REVISITING INTERVIEW DATA: ANALYSING TURN-TAKING IN INTERVIEWS WITH THAI PARTICIPANTS THROUGH 'LAYERS OF INSIGHT'

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THESIS

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Abstract

This thesis has investigated a small number of transcribed interviews taken from an educational setting in Thailand. It has shown how systems of coding spoken discourse can be used to interpret that data but has also stressed the necessity to employ tools of analysis, especially those which carry Thai-specific means of assessment, to gain better insights into the turn-taking behaviour. In this respect, it is a multi-layered investigation into intercultural communication, employing what I have termed as 'layers of insight' for that process of interpretation.

The research undertaken also has an added element of using data which was originally collected for the purpose of investigating learning strategies. This is in contrast to the present objective of looking at how the interviews themselves were constructed by both participants. I have argued that this 'double focus' requires the researcher to carry forward the contextual information about the participants and interview as a speech event to the present research in order to help better interpret the data. This process has been useful, but, at times, prone to some overlap and redundancy. In order to organize the multitude of 'layers' and potential insights into the turn-taking of the interviews, much emphasis has been placed upon the methodological process streamlined into two steps.

The results of the data analysis have revealed that the turn-taking coding system requires further experimentation and that a future 'revisiting' of the data may require careful re-organising of the 'layers of insight', but also that there is much potential in the combination of contextual information in those layers with the detailed codification system.

Chapter 1 Introduction

This research concerns the analysis of interview data, collected in Thailand, between Thai college students and a native speaker interviewer. It fundamentally embraces research in two stages, that is interview data from past research conducted in mid-1999 and current spoken discourse analysis of the language used in those interviews. This present research shows how the data and tools of the mid-1999 study can be carried over and used to assist in later, related research. In this sense, this illustrates how research can carry an "emergent" quality to it, evolving from one initial purpose to accumulate another set of tools for a future, perhaps as yet undecided area of research. This research will focus upon one stage in that evolution, whereby a number of research tools have been gathered, in an attempt to improve the quality of research interviewing at a small English-medium vocational college in Thailand.

The current study is one in which interviews originally transcribed for the purpose of finding out about students' learning strategies are further analysed in terms of the spoken discourse of the interaction taking place as my primary focus is upon how both participants in the interview situation take turns when communicating with one another. Hereafter, I will refer to the concept of spoken discourse analysis as "turn-taking" analysis. That analysis will involve the detailed coding of how both interview participants interact with each other in the research interview. It is primarily an analysis of the interview discourse based on the detailed coding of speech as originally researched by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975, 1992). In its broadest sense, it draws upon the influences of Conversation Analysis (CA), whilst recognizing that some ethnomethodological features are employed alongside the discourse analysis.

Consequently, I refer to my adopted methodological approach as CA, acknowledging that it is a form heavily influenced by discourse analysis in this study.

In effect, this research concerns the analysis of interviews in two contexts. The first is a historical one in which research was conducted in mid-1999 for the purpose of learning more about the English language learning strategies of new entrants into a vocational school where English is the medium of instruction. That research involved interviewing mostly Thai students upon entry to their required period of pre-sessional English studies after which the analysed results were fed back to staff in order to improve the teaching-learning process of the college. Viewed historically, this process of interviewing students, analysing the data and disseminating the findings acted as a catalyst for the next area of research, that of analysing the language of the interviews to improve the interviewing technique for future pre-sessional research. In effect then, the historical context is inter-linked with this next area of research since the same body of data is used, but for an immediately different purpose. Both purposes, however, aid greatly in meeting the grander objective of improving the learning-teaching process by gathering better information about the pre-sessional participants. The context of the research focusing upon the spoken discourse of the interviews requires its own particular set of analytical tools – those which analyse the language used by the interview participants and attempt to explain that language use in terms of its socio-cultural context, i.e. in an interview setting between students from Thailand and a teacher-researcher from a western country. In brief, the historical and socio-cultural contexts provide the spoken discourse analysis of the interviews with a rich 'array' of supporting research tools, unique in that they represent the emergent nature of the research.

1.1 Research questions

This study of the spoken discourse of the interviews requires a direction to the analysis beyond that which, at the macro level, simply seeks improvement of the teaching-learning process. Research questions for this study need to be specific to the nature of the turn-taking research to be undertaken and also need to embody the emergent nature of the research in terms of its historical context. In terms of the grander objective of conducting research which leads to the improvement of the college's teaching–learning process, these questions would appear to be set more on a micro level. However, they are essential as the responses to them determine to what extent the overall college improvements can be achieved. In theory, more insightful information gathered by means of more effective interviewing would, in turn, lead to heightened awareness about the learning strategies of the learners among the lecturers. Consequently, the two broad research questions to be asked in this study both serve to achieve the grander objective of improving the teaching-learning process at the college.

The first research question concerns the turn-taking analysis specifically and asks to what extent the chosen mixture of coding systems is effective in its representation of the interview discourse. As the analysis of the interview data focuses on coding in detail of each utterance, it is crucial to judge this codification in terms of its ability to clearly illustrate turn-taking patterns and idiosyncrasies within individual interviews and collectively across all the interviews conducted.

Secondly, as the spoken discourse research utilizes the tools of analysis from the earlier learning strategies research, it is important to assess to what extent this transfer has been of use to research which fundamentally has a different purpose.

Admittedly, there is an overall generic purpose to both the learning strategies and the turn-taking research, yet it should be noted that the carrying over of the tools of analysis devised for one purpose may not necessarily suit the purpose of another research area. It is essential to assess this transfer in a pragmatic manner rather than be moved to accepting its validity as a gesture which broadly aligns itself to suiting the overall macro purpose of improving the college's learning–teaching process.

Underlying these two broad questions there are a number of more specific questions related to the turn-taking research based upon coding transcripts of interviews. The primary aim of such coding is to gain insights into how Thai students can be more effectively interviewed by western interviewers to gather more information about their learning strategies; consequently, the resulting codification should be assessed on the basis of how clearly that chosen system of codification shows the patterns in turn-taking between the two participants. Secondly, that system should allow for other associated tools of analysis to be created as such 'by-products' of codification may aid in revealing patterns of turn-taking (from the interviewer) from interview to interview. What is sought then from these by-products, or supplementary tools of analysis, is an insight into the emergent nature of turn-taking behaviour focusing on the native speaker interviewer. Whether emergent patterns from these tools are noticeable or not is to be assessed. That represents a research question focusing on the practical 'readability' of tools of turn-taking analysis, how they can illustrate in visual forms of representation what is happening over long stretches of spoken discourse within and across interviews.

Clearly, assessment of tools of analysis investigating the interviewer's turn-taking behaviour needs to be accompanied by the required attempts to analyse and

explain the individual patterns and idiosyncrasies of each Thai interviewee. For this purpose, a specialized set of Thai language socio-cultural criteria is to be selected which take into account the potential problems of Anglo-centric cultural bias. To judge Thais according to Thai cultural criteria is a decision based upon both practical and moral grounds, since it is believed that greater insights into their turn-taking behaviour can be gained by evaluating Thais according to localized Thai criteria. These are ones which emanate from social, educational and religious practice and are to be selected and applied by a westerner. This is nevertheless, despite attempts to remove cultural bias, still open to the inevitable criticism of Anglo-centricity. This research question then is one which asks to what extent localized socio-cultural criteria can be selected and applied by non-Thais and then what insights they can reveal into the patterns and idiosyncrasies exposed by the previous array of transferred historical and specific turn-taking tools of analysis.

Summarising these research questions, there are two main foci to be investigated:

1. Firstly, the chosen mixture of coding systems is to be assessed as to its effectiveness in representing the interview data.
2. Secondly, the transfer of the tools of analysis for the earlier research into language learning strategies should be assessed as to its usefulness in the research into the turn-taking of the interview discourse.

Furthermore, there are two secondary objectives associated with these main questions. One is to assess the various tools of analysis in terms of their ability to create a practical and visual transparency into the discourse across the interviews. The second is to see

what insights localized Thai cultural criteria can provide to the interpretation of the discourse.

To assist us in understanding from where these research questions originate, it is important at this point in the introduction to provide a little more depth to the historical context in which the research took place. As mentioned previously, there is an 'emergent' quality involved in the turn-taking research undertaken. This next section will attempt to explain that quality in more detail.

1.2 Historical context

As we trace the historical context of the research, it can be seen that there are two areas of research. One context concerns the learning strategies of the entrants to an English pre-sessional program in Thailand, and the other concerns the manner in which the research interviews to gather such information were conducted. It is that second objective which involves the coding of the interview transcripts which were used initially for the first research purpose. The overlying cause for interviewing students in the first instance requires elucidation.

After the first few semesters of teaching at the vocational college in Thailand in which two-year Australian accredited Engineering and International Trade Diplomas were taught to mainly Thai students in the medium of English, there had been complaints mostly from those subject-matter lecturers that mismatches between teaching methodologies and learning strategies existed. Lectures took place in which a variety of modes of interaction ranging from transmission to more interactive task-based learning modes were pursued by the native speaker lecturers. However, in many instances this

resulted in various degrees of confusion among the Thai students. So far, the English pre-sessional courses conducted to prepare those same students for the Diplomas had concentrated on IELTS (International English Language Testing System) preparation, English for Academic Purposes and Study Skills sessions. Clearly the content of the English pre-sessional course needed to be reviewed in light of the western lecturers' feedback. Thai students themselves had made few direct complaints about the subject-matter courses or pre-sessional program, yet Thai administrative staff were receiving comments from students in Thai about the lessons in general. What appeared to emerge from this indirect feedback was that the pre-sessional program did not prepare them for the various degrees of interaction involved in the teaching methodologies. An investigation into the learning strategies which were needed to make the new students adaptable to the different lecturers' styles and expectations was required.

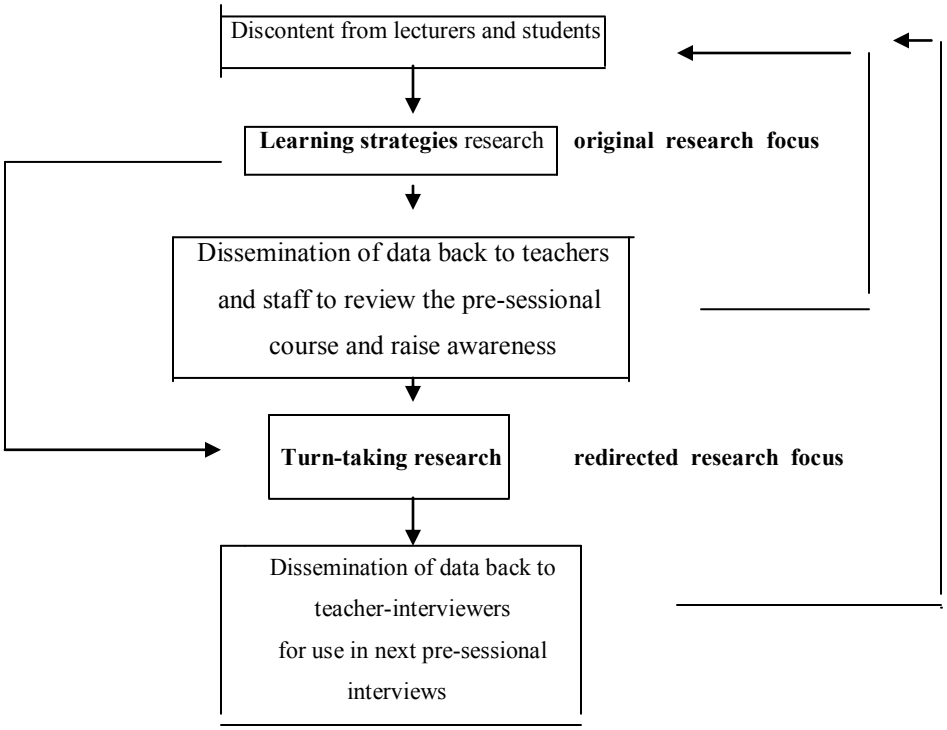
The first step undertaken by myself, the Head of Academic Studies, was to conduct awareness-raising workshops for all students, including teaching staff, concerning their expectations about the learning and teaching methodologies currently used. These measures were only one means to address the situation for present students at the college. In retrospect, they were in essence too late to rectify the confusion experienced in the first few semesters. My attention turned then towards ensuring that the next group of students entering the pre-sessional program, and thereafter into the Diploma of their choice, had a smoother pathway into their studies. This involved creating awareness of their own learning strategies and how they had been taught in relation to the expectations held of them previously and currently in their new environment.

Review of the pre-sessional course needed to be made in light of information gathered about learning and teaching from as many new students entering the college as was logistically possible. In June 1999 it was expected that a new group of students requiring the English pre-sessional course would enter the college so I decided to conduct small-scale interview-based research with them. The purpose was to interview them on a one-to-one basis asking questions about their learning and teaching experiences and present expectations. This information was to be collated and disseminated among English-language teaching staff initially and then also fed back to Engineering and Business lecturers. The information shared among English language staff was for the purpose of reviewing our own teaching methodologies and gaining an understanding of the background and expectations of our new students. How that data was collected is, I believe, important knowledge to use in investigating the subsequent turn-taking of the interviews themselves. There was at the time of interviewing, from July 1999, only the purpose of gathering information on the learning – teaching process for practical short- and long-term requirements. The redirected research focus was to investigate the process by which that data was collected in order to raise awareness about the interviewing process in terms of turn-taking behaviour between both participants. As the first objective focused on both learner and teacher in the educational context, the second objective also embraced both participants' behaviour, this time though in the interviewing context. In effect, both research areas served the same overall purpose which was to improve the quality of the teaching-learning process in the college. Without the knowledge gained from research undertaken into both areas (learning strategies and turn-taking), there existed the danger that the interviewing process would in the future

yield inaccurate data and result also in the same degree of intercultural confusion as experienced in the first few semesters of teaching.

The overall picture of the research undertaken emanating from the original complaints from subject-matter lecturers can be illustrated as follows:

Figure 1 : The Research process: Two foci interrelated



With this research process, as illustrated above in Figure 1, a clear picture of its retrospective, or historical, context can be seen. Viewing Figure 1, it is important to remind oneself of the original catalyst for both the learning strategies and turn-taking research, that is, the discontent of lecturers and students about the learning-teaching process. That discontent is, viewed in the historical sense, not an isolated or temporary condition. It is potentially an on-going condition unless learning strategies research

interviews, accompanied by turn-taking research into the nature and quality of those interviews, are conducted regularly. In brief, the process outlined in Figure 1 to create an interrelated research foci should be regularly conducted to continually pre-empt potential discontent.

1.3 Structure

The structure of this thesis follows the broad historical development of the research process in that issues concerning learning strategies are considered as core elements or influences upon the study into the turn-taking of the research interviews. The manner in which the interviews were devised, conducted and interpreted represent those influences and form a natural bridge into the turn-taking investigation. This interrelation and influence is mirrored in the structure of this study in which there are four parts.

Part A reviews the literature of three key areas underpinning the study of spoken discourse, termed as turn-taking, interviewing and finally Thais as interviewees. This latter area of review should not be regarded as an after-thought, but remains an essential ingredient alongside those of turn-taking and interviewing to firmly contextualize the study.

Part B turns to the methodological considerations I encountered and more clearly mirrors the research process in Figure 1. Accordingly, chapter five addresses the methodological issues concerning the research into learning strategies. This covers how the interviews were conducted, and interpretation of the interview data and some ethical issues concerning the interviewing process. Various means were employed to analyse the taped interviews at that time. An in-depth description and discussion of these

methodological issues are provided, whilst relating back to the broader issues of interviewing in the literature review.

Chapter six moves onto the redirected research focus of turn-taking, looking specifically at the chosen methodology of coding the interview transcripts used for the learning strategies research. In a similar fashion to the previous section, I intend to justify my specific coding system whilst referring back to the broader issues of turn-taking as covered in the literature review.

Both chapter five addressing the methodology employed to ascertain learning strategies and chapter six addressing the turn-taking analysis by means of coding focus on the practical methodological issues of interviewing and analysis of interview transcripts. It is essential to describe them in depth, referring to actual, almost physical, difficulties encountered as they all, despite apparently presenting the reader with minor details, may influence turn-taking behaviour to some degree.

Chapter seven in Part B looks at how I attempt to combine the two previous chapters to create an amalgamated methodology of old (learning strategies) and new (turn-taking) means of analysis. This marriage of seemingly divergent research foci takes on an "emergent" quality in that it illustrates how interview data can be revisited and reanalysed at later dates with new research objectives, i.e. to analyse the turn-taking features of the interview transcripts. The description of the methodology in which I combine the two research foci is accompanied by an account of how I interpret the findings of the research in a coherent manner.

The marriage of old and new research foci creates a wide array of research

tools to manage. They, in turn, can produce 'insights' from different perspectives which at times overlap and collectively result in a potentially huge body of information to interpret. The approach I have chosen for this interpretation requires the researcher to step back from the data and enter into what Kvale (1996) terms as a "dialogue" . This represents a move towards distancing oneself from the depth of the interpretation process to make more objective assessments about the findings that the diverse research tools present. Part B provides a more in-depth explanation of this interpretation process.

Part C presents the findings of the research undertaken. As the steps involved in applying the methodology produce such a large amount of data, I have decided for the purpose of this study to present ten out of the twenty interviews originally conducted. All ten interviews will be analysed with the same outlined methodology, and selected findings on both learning strategies and, most importantly, turn-taking are to be shown.

Finally, Part D attempts to synthesize some of the main issues addressed in the previous parts of the study, namely those from the general literature review, methodology and data analysis. The purpose here is not merely to repeat issues already presented, but to create an overall coherence to the study conducted so far. This involves critically assessing to what extent the research objectives concerning the creation of a spoken discourse coding system for interviews and the marriage of old and new research tools in "emergent" research have been achieved. Part D concludes by looking to the practical implications that the research carries for interviewing Thais in similar settings, and gives some recommendations for possible future research areas.

As a concluding point to this introduction, it should be noted that much cross-reference to the Appendices is required throughout the thesis. There is, in fact, a large amount of data contained in this part of the study. The content of the Appendices embraces firstly ten transcribed and coded interviews and various tools of analysis focusing on the turn-taking research. The second section of the Appendices includes the learning strategies research tools, and finally the last section contains all supplementary items related to the research in general. The organization of these three sections is so constructed as to group together the tools of analysis into related areas: turn-taking (Appendices A1 – A5), learning strategies (A6 – A10), and supplementary items (A11 – A15). Reference to them in the thesis does not intentionally follow a chronological order since it is important that each cross-reference is identified with the specific area of research it is grouped with. Chronological cross-referencing would lose the sense of association essential when frequently turning to the Appendices.

Part A Literature Review

Synopsis

The literature review is separated into the three areas of **turn-taking**, **interviewing for research purposes** and an analysis of **Thais as interviewees**. This review opens with a discussion of the theoretical issues concerning spoken discourse analysis, or turn-taking. It focuses primarily on those issues of interaction which are interrelated with the specific speech coding systems which are employed in the data analysis. The methodology of that data analysis concerns specifically how to code spoken discourse in detail. I will therefore separate the 'mechanics' of various systems originating in classroom research (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975, Tsui 1994, and Francis and Hunston 1992) from the broader aspects of discussion. These theoretical aspects for discussion in this literature review concern the analysis of spoken discourse, particularly focusing on the participants involved, the setting in which the interaction takes place, the type of speech event it represents and how those criteria are placed when viewing the transcribed record of what has taken place. At the turn-taking level, it represents a discussion of how turn-taking behaviour is represented on those transcripts and how that representation relates to all the influences that are exerted upon that behaviour. In that respect then, the first chapter on turn-taking will naturally require further discussion of the specific speech event under analysis – the interview – and then of the participants – Thais and native speakers. The Thai interviewees in this study are seen as 'non-native speakers' (hereafter referred to as NNS) and the interviewer as a 'native speaker' (NS). According to the terminology proposed by Canagarajah (1999: 79) "periphery speakers of English" refers to NNS and "center speakers of English" to NS.

In brief, the division into three chapters forms a progression in how to trace the discussion through the literature review: from the broad issues of the turn-taking issues concerning all speech events, to the specific nature of the interview and then to the wide-ranging influences affecting the interview context and participants in the form of the Thai interviewee.

The second chapter on *interviewing for research purposes* specifically looks at the interview as a speech event. It discusses it from a wider perspective than that of the Conversation Analyst, taking instead several perspectives, namely ethnographic, anthropological and semi-structured interviewing which are all relevant in the cultural context of my research, that of the western teacher-researcher in a Thai educational setting. These new perspectives are intended as a means to broaden the discussion of interviewing particularly in an intercultural context whilst considering some of the theoretical points concerning turn-taking as outlined in the first chapter.

The third chapter in the review on *Thais as interviewees* is potentially a separate area of review, yet I nevertheless believe it to be highly influential and interrelated to both the previous chapters. Interviewing looks at the communicative event taking place, presenting one dimension of the discussion which is almost physical in nature as it concerns mechanisms and techniques of interaction. The chapter on Thais as interviewees, however, takes the next step in the analysis, perhaps a step backwards into a discussion of what influences on both participants are brought to the interview setting itself. In this sense, Thais are viewed from a socio-cultural and, specifically, from an educational perspective, presenting an in-depth discussion of the interviewee as a member of Thai society, a Buddhist and a discourse partner with western researcher of

higher status. This presents a dimension to the review which will be essential to understanding turn-taking behaviour in the specific type of interviews in question and in the Thai setting.

It is intended that these three chapters of the literature review overlap and are interrelated in the sense that the theoretical issues of turn-taking explain issues concerning Thais as interviewees, and aspects raised in the chapter on interviewing relate to turn-taking issues. The permutations of the intermingling nature of these three chapters represent a sign of the importance that these theoretical issues have in relation to each other.

As a final point, it is to be noted that I have intentionally omitted a review of the literature of learning strategies research. In an earlier study focusing on the data collected in mid-1999, a review was conducted which informed this present study. Due to the direction this thesis has taken into spoken discourse analysis, I have decided not to include that review.

Chapter 2 Turn-taking

This first chapter on *turn-taking* addresses the theoretical issues of spoken discourse underpinning the choice of coding systems later which are used to analyse the interview data in the study. It commences with a discussion of ***classroom discourse,*** which is peculiar as the data under analysis is not collected from the classroom, yet nevertheless essential as the first comprehensive attempts (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975) to analyse spoken interaction focused on classroom talk. Subsequent work on other speech events in Conversation Analysis (CA), or "talk-in-interaction" (Schegloff 1989 as cited in Wood and Kroger 2000: 21), since the 1970s has been influenced by the theoretical issues raised at that time. The next section on ***systems of turn-taking*** refers primarily to work by Sacks et al (1974) which investigated spoken discourse across a variety of speech events. This naturally leads to the inclusion of formal speech events such as those in the classroom, ceremonies and interviews. It is these differences outlined by Sacks et al (ibid.) which are discussed and expanded upon in the last two sections on ***sequences and exchanges*** and ***repair***. These final two sections attempt to delve more deeply into issues which differentiate interviewing as a speech event from other events and are seen to return to some issues, particularly that of illocutionary meaning (Searle 1969) and co-operative principles (Grice 1975), which were influential in the development of CA.

2.1 Classroom Discourse

Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) attempts to describe spoken discourse were based on data collected in schools, taking Halliday's (1961) hierarchical "rank

scale" of interaction. Their proposal was that classroom interaction was ordered on this scale from the smallest units of analysis, "acts", up into "moves" (often referred to as "turns"), "exchanges", "transactions" and finally the "lesson" itself. Their definition of 'act' though differs from that of Austin's (1962) use of the term 'act' in Speech Act Theory in that theirs is related to and explained by what is said before and after it occurs. It serves a function in context with the discourse around it unlike acts in Speech Act Theory.

The descriptive framework employed by Sinclair and Coulthard (ibid.) centers primarily on the way in which moves operate in typical classroom exchanges; this well-known perspective introduced the concept of three move exchanges – "initiating" moves (*I*) from the teacher, "responding" (*R*) moves from the students and a "follow-up" (*F*) (or evaluation) move again from the teacher. The focus on the function of acts and moves making up this three-part exchange system was within the parameters of that exchange. More recently, Tsui (1994) has expressed doubts over the interpretations of utterances confined to such limited stretches of talk. Since topics re-emerge throughout the course of interaction, the exchange could constrict that interpretation of those utterances.

Research which seeks to gain a better understanding of the speech behaviour of native-speaker and non-native speaker participants in non-classroom settings, such as interviews, leads immediately to cast further doubts over a three-part system of moves (*IRF*) and how different ranks of the "rank scale" (Halliday 1961) can effectively be used to understand that speech behaviour. Furthermore, apart from understanding what is happening in, in our case interviews, between Thais and the native

speaker interviewer in terms of discourse patterns and idiosyncrasies, the general usefulness of such a codification system taken from one level or a combination of different ranks on the rank scale needs to be assessed. That is clearly an assessment of the chosen research methodology, in which we could consider whether *IRF* codification provides the researcher with more or less insightful information than the moves and acts or whether they actually complement each other.

Clearly taking a speech codification system from research conducted primarily in classroom settings and adapting it to interview discourse is open to criticism concerning applicability. This raises the issue of the difference between classroom and interview discourse in terms of who constitutes the "primary knower" (Berry 1981), meaning the person who possesses knowledge of the issue or topic under investigation. In the classroom this knowledge is most likely, in a strictly transmission style of teaching, to be held by the teacher, asking questions – opening exchanges with Initiations (*I*) – and providing follow-up moves (*F*) which evaluate student responses (*R*). In educational research interviews, the reverse situation may be the case, as student-interviewees themselves surely act as the "primary knowers" (ibid.), meaning that any follow-up moves should theoretically be in the form of non-evaluative acts (*comments* or *accepts* from Sinclair and Coulthard 1992). In such interviews, as the recipient of primary knowledge, it may be argued that the teacher-interviewer has no right to evaluate. Nassaji and Wells (2000: 400) take up this same point in warning that evaluative feedback moves by the teacher can discourage "extended…participation" by students; clearly, any judgemental rather than the expected acknowledging feedback given in topics involving personal information provided by the students is inappropriate. In an interview setting

where the objective is to coax the interviewee into extensions of interesting and relevant responses, evaluation by the teacher-researcher may also, in a similar fashion to the classroom-based research by Nassaji and Wells (ibid.), give the student-interviewee the impression that strictly teacher-led classroom discourse (van Lier 1996) is in operation and every response is being assessed as to its correctness.

However, such transmission-style classroom exchanges may not necessarily be a fair assessment of all *IRF* exchanges. Van Lier (ibid.: 170) points to the varying degrees of "contingency" employed in classroom settings to hand over the ability to initiate and respond in exchanges to the students themselves, leaving the teacher to facilitate the interaction by means of only providing feedback.

The concept of 'contingency' has two main aspects, that of the degree of dependency between participants and the unpredictable nature of that interaction. It is defined by van Lier (ibid.: 174) as "a web of connecting threads between an utterance and other utterances, and between utterances and the world" in which speech events are represented in a circular web of social interaction with formal monologues at its center and informal interaction on the outside. In practical terms, in its extreme form of low contingency between participants towards the center of the web, there is little unexpected interaction involved. The interaction in such cases shows, according to van Lier (ibid.: 181-183), elements similar to a monologue, meaning that there is asymmetry, product-orientation, a predictable methodology in classroom gap-filling activities, an authoritarian relationship to turn-taking rights and an external control over the proceedings. This extreme is one of the highest predictability in turn-taking and contrasts with the high contingency of every day casual conversation where interaction is less governed by one

party, is spontaneous and participants have more symmetrical relations. Van Lier focused on contingency in *IRF* classroom interaction, yet the variability in contingency is surely not limited to classroom exchanges. I would propose that there are also degrees of contingency in interview exchanges, for example in the more conversation-like ethnographic interviews conducted by Spradley (1979) in New York to more formal job interviews, leading to a possible argument in support of transposing classroom turn-taking codification systems onto other speech events.

In terms of the status of participants in van Lier's (loc. cit.) representation of contingency, much reference is made to "symmetrical" and "asymmetrical" relations. According to Luckmann (1990 as cited in van Lier 1996: 175) high symmetry is more associated with every day conversation and less with more formal interaction. We should note that the degree of symmetry is not necessarily constant at all points in the course of interaction (a doctor at times reverting to friendly chit-chat with patients in medical interviews) as van Lier (1996) points out. Yet despite the varying degrees of symmetry during interaction between participants, the underlying difference in status still remains. For educational settings, McCarthy (1991: 124) refers to the inevitable "hangover from the classroom" when teachers speak with students in non-classroom settings in which the teacher is still regarded as having dominant rights to interrupt, overlap, take turns and finish interaction. This lack of parity between these particular interview participants needs to be recognised by the teacher-researcher and although status cannot be easily altered, perhaps in a similar way to the doctor-patient interaction previously mentioned, efforts to change the asymmetrical nature of the discourse can be made. If Schiffrin's (1985: 640) concept of "responsibility" between participants to attain "conversational

coherence" is taken as a premise, then perhaps that responsibility may be taken to include those efforts. It must be noted though that the concept of responsibility to achieve such coherence may be open to different interpretations by student-interviewees accustomed to a lack of parity in turn-taking. I will now turn to the 'systems' of turn-taking in more detail.

2.2 Systems of turn-taking

Sacks et al (1974: 729), in investigating the type of spoken discourse across a variety of speech events, refer to the "turn-taking system" prevalent in those events. Their conclusion that there is a "massively present" organisational structure in formal interaction as opposed to casual conversation suggests that there exists a "pre-allocation of all turns" in settings like interviews. Whilst accepting the possibly "pre-determined" (van Lier 1996) nature of formal interaction as Sacks et al establish, their claim that turns are unpredictable in size, content, distribution and order must be open to question. If casual conversation is considered, then characteristics which are typical of such interaction, as in "local assembly" (where talk is often created spontaneously) and in the non-determined nature of the discourse (van Lier ibid.: 169), are surely to be found in settings of interaction – the classroom and interviews – in which efforts are made to introduce higher levels of contingency. This would suggest that elements of conversational turn-taking may appear in situations where the previously dominant controller of the interaction chooses to introduce more symmetry, more exploratory-style exchanges, moving from dialogic to conversational discourse (van Lier ibid.). As previously mentioned, just as a doctor may manipulate the symmetry in medical

interviews to elicit better responses, teachers and other interviewers with non-native speakers have the same flexibility at hand whilst retaining the status to engineer the discourse back to lower contingency when required. The "proof procedure for the analysis of turns" suggested by Sacks et al (op.cit.: 728) as being unpredictable may therefore be variable within even units of analysis as small as exchanges, moving from the predictability of pre-allocation to the unpredictability of exchanges more alike to casual conversation. This variability though is still seemingly under the control of the participant with the higher status – the speech event organiser, the teacher, the researcher and , in this particular research setting, the native speaker.

Sacks et al (1974) propose a model for turn-taking management in everyday conversation involving variable sizes of turn construction units (words, clause, sentences) where TRP (Transition Relevant Places) can take place. These junctions at which speakers change turns – the current speaker selecting the next speaker, the next speaker self-selecting or the current speaker continuing – are key descriptions of their model, helping the analyst to identify where and how silence is treated. In light of the interviewees' ethnic background in the present study – south-east Asian/Thai – this is an important feature to consider as Thai concepts of deference to authority figures and their unwillingness to challenge them (Holmes and Tangtongtavy 1995) may lead to intercultural misinterpretations about why silences occur. Sacks et al (loc. cit.) refer specifically to "pauses" (within turns), "gaps" (between the current speaker's turn and the self-selecting next speaker) and "lapses" (during and after TRPs where no participant speaks). In terms of the rights to speak at these junctions, according to Sacks et al, pauses belong to the speaker, gaps to no one and lapses to either participant. Whether or not such

rights are generalisable among non-native speakers or valid at all with Thais is open to question.

2.3 Sequences and exchanges

Looking at turn-taking from the perspective of how utterances are interlinked, the issue of the interpretation of the exchange or sequence in spoken discourse needs to be examined. If the *IRF* exchange system is taken as a framework for the analysis of discourse, it should be noted that it may be viewed as limiting interaction, at least in its classroom application, to three part 'chunks' of discourse which are repeated (Seedhouse 1996, and van Lier 1996). The predisposition in classroom discourse of three-part exchanges could be seen as representing the basic fabric for the connection between the turns. However, the mere fact that there is a tendency in teacher – student discourse to revert to three turns does not clearly explain the way in which they are interlinked. In attempting to address this, Edmondson (1981 in Taylor and Cameron 1987: 61) views spoken discourse in terms of the "inter-dependent" perspectives of turns, as researched by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975, 1992), and the "illocutionary force" within those turns. This stance though fundamentally avoids consideration of "contextualisation cues" (Gumperz 1982) in the illocutionary perspective, keeping instead to a surface-level investigation of interaction. Tsui's (1994 and 1995) turn-taking research into classroom and non-classroom discourse adopts the three-part exchange system as its basis. She too follows a surface-level investigation but she readily admits to the importance of a deeper-level perspective of the participants' cultural background which is "intertwined" with turn-taking behaviour (Tsui, 1994: 78). Furthermore, she

argues for a broader view of how utterances are interpreted, not simply one in which they are understood in relation to what is said within the exchange, but beyond that exchange. This calls for a shift in the parameters in the interpretative means we use to trace the reasons for recurring patterns within exchanges.

In terms of the existing means for interpretation within exchanges, Eggins and Slade (1997) refer to the "sequential implicativeness" of the inter-relation between utterances, which leads the discourse analyst away from the most recognisable examples of mechanical-like adjacency pairs and the preferences of responses into a somewhat broader field of inter-dependent, contextualised discourse, that of "recipient design" (Taylor and Cameron 1987 as cited in Eggins and Slade 1997: 29, and Sacks et al 1974). Analysis of sequences inevitably requires then an insight into a study of why lexical items and topics were chosen by the participants in that setting and how they were perhaps expected and reacted to. At this point, Gricean "co-operative maxims" (1975) may be a feasible means to analyse sequences, yet, as Fairclough (1995) indicates, those maxims were based on interaction between native speakers and are also only valid if participants are on parity with each other. Consequently, Fairclough (ibid.) questions the extent of their applicability in native speaker to non-native speaker interaction. In defence of their use though, one may refer again back to the variability of levels of contingency and symmetry flowing in and out of exchanges expediently in even some traditionally pre-determined *IRF*-style interaction and argue that sense and relevance in the Gricean interpretation are nevertheless still sought in NS-NNS exchanges. That sense or relevance is, however, dependent on different "communicative norms" (Briggs 1986) that either participant feels obliged to abide by. Should, however, the seemingly differing

background culture be a complete block to application of Gricean maxims when there are arguments for shared "personal common ground" or even "communal common ground" (Clark 1996: 327) between NS and NNS ? Clearly, definitions of culture based on national stereotypes appear to be giving way to those which are based upon common experience and characteristics. Idiosyncratic commonalities may subsequently form a basis for accepting the Gricean maxims of speaking the truth, saying no more than is necessary, being relevant and being clear in NS- NNS interaction. The stronger the argument for acceptance of personal commonalities, the less credence is perhaps given to Fairclough's (loc. cit.) doubts as to the applicability of those maxims. Perhaps Allan's (1991 as cited in Clyne 1994: 11) cautionary advice to regard these maxims as "reference points for language interchange" rather than "laws to be obeyed" is a more suitable perspective. There is, apart from Fairclough (loc. cit), a stronger and more research-based body of evidence which outlines contrary patterns of communication to the maxims (Schiffrin 1984, Kochman 1981 and Wierzbicka 1991). These look at the particular cases of interaction among different cultural groups yielding evidence showing that 'co-operative' as a concept is not interpreted in anglo-centric terms. With this criticism in mind, Clyne (1994) reminds us of Grice's original purpose, that of an avoidance of "cultural hegemony" and to create a universal set of maxims. For this purpose, Clyne (ibid.) attempts to revise those original maxims by taking into account the clear anomalies of the apparent contradictions to those proposed by Grice. An example for the south-east Asian context is given in which Clyne's research in Australian workplace settings shows their propensity to provide more information in inter-cultural communication compared to western counterparts. This would seemingly break the

maxim of relevance. Additions to the maxims carefully mention "within the bounds of the discourse parameters of the given culture" and "in opposition to (the) cultural norms of truth, harmony, charity, and/or respect" (ibid.: 194). However, he does note the difficulty in ascertaining actually whose cultural norms – the speaker's or the hearer's – are to be used as a framework for analysis of intercultural communication. That definition though must go beyond who is presently taking the turn and any framework surely needs to address issues of participant status more than that of speaker or hearer rights.

Following this search for a set of 'rules' to assess inter-cultural communication, there is also the more specific discussion as to what role context and cultural background information play in the interpretation of utterances, especially in that inter-cultural context. Gumperz (1982: 166) clearly states that:

> "A speech activity is a set of social relationships enacted about a set of schemata in relation to one communicative goal."

Wolfson (1985: 207) adds the importance specifically of age and gender. However, there is a need for teacher-researchers to perhaps combine these two fields of analysis into one which can suit their particular needs. This points to a combination of studies into the organization of speech (CA) and studies into the contextual information surrounding the participants, their backgrounds, and the setting. It broadly involves the marriage of CA and ethnography, the latter of which has the purpose "to identify and analyse the dynamic interrelationships among the elements which go to make up performance" (Bauman and Sherzer 1989: 7). This is an approach pursued by Moerman (1988), an ethnographer employing CA in the Thai context. The question remains as to what extent Conversation Analysts are willing to employ ethnographic data to suit their needs.

One danger which exists in the marriage of these two fields is the creation of categories (denotations of coding) which are "induced from the data" (Taylor and Cameron 1987: 53), fitting the researcher's own data yet lacking universal applicability. In addition to this argument, Kreckel's research (1981: 53) criticises Edmondson's (1977) and Labov and Fanshell's (1981) taxonomies on the grounds that their proposed universal taxonomies fail since not all speakers "share typologies of illocutionary acts" and do not consider the "deep" analysis of "what is really going on." It could be argued at this point that taxonomies requiring coding derived from the surface features of discourse in the *IRF* model, or variants thereof, can be used in a quasi-quantitative manner in triangulation with the more qualitative contextual information as support. Small-scale investigations may have the objective of finding out "what is going on" at both surface and deeper perspectives in terms of only those particular discourse participants under investigation without striving to create universal applicability for its chosen taxonomy. Although such "microethnography" gives an analysis in the interactional sense, Saville-Troike claims (1996: 357) it need not be invalidated if "contextual or ecological" information such as information on the participants' backgrounds, descriptions of the setting and time and circumstances of the speech event is provided.

This section has discussed how investigation into the sequences and exchanges of interaction in CA may require the accompaniment of ethnographic studies into the contextual features of that interaction. I have argued that this combination gives rise to various issues affecting the more purist version of CA.

The discussion of turn-taking issues surrounding CA now turns to the issue of repair in the breakdown of spoken discourse. This area addresses not simply the

mechanics involved in breakdown repair, but also the deeper perceptions of what participants believe to constitute correct and incorrect discourse. This is of great significance to the previous discussion concerning the inclusion of ethnographic investigation into CA. The decision, by either participant, to request or enact repair voluntarily, needs to be explained by means of ethnographic insights into the context in which breakdown occurs, as well as the mechanics of the discourse.

2.4 Repair

Any analysis of research in the field of turn-taking needs, I believe, to include coverage of what happens when interaction breaks down as it can perhaps reveal another set of behaviours to contrast with turn-taking behaviour which apparently flows uninterruptedly. Indeed, it is widely accepted that breakdowns in questioning and responses in terms of repetition, rephrasing and encouragement to expand (by means of prompts and cues) all form a natural part of turn-taking (Spradley 1979, Milroy 1984, Labov and Fanshel 1977). Labov and Fanshel (ibid.; 60) actually term the interviewer's repair as "redirecting", part of the "metalinguistic behaviour" which perhaps in a similar fashion to Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) appears to recognise repair in communicative breakdown as a separate area of study. Milroy (ibid.: 150), though, distinguishes firstly between breakdown and "misunderstandings" – the "simple disparity between the speaker's and the hearer's semantic analysis of a given utterance", and also recognises that communicative breakdown occurs when either participant adjudges the interaction to have 'gone wrong' in some linguistic or other capacity. Clearly this latter point implies a shift in emphasis away from interpretation and jurisdiction of the interviewer. In fact, if one considers the "responsibility" to maintain the discourse as

suggested by Schiffrin (1985), then "tactics" and "strategies" which Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) state under the control of the NS-interviewer may be more NNS-driven than expected. The broad cultural criteria which Schegloff (2000) implies that underlie and remain beyond the control of the NS may include strategies regarded as part of the NNS's set of discourse "responsibilities".

In terms of what fundamentally constitutes a repair or maintenance in spoken discourse, Stubbs (1981 in Taylor and Cameron 1987: 77) argues that native speakers exhibit "intuitions about discourse well-formedness". Presumably, this intuition extends also to a judgement during the course of discourse about what constitutes "ill-formedness" (ibid.), in practice the decision-making juncture where repair is undertaken. Yet in cases where "blatant and repeated violation" (ibid: 79) occurs frequently in spoken discourse, to term breakdown-free exchange as "well-formed" is perhaps in itself misleading. This would suggest that breakdown and discourse maintenance are naturally core elements in discourse, in which case the adoption of the "well-formed" *IRF* classroom model may possibly be inappropriate to super-impose upon other exchange settings (whether casual or more formal than the classroom) as it implies an ideal pattern of turn-taking.

Further to this, Taylor and Cameron (ibid.: 78) point out that there are "conflicting intuitions" about "well-formedness" among participants who themselves may have "different 'grammars' of tacitly-known rules". This would suggest that the NNS also possesses intuitions and may also retain some rights to make similar judgements as the NS to stop the turn taking in order to at least request clarification, and in its extreme interpretation to "challenge" (Coulthard 1985: 77) the NS's move.

Furthermore, intuition itself surely needs to be seen as an integral factor in breakdown, as it appears to determine how we maintain discourse. This leads to the conclusion that "rules of discourse" (op.cit: 79), if at all definable, "draw on extra-linguistic knowledge" (ibid.) emanating from culturally-shaped intuition as well as linguistic presumptions. The NS/NNS interaction provides a setting in which NNS "bring a special set of characteristics, capabilities, vulnerabilities, and practices of speaking, hearing, and understanding to a socio-interactional site already shaped by a range of structures of practice…" (Schegloff 2000: 233).

In response to this recognition of "a special set" (ibid.) of idiosyncrasies for either NS or NNS participant, the rationale for exercising such intuition needs to be examined. "Structural oddity", mishearing, misunderstanding or not concurring with the previous speaker's statement are listed by Taylor and Cameron (ibid.: 77). Thomas (1983: 100) creates three categories of "grammatical error", "pragmatic error" - caused by "mistaken" or "different beliefs" concerning the illocutionary force of the preceding utterances and rights to express them - and "social error" - the lack of knowledge, presumably schemata, of the issue under discussion. To advocate a taxonomy as detailed as that of Thomas (ibid.) though would require analysis of the breakdown of the discourse perhaps beyond the ability of those interpreting the utterances as it may be impossible to decide what clearly constitutes grammatical, pragmatic or social error without questioning the speakers about the breakdown itself. This distraction may aid the "repair mechanism" (Sacks *et al* 1974: 724) in theory but may subsequently call for greater re-"focusing" (Coulthard 1992: 22) onto the original topic. Post-interview analysis of breakdowns may, though, provide valuable insights into how repair was

undertaken.

In terms of "repair mechanism" (Sacks *et al* ibid.), the standard "third person repair" (Schegloff 1979 as cited in Tsui 1994: 38-39) as requested by a respondent and self-repair within the turn (Sacks *et al* ibid.) only provide a limited set of repair alternatives possible in interaction, whether NS to NS or NS to NNS. I would argue that the "dual" (ibid.) possibilities existing in repair exchanges are in fact much more varied in that firstly, self-repair can exist within the initiating speaker's turn as well as the respondent. Requests for repair due to linguistic or conceptual difficulties could also be made by either participant (by the respondent in the responding turn or the initiating speaker following a response).

Furthermore, there appears to be a gap in the available categories (Schegloff et al 1977) (self-initiated, other-initiated, self-initiated other and other-initiated other repair) to denote repair which describes NNS, or indeed perhaps NS, responses which start to request repair but, due to the suddenly occurring concept of not wishing the NS initiator to lose face, transform falsely into a positive, or "preferred" (Tsui 1994) response. In coding terms this may appear as a positive, "preferred" response on the surface but, intuitively or not as may be the case, the initiator accepts the response and the discourse continues under the false pretext that all has been "well-formed" and the NNS in particular feels that responsibilities to maintain the NS's face have been upheld. This is then a case for the creation of a category of a request for repair which is never made. It is perhaps culturally-bound in its sense of responsibility and avoidance of all that which is "ill-formed" (Stubbs loc.cit.). To code such utterances as positive

responses would belie the actual illocutionary intent of the respondent involved since the coding simply refers to the perlocutionary meaning taken up by the initiator.

This variability in repair possibilities would imply that, despite the claims of an existence of a "pre-allocation of turns" (ibid.) in the particular type of interaction in question – interviews - there may be perhaps less of a "pre-determined" (van Lier 1988: 105) nature to those turns within repair mechanisms. If so, the "dynamic process of recipient design" (Eggins and Slade 1997: 29) could be said to be complemented by a multi-functional expression of intuition in the "sequential context" (Atkinson and Heritage 1984 as cited in Eggins and Slade 1997: 29) of repair; this intuition or willingness to make sense of utterances (both in self-repair and requests for repair) must be seen from a NS - NNS perspective which extends beyond surface analysis.

Viewing the exchange involving repair from a perspective of how utterances are inter-related draws us at some point to return to the assessment of the applicability of Grice's maxims, or "Co-operative Principle" (CP) (1975). An assumption of a "common purpose" (ibid.) between participants to follow CP because it conforms to vague "principles of human rationality" or "the rationalist's motivation" (Taylor and Cameron 1987: 85) would be potentially invalid due to the lack of parity between NS and NNS participants (Fairclough 1995: 46) and the doubtful applicability of maxims in experimental settings (including presumably interviews) (Milroy 1984: 27). Furthermore, the concept of rationality in Gricean maxims is also fundamentally not easily one which could be said to be shared across cultures. Surely rationality represents part of the individual's "schema" (Tannen and Wallat 1993: 73) - the knowledge of the world - which would influence the "sociopragmatic" knowledge (Thomas loc.cit) needed to avoid

communicative breakdown. Attempts to "deduce some unstated proposition" (Taylor and Cameron op. cit: 85) could, though, be viewed pragmatically as supporting the Gricean standpoint, implying that the NS and NNS manage somehow to "negotiate" (Brown and Yule 1983: 89) their way through the topic despite culturally differing abilities and assumptions understanding the "implicature" (Taylor and Cameron loc. cit.) or "pragmatic inference" (Wood and Kroger 2000: 209) of the interaction.

Summarising this chapter on turn-taking, I have discussed the theoretical issues which I believe to be essential to an understanding of spoken discourse analysis, particularly from work originally conducted in classrooms and then applied to other speech events. It has been argued that, despite the major differences between the nature of turn-taking in the classroom and the interview setting in terms of who is providing knowledge (the "primary knower" Berry 1981), *IRF* exchanges are perhaps not bound to the imagined strict teacher-transmission style of interaction. Van Lier (1996) has pointed to the varying degrees of control over the exchanges implying that the *IRF* system of coding, due to its differing levels of "contingency" (ibid.) can be applied to a wider range of types of interaction from the formal to the casual.

The issue of the "pre-determined" or "pre-allocated" nature of formal speech events (van Lier 1996 and Sacks et al 1974) has been challenged as it is felt that there does exist some degree of variability in even formal interaction, though the participant with the higher status, for example, a doctor, teacher or researcher perhaps, still retains the power over that variability. This controlling influence in turn then leads to a contradiction of Sacks et al in their claim that turns are predictable in size, content, distribution and order. Surely talk which has some degree of formal purpose (institutional

talk, research interviews, doctor-patient talk etc) may waver from low contingency towards higher contingency with the purpose of relaxing the participant of lower status. This variability should be argued as making some formal speech events surprisingly, and therefore unpredictably, possess an unpredetermined variability in contingency throughout the course of that interaction.

The inter-relation of turns in sequences has been examined and the applicability of Gricean "co-operative maxims" (1975) has been both questioned and re-evaluated in light of the differences in "communicative norms" (Briggs 1986) between NS and NNS. The context of the interaction and the backgrounds of both participants are seen as essential considerations in evaluating turn-taking behaviour, yet it is argued that care should be taken if a universal surface-level coding system alone is used to determine such behaviour. Saville-Troike's (1996) "microethnography" including "contextual" and "ecological" information is taken as a useful umbrella term to apply to the combination of a coding system alongside participant background information.

I have emphasized the area of repair in my review as it clearly acts as a window into not only how breakdown occurs, but also provides valuable insights into the responsibilities and roles both participants play in such parts of interaction. I have argued that there should be an emphasis on the issue of parity of responsibility by both NS and NNS to enact that repair. Additionally, if this responsibility is shared, then the interpretation of "well-formedness" (Stubbs 1981 in Taylor and Cameron 1987: 77) is dependent on the culturally-shaped "intuitions" of either participant.

In the discussion of the applicability of more precise categories of breakdown (Thomas 1983), it may be impossible to accurately code the reasons for

breakdown occurring unless interviewees are questioned during interaction or soon afterwards to clarify the cause of breakdown if not clear from the recording. Further to this suggestion, the relatively limited ways to show who requests and performs repair is challenged since it appears to place those repair alternatives within a system of pre-allocation of turns. The existing categories available appear specifically to ignore the case in which partial, or no, repair is requested but then withdrawn to save face. This case, and indeed all cases of communicative breakdown, must be related to what level of "intuition" (Stubbs loc. cit.) is active and what knowledge exists about "well-formedness" (ibid.) in the first place. This finally is linked again to the ability of participants to negotiate their way through the discourse in a manner which exercises their assumptions about how to make interaction flow. These are implicitly arguments to support the existence of some form of "co-operative maxims" (Grice 1975) at play but which have a much greater element of an intercultural concept of face, responsibility and intuition about "well-formedness".

The next chapter reviews the literature on interviewing and moves forward in this first chapter of turn-taking theory as applied to a wide range of speech events by focusing on one type of interaction. It is intended then that the theoretical issues under investigation will now be narrowed down in terms of what speech event is being studied and incorporate perspectives from other fields and disciplines, namely those of ethnography and linguistic anthropology, in order to broaden the discussion.

Chapter 3 Interviewing for research purposes

At this point of the literature review I wish to investigate the interview as a specific speech event. Chapter two has looked at classroom discourse in terms of its turn-taking features as the *IRF* coding system to be employed in my data analysis emanates from research conducted into educational settings (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975). As the focus of this thesis is placed upon interviews in an educational context, it is now important to concentrate on issues involved in interviewing from the perspective of its peculiarities as a speech event. These issues may have a bearing upon how data collected from interviews in the educational context are to be interpreted.

This chapter firstly opens with a **definition** of the 'research interview' and then focuses on one particular type of interviewing, the **semi-structured** interview. It is this type of interviewing which is used in my research. This discussion of the particular speech event involved then requires consideration of its own physical setting and its participants, i.e. where and between whom the interviews are conducted – the **context**. It has been an area of much contention between Conversation Analysts and linguistic anthropologists. A discussion of the argument between those two parties can provide useful insights into the issue of the extent to which, how and when contextual information should be used to explain patterns emerging in turn-taking behaviour in interviews. The use of context leads to discussion of the work of Briggs (1986). This discussion is of particular importance for inclusion in this chapter – **lessons from ethnographic interviewing** - since it highlights aspects of ethnographic interviewing thought to be relevant for the nature of my own interviews. To return more to the turn-taking aspects of interviewing, I will then discuss the issue of **topic**, concentrating on

who controls it and why. This discussion is related very much to the status of the participants and how topics are constructed and their direction changed. I conclude this section with a discussion on the **differing perceptions on interviewing**, in which I attempt to summarise where the interview is positioned in relation to other speech events and what function it performs – that of simply gathering data or a speech event in its own right with specific idiosyncrasies.

3.1 Definition

The research interview is defined by Cannell and Kahn (1968 as cited in Cohen and Manion 1994: 271) as "a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives…". Since research interviews on student behavioural issues may often be carried out by those with a vested interest in the outcomes, i.e. teachers themselves, it is doubtful though that such a speech event can be regarded as a conversation. Indeed, McCarthy (1991) notes that symmetry in the turn-taking of casual conversation between teachers and students is difficult to achieve. As informal and relaxed an atmosphere the interviewer may attempt to establish, there will exist the danger of "overlap" (ibid.: 124) from the classroom to the interview setting. If the objectives of the research interview are indeed only to procure responses from students, then it is presumably the sole right of the interviewer to initiate and follow-up turns as in the *IRF* mode (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975). It is a situation bound by its intrinsic formality, making the interviewees (and interviewers) feel they are compelled to "abide by certain communicative norms" (Briggs 1986:2). Such constraints are

manifested in an apparent "pre-allocation" (Sacks et al 1974: 729) or "pre-determined" (van Lier 1988: 105) turn-taking system. The argument against interviews being likened to conversations is perhaps further compounded by the potentially differing cultural background of the interviewees and their relatively lower status alongside the interviewer, in this case their teacher. These issues will be taken up in greater detail in the following chapter.

3.2 Semi-structured interviewing

As it was decided to use interviewing as a research tool, it is then necessary to ascertain the effectiveness of this means of research. According to Cohen and Manion (1994) and Nunan (1992), the semi-structured interview is perhaps the preferred choice for researchers wishing to interpret responses from interviewees. This type of interview does not need to have a list of pre-determined questions. There is a "flexibility" involved which allows the interviewer, as Nunan (ibid.: 149) indicates, to steer the interview topics rather than simply rely upon set questions. There are numerous probes and prompts and open and closed question forms which result in the researcher having the ability or "free form" (Drever 1995: 13) to diverge and change or omit areas previously raised in interview. As opposed to other interview types, such as an unstructured one which is a completely "open situation" (Cohen and Manion 1994: 273), the semi-structured type has sufficient structure embedded in its compilation of topics and issues to act as a guide through the interview.

However, the validity of any chosen approach to conducting research may be affected by not only the altered interview structure and cultural factors involved in

being interviewed by a western teacher, but also by common problems inherent in any interviewing in which the interaction is recorded on tape (as in my research). Nunan (ibid.: 153) points out that such interviews carry the dangers of being "off-putting", "time-consuming to transcribe" and "masked by irrelevancies". Furthermore, there is the "possibility of data overload" and no record of the "context". Drever (1995) also notes that transcription carries the danger of bias and advises that proof-reading may reduce this. Duranti (1997) addresses this issue by suggesting that interview transcripts should not be regarded as static after one listening but should be allowed to evolve over time and further considerations (including presumably listenings). This seems to suggest that any interpretation of interview data is based upon the awareness of those who transcribe at that moment in time; the same recording may in fact be interpreted, as well as transcribed, differently at a later time.

The semi-structured interview is fundamentally a formal event in which the subject under discussion is agreed and, as Drever (ibid.) points out, "on record". It differs from the ethnographic interview in that the interviewer shares a "common frame of reference" (ibid.: 15) with the interviewee. In ethnographic interviews, the interviewee creates a path through the interaction, determining topics which the ethnographer follows. Any probing in ethnographic interviewing, according to Drever (ibid.), is conducted in order to confirm the interviewer's own assumptions and understanding which is possibly similar to that of the semi-structured interviewer at times. I would argue that although there are clear differences in objectives and the methodology of interviewing, there are commonalities perhaps at the topic level between ethnographic and semi-structured interviewing. If a topic is traced through the semi-structured interview, there must be

allowances by the interviewer to let the interviewee control sub-topic direction in a similar way to the ethnographer. Clearly, as a teacher in more student-centred interaction will look to students to determine some control over topic development, the semi-structured interviewer also reasserts control to engineer the turn-taking back to the original theme and then "frame" the exchange, i.e. close it down. The ethnographer may see no need to engineer the interaction back to a "pre-determined" (van Lier 1996) set of questions because they do not exist. Before that point, however, the turn-taking may correspond to that of a semi-structured interview within exchanges.

However we may categorise the interviewing though, McCarthy (1991: 136) believes that the differing status of participants who are "trapped in their roles" will inevitably influence the discourse. This is exhibited clearly in interview settings characterised by the chains of question – answer sequences in which interviewees appear bound by real, or perceived, lack of status to a respondent's role in turn-taking (Silverman 1993). This may be so, yet from a conversation analyst's point of view, surely the objective of analysis is to view how speech behaviour is affected by a lack of symmetry in the interview, rather than to strive towards symmetrical relations. This raises the issue of why the data was collected originally. In my case the purpose was to investigate the learning strategies. Later, the same data was used to analyse turn-taking behaviour – these are intrinsically two different objectives. One may even suggest that the original purpose was to interview students whilst attempting to create at times symmetrical relations in the proceedings. If the same interviews had been conducted with a variety of topics (not necessarily those of learning strategies) to only concentrate on turn-taking, then the results of asymmetrical relations would have represented a different

focus to the research. Remaining "trapped" (loc. cit..) in such roles would possibly have resulted in differing turn-taking behaviour. In brief, this represents a "shift of interest" (Silverman 1993: 117) from obtaining data by means of interviewing to a focus on how interview talk itself is organised. I will now turn to a discussion of the contextual features of the interview.

3.3 Context

The context of the interview and the background cultural context of the participants are two areas which need to be considered carefully in the interpretation process. Both Duranti (1997) and Briggs (1986) differentiate between these two contexts, the former outlining the debate between conversation analysts and linguistic anthropologists concerning the issue of contextuality in analysing data. Duranti (1997:103) notes the potential weaknesses of interviews in providing "culturally informed linguistic analysis" and reminds us of the dangers of the "participant-observer paradox" (ibid.: 118). He draws our attention to the type of awareness of local norms and customs related to questioning rights – "the ecology of questioning" – as experienced by Briggs (1986) in research in Mexico. He also outlines the criticisms made of conversation analysts' "disinterest in the larger context" (ibid.: 266), yet points out their retort of opposing the use of "a priori" (ibid.: 271) cultural context in analysis. Schegloff's (1972 as cited in Duranti 1997: 271) advocacy of only "relevant context", i.e. the context emanating from the talk that the conversation analyst is investigating, is further defence of the narrower use of context. Similar to myself, conversation analysts are primarily interested in the dialogue itself and seek to explain that interaction, not before it takes

place, but after the talk has been transcribed, by use of the elements of context relevant or appropriate to that talk itself. This points to a "context-free yet context-sensitive" (Silverman 1993: 141) perspective on its use. There is a more limited objective in analysing the talk than those which anthropologists – linguistic anthropologists in Durant's case – pursue.

Perhaps most necessary in recognising both participants' roles throughout the discourse is some kind of qualitative framework to assess the context in which surface-level turns are taken without imposing a set of prescribed contextual criteria onto the analysis. This would, as Stokoe (2000) indicates, move away from the conversation analyst's focus on the talk itself and bring a potential source of bias to the assessment of turn-taking behaviour. Instead, the perspective taken should be, according to Heritage and Greatbatch (1991), and Maynard (1991 as cited in Silverman 1993), to show to what extent features of the participants' turn-taking behaviour are typified by and shape the institutional nature of the interaction. Heritage and Greatbatch (1991: 95) argue that the "fingerprint" of the interview data created during the course of a potentially nebulous and ever-changing context is one which is fundamentally a comparative study to what would occur in non-institutional interaction. This comparison, though, is in my research perspective perhaps distracting in that it is unclear as to what the talk –the interview data – should actually be compared to. To draw comparisons with an everyday conversation between the same participants (a westerner-teacher-NS and a Thai-student-NNS) would entail firstly an extra analysis of turn-taking behaviour of interaction in which the relative non-parity of status would still exist. Inequalities would also exist if examining NNS-NNS everyday conversation since, as will be further discussed in chapter four, Thais

rarely seek parity in interaction. The focus of analysis of institutional talk as suggested by Heritage and Greatbatch (ibid.) would, I believe, impose the unnecessary demands of seeking identifiable elements of interviewing from the Thai-westerner context in order to make unfeasible comparisons to everyday conversation.

Literature on contextual criteria which can be applied to interviews is scarce, yet some attempts, notably by van Dijk (1977) and Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) exist. Van Dijk (ibid.) concentrates on criteria underpinning pragmatic theory, those being "positions" (roles and status), "properties" (gender, age), "relations" (dominance, authority) and "functions" (father, waitress, judge). These categories may form a basis for the qualitative supplement to the surface-level interactional analysis of turn-taking, but need perhaps to be adapted with other criteria. Among these criteria, elements of Thai sociolinguistic behaviour, Gumperz's "contextualisation cues" (1982 in Schiffrin 1996: 313) representing "aspects of language and behaviour (verbal and nonverbal signs) that relate what is said to *contextual* presuppositions", and awareness of the "tactics" and "strategies" of "Foreigner Talk Discourse" (FTD) as outlined by Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991: 126) could be added. More will be specified about the particular criteria related to Thai sociolinguistic behaviour in chapter four on Thais as Interviewees. Such notes on either individual sequences of communicative breakdown, whole interviews or groups of students may broadly be categorised under ethnographic "sociolinguistic transfer" (Chick 1996: 332), referring to "the use of rules of speaking of one's own speech community or cultural group when interacting with members of another community or group".

Moreover, this raises the concept of how the NS interviewer shifts speech style to that of the interviewee. In everyday conversation, this is termed as "accommodation theory" (Giles and Powlesland 1975 as cited in Wolfson 1989: 208). If such compensation takes place in the interview context, each interview conducted can be considered as failing to attain any constant degree of standardisation of questions. This may be due to the fact that the interviewer, if sufficiently sensitive to how those questions are understood by the interviewee, will attempt to make linguistic adaptations to the elicitations. The intrinsic process of adaptation to each interview context (differing age of participants, relationship, rapport etc.) will result in every interview creating its own separate identity – its own context. Gorden (1969) calls this a standardisation of meaning which inevitably challenges the concept of interview reliability. Overall, this seems to concur with what Wolfson terms as the "emergent" context of the interviewing process, making standardisation of interviewing technique impossible to achieve in the same way that Tannen (1981) opposes the "universality" of turn-taking behavioural rules as claimed by Sacks et al (1974). We could also then refer to a non-universality in interview context despite any attempts to standardise questions. Interview context in this sense is even more clearly separate from background context, a point frequently referred to by Briggs (1986). Further discussion of his research in intercultural research settings is provided below.

3.4 Lessons from ethnographic interviewing

The work of Briggs (1986) in research conducted in ethnographic interviews in Mexico revealed much on the issue of context and analysis of data, particularly due to his own lack of knowledge of local "metacommunicative norms"

(ibid.: 3-4) before interviewing commenced. To impose one's own norms (presumably here meaning western research norms) onto local NNS participants and therefore to ignore local ones is termed as "communicative hegemony" (ibid.: 90). Yet, I would at that point also note, whilst agreeing that ethnographers may be accused of such neglect towards recognition of local interviewing norms, that conversation analysts may not necessarily need to abide by such norms if their objective is to observe reactions to asymmetrical speech behaviour. Interestingly though, Briggs (ibid.: 21) does indicate that attempts to remove all factors possibly inducing bias in NS – NNS interaction somewhat clinically reduces the data to an almost context-free state. It is the "unfolding sequence of co-construction" (Jacoby and Ochs 1995 as cited in Wood and Kroger 2000: 74) of that context by participants during interviews which in itself is an added part of behaviour worthy of observation, as well as the data revealed from the content of responses about whatever research objective exists. In a similar vein to Briggs (ibid.: 25), I would also propose that the constant negotiation, re-negotiation and co-construction of the contextual features of the interview are valid, observable elements which reflect on and are mirrored by turn-taking behaviour.

Despite Briggs' (ibid.: 89) criticism that localized turn-taking rules are often broken by interviewers in the interview setting (for example when senior figures who are unaccustomed to being asked questions in some societies are suddenly required to answer a multitude of questions in interviews), it is this new speech event for those participants which can reveal valuable information. The objective of my analysis of turn-taking is not to create a speech event similar to those that the interviewees are used to; it is to observe how they react to the new one.

Briggs (ibid.: 42) notes the failure in interview data analysis to interpret meaning indexically – that is, to look at the meaning as related to the broader context around that utterance. This is, as Ochs (1996: 413) points out, the mistake in not considering the illocutionary meaning (Searle 1969), simply taking the perlocutionary meaning as given. Although Briggs cannot suggest a clear framework for such analysis, perhaps the work of Gee (1999: 63) goes some way to the creation of an interpretative structure. In this work, meaning is clearly related to "local, on site, social, and cultural practices". Gee (ibid.: 82) though differentiates between "situation" and "context" for this purpose, preferring to use the term "situation" in perhaps the same sense that we have used it to describe the interview "context" so far. In great detail, Gee advocates the use of "situation networks" involving a system of various aspects: the semiotic, the activity, material, political and sociocultural to analyse meaning. This appears to embrace the interview situation as well as the background of (presumably) both participants. However, the choice of what criteria to employ when assessing the sociocultural background of the participants is potentially problematic since some national cultures cannot be clearly placed – in my case, the nationality of one Thai interviewee being part-German and several of whom who had had lengthy stays abroad. Gee (ibid.: 70) recognizes this difficulty, advocating that these assessments "need not be complete, fully formed, or consistent" because of the various experiences we are exposed to. In fact, the general use of 'culture' as a term leads to the question as to whose cultural model should be adopted for assessment of the speech event with participants of varying national backgrounds and experiences. To address this, instead of the term 'culture', Clark (1996) proposes the use of "communal" or "personal common ground" as such terminology focuses not on

individual nationalities per se but the aspects of experience and interests that the participants together share. Such terminology perhaps better embodies the research objectives as they more readily clarify the relationship in that interview setting with the participants.

3.5 Topic

At first sight, the issue of 'topic' related to interviewing appears to be a simple matter of determining who determines the topic, who creates the questions, what form those questions take and who holds the rights to steer those topic areas through the interview. This over-simplification of interview topics overlooks much of the discussion concerning what the interview participants themselves really perceive as their roles and responsibilities. Those perceptions will be seen as being crucial in how topics are actually steered and shaped. My discussion will address issues of not just a suitable definition of topic, but also the wider arguments of speaker rights, topic control and NS – NNS turn-taking behaviour, all of which are clearly recurring themes throughout the whole of this chapter.

Before issues concerning the way topics are initiated or continued are addressed, the actual definition of what constitutes a topic in the context of spoken discourse analysis needs to be made. McCarthy (ibid.: 132) outlines six:

- Firstly, "stretches of talk bounded by certain topic and/or transactional markers, such as lexical ones (by the way, to change the subject), or phonological ones (changes in pitch)",
- or "a semantic framework" in which "single-word or phrasal titles" (e.g.

"holidays", "buying a house") are used to summarise chunks of conversation,

- or "interactive criteria" could be chosen by saying a topic comes in existence only when "more than one speaker makes an utterance relevant to it",
- or a "pragmatic approach" in which "topics are strings of utterances perceived as relevant to one another by participants in talk",
- or a "surface cohesional view" could be taken in which it could be said that "topics end where chains of lexical cohesion peter out",
- and finally, the common definition in which topics are regarded as typically seen in many course books "as titles for the 'subject matter' of speech events".

Clearly, the pin-pointing of a relevant definition for the possibly more institutionalised nature of the research interview is, as Stokoe (2000) notes, problematic. If interviews take place in an institutional setting, then like classroom discourse which Seedhouse (1996) argues as being a sub-genre of institutional discourse, the categorisation of the topic may be decided by the institution's agenda (the curriculum or standardised interview questions). This is, according to Stokoe (ibid.:187), a one-sided formulation which ethnomethodologists avoid. Theirs would be determined by the co-construction of the topic. From my perspective of a teacher-researcher, taking a conversation analyst's coding system, the focus of interest is not simply how turns are "constructed and patterned" (ibid.: 185), but also the reasons why. This is in direct contradiction of Stokoe (ibid.) who claims the 'why' behind such construction is not sought by conversation analysts and ethnomethodologists.

Moreover, it appears to be a matter of debate as to whether candidates have negotiating rights during interviews about topics raised. This is mentioned by

Stokoe (2000), and McCarthy (1991: 133) who differentiates between what topic is important to the speaker - the "speaker's topic" - and whether that topic is accepted as important by the other participant – if so, then making it a "full conversational topic" . This question must also be valid for interview topics if the interviewer attempts to introduce higher contingency and more symmetry to the interaction, thereby enabling the interviewee some degree of rights over which topic to expand upon.

Gorden (1969: 41) suggests that the level of control exerted by the interviewer over the topic throughout the interview is related to "the extent to which he takes the initiative in either shifting the central focus of the discussion or changing the scope of the topic". Mischler (1984: 69) confirms this role , expanding on it by adding that the interviewer - in this case, a doctor – "controls the content of what is to be discussed by selectively attending and responding to certain parts of a patient's statements and by initiating each new topic". This final suggestion that the interviewer holds rights over topic initiation aligns itself with the "teachers' pedagogic agenda" in classroom interactions (Da Moita Lopes in Cook and Seidlhofer eds. 1995: 352), where social and classroom discourse are clearly differentiated in terms of the speaker's rights in topic selection.

"Topic management" (McCarthy and Carter 1994: 181) in interview settings seems so firmly under the control of the interviewer that it is difficult to imagine how an interview could resemble every day conversation, in which topics are not pre-determined, but "negotiated in the process of conversing" (Brown and Yule 1983: 89). Naturally-occurring conversation, according to Richards (1990: 71), has a kind of "topic behaviour" which involves "rounds of topic turns that are reciprocally addressed and

replied to". The interview, or the classroom, seem diametrically different to naturally-occurring conversation in terms of who controls, introduces, shifts and terminates the topic. This is an issue, from one perspective, of the setting, the role and the status of the participants. Additionally, from another perspective, it can also be viewed as a native speaker (NS) - non-native speaker (NNS) issue. Topic management has been investigated from this perspective by Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991: 121), who identify topics in relation to what kind of move they perform: "topic-initiating" or "topic-continuing". Van Lier (ibid.: 123-124) similarly refers to "off-stream" (topics which do not follow the main theme) and "on-stream" topics (those following the theme) respectively. Stokoe (2000) uses the terms "off-task" and "on-task", noting that much turn-taking research tends to ignore the former discourse despite its relevance to 'extend' the role of the student-participants.

Larsen-Freeman and Long (ibid.: 124), in their research of NS and NNS in conversation, note that the NS employs "devices" to encourage the NNS to produce language and interact smoothly. These are "tactics", which "repair the discourse following a breakdown in communication" and "strategies", which "avoid such a breakdown occurring". Such compensations for the NNS are termed as "conversational adjustments" (ibid.: 125-126) and are accompanied by the following tendencies :

- a trend towards a "lower ratio of topic-initiating to topic-continuing moves",
- "a more predictable/narrower range of topics",
- "more willing relinquishment of topic choice to interlocutor",
- "more use of questions for topic-initiating moves",
- and "briefer treatment of topics".

Such tendencies can to a certain extent also be mirrored in my small-scale research in Thailand. In the research conducted by Larsen-Freeman and Long, it would be interesting to ascertain whether a time limit was intended for the NS-NSS conversations and if the NS had a set of topics in mind before entering into the discussion. If research is conducted under interview-style conditions, in which the NNS is informed that a recorded meeting is arranged with a NS, then perhaps the intended naturally-occurring turn-taking mechanism becomes more akin, in the mind of the NNS, to the formalities of an interview. In this case, the trends described are those more attributable to an interview setting rather than a casual conversation. If the trends described are to be accepted, then one could bring into question the authenticity of the turn-taking behaviour of the NS (rather than focus on the conversational or discourse competence of the NNS), since compensating so generously with the NNS leads us to ask whether that would normally occur in non-educational settings with a NS unaccustomed to repairing or avoiding conversational breakdowns.

The next section moves on to a discussion of interviews in relation to other speech events and what function they perform.

3.6 Differing perceptions on interviewing

In this final section on interviewing, for the type of spoken discourse under review - the interview – the following points can be made. In the analogy of a "linear array" (a continuum of speech events from casual conversation to formal interaction) put forward by Sacks et al (op.cit.: 729), interviewing may be seen to involve more formal turn-taking than casual conversation. Moves to create a less formalised

"series of friendly conversations" (Spradley 1979: 58) may enable the interviewee to provide more input in a relaxed manner. This would seem to be shifting interviewing along the "array" (ibid.) towards the turn-taking associated with casual conversation, yet the status of the participants, particularly in the Thai setting where interviewers (in this case teacher-researchers) are afforded great respect, could give rise to "hangover from the classroom" (McCarthy 1991: 24). Furthermore, attempts to de-formalise interviewing in the Thai setting may be regarded by the student-respondents as being contrary to their adherence to "krengjai" (Holmes and Tangtongtavy 1995: 90) - a reluctance to challenge authority figures face to face. Moves to create the casual "rapport" necessary for ethnographic interviewing (Spradley loc.cit.), along with unfamiliarity with interviews conducted in English, may confuse Thai participants who may actually expect a lack of parity in a one-to-one meeting with an older teacher-researcher. The "asymmetrical" (Drew 1991 in Markova and Foppa eds., and Spradley op.cit.: 67) nature of interviews conducted in English which Spradley claims results in "distorted" opinions to be drawn by the ethnographer is perhaps the "communicative norm" (Briggs 1986: 2) to which Thai participants would prefer to adhere. Attempts to de-formalise interviewing may for Thais create the wrong conditions for the provision of respondent input. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, issues related to Thai behaviour will be addressed in more detail in the next section.

If the interview is itself regarded primarily as a means to gather data on "interior" or "exterior" opinions, knowledge and practice (Baker and Johnson 1998: 229), the perspective, and purpose, of the interviewing process is perhaps open to the criticism of de-contextualisation, in that it avoids consideration of the participants and setting of

that interview as a speech event in its own right. My original purpose of interviewing pre-sessional students was indeed confined to that perspective, termed a "metacommentary" or "accounting" , in my case concerning learning strategies, by Baker and Johnson (ibid.). In combination with that original 'metacommentary', this present study may represent a means to redress that contextual imbalance as it attempts to investigate the interview discourse with contextual features much in mind. Baker and Johnson (ibid.: 241) call for their teacher to teacher interviews on teaching and learning issues to be viewed as a type of "social action" which more clearly contextualises the interview, yet it could be argued that they too are subject to their own criteria for criticism as their proposal is merely one based on how the researcher perceives the educational interview, not how the data is analysed. The argument that their investigation constitutes "culture in action" (ibid.) is one which still intrinsically focuses on the content of what is produced in interview interaction and proposes no means of analysis for the discourse. My 'context' is one which could be viewed as being analysed in an evolving manner – firstly through content-based analysis of interviewees' learning strategies, and now through the analysis of the turn-taking behaviours of both participants. If Duranti (1997) argues for a long-term, evolving view of the transcription process of interview data, then I would propose the employment of various means of analysis – content-based qualitative analysis of learning strategies and turn-taking analysis – both of which could be in their own right re-examined at later dates. This then constitutes a long-term, evolution of the analysis of the data, yet has the possibility of multi-functions – to inform colleagues of new students' learning strategies and to inform a wider academic community as to turn-taking

behaviour in interviews. Both purposes are inter-related, and may be regarded separately or intertwined to form a wide view of 'context'.

Concluding this section on interviewing, we have discussed the potential constraints of its "pre-determined" (van Lier 1988: 105) nature and the weaknesses of transcribed data from a seemingly formal, semi-structured interview technique. However, through comparison with ethnographic interviewing I have argued that there is the possibility of more highly contingent turn-taking behaviour providing more interviewee control over topic management and direction. This flexibility may be dependent upon the extent to which participants feel "trapped in their roles" (McCarthy 1991: 136).

Apart from interpreting turn-taking behaviour from the results of coding patterns which emerge from transcripts, it has also been proposed that contextual information be involved in interpretations, though which context – that of the interview or that of the background cultural context of the participants – needs to be clearly determined. It is also argued that the dialogue itself should remain as the focus of the Conversation Analyst's attention and only "relevant context" (Schegloff 1992 as cited in Duranti 1997: 271) should be utilised in analysis after transcription takes place, i.e. not in an 'a priori' fashion creating a potential source of bias in the interpretation. Various criteria may be included in this extra context to be applied, yet it is stressed that each individual interview possesses its own particular context creating an emergent context through the interviewing process which makes standardisation of questioning problematic.

Discussion of Briggs' (1986) work in ethnographic interviewing has provided the added perspective of viewing interviewing technique from the NNS perspective of "metacommunicative norms" and an emphasis on the co-construction of

the turn-taking behaviour during the course of the interview. Despite this shift in perspective, I have argued that research into turn-taking behaviour does not have the objective of necessarily creating ideal conditions for NNS input. It is intended as a means to observe and assess turn-taking behaviour in itself, not the topic content of the responses provided.

Gee's (1999) advocacy of "situated networks" is discussed, however, I have noted that alternative views of what constitutes 'culture' need to be provided. To address this, Clark's (1996) "communal" or "personal" "common ground" is seen as a potentially clarifying addition to any network or evaluative body of contextual issues as it appears to redefine the stereotypical concept of national culture affecting personal behaviour.

In terms of the topics running through the interview discourse, I have argued that interviewees may have greater control than expected in what may considered to be a formal speech event, though due to respect for authority, it is the NS interviewer who finally has the power to engineer sub-topics back to their main purpose, to terminate them and introduce new topic areas.

Wherever interviewing is viewed as belonging on the "linear array" (Sacks et al 1974), it is noted that the NS and NNS may have differing perceptions of where it is to be placed. For the NS interviewer, attempts to create a friendly rapport and semblances of symmetry in the interview relationship may not actually be reciprocated by NNSs who are perhaps culturally pre-disposed to accepting asymmetrical relations in turn-taking behaviour. This is potentially seen as a source of conflict between the participants. Baker and Johnson's (1998) views on treating the interview as a type of "metacommentary" to

explain behaviour fit well with the purposes perhaps of ethnographic interviewing but ignore how the data collected is to be analysed. Nevertheless, the perspective taken of regarding interviewing for such purposes as "culture in action" (ibid.) provide an appealing basis for educational interviews for whatever purpose, both those for conversation analysis or ethnography, yet clearly, it must be determined how 'culture' is defined and what purposes the interviews are to serve – that of observing culture or using it as a means to explain turn-taking behaviour.

Finally, Duranti's (1997) long-term view of the interpretation of interview data – that of revisiting the transcripts – allows the researcher to adjust interpretations and means of analysis of the same data at later dates. This is an argument in itself for an "evolving" interpretation of interview data over time meaning that no evaluation made is the definite one.

The final chapter of this part of the literature review moves into the specific area of looking at Thais as interviewees and attempts to create insights into the behaviour of that national group in interview settings with NSs.

Chapter 4 Thais as interviewees

To examine how Thais interact as interview participants requires, I believe, an investigation into their specific sociocultural background. Whilst it is accepted that Clark's (1996) "common ground" is a possible redefinition of 'culture', I nevertheless wish to explore potential elements of sociocultural behaviour which may generally affect Thai participants' interview performance. For this purpose, I look firstly at ***Thais in social interaction,*** referring specifically to the influences upon the learner. This is followed by a discussion of ***Thais in education,*** which reviews the potential ***Buddhist influences*** upon students. Finally, I will look at ***Thais in interaction with native speakers*** as it is that specific context in which my research interviews are conducted. The combination in this chapter of potential influences from education, social customs and religion provides a broad sociocultural context for the study. It is intended that the discussion of these influences helps to formulate part of a set of criteria on which assessment of the interview data can be made. These criteria will be described in detail in the methodological approach adopted in Part B.

4.1 Thais in social interaction

Firstly, I address the theme of how Thais interact in social settings. This theme needs to be considered as behaviour in social settings outside the classroom may mirror behaviour in educational and research settings. It must be remembered that the research interviews in this thesis are, in fact, conducted in an educational setting. The connection between research interviewing and education is not a clear one. As the interviewer's role is played by a NS and that of the interviewees by Thais, then, to some

degree, the interaction between them may be related to the status of the teacher-researcher and that of the student-interviewee. This inability by (possibly) both participants to avoid the influence of their relative teacher and student roles is seen by McCarthy (1991) as a "hangover" from the classroom. In the Thai context, Buripakdi and Mahakhan (1980: 259) in this respect note that any evaluation of the Thai educational system, and in my case research interviews conducted in Thai educational settings, "can only be made in relation to the larger system" as it is "a sub-system of the country to which it belongs". Accordingly, I would argue that the investigation into a research setting in Thailand should then consider the influence of the Thai educational and social system upon that interview setting.

In Thai literature on the nature of Thai students in classroom and training situations, Holmes and Tangtongtavy (1995) refer to *krengjai* (to which I made brief reference in Chapter 2.2 on systems of turn-taking), whereby Thais show reluctance towards expressing direct feedback to their seniors. In terms of relevance to strategies, this suggests that a Thai student may not be readily able to initiate questions directly to the teacher in the classroom. This is also noted by Ballard (1996), referring to the mirroring of traditional Thai values of deference to authority figures in classroom settings. A further concept, that of *sam ru am* (Holmes and Tangtongtavy op.cit.: 56), places an emphasis upon the ability to show restraint and composure in stressful situations, thereby creating the impression that the Thai learner is passive in discussions or classroom debate. As Buripakdi and Mahakhan (op. cit.: 269) remind us, there is seemingly a lack of "critical questioning of feats, reasons, and assumptions" among students in the Thai educational system which leads foreign observers to conclude that

the Thai student is unable to think critically, is used only to "reproductive" (Ballard loc.cit.) learning and is therefore unprepared for the western curriculum's demands for speculation in academic discourse.

Holmes and Tangtongtavy (op. cit.: 35) and Mulder (1996) both note the top-down communication flows expected in Thai social hierarchy and the consequences thereof in apparent non-assertiveness and a lack of initiative by those in junior positions. The causes of various types of behaviour within the Thai hierarchy needs to be investigated at this point. Suntaree (1990 as cited in Holmes and Tangtongtavy 1995: 30), Mulder (1996) and Titaya (1976) all consider *bunkhun* to be the pivot around which Thais interact with each over the long-term. This is the concept of obligation and reciprocity which is shown between individuals no matter how different their relative social status is. From senior to junior there is the expectation that the former will exercise *mettaa karunaa* (mercifulness and kindness) and in return will receive *kantanyoo rookhun* (gratitude and indebtedness), two expected sets of behaviour which are subject to interplay over possibly a lifetime. Such interplay is a main focus by which Thais both define and construct relations around them, according to Titaya (1976). Holmes and Tangtongtavy (1995) suggest that there is no reason to believe that such expectations are not held for the Thai – westerner relationship, whoever takes the senior role.

This inclusion of the NS- westerner in a *bunkhun* relationship opens then the question as to what kind of hierarchies exist among Thais – linear from peasant to King or, as Holmes and Tangtontavy (ibid.: 42) indicate, in three circles: those of the "family", "the cautious circle" (including work and school relations), and "the selfish circle" (the outside world unrelated in family, work or school) to the Thai. It is the

"cautious circle" in which the Thai – westerner relationship operates. This domain of relationships involves behaviour patterns which are more formal, careful and important for career stability and advancement. Yet how *bunkhun* changes within the three circles is not understood unless one takes Mulder's (1996) two-dimensional perspective on Thai behaviour in which there is a linear representation.

Mulder (1996) proposes that interpretations of Thai behaviour must be made with reference to Thai cultural terms. This concurs with Wierzbicka's (1991 as quoted in Clyne 1994) rejection of "monolingual universals or static global comparisons". Generic terms such as "shyness" or "reticence" are a vague means to use in assessments and are defined by the assessor – the western-researcher – according to their own socio-cultural norms. Mulder (1996) proposes in their place a set of Thai terminologies which admittedly needs translation, yet at least starts with a Thai concept as a means to explaining Thai (and possibly the native speaker westerner's) behaviour. I would propose a graphic representation based on Mulder (1996: 41) of these terms on a continuum:

Table 1 Thai behaviour according to Mulder (1996: 41)

Khuna	***Decha***
The intimate circle: (for insiders)	**The outside world: (for outsiders)**
Family,esp. mother	powerful influences
Safety, trust & solidarity	danger & uncertainty
Revealing one's true opinions	retaining one's true opinions
krengcaj[*] (consideration)	*krenengklua* (awe, respectful fear)
moral *bunkhun* (goodness) relations	pragmatic *bunkhun*
khwaampenkaneeng (mutual informality)	

Mulder (1996) indicates that there is an "intermingling" or "interpenetration" between

[*] *krengcaj* is also spelt as *krengjai* by Holmes and Tangtongtavy (1995)

khuna (the intimate circle) and *decha* (the outside world) elements along this continuum. We see from Table 1 that Mulder differentiates between the *bunkhun* operating in intimate relations and that which is required for the more pragmatic workplace or educational relations (presumably corresponding with the "cautious circle"). Other concepts in the *khuna* dimension appear to be similar to those expressed by Holmes and Tangtongtavy (1995) in the "family circle", yet are more clearly defined. In that dimension, or circle, there are indications that a level of informality relatively unknown to the western-NS are to be seen. The *decha* dimension is one which aligns itself more directly with the "cautious circle" and the "selfish circle", presumably indicating that the western–NS teacher-researcher is placed somewhere on the continuum towards the *decha* outside world. As both *khuna* and *decha* dimensions represent idealised extremes, it would be best to perhaps view that particular relationship according to the individual characteristics underlying both dimensions. Such flexibility would align itself more with the "intermingling" (ibid.) that Mulder outlines.

Mulder (ibid.: 65) notes that the immediate placement by Thais of all people in contact with them on a hierarchical scale requires corresponding behaviour and language, especially, as Moerman (1988) notes, the variety of personal pronouns employed. When the Thai assesses him or herself as lower in status, then a veneer of submissiveness is adopted to show deference to a higher authority and the notion of "*krengjai*" (Holmes and Tangtongtavy op.cit.: 90) comes into operation. This entails an unwillingness to challenge or make the superior lose face and contributes greatly to what Phillips (1965 in Mulder 1996: 66) terms a "cosmetic" construction of smooth relations. This appears to have an influence in the classroom and society at large and, despite the

somewhat cynical tag of being regarded as contrived cynicism by Phillips (ibid.), Mulder (1996: 70) regards this as a pragmatic ability developed by Thais of lower rank to create a "mechanism of defense for those who are without power", manifesting itself in various verbal and paralinguistic forms ranging from the anxiety-induced smile and laughter to polite and submissive silence. It appears to be a crucial issue in assessing Thai student-interviewee behaviour in the presence of the western NS- teacher-interviewer. It is important at this point to note some of the aspects of the speech event participant before the Thai: a westerner, potentially dangerous in the *decha* dimension; a native speaker, considered therefore to be more proficient in the language used for interaction; a teacher, immediately granted greater authority than the student; and finally, the interviewer, somewhat similarly regarded as the teacher but with a greater aura of the unknown due to the unfamiliarity of being interviewed for research objectives, an experience unlikely to have been shared by many Thai students entering a pre-sessional program.

I will now turn to a review of the potential influences of Thai Buddhism upon Thais in educational settings.

4.2 Thais in education: Buddhist influences

Any study of Thais requires some degree of investigation into the influence of Theravada Buddhism – the main religion practised by the vast majority of Thais – on Thai behaviour in educational settings, in which the research interview is included. This is not to suggest that Buddhist characteristics form the direct cause of all behavioural patterns. There is simply a potential in this investigation of religious

influences which may possibly explain or clarify what happens in NS-NNS intercultural interaction. The issues to be reviewed are those which concern *individualism* and *thinking.*

Individualism

One of the difficulties of generalising Thai behaviour is the apparent "loose structure" of Thai society (Embree 1980). According to Fieg (1989: 25), this results in a lack of "binding rules which would lead to predictable behaviour". As a consequence to this, Thais are regarded as being individualistic, a characteristic which seems in contradiction to their adherence to "the demands of social hierarchy" (ibid.) and also to research by Hofstede (1986: 309) which suggests that there is "large power distance and low individualism" in Thailand.

This apparent contradiction is raised by Punyodyana (1980: 187) who points to the labelling of Thai society as "loose" as being based primarily on rural research which has not considered inter-village or urban socialisation over a period of economic and industrial growth. Perhaps though, individualism as interpreted in the West is misleading in this context. Individualism is considered to be "non-assertive" among Thais and is more associated with the idea of self-reliance as expressed in the Buddhist saying "By oneself one is purified" (Fieg 1989:32). It may be a version of individualistic behaviour - or "norm blasphemy" (Stenhouse 1967: 24) - as a means to put the Eightfold path (the Buddhist pursuit of enlightenment) into practice (Cush 1993: 46), rather than part of the western, autonomous "sociocentric conception of the self" (Morris 1994: 194). Embree (1980: 165) furthermore points out that one cannot equate apparent "permissiveness of individual behavioural variation" amongst Thais with a lack of social

integration. Integration in Thai society is upheld more by a desire to maintain deferential and harmonious social relations.

Further to the concept of individualism, Thais are highly sensitive in inter-personal relations due to a desire to maintain harmony in the group as advocated in the *Dharmma* (Buddhist teachings). That trait, combined with Buddhist precepts of deference to authority - represented by the monkhood or community of monks (*sangha*) - and compassionate living in previously mostly agricultural groups have theoretically led to Thais placing great emphasis upon inter-personal relations.

Thinking

Thinking as an area for discussion clearly permeates other, if not all, social behavioural issues. It has connections with the Buddhist concept of detachment. However, this connection is fundamentally a misleading one if considered from the western perspective of objective, scientific detachment as knowledge is, in the Buddhist sense, more affective, experiential or even intuitive in nature (Donaldson 1992 and Cush 1993). Furthermore, the "unity" and "consistency" associated with developing an argument in the west are less relevant in Buddhism where more emphasis is placed on the pragmatics of the present context, rather than abiding by precedents made in one's rationale (Redmont 1998:44).

Manifestations of thinking in the social context are seen in Thais' presentation of points of view, where a case may be put in a manner seemingly non-specifically to westerners. A "broad, general objective" may be stated without pressure to reach decisions (Fieg 1989:106). This is not to suggest though that Thais have a

propensity towards thinking in abstract terms (ibid.); the broad nature has specific goals, not an inclination to expression of broad philosophical concepts which have no relevance to the present context.

In terms of the criticism made by western observers that Thais fail to think critically, Davidson (1988:121) terms critical thinking as a western "approach to life" itself, largely unpractised in cultures that value "silence, imitation, submission and conformity". Recently though, Bell's research (2000) suggests that the necessity to employ critical thinking strategies in western universities is exaggerated, suggesting that those from Asian cultures may not suffer from the expected culture shock of employing apparently new cognitive skills. Resnick (as cited in Atkinson 1997:75) regards this skill as "common-sense social practice" and Atkinson (ibid.:82) claims that it is developed through encouraging children to "de-contextualise" themselves from issues on text. Furthermore, the definition of Burbules and Berk (1999:46) that critical thinking requires, on an intra-personal level, a pre-disposition to seek out irrationalities and "exercise control over our own destinies", and, on the group level, to participate in oral exchanges which are also critical of their own values and assumptions extends the scale of difficulty that Thais may have to conform to the ideal required. The abilities nurtured in Thai schools would seem to be not focused on this same kind of introspection, yet perhaps the instrumental motivation of Thais to meet course requirements and enter chosen study programs could lead to an adoption of viewing critical thinking as a temporary new learning strategy in the "weak-sense" (Paul as cited in Popkewitz and Fendler eds. 1999:49), whereby one can think critically when the task requires. Perhaps the ability to become "strong-sense" thinkers - those constantly engaged in challenging all assumptions,

even their own - is a difficult adaptation for Thai students. The weaker version could perhaps be better suited to Thai pragmatism, even appealing to their sense of "functional" survivalism (Embree 1980: 170) without the continuous challenge to embedded Buddhist values.

Thinking as a social concept may be affected by Buddhist thinking concerning compassion, authority and attitudes to knowledge, all of which define the Thai as a contextually aware person, rather than a highly specific time-conscious westerner.

Concluding the investigation into Theravada Buddhism, the transferability of present-day behaviour of Thai monks (or indeed nuns) or the influence of Buddha's teaching style over on to educational practices is difficult to prove. Apparent contradictions to the western eye in Buddhist thought may be taken as an indication that there is a dynamic cultural complexity in interpretation of the *Dharmma*. This could be an embedded invitation to seek verification of those teachings which is in itself a means to constantly avoid static acceptance, challenge and then in turn develop Buddhism.

Whether Thais consciously or unconsciously behave in the classroom according to Buddhist precepts is, though, a hypothesis which is better discussed, rather than adamantly pursued. The benefits of the discussion itself - development of teacher-researcher awareness - may outweigh a process of falsifying a hypothesis. I will now move the discussion onto to the area of how Thais interact with native speakers.

4.3 Thais in interaction with native speakers

As we have seen, there are a multitude of possible influences on the Thai and western participants in the research interview setting. Of particular note are the

Thai's heightened "contextual awareness" (Fieg 1989: 83), their sensitivity to the micro-features of relationships and their disinclination to thinking in purely 'abstract' terms. The large "power distance" (Hofstede 1986 and 1994), a western piece of terminology, needs to be replaced, as Mulder (1996) advocates, with Thai expressions which explain Thai behaviour. The concepts of "asymmetrical" (Spradley 1979: 67) relations and Thai politeness and shyness require more exploratory and precise terms such as *krengjai*, *caj jen(self-control)*, *bunkhun* and the placement of the relationship with the westerner on the *khuna – decha* continuum. If the local "metacommunicative norms" (Briggs 1986: 3-4) cannot be investigated before the interviewing, then at least the interpretation of the ensuing data could be made with use of local concepts emanating from the study of local social and religious norms.

This chapter looking at Thais as interviewees has discussed how Thais' behavioural patterns in interview settings may be influenced by educational, social and religious practice, and their relationship to the NS. It has been argued that the reasons for their deference to authority figures lies in the Thai adherence to following social hierarchical norms (recognition of status) and into which "circle" of relations (Holmes and Tangtongtavy 1995) everyone is placed when interacting with them. These clearly have great implications for the educational research interview conducted in Thailand in which a foreign NS interviewer is present with younger Thai interviewees.

To use western terms to evaluate such interaction may lead to potential bias and inaccuracies as it is argued that those terms in English mirror a western value system. To avoid this bias, Mulder (1996) proposes the use of Thai terms for evaluation of behaviour. This requires naturally a knowledge of terms in Thai which cannot be

clearly translated. Terms such as *bunkhun* (reciprocal obligation), *mettaa karunaa* (mercifulness and kindness) need to be understood in their own, Thai context, and then applied to describe the behaviour of both participants in the interview setting, meaning that the NS is also to be evaluated according to Thai norms. Although not directly related, Briggs' (1986: 3-4) call for researchers to learn local "metacommunicative norms" could to some extent be met if local evaluation norms are adopted. Mulder's proposal may be indeed problematic in its application as it appears that the application of Thai norms in the research interview may have to be conducted by the western researcher, someone perhaps still discovering the meaning of those local norms during the course of the interviews. However, this task is made easier by Mulder's suggestion that there is always variability in how behaviour is assessed, proposing an "intermingling" of factors between the *khuna* (intimate circle) and *decha* (the outside world). If these are represented along a continuum, similar to the "linear array" (Sacks et al 1974) to place the interview as a speech event alongside others, then there is an interesting similarity again in where both participants may perceive their relationship to be positioned. In both cases, conflicting perceptions may exist, meaning that the NS may consider the interview to be more informal than the Thai believes proper, and that the NS considers himself to be closer to the friendly, informal and familiar "*khuna*" end of the continuum than the Thai would see fit.

Buddhist influences are even harder to clearly define, though there are some elements which may be important. Among these is the respect afforded to authority figures in society, contrasting with an individualistic nature which is "non-assertive" (Fieg 1989: 32). In terms of critical thinking, it is argued that there is possibly a sense of

western imposition of values in judging Thais as lacking the ability to think critically (Davidson 1988). Furthermore, there are various forms of critical thinking, among them a pragmatic "weak sense" (Paul as cited in Popkewitz and Fendler eds. 1999: 49) which is perhaps more applicable to Thais as it is a type of critical thinking not constantly in operation, i.e. "weak sense" critical thinkers 'turn on' their ability to think critically when the situation is appropriate.

This sense of appropriate use of abilities is continued particularly in the Thai sensitivity to the context in which they find themselves, continually adapting themselves to new circumstances to ensure a continuity and harmony of relations. This high context sensitivity, similar to Hall's (1976) categorisation of high and low context cultures, is regarded by Thais as indeed a manifestation of 'intelligence' perhaps unfamiliar to westerners in the degree to which it is emphasised among Thais. It creates an image of Thais as people who mould themselves to new contexts in a pragmatic manner implied ,but not clearly stated, in Buddhist teachings.

In brief, Thais acting as interviewees with NSs may be summarised as being highly deferential to the NS in turn-taking behaviour yet may also manifest behavioural traits which are inconsistent, making patterns of discourse potentially difficult to determine. Pragmatism, a highly contextualised sense of awareness and an acceptance of non-parity in relations may influence the interviewee's behaviour to varying degrees. However, the use of western terminology to assess that behaviour may best be replaced by Thai terminology, and therefore Thai concepts. This adds an essence

of local "communicative norms" (Briggs 1986) in the interpretation of the behaviour of both participants.

4.4 Summary of Part A: Literature Review

I will now attempt to summarise some of the main points from the three chapters presented in this literature review. Although I have investigated the areas of turn-taking, interviewing and Thais as interviewees separately, it is clear from the amount of overlap between them how inter-related they are. Among the recurring concepts illustrating this inter-relatedness, it is difficult to identify one singularly important theme, yet the "co-construction" of the interview by both participants remains a core focus of interest. A re-focusing of the analysis of the turn-taking behaviour from just the interviewee to how that behaviour is affected by either participant clearly can broaden and enrich the interpretation. In particular, interviewee responses need to be viewed in relation to how the interviewer adapts questioning technique to each interview "context" and also how the presumed topic control and management of the interviewer is possibly taken over by the interviewee at the sub-topic level.

Other common themes across the review are those of parity and symmetry, or lack of them, between the two participants and that of a more highly contingent form of *IRF* turn-taking. These two themes, in effect those of perceived status and how those perceptions affect the level of formality in turn-taking, are essential factors for discussion when looking at the possibly naïve attempts of NS interviewers to seek more symmetrical relations in interviewing with NNS interviewees for the purpose of creating a more friendly rapport and therefore better data. These moves to push the interview event along the "linear array" (Sacks et al 1974) of speech events towards less formal discourse may

in fact be rejected by Thai interviewees who, due to their own culturally-bound assumption about status and appropriate behaviour towards those of higher rank in society, may simply wish more formal turn-taking to be retained.

'Culture', if definable, is itself a huge contextual feature and requires, according to Mulder (1996), less anglo-centric notions of description and more localised definitions, meaning Thai concepts which describe more accurately the behaviour of both participants. It is has been implied then there should be a shift in the evaluation criteria of everything which describes the human interaction in the interview setting between the NS and the Thai. However, the issue of some definition of culture still remains despite this shift and it is important to note that there are moves away from the stereotypical definitions of national culture to that which considers the "shared common ground" (Clark 1996) which places an emphasis, similar to the idea of co-constructing interviews, on what both participants have in common in terms of behaviour, interests and idiosyncrasies. Whatever is taken as the final definition, there are clearly differences between what takes place in the interview and outside it. As Briggs (1986) argues, there is an interview context and an outside context in which both participants operate, both being potentially different and bringing their own versions of what constitutes appropriate turn-taking behaviour to the interview room.

Perhaps frustratingly, insights into Thai social and religious practice reveal that their sense of high context sensitivity and adaptability to each situation encountered may result, to the western eye, in apparently inconsistent behavioural patterns. In turn-taking terms, this would implies that each topic or question in the interview represents its own 'context'. Along with the argument that the interviewer changes questioning

technique to suit each interviewee (thereby also showing the propensity to adapt to each new context), Thai interviewees' potential lack of consistency across topics both may combine to make standardisation, and therefore reliability greatly problematic.

The question remains as to what represent certainties in turn-taking behaviour among the Thai participants. Deference to authority, a willingness to provide "preferred" responses and an apparent reluctance to critically analyse topics may be among those assumptions, yet what is perhaps better to focus upon is the co-construction of each individual interview context. This uniqueness can potentially provide fascinating forms of turn-taking behaviour in terms of what happens within topics and how participants repair, or fail to repair, breakdowns in communication.

As the discussion has progressed more deeply into the significance of context and "shared" (Clark loc. cit.) culture and the assumptions related to them, it must be remembered that such considerations form the basis of any set of 'a priori' evaluation of the analysis of the data. The transcripts themselves are for Conversation Analysts the primary focus of attention (Schegloff 1992, 2000) and any contextual and cultural insights form a valuable, yet secondary, framework to explain, only potentially, why and how participants have exhibited certain forms of turn-taking.

The next part of this study will focus on the methodology employed in this study. It is comprised of three areas, the first of which looks back at the learning strategies research interviews. The second chapter investigates the methodological aspects concerned with the choice of the coding system. The third chapter describes how these two areas of research are to be combined in "emergent" research.

Part B Methodological issues and research design

Synopsis

This part of the study addresses the methodological issues involved in this study. It comprises of three chapters, the first of which investigates the methodological considerations concerning the learning strategies research. This chapter describes the interviewing process using the set of questions used. It also gives an account of the collation of the interview data and how it was interpreted with the use of a particular tool of analysis. Ethical issues concerning the interviewing are then be considered.

The second chapter moves forward to the next stage of research analysing the same data as in the learning strategies research and the methodological considerations involved in the analysis of that same body of interview data in terms of its turn-taking features. The choice of a means to analyse that spoken discourse requires consideration of some fundamental issues concerning turn-taking in general. After a brief investigation into these broad issues I describe how a specific methodological coding tool was adapted from existing models for the purpose of representing the transcribed data. This representation, as with the original learning strategies research, also needs a means of interpretation. The various chosen tools of analysis for that purpose are described in detail.

The third chapter involves a description of how the learning strategies research and the turn-taking research are combined to provide a richer, more insightful analysis of the interview data. This combination has a mixture of research tools. It is the employment of the old and new tools of analysis which is termed as “emergent”, i.e. the interview transcripts in my chosen methodology are open to reanalysis with the use of a

unique set of tools of analysis. The concept of revisiting data enables new interpretations to 'emerge' with the aid of, in this case, a unique blend of research tools. That leads thereafter to the question of how that combination of research tools is to be used. Each tool was, at each stage of the research undertaken, subject to some form of systematic consideration, i.e. the methodology is adapted from existing models. The methodology of the combined set of tools is, however, to be argued as being intentionally non-systematic in nature. It is this subjectively-based employment which I have termed as placing 'layers of insight' over the interview data. Finally in this last section I will return to my original research questions to remind the reader of the intended purpose of the whole study at large.

Chapter 5 Learning strategies research: methodological considerations

As previously outlined in the Introduction, the research to be undertaken into the turn-taking behaviour of the interview participants emanated directly from research conducted in mid-1999 into the learning strategies of pre-sessional entrants in a Thai vocational college. The original stimulus for conducting both areas of research is interlinked and stems from the discontent shown by lecturers (from Australia, UK, USA and Germany) and students (mostly Thai with one Vietnamese and one South Korean) concerning Engineering and Business lectures. The purpose of embarking upon learning strategies research was to collect qualitative data to disseminate back to Thai staff, lecturers and students in awareness-raising workshops, thereby encouraging lecturers to review the appropriateness of their teaching methodologies and students their own learning strategies.

During the feedback sessions with the western lecturing staff, the interviewing process itself became the topic of discussion. In this way, a new area of research emerged. This new focus was one which sought to improve the interviewing process itself to more effectively gather learning strategies data from the next pre-sessional course. This secondary objective was regarded by staff and myself as an essential complementary area of research alongside the analysis and dissemination of learning strategies information each semester. It was considered to be a focal point in the college's attempts to provide a more student-centered approach to course delivery. As new entrants to the Engineering and Business faculties were envisaged twice yearly (July and November), this two-fold research (firstly, analysis and reaction to the learning strategies data and, secondly, improvement of the interviewing process) involved much

of the teaching staff. Consequently, plans for the rotation of interviewing responsibilities were drawn up after the dissemination of the first body of learning strategies findings had been discussed around October 1999.

5.1 Conducting the interviews and collating the data

This section focuses on the interviewing stage of the learning strategies research and encompasses investigations into the pre-interview arrangements, the interviews themselves and the post-interview transcription process. Clearly, conducting the interviews represents the focal point of this description, yet, the pre-interview stage of arranging the interviews themselves involved issues which were influential in defining the interview context. Additionally, the representation of the linguistic and non-linguistic features in that context required careful consideration of how to visually illustrate all those features transparently and accurately during the post-interview transcription phase.

In the pre-interviewing stage, my first considerations were towards informing the management of the college of my research intentions and of what use this research would be for the students, Thai staff and teachers. This involved negotiating with the college Principal and the Director, who were located on site, and then the Australian university and Thai management group who together owned the college. The former two people were approached directly and the latter authorities were contacted by e-mail. Permission to start the research was granted by early May after which it was decided to conduct an early pilot interview. Unfortunately, only one new student to the mid-year intake was available for this purpose. Nevertheless, the lessons learnt from that

12-question interview enabled me to restructure the semi-structured format to a more streamlined 10-question format based on 5 topic areas.

In the last week of June 1999, 20 new students attended an 'orientation' week. Ideally, that would have represented an opportunity to approach the students for an interview, but it became clear that time-contraints in the college's schedule in that week made research interviewing impossible. More time emerged on student schedules from the first week in July when the English pre-sessional course commenced. It is important to note that this course consisted of English for Academic Purposes, Business or Engineering English (depending on their future Diploma choice commencing in November) and Study Skills sessions. This latter course focused very much on the learning strategies needed for study on the Diploma itself and so I quickly realised that the more delay there was in interviewing the students, the more likelihood there was that the information sought in the learning strategies interviews, for example, asking students what their awareness was of various strategies, would in fact be influenced, indeed 'adulturated', by Study Skills input being provided around the time of interviewing. One purpose of the interviewing questions was to gain a true reflection of the students' present awareness levels at the pre-college entrance stage.

The problem of potential influence was difficult to avoid as student schedules were nearly full in the first few weeks of term. It finally transpired that only the first five students (Rungnapa, Burin, Orathai, Kik and Sangdaew) could be accommodated for interview in July itself and the second group of five students (Serm, Mingmanee, Nawarat, Komkrit and Prapaporn) could only be interviewed in August. Between July and August, it is possible that students learnt new strategies and raised their

awareness of strategy choice. This added a possible element of bias to interview responses, especially question 4 asking students about their recommendations how to learn English and question 8 asking students to give their comments about collaborative learning (see Appendices A10). The possibility, and reality, of this unavoidable influence on student responses was noted when compiling individual and group summaries but such was my concern with this aspect of bias that I actually took the decision to stop interviewing students during August to wait for new students to enter the pre-sessional at its half-way stage in September. Of the original 20 students earmarked for interview in June, only 10 had been completed. Fortunately, potential interviewees were approached for interview one by one, thereby avoiding the embarrassing need to cancel any interviews.

The September intake did not arrive en masse as had the previous intake, so again logistical problems occurred. Among the final 10 interviewed before the end of the October pre-sessional course, there was also a spread in interview dates. Fortunately though, in this latter group, with the hindsight of experience from July and August when I had to wait to interview students for convenient interview 'slots', I managed to conduct interviews within days of their entrance to the program. This appeared to give the same bias factor as with the July/August interviewees but was reduced, I believe, by the fact that they were interviewed after only a few days of pre-sessional input. Twenty students were interviewed in all, a figure that represented half of the original July intake and all of the intake after September. In this respect, the original purpose of interviewing all of the pre-sessional participants could not fully be realised, creating a potential for a gap in information to disseminate back to staff and teachers in later workshops.

Of great importance in the pre-interview stage was the approach to new students to explain the research objectives and the request for their permission to conduct interviews. More details of the ethical issues involved in this process will be discussed in section 5.3 (Ethical issues of the interviewing). In brief though, I attempted to approach students outside the classroom, usually at break and lunch time intervals. These were usually in the dining area or recreational spaces on campus. My intention was not to give the students the impression that these interviews were in any sense obligatory or part of the college's official policy. I believe that requests made in classroom time within classroom areas may have led students to consider them to have been part of the syllabus requirements and therefore impossible, or difficult in the extreme, to refuse. My wish then was to find 'neutral' territory and time in which students felt more relaxed and possibly empowered to refuse my request. In reality, this did not occur, yet it was noted that the first students to be interviewed quickly informed other course members of the research. Those in the first July intake who appeared to struggle with their English may have attempted to avoid being approached since those already interviewed may have reported back to others that the English used was linguistically challenging, whilst those more confident actually approached me to ask if they could participate. There was at that time an entry requirement of a minimum band of 5.5 in IELTS (International English Language Testing System) to a Diploma at our college, meaning that those who were required to take the pre-sessional had achieved less than that 'band' (score). On reflection, some students with low IELTS entry bands may naturally have had problems being interviewed in English.

Permission letters were given to all those to be interviewed. These could then be taken home by the students to consider participation. Once they had decided to take part in the interview, they had the choice of returning this letter (see Appendices A11) to me personally or to place it in my pigeon hole. I believe that this leeway before deciding provided those with second thoughts the option of discrete refusal. After receiving them back, I approached the student again to decide upon a convenient interview time, usually in free periods, lunch times or after college hours according to their convenience.

Moving on to the actual interviews themselves, several issues need to be considered which created the interview 'context'. Firstly, the setting needed to be determined. For the ten interviews conducted in July and August, my office was used as I believed at the time that it was a quiet environment. There soon emerged various problems with this decision. Most predominant among these were the telephone interruptions from internal calls and emergency requests to consult me by colleagues. As the Head of Academic Studies, it was necessary for me to be available to respond to some important requests for information. These disturbances were problematic for the flow of the interview discourse but never occurred more than a few times in the time period of an interview (usually between 15 to 25 minutes in duration).

The seating arrangements were initially made so that the interviewee was placed towards the corner of my desk and myself at a 90 degree angle with only a portion of that desk acting as a barrier between us. I wished at that time to avoid the barrier of using opposite sides of the desk for seating as it appeared to be similar to a formal interview. Due to the difficulties of operating the tape recorder and taking some notes, I

finally reverted to the more formal seating arrangements. This decision may have resulted in a reversal of my original intention to create a setting physically conducive to informal interaction, yet I believed, at that time, that the manner in which I attempted to conduct the interviews themselves could compensate for this. As argued in the literature review, my attempts to deformalise the interview context may have been interpreted as being strange for Thai students who may have envisaged more formal interaction with someone of my relative status.

Taping was necessary for the amount of interview data to be transcribed, yet I realised that it would be important to support the audio recording of the interviews with notes outlining points not picked up on the recording concerning body language or any other comments made by the interviewee which I deemed to be significant. These latter points included interviewee input that I believed needed to be emphasised when writing summaries individual interviews. These 'field' notes can be viewed in detail in the Appendices (A9) and included comments on facial expression, the ease or discomfort interviewees appeared to show at certain times of the interview, as well as underlined comments signifying emphasis of a point I felt was important.

Once underway the interviewing itself presented me with various issues which required quick decision-making. The first of these issues concerned the decision when to use the scripted prompts. My intention was to employ them only when the initial semi-structured initiations (opening questions or statements attempting to evoke responses as outlined in A10 question 1-10) at the beginning of each question did not succeed in their purpose. Some cases were particularly clear, for example Burin (see Appendices A1 interview 2) who required the use of almost all the prepared prompts plus

many re-initiations (repetition or rewording of the original opening initiation or even of the prompts themselves). Lack of sufficient linguistic ability and, possibly, conceptual awareness of the topic content made the interviewing laborious for both participants. More discussion about the analysis of the turn-taking is provided in chapter 6. However, it is clear from this one particular extreme case how difficult it is to focus upon the actual content of the interviews – learning strategies – when questions are not understood on either linguistic or conceptual levels, sometimes both.

My second concern arose not immediately but later in August when there was a time gap between interviewing the first five students and the second group. This gap, on one hand, gave me time to reflect upon various issues, particularly my interviewing technique (when to revert to prompts or regard the input from the initiating question or statement as sufficient). Also, I found it necessary to consider certain contextual features of the interview setting. These considerations firstly focused on the physical features of the interview, such as seating positions, where to put the tape recorder, and its discrete technical use. Also it was necessary to consider how to take notes and listen at the same time, as well as how many notes to take. Turn-taking issues of when to interject in the interviewee's input to request clarification linguistically (or simply to listen to the same point on the tape and hope I could understand the miscomprehension by means of the tape), also arose. Even matters concerning the telephone interruptions and timing of the interviews (in late afternoon interviews some students appeared to be less energetic than in morning interviews) came into consideration. These apparent 'details' were potentially issues which created, if not corrected or controlled, uncomfortable and non-conducive interview contexts.

As I made small alterations to address such potential problems, it occurred to me that I was creating a better context for those interviewed later in the schedule from August onwards. My concern was that this created a lack of standardisation among the interviews and therefore a kind of 'contextual bias'. My reaction to these thoughts was that the interviews were based upon semi-structured topics which had an element of leeway to them, firstly in the manner in which I initiated a topic (Could you tell me about… ? What do you think…? Or statements followed by a request for their opinion). Secondly, flexibility existed in the number of prompts available for use, in that I was surely not obliged to use all of them if the opening initiation had already answered the prompt. This follows the advice of Woods and Kroger (2000: 73) who advocate that interviewers in such cases become "interventionist" in nature "by providing opportunities for the participant to produce the fullest account". In essence, this means that the semi-structured interviewer must adapt each set of questions and prompts to the linguistic and conceptual level and abilities of each interviewee and that standardisation cannot, indeed should not, be a priority as long as the main topics discussed remain constant.

My reaction to the potential criticism that I had gradually improved the contextual features of the interview (stopping most calls, trying to schedule morning interviews, learning how to use the tape recorder and position it more discretely etc) was that it was an inevitability that I took such actions since the failure to do so would have created a consistent liability, i.e. without improvements, the interview data would have been standard and consistent, yet always consistently (and perhaps increasingly) negatively affected. My decision was to regard the contextual features as well as my interviewing technique as areas to continually seek improvement. The acquisition of

student input concerning learning strategies was the primary focus, not the standardisation of interviewing technique and context.

The post-interview stage consisted of the transcription of the tape recordings. This lengthy process required reference to the 'field' notes (Appendices A9) in order to remind myself particularly of features of body language impossible to detect on the audio recording. My approach was to listen to the interaction involved in each of the ten questions and then pause for reflection to consider whether I had represented that interaction accurately. In terms of how I chose to actually represent that interaction onto paper, a standardised style of transcription was necessary. For this purpose, I had previously taken into consideration the transcription protocols for turn-taking as developed by Hopper (1989 as cited in Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998) and Sacks et al (1974). My view was that these "standardised conventions" which Hutchby and Wooffitt (ibid.: 75) claim to be readable and of great use to conversation analysts did not suit my own specific purposes which at the time were purely focused on understanding as much as possible about the students' learning strategies. My content focus was the overriding consideration as I had, at that time, not yet decided to investigate the actual discourse of the interviewing interaction. On reflection, the effort made to transcribe in the manner proposed by Hutchby and Wooffitt would have not suited my purposes at the learning strategies research stage.

Looking closely at the "standardized conventions" of Hutchby and Woofitt (ibid.), the inclusion of intonation symbols (rising and falling arrows), underlined words (for stress) and bracketed timings to indicate pause length in transcriptions is practical to some extent for the spoken discourse analyst, especially one interested in the

phonological aspects of the discourse. My belief is that, despite the logical inclusion of relevant discourse features, it is not easy to 'read' when viewing long stretches of discourse. Indeed, highly detailed conventions carry the "danger that they will lend a misleading sense of scientific objectivity to the exercise" (Swann 2001: 330). Whether the focus of the research is on content or on the discourse itself, the overriding necessity must surely be in how the visual comprehensibility of the transcript allows the researcher to find patterns and idiosyncrasies. As a result of these considerations, I decided to exchange the discourse of stress (underlined), pause (in brackets), intonation (arrowed) for short bracketed explanations which can embrace these features and more. My 'key' for transcription can be seen in Appendix 15.

To exemplify this system of transcription, let us look at an example from the first interview with Rungnapa (Appendices A1.1):

2. What did you learn by heart?

By heart? (unsure look)..I understand.. by heart. We had to remember 10 words a time..but I think it was not a good idea.

No? Do you think memory is important when you learn English?

….(thoughtful look)…I like…I liked to memorise words anyway.

In this case, the brackets indicate facial expression important for the researcher in understanding to what extent the interviewee has either linguistically or conceptually grasped the initiation. These features of body language appear to be integrated in the flow of the transcription, i.e. they are not represented by symbols which stand out on the page and thereby perhaps appear to be more important than the rest of the discourse which is

not represented by symbols. The purpose of my transcription key is not to overstate the discourse or body language feature but to allow it to be integrated into the flow of the reading. The transcription as put forward by Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998) disturbs this readability, especially in the case where the researcher is looking at content. This is a clear example of the dichotomy of research objectives between those interested in the content of transcripts as opposed to the discourse features as outlined by Wood and Kroger (2000).

The next section turns to the post-transcription stage of analysing each interviewee's transcript with the purpose of finding the essence of their input concerning learning strategies. This methodological description, as with my choice of semi-structured interview questions backed up by prompts and the transcription 'key', also is not taken en masse from other research, but is adapted for the amount and nature of the data I collected. In both transcription and this summarising process of the content of what was said during the interviews, the overriding principle in operation is that of making the methodology 'suit' the data and the researcher. These choices are in themselves an indication of the focus I tried to maintain on 'context', meaning my interviewing process (the semi-structured interview format), its representation (transcription) and interpretation. Let us now look at how this interpretation was made.

5.2 Analysis of the learning strategies research: tools of analysis

Before I could conduct an analysis of the 20 collected interview transcripts, I needed a means to collate the gathered data in some form which allowed me to view each student in terms of his or her personalised responses and then take all the data to

observe patterns or similarities among them. For such a purpose, Hycner (1985 as cited in Cohen and Manion 1994, 293-296) gives a 15-step set of guidelines, represented below, for a phenomenological analysis of interview data which I have adapted to suit my purposes.

1. Transcription.
2. Bracketing and phenomenological reduction.
3. Listening to the interview for a sense of the whole.
4. Delineating units of general meaning.
5. Delineating units of meaning relevant to the research question.
6. Training independent judges to verify the units of relevant meaning.
7. Eliminating redundancies.
8. Clustering units of relevant meaning.
9. Determining themes from clusters of meaning.
10. Writing a summary of each individual interview.
11. Return to the participant with the summary and themes, conducting a second interview.
12. Modifying themes and summary.
13. Identifying general and unique themes for all the interviews.
14. Contextualization of themes.
15. Composite summary.

This represented a feasible means to analyse my transcribed data, yet included some steps which, I believe, could be discarded. Among those 15 steps I amended, Hycner (ibid.: 295) proposes in step 11 that the interviewee should be interviewed twice to check "whether the essence of the first interview has been accurately and fully captured." Also, step 6 advocates the use of other researchers to check the findings collected so far in the step process. I avoided these particular steps on time

grounds and used a condensed version of the remaining steps. Those steps were streamlined into 4 as follows:

1. The transcription of the interviews including extra notes on body language in brackets.

2. A "phenomenological reduction" (ibid.: 293), in which I noted down from the transcription what the interviewee was attempting to convey from all the five learning strategies topic areas whilst "listening to the interview for a sense of the whole" (ibid.). In this process I added my own words and expressions to clearly summarise each student's verbal and non-verbal responses. For the purpose of reminding myself of those non-verbal signals, pauses and intonational features, I often referred back to my original interview notes (see Appendices A9) and the tapes recording the interviews. I felt that the transcriptions alone did not reveal to me everything that was necessary to achieve that "sense of the whole" (ibid.) message emanating from the interviews.

3. The third stage involved "delineating units of general meaning" (ibid.: 294), which is Hycner's "crystallisation" (ibid.) of the interviewee's language and body language to ascertain the meaning conveyed. To do this, I looked through the reduced messages in stage two and visually highlighted on the word-processor only those which were "relevant to the research question" (ibid.). In this way, I achieved the goal of "eliminating redundancies" (ibid.), in which sections of the reductions were discarded, i.e. not highlighted as they were not directly related to the topic area. Although methodologically clear, this process presented me with the difficulty of identifying overall meaning and making interpretations which were inevitably subjective. Bryman

(1988: 116) stresses this difficulty by reminding us of the contextually "embedded" nature of interview responses as they need to be assessed in relation to other replies and initiations made and to "the interview situation itself". My task of simply highlighting language (or possibly body language) should have theoretically, according to Bryman (ibid.), involved retaining a broad vision of what was happening before, during and after that interviewee input was provided. On reflection, this called for an awareness of the discourse features of the interview itself which was not my main focus until the later shift in research focus. My original focus, when taking the decision to highlight or not, was primarily on the subject-matter of learning strategies, not how those strategies were expressed.

4. Stage four looks at all the interviews conducted to create group summaries (see Appendices A7). I firstly gathered all the highlighted messages in a process of "clustering units of relevant meaning" (Hycner 1985 as cited in Cohen and Manion 1994: 294). This means that all the relevant pieces of information from the interviews were collected for each of the 5 topic areas. After this, I summarised the findings, thereby "determining themes from clusters of meaning" (ibid.). These five summaries in effect represent the essential qualitative findings of my research and are, in essence, a collection and interpretation of the learning strategies of all interviewees in the five topic areas outlined in the semi-structured interview format of:

1. *Previous learning experiences and present perceptions about strategies*
2. *Teachers and their influence/status*
3. *Collaboration*
4. *Self-responsibility*

5. *Self-management awareness*

These can be viewed in full in the Appendices (see A7 Group Summaries). It is to be noted that these summaries focus on the students interviewed and did not attempt to make generalisations about all Thai learners. They refer specifically to the comments made by individual interviewees and are a compilation of the language and concepts highlighted by myself in their individual "crystallisations" (Appendices A6) along with reference to the interviewees' language learning experiences (Appendices A8). General trends and patterns of only the interviewee participants, as well as individual idiosyncrasies in learning strategy choice, were sought out for identification.

To illustrate this 4-step process, I will refer to the interview with Rungnapa on question 6 concerning favourite teachers (see extract in Appendices A1.1 in the first interview with Rungnapa for a fuller transcription representing Step 1.)

Rungnapa:	A woman at St Pauls because I could understand her clearly….so we loved her….she very kind.
Interviewer:	**Was she Thai?**
Rungnapa:	No, a foreigner. A nun.

This led to Stage 2's "phenomenological reduction" (Hycner ibid.) in which I summarised and paraphrased Rung's comments:

Her favourite teacher was a foreign nun who was very kind and clear.

Stage 3 involved the "crystallisation" (ibid.) whereby I highlighted the relevant words to the research question (see extract in Appendices A6 Individual "crystallisations" for a fuller illustration) as follows:

Her favourite teacher was a foreign nun who was very kind and clear.

Visually, this aided me when scanning through all the interview highlights concerning favourite teachers in order to recognise common or similar language to determine themes for stage 4. In this case, I scanned through the 20 highlighted summaries and identified language such as clear, clearly, lovely, Thai, and psychology. (See Appendices A7 for all the Group Summaries.)

As well as the individual "crystallisations" and group summaries for all the interviews, I also compiled a summary of the learning histories of those same students based upon information gathered from the information in those "crystallisations". This provided me with a useful visual tool to use to gain an overall perspective of who had studied English previously and under what circumstances. An extract representing the first ten Thai students interviewed is represented below (see Appendices A8 for a complete breakdown of all the interviews conducted):

Table 2 : Interviewees' Previous Experiences in English Language Learning

Name	*Nationality*	*Kindergarten /Primary*	*Secondary /High school with NNS or NS*	*International school or school abroad*	*University/ College studies in Thai/English*	*Other*
Rungnapa (Rung)	Thai		NS			
Burin (On)	Thai		NNS			
Orathai	Thai		NNS		Thai medium	
Kik	Thai	Kindergarten	NNS			private lang. school
Sangdaew	Thai	Primary	NNS		Thai medium	
Mingmanee	Thai		NNS			
Serm	Thai		NNS			private IELTS course
Nawarat	Thai		NNS			
Komkrit (Krit)	Thai		NNS			
Prapaporn (Porn)	Thai		NNS		English medium	

After the completion of stage 4 of the learning strategies research, dissemination of the individual and whole group summaries among Thai staff and teachers in informal workshops took place in which the "crystallised" summaries (A6), group summaries (A7) and the interviewees' language learning experiences (A8) of all interviewed pre-sessional students were distributed and discussed. In this way, the original purpose of conducting the learning strategies research was being finally addressed as the discussions themselves began to lead to a re-evaluation of teaching methodologies in the pre-sessional and Diploma courses by the teachers themselves. It was, in the eyes of the participating teachers, a process of reflection and awareness-raising rather than a set of formal sessions dealing with complaints.

Of great interest was the development during the workshop sessions of another direction to the research. As previously mentioned, during the discussions themselves, questions were often asked about what actual questions were asked to gather the information for the five learning strategies topic areas and what process I had gone through to arrive at the ten questions. To answer those questions from staff and teachers, I distributed copies of the semi-structured interview format (Appendices A10 semi-structured questions). This redirection towards the questioning of the interview format itself started to form the basis of the rationale to conduct the mid-2001 research into the turn-taking behaviour of not just how the interviewees responded to the interview questions, but also how the interviewer himself elicited information. It gradually emerged from the discussions that the interview itself as a speech event was worthy of investigation if the staff and teachers were to improve the means of gathering learning strategies information from future entrants to the college.

What was originally intended as a set of informal workshop sessions to discuss learning and teaching strategies evolved into discussions about the research methodology of interviewing i.e. the means to gather that information. Questions arose particularly concerning the best ways to elicit information from non-native speakers in interview settings in the college and whether the interview questions themselves should be changed in some manner. Some teachers favoured a more standardised set of questions whilst others suggested a more open set of topic areas for general discussion with interviewees. Thai staff put forward the idea of interviews being conducted in Thai so optimal comprehension could enable more student input. Most staff and teachers mentioned the danger of students giving "preferred" responses (Tsui 1994) to questions set by either Thai staff or western teachers. Most importantly, it emerged during these discussions that some teachers and Thai staff had useful insights and even previous experiences in intercultural communication in interviews (either being interviewed or conducting interviews for recruitment purposes) that I had failed to consider when compiling my own set of interview questions. This was clearly a missed opportunity which all agreed should not occur when interviewing the next group of entrants to the college.

The next section will address the area of ethics in the interviews conducted and will outline the rationale involved in my considerations and actions taken at that time.

5.3 Ethical issues of the interviewing

Some points concerning the ethical issues in the learning strategies research have been touched upon in the description of the pre-interview arrangements in section 5.1 of this chapter. To reiterate those considerations in brief, they were, firstly, to inform the college management and Thai and Australian Board of Directors. After this permission was granted, great care was taken in approaching pre-sessional English language students on 'neutral' territory and time on the college campus in an attempt to avoid the feeling that my request to interview them was in any way an institutionalized one and participation was therefore compulsory. Clearly, the research was neither part of their study requirements, nor part of the college's official educational policy. It was therefore important to clarify the status of my research, that of a private one for the purpose of my Doctorate studies and which could help staff and teachers gain a better insight into their study habits. This letter (see Appendices A 11) attempts to make this status, and my own in relation to the research, clear by introducing myself and the objectives of the research. From this letter (A11), I state that "I would like to ask you some questions to find out how you study" and "If we understand the way you study, then we can teach you in a better way". These research statements were in fact genuine in that the student input would be fed back to teachers to reflect upon and even change their teaching methodologies. This message of status and research objectives was also accompanied by how I intended to conduct the research. In the second paragraph of the letter, I informed the potential interviewee of the fact that I wished to record the interview and that notes would be taken, after which their "information and opinions" would possibly be integrated in my research directly.

In retrospect, my efforts to lower my status profile and de-institutionalise the image of the research may not have been entirely successful. No student actually refused my request for interview and it was clear from reactions in some cases that a degree of discomfort existed at the point of approach to students even on neutral territory and the students' free periods. The chance to refuse discretely without the perceived loss of 'face' to both themselves and myself was, despite my advice to reflect upon the request and return the letter either directly or to my pigeon hole the next day, always possibly too difficult to take up. In many ways, this first encounter with future interviewees was an indication of the problems I later found in the actual interviews themselves in that it was hard for young students to give responses which they perceived as being "dispreferred" (Tsui 1994) to myself. My inclusion at the approach stage and in the first paragraph of the letter of my name followed by my job title perhaps was a mistake, as their first impression may have been that I was surely making an approach in an official capacity. If not official, students may have considered why I had decided to inform them of my 'official' status.

In terms of the question of anonymity, I did not specifically refer to this in the letter itself, but did ask each student before the interview commenced how they wished to be referred to for the purpose of the interview interaction and in my actual research paper. Some said that I could use their first names, nicknames (as in 'On' for Burin), or sometimes shortened versions of those first names as in 'Rung' for Rungnapa. No family names were employed. In effect, this approach did not achieve full anonymity but that was not my objective. Students were informed that their names might appear in research to be read by possibly a wide audience and that they had the choice of either

providing me with a 'bogus' alias or I could choose one for them. From the names used in my learning strategies research and this current study (Rung or Rungnapa, 'On' or Burin, Orathai, Sangdaew, Serm, Komkrit or Krit, Porn or Prapaporn, Mingmanee and Nawarat), only Rungnapa, Burin, Komkrit and Prapaporn gave their nicknames, all of which were shortened versions of their first names apart from Burin. The only reference to full names appeared on the Interview Consent Form (A11) which were not included in the Appendices of the original learning strategies research and only one of which is included in this study's Appendices (for Rungnapa).

In brief, it may be argued that the lack of full anonymity opens my research to the accusation of unethical potential exposure to the students. I would argue, in defence, though, that those students were informed that their names may be published or made known in academic circles and no student requested confidentiality. Full briefing of research objectives, methodology (including taping) and where the report would appear and be read by was conducted before the interviews took place at the approach and immediate pre-interview stage. I would argue finally that, in most respects, all efforts were made to ensure ethical standards were maintained in the learning strategies research.

This concludes the description of that research. It has given a necessary set of insights into what was, in essence, the origin of the current research, especially in terms of what considerations were made when the interviews were formulated, conducted and analysed. Those considerations as a whole constitute the 'context' and tools which must be part of any further analysis of those interview transcripts. The next section moves on to the next stage of research, a shift in research focus to investigate the actual

spoken discourse of the interviews, using those same transcripts conducted for the learning strategies research purposes.

Chapter 6 Turn-taking research: methodological considerations

In this study, my research into the turn-taking behaviour is intertwined with the learning strategies research. That connection requires clearer explanation. As described in the previous chapter, the individual and group summaries of the learning strategies of the 20 students interviewed were disseminated at workshops involving the Thai staff and western teachers. Those workshops in turn, led to feedback from participants which questioned the actual interviewing process. That in itself acted as the catalyst for the second area of research, to investigate the turn-taking behaviour of both interviewer and interviewee. This is to say that the intercultural communication in the interviewing process was seen by the workshop participants as a speech event which required investigation not just for the purpose of spoken discourse analysis, but for the purpose of improving the next interviewing process. In this way, the teachers and some Thai staff viewed the next pre-sessional course as an opportunity to conduct the research interviews themselves. My immediate task was then to look into the spoken discourse of the conducted interviews as a preparation for a review of how the next pre-sessional students would be interviewed more effectively.

In essence, this chapter represents the turning point from the original learning strategies research and describes the shift in research focus. That shift is both methodological and theoretical, the former being mechanical in nature as it looks at the means by which the interview discourse is 'coded' on a micro level at the sentence level. The latter theoretical perspective is one which is addressed more deeply in chapter seven concerning the combination of the two areas of research. The more 'mechanical' considerations which are now to be addressed will embrace three areas which I found to

be of significance in conducting the turn-taking research. I firstly look at general turn-taking issues which, from a methodological perspective, are essential for the creation of a system to 'code' the discourse of the interviews. Following this, I describe in depth that coding system and how it attempts to represent the discourse on various levels. Finally, I provide a description of the tools of analysis I employ when interpreting or 'reading' the coded transcripts in a coherent fashion.

6.1 Turn-taking issues

The objective of this first section on turn-taking is to investigate and discuss the methodological areas of the coding of spoken discourse which I believe to be most influential for my subsequent analysis of interview data. This is intended as a contrast to the discussion of turn-taking issues in part A which was much more theoretical in orientation. The review to be undertaken in this section addresses specific elements of turn-taking most relevant to my choice of a methodological 'system' to code the data. These areas for review emanate from various studies carried out in everyday conversation analysis (Sacks et al 1974) and classroom discourse analysis (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975) as discussed in the literature review. The influences are pivotal to the present state of thinking on spoken discourse analysis, particularly in terms of what parts of spoken discourse are analysed (acts, moves, turns and exchanges) and how they are used to code spoken discourse. For these purposes, my review of the main turn-taking issues affecting the coding commences with an overview of how speech is broken down into ***units of speech*** and moves on to how spoken discourse is represented at various

pragmatic and grammatical levels, i.e. its ***coding***. These two areas define the mechanics, or building blocks, to which I will be referring throughout my data analysis.

6.1.1 Units of speech

Several units of analysis can be taken to analyse speech. There is the "T-unit', defined as "one main clause plus whatever subordinate clauses happen to be attached or embedded within it" (Hunt 1966 as cited in Crookes 1990: 184). There is also Crystal and Quirk's (1964: 50) "Tone Unit", defined as "…a stretch of speech in which there is a climax of pitch prominence", or the "Utterance" (Crookes and Rulon 1985: 9), defined as:

" a stream of speech with at least one of the following characteristics:
under one intonation contour
bounded by pauses
constituting a single semantic unit."

And finally, the "turn", which Crookes (ibid.: 185) defines as "one or more streams of speech bounded by speech of another, usually an interlocutor".

6.1.2 Coding

What is required from the unit of speech chosen is the ability to place it within a larger system of analysis and recognise its relationship within that system. Stenstrom (1994: 30) chooses the "turn" and includes it in a hierarchy of spoken discourse commencing at the top with "transactions", then "exchanges", after which "turns" are placed. Following them, "moves" and finally "acts" are ranked below. "Moves", which constitute "everything that the current speaker says before the next

speaker takes over", are units of speech that "the speaker does in a turn in order to start, carry on and finish an exchange" (ibid.). This appears to be a similar ordering of spoken discourse to the "rank scale" of classroom discourse proposed by Sinclair and Coulthard (1992) which commences at the highest rank of interaction with the lesson itself. The subsequent ranks move from the "transaction" – broadly corresponding to the concept of a topic, a concept addressed in the literature review on interviewing in Chapter 3.5 – to the "exchange" involving Initiating, Responding and Follow-up (or Feedback) "moves". Smaller denotations lowest in the scale are "acts", corresponding variably with clauses, or clauses plus subordinate clauses, with groups of words or even single words or utterances. They may overlap also with a "grammatical unit" (Sinclair and Coulthard 1992: 8) but are much more recognisable by their functional use in the spoken discourse.

The predominance of the coding based on the three-part exchange system as put forward by Sinclair and Coulthard (ibid.) was challenged in its relevance for the interpretation of social discourse by Burton (1980) and Stubbs (1981) who suggested that non-classroom discourse consists mainly of two parts, termed as "adjacency pairs". Burton (1981) argues that the Follow-up move is rarely to be found outside the classroom and bases her advocacy of adjacency pairs on this common absence. Tsui (1994), however, notes that non-classroom discourse may actually also require this third move, but it would be more likely to serve the function of an acknowledging move, e.g. "I see" or "I understand", rather than the evaluative follow-up of the classroom. Despite Tsui's (ibid.) claim that there is little agreement among conversation analysts about whether conversation is organised in two or three part exchanges, she does outline various arguments which suggest that the follow up move can be utilised for various purposes

other than acknowledgement and evaluation. Firstly, the follow up move can be the place for the repair of communicative breakdown, i.e. to request clarification or repetition. It has also been observed that it is an essential move in research conducted with telephone conversations (Francis and Hunston 1992) in which the non-verbal feedback present in face-to-face interaction requires verbalisation. Additionally, in research conducted by Stenström (1984 as cited in Tsui 1994), it is seen that a third move is often absent in husband – wife interaction, suggesting that it is more likely to occur between interlocutors who are less familiar with each other. Would this imply then that the more formal the relations, the more likely that third move will be present ? This deduction is perhaps too great a step to take as a result of research between husband and wife, yet the connection between participant relations and the dispensability of that third move needs further consideration at least.

Tsui (ibid.: 41) lists other uses too, apart from the acknowledging and evaluative ones, in "accepting the outcome of the preceding interaction", "appreciation of the response", "to minimise the face damage that has been done" and "to show a change of state of knowledge". All these "pragmatically motivated" (ibid.) uses are, when present, perhaps obvious, yet take on greater importance when they are for some strategic purpose not included. Tsui (ibid.) suggests that disagreement or sarcasm may be one of those purposes, but does not comment on 'face' – a criteria which has the avoidance of overt disagreement as its purpose – as a possible reason also for the absence of the third move. If the non-native speaker does have the confidence to initiate an exchange, it is unclear how he or she would react to a negative or dispreferred response from the native speaker. If the non-native speaker wishes to avoid potential conflict, then

the option of providing positive evaluative feedback could possibly be supplemented by the further choice of silence in the same way that non-verbal responses are used to avoid giving dispreferred answers. Surely then silence as an option at the third move stage is also "pragmatically motivated" (Tsui, loc. cit.) in the sense that it is employed to save face.

Further to the debates over two- or three-part exchanges, however, Goffman (1981 as cited in Tsui 1994: 42) notes that exchanges can adopt a fourth move, also a follow up, taking the form of a "minimisation" as in:

A Do you know the time ?

B Sure. It's five o'clock.

A Thanks.

→ B (gesture) t's OK.

Additionally, this fourth move can be a "turn-passing" follow up, an indication that a participant wishes to relinquish the floor and pass the rights of speech over to the next or other participant. In both cases, the coding of $I - R - F - F$ is followed by the start of another exchange.

Coding of moves then operates in exchanges which may have two, three or four parts: $I - R$ adjacency pairs, $I - R - F$, or $I - R - F - F$. But analysis concentrating on moves within the exchange structure requires more information as to the function of each move in light of what kind of interactive role it plays. In relation to the other ranks of the rank scale surrounding them, moves together constitute the 'turn' and are made up of 'acts'. These turns are strung together in a 'sequence' and an 'exchange' represents a combination of moves in specific sequences (two, three, four parts or "inserted"

according to Schegloff 1972). This perhaps confusing terminology can be simplified in the following representation:

Exchanges
Sequences
Turns
Moves
Acts

To code speech requires boundaries to be set, usually when exchanges start and finish. It also needs recognition of what moves are performed (*I, R* or *F*), a task which involves some difficulty as the definitions of the function of these moves have changed and developed. Sinclair and Coulthard (1975, 1992) refer to opening, answering, follow-up, framing, focusing and turn-taking moves. Burton (1981) introduced the concept of supporting and challenging moves followed respectively by bound opening and re-opening moves. Later, Francis and Hunston (1992) expanded this to eight moves - framing, opening, answering, eliciting, informing, acknowledging, directing and behaving – noting, most importantly, the variety of functions which could be applied to exchange structure *IRF* codings. In brief, they proposed the following:

> *Initiations could take the form of eliciting, informing or directing moves*
> *Responses serving as Initiations could take the form of eliciting or informing moves*
> *Responses could take the form of informing, acknowledging or behaving moves*
> *And that Follow-ups take the form of acknowledging moves*

Their coding, devised for telephone conversation analysis, clearly expands upon the one-to-one association of functions as originally proposed by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), as in:

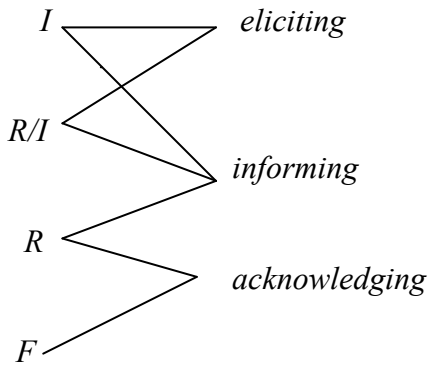
> *I take the form of opening moves*
> *R take the form of answering moves*
> *F take the form of follow-up moves*

And Coulthard and Montgomery's (1981):

> *I take the form of eliciting or informing moves*
> *R take the form of informing or acknowledging moves*
> *F take the form of acknowledging moves*

In Francis and Hunston's (1992) re-structuring of the moves to exchange structure relationship, we can see that it is recognised that the move after the first initiation may be a responding or an initiating move – a question can be used to reply to a question in, for example, a request for clarification – resulting in the addition of an eliciting move as an alternative function. Their alternatives for the potential moves are represented as follows:

Figure 2: Moves to exchange structure alternatives (Francis and Hunston 1992: 141)



Hoey (1991in Bowers and Brumfit eds. : 79) terms this double coding multi-functionality as "exchange disruption", a counter-initiation or even a challenge to the initiation.

Below the moves, the number of acts has expanded to 32 for Francis and Hunston's (1992) purposes from Sinclair and Coulthard's most recent (1992) 22. Although often similar, there are more acts in Francis and Hunston's taxonomy which can be applied across moves, for example "comment" and "marker".

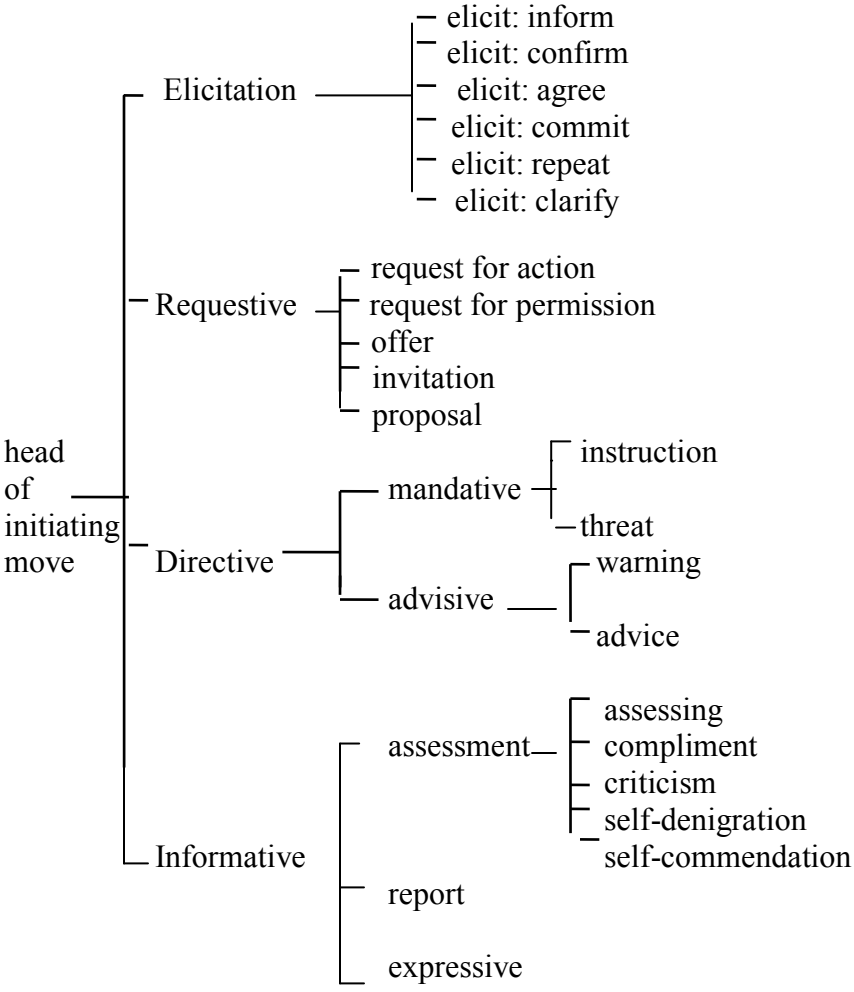
To date, coding of spoken discourse appears to have reached the stage where little major work is being undertaken to fundamentally add to the amount of moves and acts since Francis and Hunston's (1992) research. There is, though, work in the more specialised area of repair (Schegloff 2000) which, as discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2.4, is integral to the development of conversational analysis. However, in terms of a coding system, Tsui (1994) is unique in that the original taxonomy of Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) is fundamentally restructured, being given more depth and clarity to the functions performed by moves in the *IRF* exchange structure. Moves are brought together under the denotation of "discourse acts" which are in essence parallel to the pragmatic meaning of Sinclair and Coulthard's moves. This is represented as follows:

Table 3: Tsui's Elements of structure (1994: 61)

	I	*R*	*F1*	*F2*
Move	Initiating	Responding	Follow-up (1)	Follow-up (2)
Sub-class	Elicitation Requestive Directive Informative	Positive Negative Temporisation	Endorsement Concession Acknowledgement	Turn-passing

For the Initiating move, the taxonomy is broken down into four sub-classes as follows:

Figure 3 : Systems of choices at the head of initiating moves (Tsui 1994: 220)



This represents a system of choices similar to the choices of acts available in Francis and Hunston (1992) and Sinclair and Coulthard (1975, 1992). Despite the comprehensive coverage of coding utterances at the Initiation level of exchange, there is less emphasis placed on the type of utterance made at the Responding and Follow-up move. All responses – either positive (those representing attempts to answer the question), negative (those which refuse to answer the question) or temporisations (those which cannot answer the question as in 'I don't know') or Feedback moves (endorsing, conceding, acknowledging or turn-passing) – are related in their coding to the previous Initiation or Response. In one respect, this represents the reality of exchanges being

oriented to the pivotal nature of an Initiation, yet this initiation–orientation in Tsui's (1994) system of choices seems fundamentally to ignore the potential importance of topics shaped by means of the responding move. Coding according to Tsui's pragmatic function, whether a Response is positive, negative or a temporisation related to the Initiation, does not explain the true illocutionary intent (the meaning that the speaker intends to convey) of responses which provide information and influence the next speaker in not just the choice of the type of next Initiation. This must be a fundamental criticism of any system which attempts to code speech. The surface-level coding of moves and acts framed within exchanges can only explain so much about the language used. Illocutionary intent and perlocutionary uptake (the meaning that the recipient has understood) can be measured in the pragmatic but not in the instinctive sense, as illustrated in this fabricated example:

> Interviewer*: What strategies do you use for note-taking?*
> **I** (Initiation: Elicitation: elicit: inform)
> Interviewee*: I'm not so sure about those but in my own language I tend to write my own style of short-hand.*
> **R** (Positive Response)
> Interviewer: *Oh right. Can you tell me more about that?*
> **F/I** (Acknowledging Feed-back + Initiation: Elicitation: elicit: inform)
> Interviewee: *Well, I started when I was at school and …*
> **R** (Positive Response)

(Coding follows Tsui's 1994 taxonomy)

The first initiation by the interviewer is responded to with information not about English but the interviewee's first language. This shifts the topic, thereby influencing the next follow-up move of "Oh right" and initiation eliciting more information. In Tsui's

taxonomy, it would appear as a felicitous exchange according to the codings available, yet does not differentiate fundamentally between those responses which induce topic redirection or topic continuation. Viewing the coding below does not reveal enough about the true illocutionary and perlocutionary intent between the participants:

I (Initiation: Elicitation: elicit: inform)

R (Positive Response)

F/I (Acknowledging Feed-back + Initiation: Elicitation: elicit: inform)

R (Positive Response)

In the next section, I shall describe and attempt to justify my chosen methodology of coding of interview data in light of these shortcomings focusing on a combination of systems and ranks of the "rank scale".

6.2 Towards a coding system for the transcribed interviews

The analysis of the turn-taking behaviour of the interview participants requires a system of investigation which enables the researcher to see clearly not only the spoken discourse of each individual interview, but also to see across the interviews. It is important to consider what perspectives we are seeking for the data. From one perspective, individual insights into the turn-taking behaviour are useful as they may be used to provide individualised guidance to that particular student and his or her teachers. Looking across the interviews, that is at the interviews as a whole, also is beneficial in that it provides insights into emerging patterns for both participants. For these purposes, I created a coding system which is adapted from two previously employed systems. Both

have strengths and weaknesses individually, yet it is the combination of them which can create a more effective tool of analysis.

This analytical system is one taken from the work on turn-taking analysis conducted by Tsui (1994) and Francis and Hunston (1992). Their form of analyses are based upon coding speech originally as Sinclair and Coulthard (1975 and 1992) had done in classrooms in the 1970s. Tsui's coding system involves an advancement of the *IRF* exchange rank coding conducted by Sinclair and Coulthard with a particular emphasis upon the initiating move and seems to be universally applicable to all speech events including interview settings (personal correspondence with Tsui 2001). Francis and Hunston's (1992) coding concentrates on moves and acts at the lower end of the rank scale and appears to be better suited to providing coding descriptors at those ranks to not only the initiating move, but also the responding and follow-up moves. For this reason, I have chosen to employ an exchange sequence coding system to analyse the interview data – Tsui's *IRF* exchange sequence codings to provide a broad picture of the speech activity within the exchange, followed by Francis and Hunston's (1992) 8 moves and 32 acts. There will be a natural overlap of information as Tsui's system of choices at the initiation stage is a detailed extension into similar codes to those provided at the move and act ranks. This occasional repetition of move codings between Tsui and Francis and Hunston is perhaps one weakness in the choice of a combined set of coding systems, yet the compensation offered by the latter researchers at the *R* and *F* level represents an insightful advantage.

When viewing the transcribed interviews and the coded dialogue, boundary lines are drawn which correspond broadly with the ten questions constituting

the five topic areas in the learning strategies research. At times, as a single question may represent a topic in its entirety, the exchange boundaries are equivalent to that of the topic – or transition – boundary itself. The transcripts are divided by lines marking the start and finish of question boundaries within which various lengths of strings of exchanges are to be seen.

Dotted lines represent occasions where the *IRF* flow is interrupted by communicative breakdowns, meaning "insertion sequences" (Schegloff *et al* 1977 and Schegloff 1979) or "misapprehension sequences" (Jefferson 1972), indicating miscomprehension or a request for clarification by either participant.

The lines and dotted lines serve to visually mark on the transcripts where breakdown occurs during questioning sequences and identify clearly the language used to enact repair. Furthermore, the interviewer's language immediately preceding the first dotted line is also naturally highlighted by the presence of that line as in:

Sangdaew Question 2	Exchange sequence	Move	Act
I see….and tell me firstly about your Thai teachers of English, I mean…. what did youlearn by heart?	**Facknowledge Iei**	**acknow**	**ter/m**
By heart?	R-ve//Ie:clarify	acknow//elicit	ret
Yes, by heart…I mean….what did you have to memorize?	**R+ve/Iei**	**informing**	**rec/inq**
Oh, I see...I remember I have...had to Remember ...memorize 5 words each time. I enjoyed this.	R+ve	acknow/inform	rec/i/i

Figure 4: Key of turn-taking codes from Tsui (1994) (for extracts used in this section)

I = Initiation R = Response F =Feedback F_2 = turn-passing feedback
Iei = Initiation elicitation elicit inform
R-ve = Negative response
Ie:clarify = Initiation elicitation clarify
R+ve = Positive feedback
/ = indicates next exchange, move or act without a pause
// = indicates the situation when one utterance takes the form of two moves
(For a fuller account of all coding symbols used at the exchange rank, refer to Appendices A13 and A15)

In the above sequence (only illustrating one rank out of the three for this example), the interviewer's question '**by heart?'** above the dotted line is immediately followed by 'By heart ?' from Sangdaew, the interviewee.

The choice of Tsui's (1994) taxonomy for the exchange sequences provides (see Figure 3) the detail of the system of choices in four categories at the initiating move. These choices are broken into further sub-categories which finely define that initiation in a similar fashion to the moves and acts which constitute it. That similarity varies as illustrated below:

Rungnapa Question 1	Exchange sequence	Move	Act
How have you studied English before? (What games, teachers?)	**Iei (Initiation:elicit: inform)**	**Opening**	**ms (metastatement)**

Figure 5: Key of Moves and Acts from Francis and Hunston (1992) (as used in this section)

Moves	Acts
Opening	ms = metastatement
Eliciting	i = informative
Informing	end = endorse
Acknowledging	m.pr = marked proposal

(For a fuller account of all moves and acts employed in coding, see Appendices A13)

In this case the information carried by Tsui's (ibid.) Initiation: elicit: inform coding is clearly more precise than that offered in the move and act categories. An ***Iei*** –defined as an utterance seeking to procure a linguistic piece of information – more clearly explains the move initiated by the interviewer in terms of its function related to the following moves. However, in Tsui's taxonomy Responding moves are less well defined. For instance:

Rungnapa Question 1	Exchange sequence	Move	Act
My teacher at St Pauls she teached us with games, videos sometimes..	R+ve	informing	i (informative)

Here, the denotation *R+ve* simply serves to show that the response is positive, i.e. that it fulfills the requirement to provide linguistic information. In Tsui's (ibid.: 164) terms it is "fully-fitting" as opposed to a *R-ve* which cannot or refuses to answer the initiation and is therefore seen as a "challenge" (ibid. 165) to the interviewer. Rungnapa's response is "fully-fitting" (loc.cit.) and is supported only marginally by the information at the move and act level as seen in the example above.

Problems occur, though, with the following:

Burin Question 1	Exchange sequence	Move	Act
How have you studied English before coming here, Burin?	**Iei**	**Opening**	**ms**
About 5 years	R-ve	Informing	i (informative)

Here, Burin's intention is to provide information so at the move and act rank his utterance is coded as providing that information, yet he has not fulfilled the illocutionary purpose

intended by the interviewer. Burin's answer of "About 5 years" is clearly a misunderstanding of the question "How", which he interprets as meaning "How long". This causes the communication to temporarily break down and re-initiation is necessary. However the *R-ve* coding at the exchange rank appears to sit strangely with the apparently positive coding provided at move and act ranks. Although a *R-ve*, it is clearly not an intended face-threatening challenge or declaration of inability or unwillingness to respond.

Feedback moves too suffer from a limited scope in describing what is clearly happening, although the extent of confusion of the above examples is not present. This rank of exchange is actually supplemented by the extra *F2*, the turn-passing coding, which is useful as it denotes follow-up moves encouraging the interviewer or interviewee to take the floor. This is achieved by providing follow-up which simply acknowledge or endorse the previous response and leave a pause indicating that the speaker is passing over the turn. It appears that this follow-up move *F2* serves the purpose of turn-passing and acknowledging or endorsing. The available coding at the move rank in Francis and Hunston's study includes only an acknowledging code which embraces both the endorsing and acknowledging roles. This is illustrated as follows:

Orathai Question 1	Exchange sequence	Move	Act
Many ways..with games..many games, songs and video.	R+ve	informing	i (informative)
→ **That's very interesting.**	**F2 endorsing**	**acknowledging**	**end (endorse)**

Despite the emphasis placed upon the initiating move at the *IRF* exchange rank, the examples show that there is a scarcity of descriptive coding in the Responding and

Follow-up moves. The issue is one of perspective down through the rank scale and the fact that the coding denotations of moves and acts emanate from different researchers. Francis and Hunston's research purposes focused on telephone discourse in Singapore specifically.

Further investigation, however, reveals that the choice of a three-part coding system, despite the potential mismatches and overlap , does on many occasions show a complementary element, as in the following :

Kik Question 1	Exchange sequence	Move	Act
And of course, you had to Study at secondary school, right?	**I elicit: confirm**	**eliciting**	**m.pr**

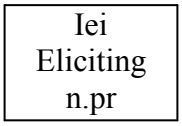
This initiation is clearly coded by Tsui as seeking confirmation, yet in Francis and Hunston's codings is seen as an eliciting move and, at the act rank, as a question form seeking a confirmation. Individually, each rank scale description reveals insufficient information about the discourse. Together, the combined description of an initiation which seeks to confirm the previous utterance by means of a yes/no question is much more effective and approaches some form of cohesiveness as a three-part description.

Viewing the overall effectiveness of the three-part coding system adopted, the use of the exchange rank coding provides perhaps the primary focus of the analysis. It is supplemented or complemented by the move and act codings in particular at the responding and follow-up stages. This almost 'secondary' perspective is greatly enhanced at the act rank as the choices available – 32 acts – provide a depth to analysis not given at the higher ranks.

As a final note to this description of my methodological approach taken towards coding, it is important to bear in mind the potential discrepancies which may arise in attempting any definitive codification across all the three ranks. There is a natural element of interpretation involved when ascertaining the actual functional quality of any coded utterance.

6.3 Analytical tools employed

Apart from simply coding the spoken discourse with this chosen three-part system on each page of the transcribed interviews, it is also necessary to support that coded analysis with other means to understand more clearly what the turn-taking coding reveals. For this purpose, I have decided to summarise the **exchange sequences** (*I R F and* F_2) in a manner which is visually capable of revealing patterns within individual interviews and between them (see Appendices A2). Looking at a large amount of data at the *IRF*, move and act ranks represented on numerous A4 size pages may not sufficiently offer that visual perspective which I require. This visual supplement to the analysis can concentrate on the exchange sequencing and also be employed to highlight sequences at which points in the interview communication breaks down, who requests repair, who repairs that breakdown (whether requested or not) and what moves are employed to rectify it. If outstanding patterns are noted from viewing the individually transcribed and coded A4 pages, I have then noted where they occur on the exchange sequencing analysis and created boxes in which the three ranks of coding are represented, as in :



These boxes represent small windows into the lower ranks of the rank scale during the sequences. It should be noted that the creation of these windows is purely experimental at this stage. In the above example, the *IRF* exchange rank is shown according to Tsui (1994) as an Initiation (*I*) which seeks to elicit (e) information (i) from the other interview participant. The move rank coding of "Eliciting" (Francis and Hunston 1992) reveals little new information compared to that which is provided with the exchange code, yet the act coding informs us that the type of elicitation was in the form of a "*n.pr*" (a neutral proposal). This is fundamentally a closed question form seeking a yes or no response.

As the purpose of using Francis and Hunston's taxonomy is to compensate for the lack of description at the response and follow-up stages, 'windows' into a Response reveal typically at the move rank information which is not shown in Tsui's coding, as in:

R+ve Informing i…com

Tsui's *R+ve* represents a positive responding move, i.e. one that provides some form of information or action as required from the initiation (as opposed to a *R-ve* which does not comply with the initiation). The *R+ve* denotation does not clearly show if the compliance is in the form of a verbal provision of information or an action and it is only through the move rank "informing" coding that we gain this information. On further investigation into what happens at the rank of acts, we see that two codings are used – "*i*" (informative) leading into a "*com*" (comment). This shows that the response given starts with an

"informative" act whose "function is to supply information or to give a decision between 'yes' and 'no' " (Francis and Hunston 1992: 131). It then leads into a "comment" act which can "exemplify, expand, explain, justify, provide additional information, or evaluate one's own utterance" (ibid.: 133). Clearly in this case, at the act rank especially, additional information is provided to give the analyst a better insight into what kind of responses are given, beyond the simple coding of *R+ve* or *R-ve*.

The exchange rank representation of sequences with its 'windows' and breakdown sequences can also be used in the simplest quantitative manner to count how many turns were needed to complete a question as the interviews are horizontally displayed and broken off with boundaries at the start of questions. These correspond with the same transition boundaries shown in the transcribed and coded interviews. Numbers of turns do not correspond with the length of each turn made, so the time taken to complete a turn cannot easily be visually represented except perhaps in the case where exceptionally long turns were given a 'window' in which each type of move and act were to be represented under an *I, R* or *F*. Nevertheless, if insight into how many turns are made is sought, then a greater number of turns made, although not proving that the interview lasts longer than any other, may reveal that there were many changes of the person taking a turn. Care must be taken about what that actually means in terms of quality of interaction (its content about learning strategies) and length of time in a turn.

At this point it is clear that how much can be deduced from the exchange sequence patterns is limited if visual convenience is the prime objective. To explain what is happening in turn-taking can be shown by means of coding at the three ranks of the rank scale as shown in the transcribed interviews and the exchange sequences simply

give us further, clearer insights into this question. However, tracing the reasons for emerging patterns can be aided by viewing the turn-taking behaviour from a more macro perspective and so what is required is the same type of individual and group summaries provided for the learning strategies research. Unlike the learning strategies' summaries, though, the **interview summaries** (see Appendices A3) need to focus on the turn-taking behaviour of the interviewer and interviewee as the interview is a co-construction by both. To focus on the interviewee alone does not reveal to us how the spoken discourse is shaped. After compiling these individual interview summaries, the greater macro perspective for all of the interviews can be made, yet in taking such a progression of steps there exists the danger of not returning to the data provided by the coded transcripts (A1) and exchange level sequencing patterns (A2). The latter has the purpose of identifying 'patterns' not only within individual interviews but across them. To jump to a group summary without making more use of the original coded data will fail to show the trends of turn-taking behaviour emerging throughout the interviews on the part of the interviewer. One interviewee cannot influence the next. However, the turn-taking behaviour of one interview may possibly affect the interviewer's performance in the next interview.

The next step in the analysis involves a return to the codification process, and the exchange sequences in particular, in which those **turn-taking trends** (see appendices A4) can be traced in terms of the following aspects: what kind of *F* (follow-up) move is performed (acknowledging, endorsing or turn-passing F_2), who requests repair in a communication breakdown sequence, how many and at what point in the discourse "reformulations" are made at the *F* move (the use of "so you think that…" by

the interviewer to summarise and clarify or confirm what has been said by the interviewee), and finally the type of initiations used by the interviewer ("*n.pr*" or "*m.pr*" acts – open or closed question forms). These trends can be ascertained by tracing and counting the type of turn-taking behaviour identified whilst reading through the transcripts and exchange sequences. This is at this point clearly an issue of highly personalised recognition of what constitutes a trend worth tracing but is also, therefore, open to the criticism of reliability. However, the judgement must be made and the tools employed - the coded transcripts (A1), the exchange level sequences (A2) and the individual summaries (A3) – serve the purpose intended of revealing those trends. As a body of 'perspectives' they help them emerge by the nature of their presence and use in the process of analysis.

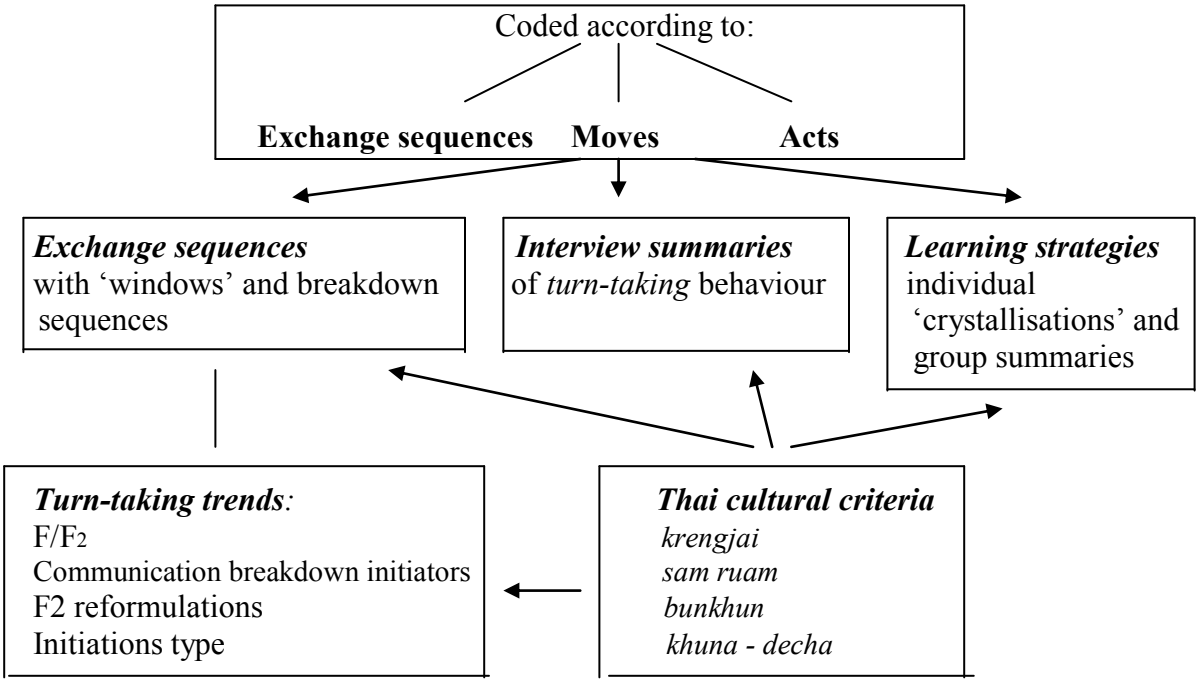
Once these trends are seen or sought out, a clearer picture begins to emerge of what is happening in terms of turn-taking across the interviews as a whole. Again, though, the more tools employed at this juncture, the better. Those tools emanating from the learning strategies research are described in Chapter 5.2. The English language learning histories (A8), individual "crystallisations" (A6) and group summaries (A7), need also to be included. Yet, still deeper investigation into why turn-taking took a certain course and showed certain patterns with one interview and took another direction in other interviews all beg a return to various fundamental issues: the semi-structured nature of the interviewing technique (the wording of the questions) (A10), the content of the interviews (the learning strategies theme of which many students may remain unaware despite their linguistic ability whilst being interviewed) and the whole issue of what language (Thai cultural terminology or anglo-centric terms) to use to explain the

'context' (of the interview setting, the status of participants, the background 'context' of the students), as discussed in depth in the literature review.

In addition to the learning strategies tools of analysis and the newly created ones focusing on turn-taking, the inclusion of some form of **Thai cultural criteria** (A5) to act as a supplement to the other tools of analysis is, as Mulder (1996) advocates, a necessary direction to take in order to avoid an anglo-centric judgement of Thai behaviour. This is necessary primarily for the practical purpose of making an assessment of how Thais behave in Thai settings with western researchers. How that judgement is made is highly debatable as there are numerous Thai cultural criteria to possibly include in any 'set' of criteria. I propose that this 'set' should include consideration of turn-taking behaviour according to *krengjai*, *sam ruam*, *bunkhun* and an assessment of where the relationship lays on the *khuna – decha* continuum (Mulder 1996). Respectively this considers elements of the status-oriented relationship (*krengjai*), the reticence to embark into strong debate (*sam ruam*), the maintenance of a reciprocal and mutual relationship (*bunkhun*) and, finally, attempts to place the interaction between the participants in each interview on a continuum of familiarity/respect to unfamiliarity/non-necessity to display respect (*khuna – decha*). It could be argued that a variety of other individual criteria could be employed to explain idiosyncratic behaviour. These would not necessarily be bound so closely to the aforementioned criteria which are more closely inter-related with status and the role relations at play in every interaction. As the judgement is qualitative, the use of these 'Thai – centric' criteria is made perhaps most subjectively, yet, coupled with the carried over data from the learning strategies research and the tools compiled for turn-taking purposes specifically, this subjective

assessment is not an isolated one. As with any conversation analysis, the researcher should retain focus on the talk-in-interaction itself. This remains my objective despite the numerous accumulated tools from two research purposes. The following Figure 6 provides an overview of the turn-taking assessment and the tools used to provide that assessment:

Figure 6: Overview of the turn-taking assessment and related tools



How these Thai cultural criteria permeate the assessments affecting the coded turn-taking behaviour is, from the above representation shown by the use of arrows, clearly potentially wide-reaching. However, how, when and to what extent inclusion of these criteria are to be employed is fundamentally a decision based upon the idiosyncrasies and patterns which emerge from reading through the transcribed and coded interviews. It is another tool to be used on parity with the exchange sequences, the

interview summaries on turn-taking, learning strategies "crystallisations" and turn-taking trends as illustrated above. This is then not a post-analysis search for explanations of anomalies in the data. It should be regarded as a tool spread before the researcher alongside the others. This leads perhaps now to natural questions about the nature of the interpretation of the data as the tools at the researcher's disposal are in some cases already the result of research completed, in this case the mid-1999 study to ascertain learning strategies.

In terms of the perspectives of interpretation, it must be noted that interview data can be viewed as providing "veridical descriptions", which are "reliable reports of events provided by well-meaning individuals", or "symptomatic" ones, in which the interviewee's input is regarded as "more about the research participant's relationship to the topic and the interview context than about the topic being discussed" (Block 2000: 758). This draws parallels between my learning strategies purpose - "veridical" in nature – and the turn-taking research purpose – "symptomatic" in nature. Block (ibid.) warns of an interpretation of interview data as co-constructed speech events in which the "voice" (Bakhtin 1981 as cited in Block 2000) of the interviewees is taken at its face value, i.e. that it represents a true value of their own opinion. Additionally, Block (ibid.) indicates that any interviewee's "voice" may possibly be that of their own community (nationality, age group etc), not their own. Both Block (ibid.) and Briggs (1986) note that any interview context may also influence the participants into representing their views differently compared to how they may do so in their own community setting. Further to these perspectives on interpretation of the data, Holstein and Gubrium (1995 as cited in Block 2000: 760) warn of the presumption that

interviewees possess only one "voice" during the course of the interview. Different questions may indeed draw the interviewees into adapting differing roles – as a friendly co-confident at one moment to a student sitting before a teacher in another – leading to differing "voices" being expressed. This requires the researcher to look beyond the apparently fixed or constant interpretations of data to ones which fluctuate according to the roles taken on by the interviewee.

These considerations seriously cast doubt on any array of research tools and their ability to avoid that possible invalidity and variability in responses given by interviewees. Perhaps, though, the recognition of the existence of the different "voices" and contexts is at least taken into account by the depth of consideration provided among the tools and raises the awareness as to the possibility of invalidity. The extent to which they can assess the changing roles within any given interview is an issue which needs to be considered by the conversation analyst as an influential factor upon turn-taking behaviour. It must be admitted that adequate tools do not exist, in my case, to assess what exact role is being adopted as such judgement is perhaps beyond the scope of the tools chosen. The methodological system selected is one which is primarily focused upon explaining talk-in-interaction and needs to retain that focus.

The next chapter will demonstrate how my methodological 'system' operates. It specifically addresses the issue of the combination of tools of analysis from previously conducted and present research.

Chapter 7 Combining the two areas of research: "emergent" research

After the in-depth descriptions of the methodologies employed to analyse the learning strategies research and the present turn-taking research, it is now necessary to show how the combination of the analytical tools from both research areas can be combined. As previously discussed, in a historical sense, this adds a retrospective perspective to the present research objective of coding and interpreting interview data. Admittedly this is potentially confusing in that two sets of research tools for ostensibly different research objectives are employed together. Nevertheless, there is an overlying, grander objective marrying the learning strategies and the turn-taking research, which is to improve the learning-teaching process in the college. That improvement per se cannot be achieved through one area of research alone. It is practical that data collected be revisited, reexamined and reassessed at different points in time when researchers have different insights, different methodological perspectives and tools available to them. This is the key point in justifying the combination of apparently different research tools. They, as a combination, allow the original data to reveal new insights at later points in time. In that sense, messages which 'emerge' are aided in that process by an accumulated set of analytical tools and will continue to 'emerge' in the future when the researcher decides to probe further into the data with new tools. This chapter describes that process, or search, for appropriate tools of analysis.

7.1 "Layers of insight": using old and new tools in "dialogue"

This section illustrates how research tools from the 'old' learning strategies and 'new' turn-taking studies are combined to create an amalgamated

methodological approach to analyse the interview data. As the coded transcriptions are quite large, cross reference will be made to them in the Appendices (A1.1 – A1.10). This is similarly the case for the research tools used to analyse these transcripts. What is perhaps important to note at this stage of the research is the aspect of visual convenience in looking at large stretches of transcribed interview data. In light of this, the tools created from both sets of research must retain a sense of visual clarity without losing the ability to focus in on the details of turn-taking and the learning strategies research. For example, these tools can illustrate what happens at the lower ranks of the "rank scale", whether that particular interviewee was taught by a native or non-native speaker at secondary school, who requested clarification in a communicative breakdown sequence, how many turns were required to complete one question compared with other interviews or what kind of feedback moves were made by the interviewer across the interviews. Alongside these micro and macro sets of information concerning the two areas of research conducted, there must also exist the original tapes and field notes taken during the interviews so that it is possible to return to the original source of data which was used to make the first transcriptions.

This array of tools of analysis needs a visual, tangible presence surrounding the main body of coded transcripts enabling the researcher, but not obliging him, to use them at every decision-making juncture. This usage is a typically uncontrolled one, selfish in that it serves only what the researcher wishes it to be applied to, yet richly eclectic and potentially greatly enlightening in its depth of potential information. As it represents historical and recent tools all emanating from tapes, it is not unfeasible at some point to actually return to that source to even reassess what was said

between the participants and how it was then transcribed. This very much creates an emergent quality to the interpretation of the data and reminds the researcher that the transcripts themselves are only a representation, in some sense a "hybrid" (Kvale 1996: 182), of the spoken discourse of the tapes as seen in the form of written text.

In terms of the procedure of how the analysis is to be carried out with such an array of tools available, it is not my intention to prescribe an overly systematic order or an obligation to use all tools in the analysis of individual or groups of interviews. It is perhaps more important, as a researcher, to be aware of the tools at one's disposal without the sense of obligation to apply them in each case. For Bakhtin's "voices" (1981 as cited in Block 2000) to emerge or fluctuate throughout interviews and to avoid the limitations of viewing interview data from only the perspective of content (the topic of learning strategies in this case) or talk-in-interaction (the turn-taking behaviour clinically separated from the content or the contexts), it is necessary to regard the tools as transparent 'layers of insight' to be placed over the coded transcripts and removed at will. This analogy of placing and removing gives the analysis a probing sense of discovery perhaps creating an emergent quality not in the historical sense previously alluded to, and subsequently allows a return to the interpretation of the transcripts or tapes at later times. The here and now - the present context that is - embraces an eclectic 'probing' with the use of a wide array of research tools from different points in time and so allows new perspectives to emerge from the data in its present condition. In short, emergence in the analysis has two aspects, historical in that we can return to the same data later to reinterpret it, and current in that the analytical tools available probe that data from a

variety of perspectives. It is that current sense of emergence which will now be pursued. It is useful at this point to provide a brief overview of that array of research tools.

Table 4: Research tools

Turn-taking research tools	**Learning strategies research tools**
Coded transcripts (A1.1 – A1.10)	Individual "crystallisations" (A6)
Exchange sequences (A2)	Group summaries (A7)
Interview summaries (A3)	Interviewees' language learning experiences (A 8)
Turn-taking trends (A4)	Original interview field notes (A9)
Thai cultural criteria (A5)	Semi-structured interview questions (A10)
	Original tapes of the interviews

If the turn-taking research tools are regarded as providing "symptomatic" (Block 2000: 758) descriptions (looking at the discourse of the interviews) and those used to analyse learning strategies are "veridical" (ibid.) (looking at the subject-matter), then we have two useful perspectives to refer to when applying the research tools either separately or in a combined manner. Placing our 'layers of insight' in a combined manner, theoretically, also combines these perspectives. To achieve this multi-perspective requires perhaps a broad set of steps to be taken towards this objective within which I wish to retain some degree of flexibility. This points to the creation of a loosely structured analysis in which the interviews are viewed individually and collectively from firstly the retrospective perspective of learning strategies, and then from the turn-taking perspective of the present study. The purpose in these first two steps is to remind the researcher of the breadth of information emanating from among the interviews. Within both steps, the various tools available should be, metaphorically, placed and removed like 'layers of insight' on the coded transcripts in a manner which is less prescribed. This represents a purely experimental, probing and instinctive element in the conduct of the

analysis which enables the researcher to interact, or in Kvale's (1996: 182) analogy, to enter into "dialogue" with the data. This involves asking oneself key questions in each step which probe the researcher's understanding of the transcript and what the 'layers of insight' are capable of revealing. In essence, these questions, outlined in each of the following steps, cut through the potentially large and confusing amount of data available in the transcripts and various tools of analysis to the core of the research.

Looking at each step in turn, firstly, the interviews (A1) should be read focusing on the learning strategies of each individual interviewee rather than the codings. In this process, the tools associated with the learning strategies research (A6, A7, A8, A9, A10) may be placed, in any order, onto the data. This gives the researcher a reminder of the flow of the interview in terms of its subject-matter, not the discourse. At this stage, the reader of the transcripts can view each interview individually initially but then refer to the summaries of all the interviews conducted (A7) and all the interviewees' language learning histories (A8). Subsequently, after placing the various 'layers of insight' over each interview, it would be interesting to enter into Kvale's "dialogue" (ibid.) by asking 'How are this student's learning strategies different from those of the others interviewed ?' This represents the first rhetorical questioning not just with the use of the transcripts, but also, significantly, with the tools of analysis placed upon them.

After these mainly "veridical" (ibid.) insights have been (re)gained, the researcher can re-read the interviews focusing, this time, upon the discourse - the turn-taking features - illustrated in the codification (A1) and supported primarily by other turn-taking tools (A2, A3, A4 and A5). This changes the perspective to one which has a "symptomatic" (ibid.) focus. The other 'layers of insight' used in step 1 to ascertain the

learning strategies need to be applied at this point, not in the sense that this focus requires redirecting, but to help explain turn-taking behaviour possibly by means of learning strategies behaviour. As in the first step, there should be both an individual and collective analysis at play as it is important to see how each interview compares to others. The "dialogue" (Kvale ibid.) between the texts and the researcher should embrace both individual and collective interviews, as well as learning strategies and turn-taking aspects. Such questions may include: 'What is of note about the turn-taking behaviour of both participants ?', 'Are there any turn-taking elements in this interview which can be explained by the semi-structured interview format ?', 'Are any of these elements repeated among other interviews ?', 'To what extent was this interviewee's turn-taking behaviour influenced by his/her awareness of learning strategies ?', and, 'Is this interviewee's 'voice' consistent throughout the interview ? How about the interviewer's ?'

In these first two steps, there is a separation and combination of two perspectives to look at the interviews individually and collectively. It is important to consider the extent to which the interviews are inter-related. This involves taking the individual idiosyncrasies from each interview from the turn-taking perspective and placing tools from either research areas onto them in an attempt to seek possible explanations. This is a return to the conversation analyst's original focus, that of the talk-in-action, and, in the true essence of how that type of researcher operates, to seek ways to explain what is happening as it emerges from the transcribed page in front of him. It is not a quest to 'confirm' cultural stereotypes or profiles, but an open-minded attempt to trace possible relationships which help the researcher (and the staff and teachers) understand how discourse with the individual interviewee is 'shaped' by various criteria.

This understanding of the discourse is one which accepts that there is a "joint meaning-making" influenced greatly by power relations existing between the participants (Shi-Xu and Wilson 2001: 80) in the intercultural context of the interview. However, contrary to Shi-Xu and Wilson (ibid.), my methodological choice of tools seeks to explain the turn-taking behaviour between the interviewer and interviewee in terms of individual idiosyncrasies and overlying cultural criteria. An example of this could be the high number of breakdown occurrences for one question being traced back to my original wording as formulated in the semi-structured interviews (A10). If it appears to be a common occurrence for one question among the interviews as a whole, the reaction in turn-taking of the interviewee(s) to that question is perhaps a consequence of, firstly, my own competence in question formulation, but also, secondly, of other possible factors, such as the language learning histories of the interviewees or certain face-threatening issues associated with Thai cultural criteria. The connections and relationships should be viewed from a variety of perspectives, and the research tools associated with them are to be viewed, literally, as a potential, but not obligatory, means to aid in that process. This leads the researcher to be aware that no presumptions should be made when seeking inter-relationships (the presumption, that is, that the tools must provide an explanation to every element occurring in the interview discourse.) Indeed, it may occur that no feasible explanations may be found using the tools of analysis available, at which point it is necessary to recognise the limitations of those tools and prepare, or seek, the creation of new ones.

As previously mentioned, the main objective of this study should be to explain talk-in-interaction. If that can be achieved by use of one tool from the same set of

research tools, or a combination of tools from both, then that focus on intercultural conversation analysis has provided a real justification for what is seemingly an unstructured methodology.

The last section in the description of the methodology will return to the original research questions. This is an appropriate time to remind ourselves of these questions as the data analysis thereafter must specifically be oriented to addressing them. The amount of data to be presented is, potentially, too great for the scope we have in this study, so it is important to retain a focus on what is originally intended for presentation in that section.

7.2 Research questions revisited: maintaining the original direction

Finally, in the description of my methodology, I would like to return to the original direction of the study. In doing so, it is important to pause to consider what clear concepts – the research questions – are actually being addressed in the analysis. Looking back at those questions we must remember the **two primary areas**: the assessment of how effective the chosen coding system has been in helping us 'read' the transcripts and also to what extent the loose amalgamation of tools of analysis carried over from the original learning strategies and turn-taking research have been helpful in interpreting whatever jumps out from the transcribed page to the researcher. This means that the two main questions are the judgement of effectiveness of research tools – the coding systems representing what I have selected *now* to investigate turn-taking and the "layers of insight" representing what were *historically* and *currently* useful.

But how can effectiveness be assessed ? Is it a matter of praising the tools if any insights are revealed with their use as if no other methodology existed to gain insights into turn-taking behaviour ? Simpler methods exist other than those chosen to combine a variety of present and past tools and represent them under the 'emergent' label. It is perhaps a matter more of practicality when viewing how to assess these tools, meaning that the judgement can only be made by becoming aware of what tools were available to the researcher. Turn-taking coding research seems to have reached an impasse since the work of Tsui (1994), yet the quality of those tools (from Tsui 1994 and Francis and Hunston 1992) can be assessed critically in the here and now. The use of carried-over historical tools from learning strategies research is to be assessed in a different light, that is, by comparing the particular learning strategies questions and interview structure (semi-structured) to other forms of interviewing technique and other means to gather insightful data on learning strategies. For example, would a written questionnaire have yielded more insights as to student strategies and have been less face-threatening than interviewing ? At that point though, we need to return to the overlying objective of conducting research with students in order to improve the college's learning –teaching process. Our research questions are a means of addressing that issue. Simply asking the question as to how effective the whole research exercise has been in improving the quality of educational provision in the college would be posing a question which required an intermediary stage of inquiry, that of looking at the effectiveness of the combination of historical and current research tools. The judgement of that effectiveness is subsequently an essential part of one of the various ways in which a school can seek improvement.

The next part of this thesis turns to the research findings. It will follow the aforementioned steps of analysis, employing the 'layers of insight' metaphor, to see what emerges within individual interviews and from them as a whole.

PART C: Research Findings

Synopsis

This part of the study will present some of the main findings of my research following the two step process outlined in the Methodology. In brief, this process focuses firstly on the learning strategies research (step 1) which acts as a reminder to the researcher of the original purpose of the interviews. It then progresses to the research of the turn-taking features of those interviews in step 2. Both steps involve the metaphorical 'placement' of the various research tools, termed as 'layers of insight', onto the interview transcripts. This placement, as described in the methodology section, is intentionally eclectic in nature and it is intended that insights into the interview discourse will be revealed in an exploratory manner, rather than by means of a standardised sequence when applying the research tools.

After each of these two steps, I have decided to stand back from the potentially large amount of data gathered by the 'layers of insight' and enter into a reflective "dialogue" (Kvale 1996: 182) with myself. The same standardised questions are to be asked after each step serving the purpose of allowing me to view my findings objectively. Without this opportunity, I feel unable to gain an overall clear perspective on what the findings may be showing on both an individual or collective basis. These "dialogue questions" (Kvale ibid.) also create a degree of standardisation to my methodology, perhaps lacking if only the 'layers of insight' are applied. The following figure outlines the two steps involved in the process of analysing the data with the 'layers of insight' and "dialogue questions".

Figure 7: Process of data representation

Step 1: Learning strategies

- *Reread A1 transcript referring to A9 Interview field notes.*
- *Review each interviewee's "crystallisations" (A6)*
- *Compare with the others' learning strategies (A7) and English language learning histories (A8): note any differences/similarities along with idiosyncrasies and patterns within the interview*
- *"Dialogue" question:*

"How are this interviewee's language learning strategies different to those of the others?" *Note any observations.*

↓

Step 2: Turn-taking

- *Reread A1 transcript referring to the three ranks of the rank scale for each interview.*
- *Examine the exchange sequences (A2) and refer to the Interview Summaries (A3) and Turn-Taking Trends (A4) for each interview and across the interviews: note the individual aspects and compare them to the collective: note any observations both individual and collective.*
- *Refer to the Thai cultural criteria (A5) and note any significant aspects.*
- *"Dialogue" questions:*

"What is of note about the turn-taking behaviour of both participants in this interview?" "Are any of these observations to be explained by the semi-structured interview format?" (A10) "Are these observations repeated among the other participants?" "To what extent is this interviewee's level of awareness of learning strategies influential in the turn-taking behaviou ?" "Is the 'voice' of the interviewee/interviewer as represented in the turn-taking coding consistent throughout the interview(s) ?" *Note any observations.*

For the purpose of this section, I will present the findings of the first ten coded interviews. Originally, twenty interviews were conducted and transcribed. There is, however, not sufficient space in this study to present all of them. As a consequence of these limitations, findings from the first ten interviews conducted between July and August 1999 will be given according to both stages of the two-step analysis outlined above in Figure 7.

Chapter 8 Analysis of the ten interviews

The first chapter in the Research Findings looks at the main findings from the analysis of the ten coded interviews. All ten have been analysed in a similar fashion. This process involves the two steps, firstly that of applying the 'layers of insight' associated with the learning strategies research, and secondly of applying the 'layers of insight' which investigate the turn-taking features of the spoken discourse. Both steps have their own "dialogue" questions (Kvale 1996: 182) which are to be employed in a standardised manner for each interview in addition to the more eclectic application of the 'layers of insight'.

In the first section of this chapter, I will firstly present important findings from step 1 on the learning strategies research, especially those which are potentially important for turn-taking behaviour. That choice in itself is problematic because it involves intrinsically a decision to include or discard large areas of data already collected. All this information gathered was, at the time, important for a different purpose, that of gaining insights into the learning-teaching process affecting each student interviewed. The solution perhaps is to select commonalities and outstanding differences in this body of information to retain and use for consideration in the analysis in step 2 of turn-taking behaviour. This selection is presented below.

8.1 Step 1: Learning strategies

One of the first observations in step 1 was that there was not one common background educationally among the interviewees. With regard to the use of

the language learning experiences (A8), Burin (A1.2), Mingmanee (A1.7), Nawarat (A1.8) and Komkrit (A1.9) are seen to have come directly from secondary school and also had had little exposure to native speakers in their English lessons before entering the English pre-sessional. Some others had similar backgrounds educationally but had taken private language tuition (Serm A1.6 and Kik A1.4) and another group (Orathai A1.3, Sangdaew A1.5, and Prapaporn A1.10) had been to either university or taken tertiary courses previously. This meant that there was some divergence in awareness about various language learning strategies and, naturally, competence in communicating in English with native speakers.

It should be stressed at this point that the concept of divergence in strategies is not related to the assessment of whether those strategies are considered to be correct or false ones in the interviewer's eyes. It is also not a question of simply dividing the students into broad groups of those experienced with native speakers in interaction and those who are not, and then to correlate that experience with awareness of learning strategies. Those with less experience in this respect, for example, Rungnapa (A1.1), Burin (A1.2), Nawarat (A1.8) and Komkrit (A1.9), did not necessarily exhibit less awareness about how they learned English or were taught the language compared to those who had been exposed to native speaker lessons at higher levels (college or university). Rungnapa, for example (A1.1) showed great confidence in her ability to manage her own studies. Burin (A1.2) was extremely sure, when asked how to learn English, that singing was a good strategy. In contrast, Orathai (A1.3), a more experienced student from university, had great difficulty in expressing her own self-management strategies and could not expand upon what she termed as

the "special system in my head". In brief, the awareness of strategy choice did not necessarily relate to educational experience in English language learning.

Of some note were some observations in the data which ran contrary to my expectations about Thai students' attitudes about collaboration in the classroom and the concept of autonomy in learning. My expectation that such, perhaps new, modes of learning would be regarded positively by interviewees was not uniform among those interviewed. Although some students expressed their enthusiasm for collaboration as it aided comprehension and allowed, as Burin (A1.2) stated, strong students to help the weaker ones, others such as Mingmanee (A1.7), Komkrit (A1.9) and Prapaporn (A1.10) expressed great scepticism about working with "lazy" students who may take advantage of those who worked harder on a task. Those who doubted the effectiveness of collaboration were from both experienced and inexperienced backgrounds in terms of native speaker classroom exposure.

One topic area which has perhaps a more obvious connection with turn-taking behaviour is that of classroom questioning. In this question, number five (Appendix 10), when asked whether asking questions directly to the teacher in class was regarded as being positive, most interviewees replied that it was a good habit to practise. This wilingness to initiate a question could be construed as being an indicator of the students' confidence to speak out in classroom (and interview) settings and so I felt encouraged that students advocated its practice. My enthusiasm was slightly tempered by the comments from some students, particularly Nawarat (A1.8), who stressed that it is important to ask only "relevant" questions in class and Mingmanee

(A1.7) who added that questions in class were acceptable as long as the answer could not be found in the text being used at the time. Burin (A1.2) commented that he did not yet possess the confidence to ask questions in class, giving the impression that to do so constituted a potential face-threatening act to the teacher. In contrast, Serm (A1.6) explained how his habit of regular questioning directly to the teacher in his secondary school was regarded as unique and perhaps strange by other students.

Overall, the data collected for this topic revealed a willingness to initiate questions in class and an understanding of the practicality of doing so for comprehension, yet also showed the underlying tentativeness of students who wished to do so and how they might potentially be regarded by their peers if that initiation were deemed as being in some way time-wasting or irrelevant.

Finally, among the large amount of data collected, one small response from Mingmanee (A1.7) about Thai and native speaker teachers in interaction with their students seemed most insightful. She felt that Thai teachers had an instinct for understanding when Thai students needed to be helped or counselled and that foreign teachers, in contrast, expected students to approach them if they required help. These comments suggested that Thai students in difficulty were possibly not accustomed to approaching authority figures as they believed that their concerns, and comprehension of classroom input, would be instinctively predicted. This has great implications for further discussion of homogeneity and passive behaviour among Thai students and may help to explain lack of initiations in classroom settings involving Thai students and non-Thai teachers, the latter of whom may not possess Mingmanee's 'instinct' to

predict their non-comprehension or concerns.

Further issues directly referring to learning strategies will be raised in step 2, but it is felt that those issues outlined in step 1 may encapsulate some of the most important areas of commonality and idiosyncrasies observed. I will now turn to step 2 and its analysis of the turn-taking behaviour of the ten students whose interviews were coded.

8.2 Step 2: Turn-taking

As my primary perspective in this conversation analysis concerns the turn-taking behaviour of the participants, I will analyse the interview data collected with the aid of various 'layers of insight': the A1 coded transcripts, A2 exchange sequences, A3 Interview summaries, A4 turn-taking trends and A5 Thai cultural criteria. Since there are a variety of perspectives which emerge from the use of these tools, I shall firstly describe the findings from the exchange sequence (Initiation, Response and Feedback moves), commencing with the interviewer's Initiating and Feedback moves and turn then to the interviewees' responding moves. After this, various issues emanating from the placement of the Thai cultural criteria 'layer" onto the data will be described. Then I will provide the findings concerning interviewee interruptions and communicative breakdown, after which finally a number of miscellaneous issues concerning turn-taking, coding and the semi-structured nature of the interview format will be provided.

I will firstly investigate the findings emerging from the exchange rank

of the rank scale, commencing with the interviewer's Initiating and Feedback moves and moving thereafter to the interviewees' Responding move.

8.2.1 Exchange level sequences

The turn-taking perspective for the interviewer's language focuses on the *I* (Initiation) and *F* (Feedback) moves. This is not to indicate that the turn-taking was one in which the interviewee was only active in the role of providing the second *R* (Responding) move, although, upon investigation, the majority of sequences at least involved the interviewer as providing the research question (*I*) and the interviewees as providing responses (*R*) to those questions. This predominance of the three-part IRF exchange sequence seems to mirror, at first sight, the turn-taking interaction expected in "low contingency" (van Lier 1996) classroom interaction. The feedback move was mostly made by the interviewer, yet it should be stated that this move was at times absent, resulting in strings of sequences following an *I – R – I – R* pattern, especially, as can be seen from the exchange sequences in Appendix 2, for question 4. This intended lengthy topic area involved discussion of various specific learning strategies, as opposed to the other nine questions which had fewer questions and prompts. In this sense, question 4`s relative absence of feedback moves could possibly be connected with the semi-structured interview format. I will now look in turn at the interviewer`s initiating move (*I*) and feedback move (*F*) in more detail.

8.2.2 Interviewer's initiating move

When tracing the initiation moves as shown in Tsui's (1994) taxonomy, it is clear that the representation provided in that taxonomy, although apparently

comprehensive, does not show the difference between an open and a closed question and the varieties of closed question which can be made. To rectify this, I have created 'windows' in the exchange sequences to illustrate the lower ranks of the 'rank scale', that is the moves and acts as taken from Francis and Hunston's (1992) coding taxonomy. This is shown in the interview with Burin (A1.2) in question 2 where three closed initiations are given 'windows' which show that, although all the initiations were coded as "eliciting" moves, they took on the form of '*n.pr'* acts (closed yes/no questions) and an '*m.pr'* act (tag question). Using this information at the lowest rank of act to help analyse the initiations made by the interviewer across the interviews proves to be useful in tracing larger trends in the type of initiating moves made.

Tracing the initiating moves (*I*) in isolation in terms of the acts made within them is one of the trends illustrated in the turn-taking trends in A4. From this, it can firstly be seen that open questions in the form of '*inq*' (inquiry) acts and closed questions in the form of '*n.pr'* (neutral proposals seeking yes or no answers) or '*m.pr'* (marked proposals seeking confirmation with tag questions) were asked in proportion in the first six interviews. However, from interview 7 with Mingmanee to interview 10 with Prapaporn, there was a clear trend towards asking more open questions in proportion to closed ones. It should be noted that initiations in earlier interviews had a equal proportion of open to closed questions despite different lengths of interviews in terms of number of turns. In retrospect, my initial reaction to this difference between the first six and the last four interviews was that those students receiving a proportionately higher number of open questions could be viewed as having more conceptual awareness of learning strategies and therefore could respond to opening

initiations in great length without the interviewer using prepared prompts. This view should be slightly tempered by viewing the actual transcripts which reveal that expansions to open or closed questions were made by a broad range of interviewees, not just those with experience with native speakers or those with awareness of their own strategy use.

My second observation concerning this stage of the exchange sequence is that the interviewer tended to move away from the scripted opening to certain questions. This "framing" of the initiation in questions 5 and 7 was given a longer explanatory pre-amble to enable the interviewees to better understand the context of the question. Question 5 concerned teachers and their influence and status as perceived by the students. It was scripted as "Did you use to ask your previous teachers many questions?" but, due to some perhaps linguistic and conceptual difficulties experienced by those interviewed early, especially Rungnapa and Burin, I instinctively made the decision mid-interview to re-frame the initiation to include more background context to the perhaps rather abrupt original initiation. It was changed in this instance to the following for Burin's interview (A1.2):

"Oh…well now let's think about your teachers at secondary school. Did you use to ask them any questions in class?"

Question 7 followed the same pattern, in that the original scripted version which had a short "framing" of "Your teachers will all be foreigners" was gradually supplemented by the longer pre-amble of, as can be illustrated in Serm's interview (A1.6):

"OK, moving on now to the next question, I'd like to ask you about foreign teachers and Thai teachers…".

This exhibited a trend towards clearer demarcation between questions at the exchange boundaries than originally scripted and, as in question 5, a clearer explanation of the topic area to be discussed. This extension of the "framing" tended to occur after the first two interviews with Rungnapa and Burin.

8.2.3 Interviewer`s feedback move

Analysis of the third common move associated with the interviewer, the feedback move, shows that there were fluctuations in the various types of feedback which were given, namely acknowledging feedback (non-evaluative, such as "I see"), endorsing feedback (evaluative, such as "That's a good idea"), or turn-passing (feedback which is either acknowledging or endorsing but which has the objective of passing the floor back to the interviewee, such as "OK" followed by a short pause). The amount of all types of feedback increased when the interviews were of greater length in terms of turns. Endorsing feedback seemed to be employed after responses which the interviewer agreed with personally, as this researcher felt that over-endorsement could lead to a replication of classroom-style turn-taking (Nassaji and Wells 2000), so conscious efforts were made to revert back to non-evaluative acknowledging feedback in subsequent questions and interviews. This was not always achieved and the resulting pattern of fluctuation in endorsing and acknowledging feedback across the interviews appears to be inconsistent. Interestingly, most endorsement was employed in latter interviews with the more aware and linguistically

competent interviewees. On close investigation of the effect of providing endorsement, the fear that Nassaji and Wells (ibid.) express of eventual suppression of extended responses if classroom-like turn-taking is replicated is not substantiated in my interview data. In fact, looking at Sangdaew`s interview (A1.5) shows that her responses were actually extended from '*i*' (informative) acts to '*com*' (comment) acts even after endorsing feedback was given. With this unexpected extension of responses in mind, there may have been a subconscious reversal of my policy to avoid endorsing feedback in subsequent interviews. In fact, the next interview with Serm (A1.6) did involve more endorsing feedback, yet it must also be noted that the number of turns in that interview at 137 far exceeded the 87 in Sangdaew`s interview, showing that the greater number of turns led to a greater likelihood that endorsing feedback would occur.

Moving onto turn-passing feedback, coded as *F2*, no clear pattern emerges as when the interviewer was likely to use it most. The greater the number of turns were involved in an interview, as with Serm (A1.6) for example, led to a large number of turn-passing moves to be recorded. More was seen in some later interviews from interview 5 with Orathai onwards but deductions for its usage should be made tentatively as the educational background, exposure to native speaker interaction and turn-taking behaviour during the interviews themselves of those students remain quite divergent.

Finally, viewing across the interviews for all the instances of feedback, whether acknowledging, endorsing or turn-passing, or a combination of

them, raises the issue of determining when feedback is likely to occur. As has been mentioned previously in this section, question 4's lengthy topic of learning strategies brought about some instances of strings of Initiation – Response moves in which feedback was left out. Apart from this, there are other occasions in the discourse where I presume that feedback would be present. Taking the interviewer's requests for clarification in communicative breakdown sequences sometimes supports this assumption, as in Sangdaew's (A1.5) interview for question 5 on asking questions in class:

No, because at school I am shy and I don't like to show.	R+ve
To show?	**Ie:clarify**
Yes, to show myself before the class.	R+ve
I see, OK. And what…..	**F acknowledge/Iei**

In contrast, though, some interviewer requests for clarification are not followed by this expected feedback before the next initiation, as coded above by Iei (Initiation elicitation informing.) This is shown in the second interview with Burin (A1.2) in question 1 on previous English language learning experiences:

Oh, no games, T.V. …just talking	R+ve
Just talking, in English ?	**Ie:clarify**
Yes.	R+ve
Was your teacher Thai or foreign ?	**Iei**

In this case above, this absence appears abrupt in sequences where clarification is

given to an interviewer's request. This lack of the third turn pragmatically is clearly not necessary to conform to the interviewer's sense of "well-formedness" (Stubbs 1981 as cited in Taylor and Cameron 1987:77) in this particular instance. However, this is done without consideration of what constitutes the "communicative norms" (Briggs 1986) of the interviewee who may have expected some form of feedback and may therefore consider the exchange to be, in some sense, incomplete or 'ill-formed'. Considering the subsequent trend in question 4 in which frequent *I-R* sequences were observed, there may exist the danger that this repeated absence of feedback presents a source of confusion to an interviewee unaccustomed to native speaker interaction, especially one who is used to responses being immediately evaluated in classroom settings.

In brief, the turn-taking features of type of initiation (open or closed) and feedback (endorsing, acknowledging or turn-passing), as traced in the turn-taking trends (A4), all show great fluctuation across the interviews. Some patterns can be tentatively traced to the interviewees' educational background and awareness of strategies and there may be some degree of influence from one interview to the subsequent ones in the interviewer's turn-taking behaviour. Issues arise, particularly with the absence of the interviewer's feedback move in question 4, concerning the effect this may have on interviewees expecting a classroom-like third move to conform to their sense of "well-formedness" (Stubbs 1981 as cited in Taylor and Cameron 1987:77). This possible insensitivity to interviewee expectations may have contributed to their sense of being ill-at-ease in the interview setting, especially for

those unused to one-to-one interaction with native speakers. Quite significantly, it raises the larger issue of to what extent the interviewer should research local "communicative norms" (Briggs 1986) before embarking upon research interviews in this context.

8.2.4 Interviewee responses

Turning to the interviewees' turn-taking behaviour, I will now attempt to ascertain whether there are any significant patterns within individual interviews and across them. If responses are taken as an indicator of such patterns, as initiations and feedback were for the interviewer, then it is firstly to be noted that the vast majority of interviewee turn-taking behaviour adopted the form of positive responding moves which provided information as elicited by the interviewer's initiations. Consequently, the objectives of the interviews themselves, that of providing valuable information on learning strategies to help teachers and students understand more about Thai students, seemed to have been understood, especially as the pre-interview stage involved an explanation of the research objectives. This created the interview context of the interviewer not taking the role of "primary knower" (Berry 1981) as in classroom interaction. In contrast, this role, that of the "knower", was played by the interviewee. This is an important point to note in terms of status and role relations during the discourse and how it may possibly affect turn-taking and "voice" (Bakhtin 1981 as cited in Block 2000), as the normally prevalent relationship between the two participants was one which was created in the English language classroom where the role of "knower" was played by the teacher.

This "hangover" (McCarthy 1991) from the classroom is significant in terms of Thai cultural expectations of the interaction with any higher authority figure, in that the "voice" of the student, in this case, the interviewee, may revert to classroom-style turn-taking behaviour. If classroom-style turn-taking behaviour is passed over into the interview setting in this case, then the type of responses may typically mirror those associated with their most immediate classroom experiences. These experiences, especially for those directly from secondary school in Thailand, are typified by a turn-taking behaviour in which low "contingency" (van Lier 1996) and accuracy of response are favoured. This influence was evident in Burin's (A 1.2) responses which were sparse and took the "*n.pr*" (yes/no questions) literally in that he did not expand upon his simple yes or no "*i*" (informative) act replies. In contrast though, others, directly from secondary school, those with tertiary experience and those with outside private language school experiences were all most willing to expand from "*i*" to "*com*" acts (informative to comment acts). This contradicts the sparse nature of response expected from those directly from secondary school and can be seen in the performance of Nawarat (A1.7), who only months before the interview had graduated from secondary school and had had little exposure previously to native-speaker interaction. He was observed to readily expand upon his responses despite some linguistic difficulties in doing so as in the following extract from question 1:

And was there any conversation ?	**Iei**	**eliciting**	**n.pr**
Yes (smiles) sometimes she try and.. yes …very nice…I enjoy…enjoyed this. And games too…sometimes we play games like hangman for spelling and vocabulary	R+ve	informing	i…com

In general, the trend towards expansion of response among some students requires perhaps a different 'layer of insight' to be placed upon the data to act as an alternative source of explanation. This layer is one which looks at the interaction from the viewpoint of Thai cultural criteria and will be presented after this section.

In addition to these observations on expansion of interviewee responses, there are other turn-taking issues which should be noted. One concerns the ability of the researcher to ascertain the difference between responses which exhibit linguistic or conceptual difficulties on the part of the interviewee. Although tentativeness in response can be coded at the act level as "*qu*" (qualify) and the inability to respond or continue as *R-ve* at the exchange level, the taxonomies of Tsui (1994) and Francis and Hunston (1992) employed in this study do not provide a code which shows whether a response exhibits some linguistic or conceptual difficulty. Although an indication of lexical problems may be apparent from an interviewee request for clarification, it does not necessarily immediately show to the interviewer that miscomprehension has arisen on a linguistic or conceptual level. This is illustrated in Sangdaew's (A1.5) interview in the use in question 10 of "organisation" where it is not clear whether the interviewee has lexical difficulty or does not conceptually understand how she should respond to this topic:

And finally, Sangdaew, I'd like to talk about your organisation in your studies	**Iei**	**Framing/ opening**	**fr/ms**
My organisation ?	R-ve/Ie:clarify	eliciting	ret
Yes, I mean how you write your notes, if you keep your note-books and files in good order.. things like that.	**R+ve**	**informing**	**i**
Oh, I see. I have different note-books…many note-books and files for now.. and before.	R+ve	informing	m/i

In this example, not only is there difficulty in assessing this linguistic or conceptual difference in the interviewees' responses, but also, as a consequence, in knowing how to effectively re-phrase the original initiation. In the above, my re-phrasal repairs the breakdown by a conceptual explanation of "organisation" which could also serve as a lexical definition in terms of metacognitive skills. It is quite feasible, though, that the split-second decision in how to re-phrase the initiation could be wrong, in that, for example, the lexical terms used are literally understood but the conceptual meaning, i.e. how the interviewee should respond, is not.

This issue of interpreting interviewee responses in terms of their comprehension, or lack of it, can be extended to instances in which some responses may have actually been falsely given under the guise of comprehension. Nawarat (A1.8) in particular exhibited the tendency to provide a response which proved to be tentative, as in question 4:

When I have no time.. or when I know maybe the basic	R+ve	informing	i
…get the… story…(unsure how to continue)	R-ve	informing	qu

In this case, which is not untypical of several interviewees, Nawarat changes from initially providing what is an ostensibly informative reply. It then becomes apparent that he is unable to continue due to either linguistic or conceptual difficulties. In another instance, the same interviewee, in question 4 on specific learning strategies use at school, gives a response which changes from an initial *R-ve* to *R+ve* within a turn, i.e. he has changed from non-comprehension or inability to respond to being able to provide some positive response.

(thoughtful look)..I …don't know… but maybe.	R-ve…R+ve	informing	qu…i

We should naturally bear in mind that this may represent a genuine switch to comprehension mid-turn, yet may also be accounted for by the pressure to give "preferred" (Tsui 1994) responses to an authority figure, in which case Thai cultural criteria may also play a role in influencing the interviewee in this context.

Responses must also be seen from the perspective of the coding taxonomies employed to describe them. In this respect, the responding moves as provided by the interviewees can fall into the two categories at the exchange rank of positive (R+ve) or negative replies (R-ve). These simple denotations alone require further information about their functional nature at the move and act ranks, hence the additional coding by Francis and Hunston (1992). When the response takes the form of a simple informing move, the move and act rank denotations of "informing" and '*i*' (inform) clearly overlap and could be regarded as providing redundant information. However, when the positive response is extended, the variety of information provided

at the act rank proves to add more insights into the discourse, as is illustrated in the following examples (from A1.9 question 4 and A1.9 question 5 respectively):

Yes, but sometimes I still nervous.	R+ve	informing	conf/com

Never, nobody ask a question in English class (grimaces to emphasise "nobody")	R+ve	informing	i(react)

In both cases, the response is represented at the exchange rank as a positive reply (*R+ve*) and at the move rank as providing an "informing" response. This does not sufficiently show that the move, in the first instance, is extended and, in the second, that a non-verbal gesture (a grimace) is used for emphasis. The act denotations in such cases of *conf* (confirm), *com* (comment) and *react* (reaction) more accurately represent the actual discourse, showing the limitations of coding at only the exchange and move ranks.

Other instances of exchange sequence coding at the response stage, with a little adaptation, can prove more useful. Taking the negative responding move of *R-ve* as an example, utterances which fail to reply or show an inability to reply are sufficiently represented at the exchange level with *R-ve* standing alone. However, when the negative response takes the form of a question, I have added Tsui's (1994) initiation codings to supplement the representation. This is illustrated in various breakdown sequences in which the interviewee (and interviewer) have asked for clarification, confirmation or repetition of the original initiation. In such cases, the combination of, for example, *R-ve/Ie:clarify* serve to illustrate that a response can take the form of an elicitation, as noted by Francis and Hunston (1992). More examples of

this extra coding will be discussed in section 8.2.7 on communicative breakdown.

As there have been numerous cases in the collected data of the potential influence of culturally-related criteria on the discourse, I will now turn specifically to the analysis of the interviews according to the Thai cultural criteria (A4).

8.2.5 Thai cultural criteria

For this part of the analysis I will refer to the specifically Thai cultural criteria as outlined by Mulder (1996) from the familiar realm (*khuna*) to the outside, less familiar circles of interaction (*decha*) among Thais and their related concepts as discussed in Chapter four of the literature review in Part A.

In terms of the extended responses given by many of the interviewees, this unexpected willingness among the less experienced interviewees (those with little exposure to native speakers) is naturally difficult to explain in a generalised manner. There is, at this point, the opportunity to refer to the Thai cultural factors, described in detail for each interviewee in A5, which may possibly have some bearing on this apparent enthusiasm to expand from '*i*' to '*com*' (informative to comment acts) in interviewee responses. The concept of forming a relationship which shows respect and a sense of obligation to an authority figure - a *bunkhun* relationship - is typically one which exists between student and teacher in Thai educational or workplace settings. This requires the student or junior figure to earn favour or merit (*bun*) in interaction with the superior. This merit will be recognised and repaid forming a continuous

mutually reciprocal sense of obligation towards one another. The fact that the superior, in this case the interviewer, requested a favour (for information on learning strategies) from the student created a chance to start the *bunkhun* relationship which then may explain the willingness to expand. Clearly, this represents one possible perspective on such expansions. To imagine that turn-taking behaviour is always to be explained by generalised Thai cultural criteria is potentially dangerous and other more idiosyncratic reasons should be pursued. It is interesting to note that Burin's (A1.2) inability, lack of willingness or awareness that expansions are part of the illocutionary intention of some closed questions runs contrary to all cultural explanations involving *bunkhun*. Issues arise as to whether previous low contingency turn-taking behaviour from the Thai classroom created a "hangover" (McCarthy 1991) for Burin which prevented nothing but the briefest responses being provided. This must also be viewed as a possible explanation for sparse responses, since only months previous to the interview Burin would have been participating in classroom interaction in large classes where short accurate responses were viewed as preferable to longer expansions. In Burin's eyes, his own turn-taking behaviour may have been actually appropriate according to his experiences, indeed according to how his previous English teacher expected him to respond. Following this argument, his short responses may have been his attempt to earn merit, *bun*.

If the interviewees' turn-taking behaviours are further viewed according to Thai cultural criteria, the *khuna – decha* continuum portraying Thai relationships (Mulder 1996) can be employed as a visual means to envisage fluctuations in the state of the interviewer-interviewee relationship throughout the

interview. In a similar way to how the interview can be viewed as a speech event along the speech event continuum by Sacks et al (1974), I would argue that interviewee participation in the interview as a speech event can be seen as varying from interviewee to interviewee and also within interviews. Taking Serm's (A1.6) turn-taking behaviour as an example of how such fluctuations can occur within an interview, it was observed that he, at times, used quite informal means to seek confirmation or clarification of the interviewer's initiation, such as tag questions using "right ?". Whether this was intended as being informal, and therefore showing elements of less formal interaction as is expected in relationships in the *khuna* realm, is open to debate. Nevertheless, the interviewer construed such turn-taking behaviour as more typical of interaction in that less formal *khuna* realm. That perception, despite its subjectivity, influences the interviewer's overall perception of Serm's turn-taking behaviour. At other times in the interview, Serm reverted to the use of "sir" and showed more of a sense of *krenengklua* (awe, respectful fear) in his body language, nodding respectfully after the interviewer's initiation was made or re-initiated. These smaller signs lead me to suggest that Serm at times moved into turn-taking behaviour typical of less formal relationships, and then reverted back to the more formal *decha* realm.

Finally, it should be noted that the use of Thai cultural criteria is intended mostly to help explain elements of the spoken discourse. This is typically a stance adopted by the conversation analyst in which the analysis of the talk-in-interaction comes first and the contextual features of the talk are seen as a means to explain the idiosyncrasies of that talk. In light of this, I have attempted to maintain

that premise when applying Thai cultural criteria to explain the turn-taking of these particular interviews. However, there is the temptation to literally break this premise of creating a "context-free yet context-sensitive" (Silverman 1993:141) analysis and bring some criteria to the foreground of consideration and work backwards to seek elements of turn-taking to identify with the chosen contextual features. By this re-direction itself, the original conversation analyst's rule-bound approach of looking at context as a means to explain talk is theoretically broken. At this point, I would argue that the concepts in Mulder's (1996) *khuna – decha* array would tend to be neglected if this stance were strictly adhered to. Working backwards by using cultural context as a 'foreground' consideration could be regarded as an extension of my proposed eclectic use of 'layers of insight'. Indeed, if taking some Thai cultural criteria to seek out whether they occur or not within the discourse actually reveals something more in the discourse than the typical conversation analyst's approach of working primarily without context, as in Silverman's "context-free" (ibid.) description, then working backwards can be justified.

To illustrate this reversal of approach, let us consider the concept of *sam ruam* (restraint/calm under pressure). *Sam ruam* has barely been referred to as an explanatory aspect for any turn-taking patterns, yet if one investigates the occurrence of this concept from the perspective of a linguistic anthropologist (for instance, Duranti 1997), the researcher gains new insights into the turn-taking. This is shown by looking back at the transcripts and the various tools available, especially the bracketed notes on body language in the A1 coded transcripts themselves and the interview summaries (A3) in which notes are made concerning the interviewees' sense of being

ill-at-ease or relaxed. In practical terms, this analysis of the occurrence of *sam ruam* indicates that most males interviewed, with perhaps the exception of Serm (A1.7), all exhibited great difficulties in maintaining a sense of calm in the interview setting. Burin (A1.2), Nawarat (A1.8) and Komkrit (A1.9) were all noted to be visibly nervous throughout the interaction, whereas most females displayed more control over these affective factors and tended to smile more frequently than the males. It is not my objective to investigate the gender-related issues clearly at play in these instances, yet the foundation to conduct further studies in this area is shown to emanate from the fact that *sam ruam* as a concept was looked at from the perspective of a linguistic anthropologist, not a conversation analyst. In terms of how the pressure of the interview affects interviewees' turn-taking, *sam ruam* could then be traced to aspects of interaction which could possibly justify its presence or absence among those males and females interviewed. For example, most males showing nerves did not overlap the interviewer's speech and two of the ostensibly more nervous males (Nawarat A1.8 and Komkrit A1.9) showed some propensity to expand their responses whenever possible. In contrast, though, Burin (A1.2) exhibited his inability to control his *sam ruam* by giving short, accurate answers with little expansion. This shows that no clear commonality can be seen among male interviewees, however, individual idiosyncrasies for each interviewee nevertheless still can explain the same inability to control *sam ruam*.

I will now turn to the turn-taking issue of how the flow of the discourse between the two participants was stopped, that is, how it was interrupted by the interviewee. After this, the related issue of how the communication actually broke

down completely will be examined.

8.2.6 Interviewee interruptions

In terms of interviewee interruptions, the turn-taking behaviour of Sangdaew (A1.5) and Kik (A1.4), who both interrupted the interviewer, was perhaps not expected. To explain this, we should look at various features providing potential causes or influences to this aspect of turn-taking behaviour. Both had considerable experience of interaction with native speakers. In their interviews they quite abruptly interrupted the interviewer to continue their previous responses. These were expansions they felt necessary to make despite the fact that the interviewer was in mid-utterance, leading me to note this turn-taking behaviour as being exceptional compared to other students. Generally, there was little overlap initiated by all the interviewees and very rare incidents of interruption. Perhaps as overlap had not been prevalent preceding these incidents, their occurrence came as a surprise to the interviewer. From one perspective, they could be viewed as exhibitions of great enthusiasm to add to their expansions, thereby earning *bun* (merit). From another, they may represent increased awareness of more casual turn-taking norms associated with everyday conversation. These are typical more of interaction for Thais in the informal *khuna* realm where more *khwaampenkaneeng* (mutual informality) in familiar settings (with family and friends) is evident.

Overall though, these incidents were rare indicators of turn-taking behaviour associated with non-*decha* relationships, that is in informal speech events which have elements of more contingent interaction (van Lier 1996). They tended to

occur in interviews involving interviewees with more confidence linguistically and with experience of interaction with native speakers. Other students' turn-taking behaviour showed a consistent lack of overlap, interruption, and face-threatening challenges in the form of disagreement or prolonged breakdown. These indicate that the "voice" (Bakhtin 1981 as cited in Block 2000) of most students was fairly constant according to their expected turn-taking behaviour along the *khuna* - *decha* continuum. I will now turn more specifically to the next of the aforementioned aspects of turn-taking, communicative breakdown, which can be analysed in great detail.

8.2.7 Communicative breakdown

In terms of communicative breakdown sequences, the exchange sequences in Appendix 2 are useful in helping to trace the occurrence of breakdown across the interviews. It can be seen from this cross-interview representation, summarised in the turn-taking trends in A4, that breakdown took place most commonly in questions 1, 2 and 4, questions which concerned recalling information on learning and teaching styles before entering the college and teachers' methodologies. In questions 3, 7 and 9 breakdown was less likely to occur. These questions focused upon affective factors in learning English, the differences between Thai and foreign English teachers and attitudes towards collaborative learning. It could be surmised from this that it may have been easier for those interviewed to speak about topics which conceptually addressed their feelings of liking or disliking the issues in questions 3, 7 and 9. In contrast, questions 1, 2 and 4 required the interviewee to recall classroom-related behaviour, that is the actual strategies and

methodologies used by teachers and students. Such information is, as Field (1998) indicates, perhaps often subconscious and so cannot be drawn from memory as quickly as other issues discussed.

There are other issues which also potentially play a role in communicative breakdown. If we can ascertain where it occurs during the interview, as we have above, then the actual language used immediately before that breakdown occurs and who then actually stops the flow of the discourse, the interviewer or the interviewee, need also to be analysed. The language involved in the breakdown sequences recorded can be summarised as taking two forms, individual lexical items in the interview format which were not understood by the interviewees and expressions which, although not apparently linguistically difficult, posed some perhaps conceptual difficulties for the interviewees.

Those lexical items in the interview format causing breakdown included words such as “guess” or “guesser”, “by heart”, “memorise”, “strategies”, “essay”, “organise”, “well-organised”, “organisation” and “self-responsibility”. Taken individually, these items occurred as causes for interviewee requests for clarification in at least two interviews. This has implications, of course, for the interview format chosen, in that the vocabulary used to discuss topics even within their conceptual grasp may have led to unnecessary communicative breakdown.

Apart from lexical items breaking the flow of the discourse, there were occasions in which the topic, or the concept, under discussion caused some difficulties for the interviewees. This can be seen in a mixture of interviewee strategies to attempt

to regain comprehension. Of particular note were some clarification requests, coded as *Ie:clarify* (Initiation elicitation clarify in Tsui's 1994 taxonomy) in questions concerning the interviewees' recall of specific learning strategies employed before entering the college. Often the response to the opening elicitation in question 4 about "the best way to learn English" took the form of a repetition of that chunk of discourse with a rising tone, as is seen in A1.5 with Sangdaew and A 1.9 with Krit who both replied "The best way to learn English?" Others in the same question tried to seek confirmation in their responses, as with Prapaporn in A 1.10:

"So you mean how I do things in speaking, listening and the others?"

Other attempts to seek confirmation or clarification of understanding to the conceptual issue under discussion came in question 1 about previous learning experiences. Serm (in A 1.6) used a restatement of what he presumed the meaning of the question to be:

" Special methods, you mean like games?"

In question 2, Nawarat (A 1.8) used a similar strategy to seek clarification when asked about questions in the secondary school classroom:

"You mean when to ask the question?"

This repetition of the interviewer's question accompanied by "You mean" and ending with a rising intonation was a common strategy among students seeking conceptual understanding. Again, as with the record of lexical items commonly causing breakdown, these requests for confirmation or clarification of the interviewer's topic

should be noted as potential areas for reconsideration in interview format.

In terms of what language the interviewees themselves used which could be seen as cause for communicative breakdown, there appear to be no outstanding commonalities. The occasional use of the word "policy" in place of the interviewer's "strategies" was later discovered to be due to the common use of the English word "policy" in the Thai media both politically and generally.

The next issue concerning communicative breakdown focuses on who 'initiated' the breakdown. On viewing the exchange sequences (A2), it becomes apparent that the occurrence of communicative breakdown in itself is not necessarily the perfect indicator of how much of the discourse was not understood by the interviewees. The exchanges represented simply show the result of exchange rank coding, i.e. when breakdown actually, verbally, occurred. I would argue that there may have been more cases of breakdown as Thai cultural issues of *krengjai* (reticence to challenge authority figures) may have taken precedence over the desire to comprehend all that was discussed. This is evident in some of Nawarat's (A 1.8), occasional short and tentative responses, as in question 4:

"(thoughtful look)..I don't know…but maybe"

""Oh yes…I write for the teacher…yes…(unsure how to continue)"

If the exchange sequences are viewed from a quantitative perspective, then there were marginally more cases (32) of interviewee-initiated than interviewer-led breakdown (29). Interviewees initiated communicative breakdown by requesting

clarification (*Ie:clarify*), confirmation (*Ie:confirm*) or failing to respond (coded as the negative response *R-ve*) and the interviewer initiated breakdown mostly by seeking clarification or confirmation of the previous utterance.

It is interesting to note that the breakdown sequences were invariably short in interviewee-initiated breakdown. Usually the following sequence was seen :

Interviewer initiation – interviewee request for clarification or confirmation – interviewer re-initiation – interviewee acknowledgement of comprehension and response

Repair so commonly completed in four moves leads us to conclude either that the quality of the interviewer re-initiation in the third turn was consistently clarifying enough for true comprehension on the part of the interviewee, or that the interviewee was unwilling to continue the breakdown. This raises, again, the Thai cultural concept of *krengjai* which, if adhered to strictly by the Thai participant, would place pressure on the interviewee to avoid potentially embarrassing face-threatening incidents for someone in higher authority. The interviewee may have been confronted with the dilemma of wishing to provide genuinely informative responses, yet not wishing to cause a loss of face to the interviewer by prolonging breakdown sequences.

I will now conclude these research findings by examining the occurrence of miscellaneous features of turn-taking not addressed so far. They represent shorter, yet still potentially significant analyses of the interview data. For pure convenience I place them under the umbrella term of miscellaneous turn-taking elements.

8.2.8 Miscellaneous turn-taking elements

Several issues are investigated in this final section: interview length, the semi-structured interview format and the absence of a particular code. Firstly, the interview length itself is seen in terms of the number of turns taken to complete the interview. This does not necessarily mean that an interview with more turns than another is longer time-wise, as one turn may be longer than a number of short turns together. This can be illustrated by Burin's (A1.2) interview in which responding turns were often short and therefore required the use of all the scripted prompts in addition to numerous re-phrased initiations (and re-phrased prompts). Taking Orathai's (A1.3), Kik's (A1.4) and Sangdaew's (A1.5) interviews as examples, we can see that question 4 on learning strategies involved 18, 14 and 16 turns respectively, whereas Burin (A1.2) required 25 turns to complete that topic. Other students, noticeably all from interview 6 onwards with Serm (A1.6), all required more than 20 turns for the same topic, the largest number accounted for in Serm's (A1.6) and Komkrit's (A1.9) interviews, 33 and 34 turns respectively. This extraordinary number of turns in these two latter interviewees' cases cannot simply be traced to the same reasons of lack of comprehension and sparse responses as in Burin's (A1.2) interview. Both Serm and Komkrit tended to expand eagerly upon the interviewer's elicitations, whether in the form of open or closed questions, and tended to slightly shift the original topic. This is illustrated in Komkrit's (A1.9) response concerning reading strategies:

Yes, I mean, do you read every word?	**R+ve/Iei**	**eliciting**	**inq**
Oh, I see..no sometimes not every word. In English, difficult but I think same Thai.	R+ve	informing	i..com

So do you sometimes not read every word in Thai?	**F2acnow**	**acknow**	**ref**

Looking across the interviews in the exchange sequences representation (A2) and investigating the interviews with the longest number of turns involved, we can see that there is generally some divergence in the explanation for long interviews turn-wise. One explanation, as previously mentioned, is that some interviewees required many prompts and re-phrased initiations to be made. Another suggests that the willingness and ability of some interviewees to expand upon their responses to shift the topic resulted in the natural supplementation of the interviewer's scripted interview format, i.e. the interviewer followed the re-directed topic by means of non-scripted elicitations.

The second issue concerns the semi-structured interview format itself. The preceding analysis concerning interview length has partially touched upon this issue in its reference to the use of the interview format. Further to this point, though, it is necessary to remember that there was a significant shift in the proportion of open to closed questions used for elicitation purposes in the second half of the interviews analysed. Upon closer investigation, it is interesting to note that this change in questioning technique occurred with students interviewed at a later time. The first group of students were interviewed, as is explained in the account of the methodological considerations in Part B of this study, in July. Interviews from Serm (A1.6) could only be conducted from August onwards. This gap between the first and second groups appears to be significant in this shift, towards more open questions in

proportion to closed ones. It should be noted, however, that the interviews in this second group tended to be with students all willing to expand upon their responses and, as previously discussed, who in doing so shifted the topic direction slightly. When such shifts from the original interview format occurred, there was eventual 're-engineering' back towards the scripted topic by the interviewer. Before that occurred, however, there were deviations from the topic which nevertheless provided useful insights into student attitudes towards learning strategies and teaching methodologies, as is illustrated with Komkrit (A1.9) in question 6 on previous influential teachers:

OK, Krit. Tell me, who was your favourite teacher at school?	**Iei**	**framing/ opening**	**fr/ms**
At secondary school ?	R-ve//Ie:clarify	eliciting	ret
Yes, if you like.	**R+ve**	**informing**	**i**
I think…my maths teacher I like very much, because maths is real… (quite animated)	R+ve	informing	i…com
I see…what do you mean by "real"?	**Facknow/Ie:clarify**	**acknow/elicit**	**rec/ret**
I mean you can make… the calculate… calculation and the result not change…there is one answer.	R+ve	informing	i…com
OK, I'm getting the meaning now. That's interesting…how is that different to, say English?	**Facknow/ Iei**	**acknow/ elicit**	**rec/ obs/inq**
Oh, English (gestures very grandly with his arms stretched out) is very big…there are many ways to say something..	R+ve	informing	i (react) com
Yes, that's true..but is that good or not so good for you?	**Fend/Iei**	**acknow/ elicit**	**end/n.pr**
Sometimes not so good… because too many choices.	R+ve	informing	i….com

This deviation from the semi-structured interview format was productive to the learning strategies research in that it managed to gather valuable information on attitudes to learning and teaching. It is also interesting in this exchange that the three non-scripted elicitations by the interviewer after Komkrit's description of why he prefers learning maths take the form of two open questions ("What do you mean by 'real'?" and "how is that different to, say, English?") and one closed question ("is that good or not good for you?"). In this way, by following, the interviewer has also added to the number of open questions employed in that interview.

Finally, there are several instances of difficulties in coding exchanges where the interviewer completed an interviewee's lexical item mid-utterance due to pronunciation or lexical recall problems. The case of Orathai (A1.5) illustrates this when her response of "self-organi.." is completed by the interviewer and can only be coded as an *Ii:report* at the exchange rank, *informing* as a move and *i* as an act. Clearly, a new code is required for such instances.

A summary of the findings of the ten interviews is perhaps redundant at this stage of the study as it serves merely to repeat much of what has been presented in the data analysis. Instead, I will make that summary a part of my conclusions in the following section. The final chapter of the study will provide an opportunity to synthesise these main findings with the research objectives and the literature which addresses them. In this way, a more coherent, and concise, set of conclusions can be drawn.

Part D Conclusions

Synopsis

In this last part of the study, I attempt to firstly summarise the main findings of the data analysis according to the two step approach. This focuses firstly on a summary of the findings from the learning strategies research and then moves on to the findings from the turn-taking analysis. After these summaries, general conclusions are drawn focusing on the original research objectives and referring to issues raised in the literature review and methodology sections. Finally, I look at the implications this research has for interviewing in this context and then make some recommendations for further research. This last section on future research areas is particularly important in light of the commonly recurring theme of "emergent" research throughout the study. It is felt by this researcher that future avenues for exploration in the field of spoken discourse analysis, possibly with this same data, need to be outlined so that the overriding principle of 'returning to the data' at a later point in time can be upheld.

Chapter 9 Summary of the data analysis

The summary of the data covers all ten interviews which were transcribed and coded. Taking the two-step system also as a sequence for this summary, some brief observations concerning the learning strategies is presented first, followed by more in-depth findings addressing various turn-taking issues and Thai cultural criteria.

9.1 Learning strategies observations

Firstly, it became apparent throughout the interviews that the awareness of learning strategies among the interviewees did not relate consistently with their educational background. This is illustrated by the fact that some with experience of studying at university with native speaker teachers had difficulty explaining what strategies they used, whilst others who had come directly from secondary school to the English pre-sessional course expressed, at times, some degree of sureness about their strategies. This contradicted my expectation that the latter students would perhaps have a more limited awareness of strategies.

Other surprising findings concerned the topic of collaboration in learning. Again, my expectations that pair work would be accepted as a means for students to positively engage themselves in interaction in English in the classroom were proven to be, in some cases, false. This applied to some students who had been exposed to this methodology in their previous learning experiences and showed some degree of scepticism existed concerning other Thai students who were quoted as being “lazy” during collaborative activities.

In terms of the interviewees’ attitudes towards student to teacher questioning,

various perspectives were revealed. Some noted that questioning the teacher directly may constitute a face-threatening act towards that teacher. Others accepted the value of direct questions in class, regarding it as a good habit to practise, but, importantly, brought my attention clearly to issues of good timing of the question and the necessity to make sure that it was relevant to the lesson. A common theme sometimes expressed in words, and at other times shown through slightly reticent answers, was the fear of embarrassing oneself in front of fellow students by showing a lack of comprehension or making a mistake in the lexical or grammatical formulation of the question. As mentioned in the data analysis, such observations may have a direct relation to the interviewees' own turn-taking behaviour during the interview itself, as well as during classroom interaction. This potential connection, I would argue, carries with it an immediate relevance to the extent to which classroom behaviour in general influences the interview interaction itself. I will return to this issue in the next section, 9.2 of this summary.

Finally, the comment made by Mingmanee concerning the instinct that she felt Thai teachers possessed about their students' problems should be noted as potentially significant for turn-taking behaviour. It must be stressed that only one student raised this issue and it is interesting that that student had come directly from secondary school, showing, as mentioned previously, that awareness of classroom-related issues did not rest solely in the hands of students more experienced with native speakers. Mingmanee's insight into the Thai teacher's ability to predict when students would fail to comprehend is hard to substantiate in this study, yet nevertheless is a reflection of perhaps more than one student's perception of how Thai teachers differ in their

interaction with their students compared to foreign teachers. In brief, Mingmanee's observation could indeed be used as the catalyst to pursue future research into the "hangover" (McCarthy 1991:124) from classroom turn-taking over to the research interview.

I return to some of the observations mentioned in this summary later in the subsequent sections on my general conclusions (9.2) and the implications and recommendations (9.3) to be made concerning this study. Before doing so, I turn to presenting the main findings that I have made from step two of the data analysis specifically on the turn-taking issues in the interviews.

9.2 Turn-taking findings

The findings from the turn-taking analysis are quite extensive and so will be separated into various sub-sections. Firstly, I address the interviewer's language used at the Initiation and Feedback stages of the exchange. After that, I turn to the interviewees' language at the Response stage of those exchanges. Clearly, these stages are not exclusively taken by one speaker. It is seen that the interviewees often took the role of formulating Initiations and the interviewer, at times, that of providing Responses. These cases are dealt with in a sub-section of this chapter termed as 'miscellaneous' turn-taking issues which includes observations on interviewee interruptions, communicative breakdown sequences, interview length and the influence of the semi-structured interview format. Lastly, but by no means of less significance, I summarise some of the main findings emanating from the research findings concerning the influence of my chosen Thai cultural criteria on the interview

interaction.

Interviewer Initiations and Feedback moves

Firstly, in terms of the main observations into the interviewer's turn-taking behaviour, we can see that, although the role undertaken was predominantly that of providing Initiations and Feedback moves, there were some strings of exchanges in questions four on specific learning strategies (reading, writing, speaking and listening) which followed an *I-R-I-R* pattern without the provision of a Feedback move. It was deduced that this may have occurred because the interaction often became quite rapid in this particular topic. The other topics tended not to be scripted in such a long string of questions in the interview format. As specific learning strategies of the four skills represented, for myself, an inseparable topic, all the Initiations came under one long interlinked theme. In general, the absence of the Feedback move is observed as a recurring pattern in long interview exchanges in my data. It could also represent what Schegloff (1972 as cited in Edwards 1997:104) terms as a "notable absence" from an expected three-part exchange. This expectation needs to be assessed in terms of who actually is expecting a third move to occur, and why. If the interviewee expects its occurrence, then parallels can clearly be drawn to the type of three-part exchanges commonly occurring in "low contingent" (van Lier 1996: 170) classroom interaction. When absent, as in question four, it raises the issue of whether the interviewer has contravened the interviewees' sense of what constitutes a "communicative norm" (Briggs 1986) for the interview setting. Although I refer in more depth to communicative breakdown later in this section (in miscellaneous turn-taking issues), this theme of the absence of the Feedback move is again raised when viewing some

repair sequences. In some cases, the interviewer, having requested clarification from the interviewee and then having received it, proceeded to jump into the next initiation without having in some way provided Feedback acknowledging or endorsing that interviewee clarification. In a similar manner to the absence of Feedback in question four, I would argue that the "communicative norms" (ibid.) of the interviewer are being possibly insensitively imposed onto the turn-taking at certain points (long questions and some repair sequences).

Moving onto other observations in interviewer language, it can be seen that there was a noticeable shift in the type of elicitations made during interviews conducted in July to those conducted in August. In the first six interviews the amount of open to closed elicitations was roughly on a par. In the last four interviews from August there were often considerably more open to closed questions asked to the interviewees. This shift is revealed clearly by the coding at the lowest rank of the rank scale, the acts, which show '*inq'* (inquiry) acts as open questions and both '*n.pr'* (neutral proposal) acts and '*m.pr'* (marked proposal) acts as closed ones. From a coding perspective, this illustrates the effectiveness of the coding at the act rank concerning such question forms compared to the coding provided at the exchange (*IRF*) and move rank, particularly despite the depth of detail entailed in Tsui's (1994) taxonomy at the Initiation stage. In terms of the rationale for this shift towards proportionately more open questions, I have surmised that one possible cause could have been the propensity of some interviewees in the last four interviews to extend the topic and thereby move the interviewer into adding unscripted, supplementary questions to the interview format. Those additions clearly tended to be of the open

question variety.

Another smaller, yet still significant, shift in interviewer language at the Initiation level occurred in some interviews around questions five to seven. These questions came under the second major topic area of "teachers and their influence/status." It was noted that the opening question (called a *framing* move) tended to be extended for some students who the interviewer possibly felt were struggling linguistically or conceptually in the first four questions in the interview. This extension involved describing more of the background context to the questions about teachers (both Thai and foreigners) and was intended as a means to aid interviewee comprehension of the topic. It illustrates, on the one hand, the flexibility of the semi-structured interview format, but also the possible danger of de-standardising the interview format. I have argued that such supplements are a natural move undertaken by the interviewer to contextualise and sensitise the question format to the needs of each interviewee. This is a shift in language which I accept is open to criticism but shows the concept of a standardization of "meaning" as put forward by Gorden (1969), and Wood and Kroger (2000: 73) in their "interventionist" approach to interviewing, which both advocate that interview questions should be linguistically altered to tailor them to each interviewee. It also concurs with Wolfson's (1989) reference to the idea of an "emergent" interview context (not to be confused with the use of 'emergent' in the methodological sense in this study meaning research which involves 'returning to the data' at a later point in time) and the common occurrence of the "accommodation" of native speaker speech to that of non-native-speakers (Giles and Powesland 1975 as cited in Wolfson 1989: 208).

Finally, turning to the interviewer's turn-taking behaviour in the Feedback move, there are a number of significant observations to be noted. As early as the first interview with Rungnapa (A1.1), there were significant variations throughout the interview between acknowledging and endorsing Feedback. I have concluded, for this interview (A1.1), that language use is part of Bakhtin's (1981 as cited in Block 2000) concept of "voice" and so any fluctuation of it can be concluded as representing a change in that "voice". Subsequent interviews showed less fluctuation in the type of Feedback provided – acknowledging, endorsing or turn-passing– within individual interviews, yet did nevertheless display variation across the interviews. This meant that common patterns were difficult to trace across the interviews for each question.

In the case of '*ref*' (reformulating) acts at the Feedback move where the interviewer attempted to briefly summarise the interviewee's Response in order to concept check the previous utterance, it was also observed that fluctuations occurred in their use across the ten interviews. The search, though, for patterns in such use is perhaps better seen from another perspective. If '*ref*' acts were an attempt to check the conceptual or linguistic input provided by the interviewee, they can be compared with interviewee attempts at the Response stage to also check the concepts provided by the interviewer at the Initiation stage of the exchange. This connection between the Feedback use of '*ref*' acts and the Response stage use links the willingness of both participants to create what Edwards (1997:127) terms as "common knowledge" between them. Both the interviewer's use of "so…" and the interviewees' "You mean…" and "…, right ?" serve the same purpose at different stages of the exchange illustrating, albeit on a small scale lexically, the exercise of the "responsibility"

(Schiffrin 1985: 640) they may feel towards co-constructing meaning.

Looking specifically at endorsing moves at the Feedback stage shows that they were most often used after responses from interviewees which contained content on strategy use which the interviewer personally agreed with. This subjectivity was subconsciously felt to be a negative influence on the interviewees, in that it was feared, as Nassaji and Wells (2000) point out, that too much endorsement may lead to a replication of classroom discourse and, in turn, would cause interviewees to regard the interviewer as a teacher rather that an interviewer. This chain of subconscious fears was actually not realized as students were often observed to give long, extended responses after either acknowledging or endorsing Feedback was given.

Although I will address communicative breakdown in some detail later, it was noted that the lack of a Feedback move in repair sequences was a potential contravention of "communicative norms" (Briggs 1986) in the interviewees' eyes. I have argued that such local "norms" may have been overlooked at various points in the interviews, especially during the rapid *I-R-I-R* exchanges in question four, yet this non-adherence to a three-part move system and the assumption that Feedback is not always necessary to acknowledge repair may both have created some degree of real confusion among interviewees. This is due to the specific nature of the repair sequence which required that some kind of 'closing' move be provided before the participants returned to the original exchange topic.

In brief, to summarise the interviewer's turn-taking behaviour at the Initiation and Feedback moves, patterns were often hard to trace within and across interviews, apart from some notable exceptions (the shift proportionately in open to closed

question forms at the Initiation move in the second group of interviews). I have argued that there are various instances which may illustrate that the interviewer's sense of "well-formedness" (Stubbs 1981 as cited in Taylor and Cameron 1987:77) and perception of "communicative norms" (Briggs 1986) may have dominated the interview interaction and caused some confusion among interviewees.

Interviewee Responses

Moving now to the language used by the interviewees at the Response move, it can firstly be seen that most responses given conformed to what Tsui (1994) terms as positive responding moves, *R+ve*. They provided the "primary" knowledge (Berry 1981) required about learning strategies. In this sense, this provision satisfied the research objectives at that time. However, the concept of "voice" (Bakhtin op.cit.) again can be employed to view those responses, not merely in the sense of what type of linguistic fluctuations occurred, but also in the sense of who the interviewees believed they represented when providing knowledge about learning strategies. This is a point stressed by Briggs (1986) in research conducted in Mexico and could also in the Thai setting be regarded as a valid comment. The question must be asked, as to what extent the Thai participants were giving responses which represented Thais in general or themselves individually. In terms of finding evidence for this difference in representation, clearly the use of 'I' or 'we' could indicate what "voice" is being employed, yet even when 'I' is used, it is not certain that that is the true persona being adopted. This is an issue to be seen as potentially important in data interpretation for the original learning strategies study and also for the this study on turn-taking.

Participant identity, or sense of identification with a larger group, needs to be viewed as potential influence both on turn-taking behaviour and the content provided as "primary knower" (Berry 1981).

Returning to the specific turn-taking issues of the interviewees' Responding move, it was noted that although there was a propensity among some interviewees coming directly from secondary school to provide short answers, others showed a tendency to expand upon their responses most willingly. This tendency existed among both those directly from secondary school and those with more experience of learning with native speakers. It is illustrated in the act coding in the transition from "*i*" (informative) to "*com*" (comment) acts after both open and closed elicitations were given. Closed questions, although taken as an opportunity to expand by some students, were taken by a minority to simply provide short, accurate "*i*" responses without expansion. In trying to explain this variation in expansions, I have argued that the Thai cultural criteria of earning merit, *bun*, in interaction with a superior figure may be the reason why some longer than expected responses were given. It also could form the basis for an explanation of short answers as such responses are often regarded as the ideal, and therefore worthy of *bun*, in large English classes at Thai school.

Moving on to the actual coding at the Response stage, it was sometimes seen to be difficult to differentiate between answers which illustrated linguistic or conceptual uncertainties among the interviewees. Apart from an act showing tentativeness in response, "*qu*" (qualify), no other exists to show this difference other than to express the uncertainty by means of interviewer comments in brackets, e.g. "(looks unsure)". This issue is also argued as having an effect upon how the

interviewer continues the exchange, either by re-phrasing the original Initiation linguistically or conceptually. Furthermore, it is noted that 'false' comprehension may have been provided by interviewees in some Responses, particularly Nawarat (A1.8), again the only possible signal being in the form of paralinguistic features written in brackets.

This latter point of the interviewees' responses disguising a lack of comprehension may have been illustrated in several cases of a switch from negative responding moves, *R-ve*, to positive ones, *R+ve*. This shift in response has been argued as representing an avoidance of face-threatening responses and is connected with the Thai propensity to exercise *krengjai* (deference to authority).

In brief, the interviewees' Responses are seen to be represented in most detail by the coding provided at the act level, particularly in the form of "*i*" to "*com*" acts for expansions and the presence of some "*qu*" acts denoting tentativeness. I will now turn to the last of the sub-sections on turn-taking, that covering the remaining, miscellaneous issues not addressed in the first two sub-sections on the Initiation and Feedback moves made by the interviewer and the Responses given by the interviewees.

Miscellaneous turn-taking issues

In the data analysis, one significant turn-taking issue concerned the relative absence of overlap by interviewees (and the interviewer) when the other participant was speaking. Only two interviewees, both experienced in interaction with native speakers, interrupted the interviewer. This was for the purpose of continuing and expanding their previous Responses and so could be interpreted as attempts to show

bun (merit) by enthusiastically providing as much information about learning strategies as possible. On the other hand, it could also be seen as an exhibition of informality in the relationship between interviewer and interviewee most commonly seen in the more familiar *khuna* realm relations in *khwaampenkaneeng* (mutual informality). This shift in the interpretation of the status relationship by the interviewees could also be seen as an attempt to conform to "communicative norms" (Briggs 1986) which they had previously experienced with non-native speakers and presumed to be my "norm" in the interview setting.

Turning now to the communicative breakdown sequences, I have observed that all sequences, whether initiated by the interviewer or interviewees, lasted only over four turns. This means that two patterns were followed. Firstly, after the original Initiation, there either was an interviewee Response followed by an interviewer's request for clarification and then a repairing move by the interviewee which then resulted in acknowledgement by the interviewer and a return to the original exchange topic. This was slightly less common than the case in which the original Initiation was followed by an interviewee Response requesting clarification, subsequent interviewer clarification, interviewee acknowledgement and finally the return to the original exchange topic. As previously mentioned, the absence of the interviewer's acknowledging move in the first case was considered to be a possible deviation from "communicative norms" (Briggs 1986). Whether there was an influence of *krengjai* (deference to authority) in the brevity of these sequences is open to debate, but it has been argued that some degree of avoidance of face-threatening behaviour may have been present in both cases.

I have previously mentioned that problems existed in determining whether comprehension difficulties arose due to linguistic or conceptual miscomprehension on the part of the interviewee. On close analysis of the type of language associated with breakdown sequences, it was seen that individual lexical items in the scripted text caused most of the linguistic problems. Conceptual miscomprehension occurred mostly in question four when interviewees were required to describe learning strategies which may have been subconsciously embedded (Field 1998). It was also noted that the amount of breakdown sequences occurring may not have represented how much interviewer language was actually misunderstood as some interviewees were possibly embarrassed to reveal their miscomprehension. In contrast, some interviewees actively sought to gain comprehension by paraphrasing my Initiations with the use of common expressions such as "You mean" and tag questions with "right?".

In terms of comparing how long the interviews were, no common pattern emerges. A large number of turns does not necessarily correspond with a long interview in the time sense as those interviews in which fewer prompts were employed may nevertheless have involved lengthy expansions within the standard scripted interview format. In fact, it was observed that several interviews with linguistically weaker students required not only the use of prompts, but unscripted re-phrasals of the Initiations or prompts themselves resulting in long interviews with little expansion. In general though, it was often apparent that there was much willingness to expand upon Responses either within the turn itself or after Feedback was provided. This resulted in exchanges with a *I-R – F – R – F* pattern in which the

second *R* was commonly an extension of the response given in the first.

Finally, the semi-structured interview format was seen in the data analysis as constituting various forms of influence over the turn-taking of both participants. As previously mentioned, the intentionally long scripted topic in question four led to the absence of the Feedback move. Also, the shift to proportionately more open to closed questions in the second set of interviews in August showed that there was sufficient flexibility in the semi-structured interview format to enable such variation to occur. A more rigid structured interview format would not have allowed for such deviation from the script, and so, as argued previously, the flexibility inherent in semi-structured interviewing can accommodate differing linguistic and conceptual competences among the interviewees. I have argued that these changes in the script, often by means of extensions to interviewer Initiations, led to more useful insights to be provided by interviewees into their learning strategies. These extra topic-extending sequences helped to enhance the "veridical" description (Block 2000: 758) of the data.

I shall now turn to the last area to be summarized from the data analysis, that of the Thai cultural criteria and their influence over the turn-taking.

Thai cultural criteria

Of all the cultural terminology taken from Mulder's (1996) investigations into Thai behaviour and employed to analyse the turn-taking behaviour, the *khuna* to *decha* (familiar to unfamiliar relationships) have often formed a pivot around which the Thai interviewees (and the interviewer to a certain extent) have been viewed. That continuum has been likened to the continuum of speech events ranging from the formal to informal by Sacks et al (1974). I have concluded that each interview in itself

can exhibit an element of flux between the two extremes of the *khuna* and the *decha* realms. The extent of this flux shows that the relative perceptions of what kind of relationship exists between the participants varies from interview to interview and can be traced to, but not tied down to, factors such as experience of contact with native speakers and educational experience at the post-secondary stages. Serm's (A1.6) linguistic usage of "sir" contrasted pointedly with his more casual use of "right ?" , as did the interruptions of some more experienced interviewees with their otherwise polite, smiling body language. I would argue that some interviewees perceptions of the relationship existing between the participants, as well as, in turn, their perception of the interview as a speech event, both vary within and across the interviews.

Most cultural criteria were used at some point in the data analysis to explain features of the turn-taking which needed a tentative label to be placed upon them. One criteria which failed to become attached to any feature was that of *sam ruam* (the ability to remain calm under pressure). In an ostensibly contrary manner to the ethos of Conversation Analysis (CA), I have argued that the occasional use in an *a priori* sense of a concept such as this does constitute a switch over to the principles exercised in linguistic anthropology. This means that *sam ruam* was strictly in a CA sense regarded as irrelevant as an explanatory factor for turn-taking behaviour. I have argued, however, that a reversal of the CA ethos can help in revealing elements of behaviour underpinning language and body language which would otherwise have gone unnoticed. The objective in my research is to find ways, by the use of 'layers of insight', which usually explain talk-in-interaction after detailed coding has taken place. However, the large amount of the 'layers' (potentially increasing in subsequent

research) and their post-coding application may tend to disadvantage the researcher. The pitfalls of what I have termed as 'foregrounding' the concept of *sam ruam* are clear in my deviation from standard CA practice. I would propose, though, that 'foregrounding' is merely the exercising of the researcher's need to create a new perspective, or reminder of, potentially important explanatory criteria.

Finally, of the Thai cultural criteria employed in the standard CA fashion, *bun* (merit), as in the *bunkhun* (mutual relationship between superior and junior) constantly were referred to. Most of these references implied that there was a high degree of deference to the interviewer and that the relationship was considered to be firmly in the *decha* (formal) realm, albeit with some fluctuations at time to some more informal elements of the *khuna* (informal, familiar) realm. I have noted that the search by the interviewees to earn *bun* must be seen as having personal variations, in that each Thai who wishes to gain it may do so in a different fashion. In terms of how that is manifested in turn-taking behaviour, I have drawn attention to the interview with Burin (A1.2) whose short answers, with the hindsight of knowing how he was previously expected to interact with authority figures at school, were his way of gaining *bun*. Following this argument, the interruptions and more casual language use by others students, though in stark contrast to Burin's formal style of responding, may also have been exhibitions of attempts to earn *bun*.

This concludes the first section of the conclusions. It has summarized the most important aspects presented in the data analysis and serves as an immediate reference point for the next chapter on general conclusions which attempts to draw more in-depth conclusions concerning this study in general. It commences with a review of

where this research stands in relation to other research in the field of CA. Thereafter, I return to the research questions first set out in the initial stages of the thesis and assess to what extent I have been successful in achieving them.

Chapter 10 General Conclusions

This section serves two aims. The first is to contextualise my research with that of other research in the field of Conversation Analysis. Secondly, I return to my original research questions and assess to what extent they have been achieved.

10.1 Contextualising the research

The first issue in this section addresses the use at the post-coding stage of selected Thai cultural criteria. In a practical sense, the application of these criteria has provided useful explanations, or perhaps better expressed, explorations into turn-taking behaviour. That positive assessment, though, should be tempered by two overlaying issues which challenge their application. The first concerns their choice. Among the numerous criteria which could possibly have been chosen, those adopted from Mulder's (1996) studies into Thai society represent an attempt to condense Thai behavioural patterns into a limited number of categories seen along the *khuna* to *decha* continuum. This may carry the danger of categorizing Thai behaviour in the same sense that Conversation Analysts criticize linguistic anthropologists (Duranti 1997) for creating *a priori* categories before their data is analysed. The CA approach of avoiding such pre-analysis categorization and regarding the talk-in-interaction as

the starting point for analysis seems, although not directly contravened as a rule in my research, perhaps to be slightly distorted by my creation of set 'layers of insight'. I would argue, though, in defence that the Thai cultural criteria, along with other 'layers' do in fact create a necessary distortion of the purest form of CA. Moreover, their application is exploratory in nature, hence the analogy of placing 'layers' to gain insights into the data which implies that the procedure I have undertaken is fundamentally lacking in any set pattern apart from the two steps advocated to look at learning strategies 'layers' first, followed by turn-taking 'layers'.

Following this defence of my methodology into the exploration of the context in CA, there are several aspects to be regarded as significant. Moerman's (1988) call for CA to become "culturally contexted" is taken in my methodological approach as a central issue, yet in trying to contextualise the turn-taking, I would argue that it is inevitable that some degree of categorization will occur. At some point, whether it is at the pre-analysis stage or post-analysis stage, a subjective choice will be made as to what model of analysis, or in my case, what set of loosely applied 'layers of insight' are to be used. Indeed, I have admittedly strayed from the purest adherence to CA by 'foregrounding' one concept, *sam ruam* (calm under pressure), from the Thai cultural criteria. Ten Have (1999: 41) accounts for this possible dilemma when conducting CA as a movement away from its typical "inductive" methodology into the "deductive" and illustrates such tendencies with the now common search in CA for proof of, for example, "preference" (Sacks 1987), in transcriptions. Ten Have (ibid.) argues that such aspects of turn-taking have become so well documented that they appear to be "law-like" (ibid.: 41) in nature and draw the CA researcher into *a priori*

categorization of data. My chosen methodological approach at the post-coding stage does not strictly conform to the methodological ethos outlined in CA but shows a natural tendency to pursue some degree of deduction.

The second issue to be raised concerning my methodological approach is that individual idiosyncratic features of either participant do not appear to be used as explanatory criteria for turn-taking behaviour to the same extent to which 'layers of insight', particularly the generic Thai cultural criteria do. This is valid criticism and represents an area for future improvement and research. The problem is not that personal idiosyncrasies were absent in my data analysis, but that the references made to them emanated from the previous 'layers of insight' associated with the learning strategies research. Those tools (A6 to A9) contained information mostly focusing on the interviewees' educational backgrounds and were, in that sense, capable of providing idiosyncratic information from the learning strategies perspective. Other forms of information which could perhaps have better aided the data interpretation are those which are less connected with the original research. They could have concerned the interviewees' attitudes towards interaction with superiors in general, whether in Thai or English. To be practical, though, the collection of such background information would have involved further research specifically into those areas for each interviewee. The overlaying objective of my study focused more on the 'emergent' nature of conducting research into learning strategies and then using that data to analyse, and thereby improve, the interviewing process. That focus involved a revisiting of data whilst making the best use of tools at my disposal at that time. In retrospect, an extra layer carrying more information into each interviewee's attitudes

to interaction would have been a useful addition to the available tools. Such an ideal tool was not available and so it can only be theorized as to how much more effective it would have been to apply it in place or, or in addition to, those already existing.

The second major issue to be discussed as part of these conclusions looks at the coding systems employed. Tsui's (1994) proposal that the analysis of an utterance should be seen in light of not only where it stands and how it interacts with others within the exchange, but also across exchange boundaries, is an important issue to stress in understanding the influence of previous utterances on what is presently being investigated inside one exchange. That understanding needs, however, to be further extended to the inclusion of the relevance of language used not only within a whole interview itself, but across interviews as it has become apparent from my own data that the interviewer's language was particularly influenced by what happened in previous interviews. If the turn-taking outcomes of each exchange are viewed as being a co-construction, then the interviewees' language will also be affected by cross-interview turn-taking idiosyncrasies and patterns. This is seen in the turn-taking trends (A4) and possibly represents one of the most important 'layers' used when investigating the concept of how one utterance is to be interpreted in relation to what happens around it. This has a huge significance for the understanding of utterances in general as it naturally follows that the context of previous interviews, the personal idiosyncrasies at play in them, and how Thai cultural criteria were in operation all form a body of potential influences which accumulate over the interview schedule. With this perspective on the individual utterance, there is a sense of great retrospection involved in analysis which suggests that the Conversation Analyst's

search for "specimens" (Alasuutari 1995: 63 as cited in Ten Have 1999: 37-38) in the data analysis should be regarded as a process of continual accumulation of previous turn-taking experiences and contexts (both interview contexts and participant background contexts).

The last issue to be investigated as part of this section of the conclusions is one that returns to the concept of "communicative norms" (Briggs 1986). The fundamental question of exactly whose "norms" are dominant, in operation, subdued or suppressed in the interview setting is related to the larger issue of "cultural hegemony" (ibid.). I feel, as a participant and researcher in this study, that some degree of an imposition of my interpretation of the interview as a speech event must have been present. My inclination to attempt to move the interview towards the less formal continuum of speech events (Sacks et al 1974) may have differed from many of the interviewees' preconceptions of how interaction should be conducted in interview settings in Thailand. However, my presumption of their expectations of the interview is potentially a dangerous one, as was illustrated by various instances, for example with Serm's propensity to extend the topic and move the interaction towards the more informal *khuna* realm. My assumption that it was my responsibility to actively move the speech event along the speech event continuum and change the nature of the relationship towards the *khuna* realm was clearly disturbed when students took over that responsibility themselves. This surprise on the part of the interviewer must be regarded as a signal that, despite my intentions to relax the interviewee and encourage extensions of Responses, there was a feeling that it was the interviewer who should determine at what point, and to what degree, the interviewees should respond in an

informal manner to my encouragement of it. The fact that some interviewees had to take their own initiative in interpreting, and therefore managing, the speech event is proof of a great degree of interviewer hegemony. In fairness, though, those cases of interviewee autonomy are perhaps scarce compared to the vast majority of the interaction which, in terms of interviewee participation, tended to follow a three-part exchange pattern with the interviewer predominantly asking questions and providing feedback and the interviewee providing responses. In this respect, the "pre-determined" (van Lier 1988) nature of interview turn-taking was clearly evident. Despite this apparent rigidity in roles, the semi-structured format's "free form" (Drever 1995:13) did manage to allow topic expansions which gathered useful information for the interview's original learning strategies purpose.

At this point, I will return to the original research questions set out at the start of this study and attempt to assess to what extent they have been answered.

10.2 Original research questions

The original research questions concerning the effectiveness of the coding system and the 'layers of insight' are now to be finally addressed. These research questions, as outlined in chapter 1.1 of the Introduction, have two main foci and two secondary questions. To recap in brief, they are as follows:

1. the chosen coding system in terms of its ability to represent the interview discourse and
2. the usefulness of learning strategies research tools in combination with turn-taking research tools.

The secondary questions address, firstly, the visual effectiveness of the 'layers of insight' in reading the data. Secondly, the insights provided by the localized Thai cultural criteria

are to be assessed.

At this point, the study appears to return full circle to is primary purpose, in that a great deal of analysis has taken place at the smallest level of turn-taking coding and then at a much higher theoretical level in terms of how this research compares to other studies in the field of Conversation Analysis. Already it is clear that the last sub-section contextualising the research contains a significant element of introspection about the research undertaken. Some themes in that introspection, as well as those arising in this sub-section addressing the research questions, are to be taken as a basis for the final section, 9.3, which looks at the implications concerning interviewing in this context and recommendations for further research.

Turning to the first research questions concerning the effectiveness of the coding system, I can conclude that by far the most number of deductions – or insights, following my analogy of the use of 'layers of insight' – were made by using Tsui's (1994) taxonomy of *I R F* (Initiation – Response – Feedback) moves. This was tentatively regarded as a pivot around which extra turn-taking information could be gathered at the subsequent two lower 'ranks' from the 'rank scale' of moves and acts. Moves were generally seen to be slightly redundant in the ten interviews under analysis as their codings tended to overlap with the information carried at the exchange and act ranks. That is not to suggest that further analysis will not reveal more of their potential. However, even if more interviews were to be coded with the

moves as provided by Francis and Hunston (1992), there would also exist the inevitable large amount of redundancy. In terms of what information the acts provided, though, much more use was seen in the extra insights given in '*com*' (comment), '*qu*' (qualify), '*inq*' (inquiry), '*n.pr'* (neutral proposal), and '*m.pr'* (marked proposal) acts. Not all act codings were employed and so it could be surmised that their use carries for further interview analysis great potential alongside the inclusion of exchange sequence *IRF* coding.

Returning to the specific use of Tsui's (1994) coding system, it is also to be noted that, despite the paucity of information which the Response move carries with denotations of *R+ve and R-ve*, such turns are often accompanied by extra moves, for example, questions requesting confirmation or clarification. The inclusion of the Initiation stage's large amount of elicitation choices was employed as a supplement to good effect resulting in Responses which offered precise coding details of what is actually happening at that stage of the exchange, such as *R-ve. Ie:clarify* (a negative response which is followed by an Initiation requesting clarification.) Positive responding moves also can be represented in a similar fashion. In both cases, this double coding conforms with the concept of a Response which takes the form of, for example, a question or is accompanied by one, as outlined in Francis and Hunston (1992: 141).

In terms of the choice of the *IRF* three-part exchange system to code the interaction, we should perhaps assess to what extent its use is appropriate for analysing interview data. A three-part exchange system derived originally from work in describing classroom interaction could be viewed as carrying with it the

assumptions of the roles of classroom participants if applied to other speech events. I have argued that there is considerable "hangover" (McCarthy loc.cit) from the classroom onto this particular interview context as the participants were actually teacher and students at the same establishment. With both parties aware of such classroom-based roles, there is a tendency to adopt attitudes and therefore, in turn, follow speech patterns similar to those that they would normally have in the classroom. For most of the interviewees, the interviewer was also their teacher for various pre-sessional English course subjects. In this sense, the respect afforded to the interviewer was similar to that afforded to him in the classroom. If that interviewer had not been known to the interviewees as their teacher, the semi-structured nature of the interview script would, in any case, have locked the interviewer into the role of providing Initiations. There would have ensued at least a string of exchanges with the interviewer making Initiations, the interviewees providing Responses and the interviewer then, in turn, giving some kind of Feedback. Of particular note is the idea that the absence of that third move may have been regarded as being "notable" (Schegloff 1972 as cited in Edwards 1997: 104), indicating that it was expected, at least by the interviewer and presumably by the interviewees. Admittedly, proof of the interviewees' expectation of its presence needs to be found. In general, however, it is open to debate whether a non-teaching interviewer would have followed this same three-part exchange sequence to the same degree as myself, a teacher-researcher.

In brief, the coded data shows the pre-dominance of exchanges which fit mostly into the three-part *IRF* system, indicating that the interviews followed the more formal "pre-allocation" (Sacks et al 1974) turn-taking pattern of a formal speech

event.

The second research question concerns the extent to which the 'layers of insight' were effective in explaining the outcomes of the codification process. My initial conclusion is that the role played by the learning strategies 'layers' managed to effectively remind the researcher of the two divergent purposes undertaken – one in the form of the learning strategies research which adopted a "veridical" (Block 2000) approach to analysing the interview data, and the other to analyse the turn-taking aspects of those interviews by means of Conversation Analysis. In this sense, this combination of the research tools from both research purposes adds a realistic element to the analysis as it represents both research purposes, yet is problematic in that it is difficult to determine which tools – the learning strategies tools or the turn-taking ones – play the greater role. The information carried by both is necessary but probably not in a constant sense. For example, some deductions made from one interview may have been more dependent upon one set of tools than the other. This indicates that the contribution made by either set of tools may have fluctuated in its degree from interview to interview.

Referring specifically to the turn-taking 'layers of insight', the adopted coding system was intended as a means to help to trace turn-taking patterns across and within interviews (see A2 Exchange sequences). This led to a useful collection of observations concerning cross-interview trends (see A4 Turn-taking trends). As the *IRF* , move and act coding in the transcripts (A1.1 to A1.10) also represented a 'layer of insight' in itself, such trends would not have been collectable. In effect, the coding of transcripts and the subsequent tracing of turn-taking trends helps to identify clearly

what kind of "speech exchange system" (Duranti 1997: 250) exists as represented in the exchange sequences (A2). The identification of utterances, especially focusing on three turns, allows the researcher to view the ways in which the participants differ, or are similar in, their interpretation of each other's utterances. This sequential organization is also a practical means to view "intersubjectivity" (Duranti 1997: 255) in action in terms of where it apparently succeeds and fails (communicative breakdown).

By the existence of similar, albeit semi-structured, Initiations for topics about learning strategies, the visual display in the exchange sequences (A2) of that aforementioned "speech exchange system" (Duranti loc.cit.) in operation can show how the recipients (the interviewees) interpret the elicitations put to them. How those elicitations are subsequently altered with respect to the linguistic and conceptual understanding shown by the interviewee is also an insight into the "recipient design" (Taylor and Cameron 1987 as cited in Eggins and Slade 1997: 29 and Sachs et al 1974) employed by the interviewer. This links, in turn, with the propensity of the native speaker interviewer to compensate, i.e. adapt, his talk to the immediate needs of the interview context. This compensation is, as argued in the literature review, naturally susceptible to criticisms of non-standardisation of the interview format, yet can be countered by arguing that such changes in Initiations (and also added open/closed questions in topic extensions) represent a positive means towards shaping and contextualising the interview to the needs of the interviewee. If the original objective of gathering learning strategies information is pursued, then such contextualisation (both linguistically and paralinguistically) more truly conform to

those objectives than to the strict standardisdation of interviewing technique. I would argue that such contextualisation is a representation of the sensitivity and flexibility of the interviewer's "communicative norms" (Briggs 1986) despite the hegemony inherent in those norms.

My final comments regarding the effectiveness of the use of the 'layers of insight' return to the methodological approach employed which involved a two-step progression with retrospective "dialogue" questions (Kvale 1996). If the interview context and participants' background context are regarded as so relevant to the understanding of turn-taking, the information provided by the 'layers of insight' carries a rich source of various types of context (interview context, learning strategies information, educational backgrounds, turn-taking codes and trends). This combination is prone to overlap and redundancy but contains so much accumulated data relevant to the analysis of the interaction that it allows for the 'emergence' of insights both through its eclectic placement of those 'layers' at the time of analyzing the transcripts, and also over time in the historical sense. This latter perspective indicates that the emergence of new insights into the data has a historical perspective which will reinforce the methodological framework each time that data is revisited since every research undertaken is accumulated and carried forward.

I now move on to the final section of this study, to look at the implications that this study holds for interviewing Thais. This section also provides recommendations for further research in the area of analysing interview data.

Chapter 11 Implications and recommendations

In this last section I attempt, firstly, to show how this piece of research can be of benefit to those who also interview Thais in educational settings and wish to interpret the data they accumulate. It focuses on practical means of data analysis and also outlines some theoretical issues that researchers should consider. Secondly, I look at how certain areas of the research can feasibly be continued.

11.1 Implications for interviewing Thais

One initial implication for researchers dealing with interview data particularly with Thais is to consider the influence of previous interviews on the interview schedule on the one which is presently under analysis. I have frequently reiterated this point in the research findings and conclusions as it has become apparent that one utterance is not merely the result of the present co-construction within the interview but also a consequence of accumulated turn-taking behaviour and contextual features leading up to that utterance.

In terms of gathering data to view from a content basis, the semi-structured interview format allows for a great deal of "free form" (Drever 1995: 13) in which the interviewer can adapt questions to the linguistic and conceptual level of the interviewee. This format also allows for extensions which are a valuable means to gather topic-related information. This extra data can be clearly retained or discarded if not regarded as relevant to the research questions. This advice is particularly valid for those pursuing "veridical" (Block 2000) research. For those interested in the actual language employed in order to improve interviewing technique, it is recommended

that the initial objective of the content-based research be pursued first and then returned to for the purpose of further analysis into the turn-taking features. I suggest this approach as it is essential that the initial research be conducted without the conscious focus upon the language employed. Improvements are best made from advice gathered after analysis of 'naturally occurring' interviewing has taken place.

The double focus of my research - that of investigating learning strategies without prior knowledge that later research into turn-taking would occur – enabled me to look at data which emanated from 'naturally occurring' interviews, if it is indeed possible to associate interviews with the concept of 'naturally occurring' speech. The interview context itself was, despite efforts to the contrary, a formal speech event in the eyes of the Thai participants, so perhaps the best insights into the turn-taking behaviour of the participants are those which are made when analysing speech which is a natural result of that, at times, nervous, anxiety-ridden speech event.

The fact that two areas of research have effectively been involved in the analysis of the 'double focus' of the research may point to the recommendation that researchers in the same field also collect data initially for one purpose, possibly one which also serves an educational purpose in its own right. To return to that data, thereby following the 'emergent' aspect of my research methodology has the advantage that previous information collected surrounded the initial research can be re-used to add important contextual information to any later research with the same interview data.

In terms of how the data in its transcribed form should be interpreted, I would propose a *IRF* (Tsui 1994) system acting as a pivot, or main focus of analysis, after

which coding at the act rank from Francis and Hunston (1992) could then be added. This combination, as argued in my conclusions, is not yet the ideal match, yet is perhaps advantageous in helping to reveal what happens in interaction within and across interviews. An important insight can be best created for that purpose by visually displaying the exchange level sequences alongside other interviews.

Of final note in the implications for other researchers in this field is the recommendation that the "communicative norms" of both the interviewer and interviewee are considered before interviewing commences, as argued by Briggs (1986). This awareness-raising process may perhaps not result in any fundamental shifts in the somewhat "pre-allocated" (Sacks et al 1974) system of turn-taking in interviews. It may, however, start to sensitise the interviewer into what 'norms' are contravened and therefore act as a reminder, even mid-interview, into what turn-taking behaviour to avoid. It is of great importance that this process of study into what constitutes local 'norms' is also accompanied by awareness of some Thai cultural criteria which concern status and roles in superior to junior or teacher to student interaction, such as the criteria outlined by Mulder (1996) on the *khuna* to *decha* continuum. The direct implication in such studies is that there is a "hangover" (McCarthy 1991) not merely from the classroom to the interview setting, but also from Thai social behaviour, an influence which I have argued is evident in the turn-taking behaviour of the Thai participants in my analysed data. As those Thai participants themselves may regard the interview as a formal speech event similar in levels of "contingency" (van Lier 1996) to the classroom, it is of great importance to consider whether the interviewer conforms to the interviewee's expectation that those

levels will be upheld or attempts to move the interview along the speech event continuum (Sacks et al 1974) to become a less formal speech event. If the latter option is taken, then that researcher needs to be aware of the consequences in turn-taking behaviour by the interviewees. This may be manifested directly in speech, or silence or reticence to provide the kind of content-based input desired from the interviewees. In that sense, contravening local, or personal 'norms', in interviews can endanger the original purpose for interviewing, that being the collection of content-based, "veridical" (Block 2000) information.

I now finally turn to the last sub-section in this study, that of my recommendations for further research in the area.

11.2 Recommendations for future research

Among the most important areas which need further research in interviewing is the selection and implementation of a suitable coding system to 'interpret' the transcribed data. My choice and experimentation with the *IRF* taxonomy from Tsui (1994) and the two lower ranks of moves and acts from Francis and Hunston (1992) could be employed to analyse the remaining ten interviews. However it is perhaps important to recognize the weaknesses of this choice and make adaptations to it, particularly in light of the great amount of redundancy existing at the move rank. A combination of exchange sequence and act coding may possibly present the researcher with a less confusing array of codings to interpret since the overlap between acts and exchange sequence *IRF* denotations was much less than that which existed with the inclusion of moves.

As a predominant theme throughout the study has been that of 'returning to the data', i.e. one that advocates 'emergent' research, I would propose that the remaining ten interviews be used as the focus for the next stage in the process of emergence. This future stage should include the learning strategies and present turn-taking 'layers of insight' as accumulated tools of analysis, with the addition of new 'layers'. These additions to the existing array of tools could, as with the present research, focus on different aspects of turn-taking, such as tracing how the semi-structured interview topics develop and shift when the interviewee or interviewer moves away from the interview script. Also to be included as a new 'layer' could be a mini analysis of how the "voice" of each participant changes within and, for the interviewer, across the interviews. To a certain extent, this has been included in the present research, but not as an individual 'layer' in its own right. In this study it has been an area of analysis which has been interpreted with the use of several other means.

In terms of the methodology employed at the data analysis stage, I feel that the two step placement of 'layers' accompanied by various standardized "dialogue" questions (Kvale 1996) needs to be reviewed especially in terms of the type of questions used to ask the researcher to encourage a sense of retrospection.

The continuation of the concept of applying 'layers of insight' onto transcripts is one which should be also shaped, to a large degree, by further study into what constitute the contextual features surrounding the interviewing process. As I have used Mulder's (1996) localized Thai criteria as a major 'layer' to explain turn-taking behaviour, I believe that those criteria should be perhaps assessed and revised accordingly. That revision in itself is a focal point for research. From one perspective,

it could be argued that the criteria in themselves are not at fault, but that their application requires rethinking. In my research, the post-coding approach of Conversational Analysis was generally adopted, with the exception of *sam ruam* which was purposely used in an *a priori* manner. It must be clearly decided in further research whether such criteria are to be used in a strictly CA manner or whether the whole methodological approach should adopt an approach more familiar with that of linguistic anthropology. In effect, this decision is hugely significant in the sense that a totally different research paradigm is to be considered. A non-CA approach would present a shift in how the data is to be interpreted and, in turn, would mean that the ensuing results would possibly differ from those gathered by Conversation Analysts.

Returning to the two step process of methodology involved in this research, the comments made by Mingmanee about the instinct that Thai teachers possess to predict linguistic and conceptual difficulties may merit further investigation. Her observations would point towards specifically conducting research into the "hangover" (McCarthy 1991) between the classroom interaction with a Thai English language teacher and that of an interview between Thai participants, who have been exposed to that classroom interaction, and a native speaker. Perhaps the first step is to conduct research into classroom interaction looking at the difference between Thai and native speaker teachers before investigating the "hangover" element from the classroom to the interview setting. The fundamental question which inevitably needs research is that of seeking out actually what constitutes the nature of that "hangover" from the formal Thai classroom and the interview setting. Is it feasible to simply take the stance that they constitute two similar formal speech events and therefore that a

three-part exchange system can be used to analyse them ? A possible answer to this question is to find a means to assess the changing levels of "contingency" (van Lier 1996) in classroom interaction and see to what extent the same levels are transferred over to interview settings. This would imply that the Thai participants have great influence over that level despite the attempts of the native speaker interviewer to move the speech event of the interview along Sacks et al's (1974) speech continuum.

Of particular interest to this researcher is the conceptualization of any speech event in terms of the Thai cultural criteria of Mulder (1996) using the khuna – *decha* continuum and Sacks et al's (1974) speech event continuum. My visual representations have mainly focused on showing the mechanics of the interview's turn-taking. I believe that a clearer illustration of the fluctuations in the interview, or the lesson compared to the interview in my recommendations for future research, could be made by visually displaying how the speech event, or exchanges within it, are seen from both of these perspectives. This points to a more macro vision of the interview which could be employed alongside the exchange sequence representations as seen in A2.

Of final note in this last section is the necessity for future research into interviewing Thais to be conducted. The concepts raised by Briggs (loc.cit.) of investigating local "communicative norms" in order to eradicate the "cultural hegemony" of the interviewer is important if better input is to be gathered from students entering the college. Their information concerning learning strategies is the primary stimulus for conducting turn-taking research in the first place, so an improvement of the interviewing process may enable more information to be

forthcoming. The turn-taking analysis has the purpose of leading to better interviewing technique, which, in turn, leads to better information about learning strategies to disseminate among the teaching staff. Any research which loses that overall perspective starts to lose its practically-based purpose. It is my belief that this research has retained that perspective and future research which 'returns to the data', in the form of future interview transcripts from new entrants to a pre-sessional English course in this context, should also follow that same practical purpose.

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