LANGUAGE USE IN INDUSTRY

by

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Note

Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at are those of the author and are not to be regarded as those of the Human Sciences Council.
An immense degree of linguistic diversity exists in the work force where it is possible for speakers of twenty-three home languages to come into contact on the work floor. The language of management in industry is predominantly English, while supervisors are primarily English- or Afrikaans-speaking. Misinterpretation of speaker intent plays a significant role in communication breakdown that occurs when management or foremen/supervisors communicate directly with workers who do not understand the two erstwhile official languages sufficiently or not at all.

Reagan (1986) hypothesized that the greatest number of problems are caused by what might be termed mutual ignorance, rather than by language difficulties. The aim of the thesis was therefore to establish what constitutes the mutual ignorance that leads to misinterpretation of speaker intent.

The Hymesian model, the ethnography of speaking, was used as a model for an analysis of sociolinguistic features in factories in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging area.

For data collection a process of triangulation was used and qualitative and quantitative methods used. The Free Attitude Interview technique was used for unstructured interviews. Other methods include observation, and elicitation procedures such as the Discourse Completion Test, which were used in structured interviews. Language preference, forms of address and politeness markers were examined.

Findings revealed that the major differences were found to be in the area of non-verbal behaviour. Speakers of Afrikaans and English are, on the whole, unaware of politeness markers used by speakers of African languages. Afrikaans and English speakers are unaware of offensive non-verbal behaviour used by them. It is revealing that speakers of the official languages believe this to be the very area that makes communication possible, but it is the area in which they may cause offence. It was also found that speakers of African languages have adopted many of the features of the power dominant group at work.

The findings of the research are important for the development of strategies for overcoming misinterpretation of speaker intent and negative stereotyping.

This research was undertaken as part of the Human Sciences Research Council's programme entitled Language in the labour situation.

Key words: language in industry, intercultural communication, miscommunication, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, pragmatics, sociolinguistic relativity, communicative competence, forms of address, politeness markers.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Not only the greatest number of problems, but the most serious ones, were at the black-white contact point. A significant number of problems were, in essence, caused by what might be termed "mutual ignorance", rather than by either bad will or language difficulties. Indeed, even racism per se, although often mentioned by workers as a problem in the abstract, did not appear to be at the root of many communication problems between black workers and white supervisors (Reagan 1986: 106).

1.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 provides an overview of this thesis by first stating the purpose and expected outcome of the research. This is followed by the hypothesis. Then the research problem (which is to establish the causes of misinterpretation of speaker intent in communication on the work-floor) is outlined against its background. Terms are defined, and finally an overview of the content of the other chapters is sketched.

In the first chapter most of the terms that are referred to in the rest of the thesis are discussed. When these terms appear in the text for the first time, they are marked with an asterisk. This indicates that they will be discussed fully later in the section where terms are defined.

1.2 Purpose of the study and expected outcome

The overall goal of the study is to arrive at a description of sociolinguistic features that have the potential for causing misinterpretation of speaker intent.

It is hoped that the findings obtained will produce outcomes that will be socially constructive, enabling us to address communication problems that have been identified by research conducted in the recent past (Reagan 1986; Gxilishe and Van der Vyver 1987; Van Jaarsveld 1988a; and Van Dyk 1991a, 1991b).

By arriving at descriptions of verbal and non-verbal sociolinguistic features that have the potential for causing misinterpretation of speaker intent, a contribution can be made by (a) presenting the findings to developers of language courses and to other language practitioners, and (b) using the insights gained in *intercultural *communication training programmes.
1.2.1 Language course development

It is envisaged that the description of sociolinguistic rules that are violated by speakers of different languages could be used in the development of courses for second-language learners involved in Adult Basic Education (ABE). The information gleaned could be used in language course development and would enable people who interact on the work-floor to understand more fully the implications of their own behaviour and that of others.

Recently major industries and mining houses, amongst them Eskom, Iscor, Telkom, Transnet, Anglo-American, and some of the major trade unions have become actively involved in ABE. This interest can be ascribed to the transformation that is taking place in the country and possibly also to the resurgence of interest in adult literacy after 1990 was proclaimed "Literacy Year". This awareness has highlighted the need for serious intervention in the development of members of the workforce who were deprived of education and may lack communicative skills required for job opportunities to which they previously did not have access.

1.2.2 Intercultural communication courses

It is also envisaged that the description of sociolinguistic rules violated by speakers of different languages will be implemented in intercultural communication courses.

During the early stages of the research the extent to which language contact featured in intercultural training programmes was investigated, and it was found that not much attention was paid to language contact features other than the advice that derogatory ethnic labels (DEL) should be avoided. This forms part of the history of a more general lack of insight into communication problems that might arise from cross-cultural contact. Munby (1978:79-80) states, for instance, that non-verbal communication "will not be dealt with, except in passing". There can be no doubt that non-verbal communication forms an integral part of communication and should, therefore, form an integral part of intercultural communication courses.

Once identified and described, the sociolinguistic rules of other cultures can be taught as a component in intercultural training programmes. If awareness of differences that lead to miscommunication were raised, this would, one hopes, result in a reduction in misinterpretation of speaker intent.

How findings made in this thesis can be implemented will be discussed in Chapter 6.

1.3 The hypothesis

One basic hypothesis underlying the study is that the "mutual ignorance" that leads
to communicative breakdown in language contact situations (re
above) is caused by ignorance of, or insufficient knowledge of, sociolinguistic rules.

To test the hypothesis, and to arrive at an understanding of the misinterpretation of
speaker intent, the sociolinguistic rules violated by speakers will have to be identified.
This task will be undertaken by applying the insight gained from theoretical
frameworks postulated in communication theory and sociolinguistics. Models posited
in communication theory are discussed in Chapter 2. Hymes's framework, the
ethnography of speaking, provides the theoretical underpinning of this thesis and is
discussed in Chapter 3.

1.4 Background to the problem

The Human Sciences Research Council investigation into Intergroup Relations (Marais
1985), covered a wide spectrum of issues involving more than 20 disciplines (law,
political science, economics, industrial relations, religion, communication, and so on).
The investigation showed that most intercultural communication in South Africa takes
place in the workplace, where limited spontaneous communication occurs. The
investigation revealed that various population groups differed significantly in their
evaluation of contacts, bearing testimony to the asymmetrical situations in the
country: most whites were significantly more satisfied with their communication with
other groups than were those groups with the communication of whites with them.
In other words, the majority of people were dissatisfied with the quality of
intercultural contact. The study revealed that more than half of the respondents had
not had contact with someone from a different *culture the previous day, and where
this had taken place, it was generally task-oriented and occurred in structured vertical
situations (such as supervisor/worker or customer/shop assistant).

1.4.1 The linguistic diversity of the workforce

When this study was undertaken South Africa had two official languages, Afrikaans
and English, (together with a pidgin language, Fanakalo,) that served the 11,7
million¹ economically active people engaged in trade and industry in South Africa,
the continent's most industrialized society. Most work opportunities are located in
areas where one of the erstwhile official languages is dominant, and consequently
most employees are forced to be trilingual to be eligible for work, a situation that may
change now that eleven official languages have been recognised (Act No. 200 of
1993).

¹ For a population of 30,1 million this figure may seem small, but it must be borne in mind that
in 1988 only 37,8% of the population, or 11,4 million people, were below the age of fifteen and
therefore not economically active (Central Statistical Services, 1989). These figures, supplied by
the Central Statistical Services, reflect the position in 1988.
There is an immense degree of linguistic diversity in the economic sector in South Africa. It is possible for people speaking as many as twenty-three home languages to come into contact with one another on the work-floor. (The term *home language* or *first language* is preferred to *mother tongue* because the latter has been known to be misleading (Wissing 1987:16). Wissing points out that in African society the father's language generally predominates in a home where the mother speaks a different language.) Not only are there major differences in home language, but also differences in language skill and proficiency. Some persons speak a language that has not been committed to writing, while the proficiency of others ranges from totally illiterate to literate in an indigenous language to literacy in one or both of the erstwhile official languages. Sometimes the labour force of a particular factory or organization is linguistically fairly homogenous, depending largely on where it is situated. For instance, one might find workers who have isiXhosa as a home language in the Transkei to be in the overwhelming majority, or similarly Afrikaans in the north-western Cape or the Orange Free State; yet Verster (1976) found that in the municipality of Bloemfontein more than half the organizations employed more than five ethnic groups. The geographical distribution of the languages in southern Africa is very complex: Afrikaans is the dominant language in the Cape Province and Pretoria; English in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg; isiXhosa in the Ciskei, the Transkei and the Eastern Cape; isiZulu in KwaZulu and Natal; Sesotho in Qwaqwa and the Orange Free State; Setswana in Bophutatswana and surrounding areas; Sesotho sa Lebowa in Lebowa and the central Transvaal; Tshivenda in the far Northern Transvaal; Xitsonga in Gazankulu; siSwati in KaNgwane and the South Eastern Transvaal; and isiNdebele in KwaNdebele. These language regions are of course not discrete and where languages overlap, there are many districts with two, three of five home-language groups, complicating the situation in the work domain. The Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging triangle has the greatest concentration of workers, with most of the languages of South Africa existing side by side in organizations. One research report states that as many as 53 varieties of African languages are spoken on the mines controlled by one of the major mining companies (Gxilishe and Van der Vyver 1987:17); another claims that as many as 80 are spoken (Wessels 1986:26).

The figures used in this thesis are taken from the 1980 census. (In 2.2.3 in Chapter 2 reasons are given for using an analysis of the 5% sample of the 1980 census as part of the HSRC programme entitled *Language in the labour situation*.) In 1985 no language or literacy questions were included in the census, and the present study was started before the 1991 census was conducted. It would have been possible to analyse the 1991 census data, but the cost involved did not warrant this exercise.

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2 These are the official names as established by the National Language Services on 12 October 1993. In the rest of the thesis and questionnaire the old form of spelling is retained because the research was conducted prior to this.
because the patterns of the "language gaps" in the various industries had been identified (Schuring and Ellis 1987:37-45). Problems associated with measuring literacy rates are common knowledge and it is accepted that they can serve only as an indication of trends. Lyster (1992:13) says of literacy statistics, "They are absolutely not absolute". The same can be said for figures used in presenting the linguistic diversity of the South African population. The recent election in the country confirms the unreliability of census data. Therefore, although the figures used in the research are based on the 1980 census, the picture they sketch for the purpose of presenting the linguistic diversity of the South African population may be regarded as adequate for sketching the background to the problem.

In 1980 English was the home language of 9.07% of the total South African population, Afrikaans that of 16.20% of the population, and the African languages combined those of 72.60% of the population. The other 2.13% of the population spoke immigrant European languages such as Portuguese, German, Greek, Italian, Dutch; Asian languages such as Gujurati, Hindi, Tamil, Urdu, Telugu; and other home languages such as Spanish, Polish, Czech, Hebrew, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Bemba, Chichewa, OtjiHerero, Shona, OshiNdonga and !Kung (Schuring 1990:3).

An analysis of data supplied by the Central Statistical Service for the 1980 census (Schuring and Ellis 1987:41) revealed a tremendous "language gap", i.e. the absence of a mutually known language. The study by Schuring and Ellis (1987) excluded minority Asian, Indian and European languages such as Tamil, Hindi, Gujurati, Urdu Portuguese, German, and concentrated on the two official languages and nine major indigenous languages. The analysis (based on self-evaluation in which respondents were asked to indicate with crosses whether they could speak (i.e. communicate), read or write a particular language) revealed that in terms of language proficiency, the workforce can be divided into three categories. The first category (A) includes those who are proficient in at least one of the African languages. This group accounts for approximately a quarter of the workforce. Category B, the intermediate group, includes persons who are proficient in at least one of the African languages and at least one of the official languages. Category B makes up roughly two-fifths of the workforce. Category C includes those persons who can speak one or both of the official languages, but none of the indigenous languages. This category makes up roughly one-third of the economically active population of South Africa. These findings mean that significant sections of the workforce cannot communicate directly with other sections, but are dependent on the intermediate group (Category B) for communication. Translation and interpreting are problematic when a particular concept has no parallel in the other language(s).

In order to get an overview of the languages in contact in the economically active population in South Africa, the Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities was used as framework for the available statistical data on language
proficiency of the economically active population (EAP) in South Africa (Ellis MS). For each economic sector the size and importance of the language gap is of course different. See Figure 1 on the next page for a breakdown of the estimated language proficiency of the various economic sectors.

The economic sector termed services is the biggest employer sector as it accounts for a quarter of the workforce and it has the biggest intermediate group (51.50% of the sector) of persons that are proficient in at least one African language as well as Afrikaans and English. (Services comprises central, provincial, regional, and local authorities, community and social services as well as personal professional services such as medical, veterinary, dental, health and domestic services.) The intermediate group in the second, third and fourth largest sectors, manufacturing, agriculture and trade, tourism and catering, each totals approximately two-fifths of the workforce, but for the fifth largest employment sector, mining, the figure is only 32.75%.

The biggest "language gap" is therefore to be found in the mining industry. To bridge this gap Fanakalo (a pidgin with limited vocabulary) was developed and formally taught to all recruits. The adequacy of Fanakalo as a means of communication and a medium of instruction for anyone learning more skilled or technical operations has been questioned (Radise et al. 1979:24; Craib 1984:22, 27; Hanekom 1988). Wessels (1986:32) maintains that due to the limited expressive ability of Fanakalo, incorrect messages have been passed because of faulty translations of management decision and policy statements by management.

The second smallest economic sector of the EAP is finance. This sector consists of monetary institutions, such as the Reserve Bank, merchant banks, building societies, stockbrokers, insurance institutions, real estate and related business services, as well as legal services (attorneys, notaries and conveyancers) engineering, architectural and technical services. This sector has the lowest percentage for language proficiency in an African language and the highest percentage for persons who know only one or both of the erstwhile official languages.

The erstwhile official languages are spoken with varying degrees of competence by non-native speakers. Seven varieties of English, not all equally intelligible, have been identified in South Africa (Lanham 1985:242-4). These are:

(a) Extreme South African English (characterized by phonological, grammatical and lexical borrowing from Afrikaans),
(b) Respectable South African English (characterized by pronunciation variables of Natal English which originated with the British settlement),
(c) Conservative South African English (strongly associated with southern British English),
(d) Afrikaans English (spoken by white Afrikaans first-language speakers),
Figure 1
LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IN ECONOMIC SECTORS
(Source: CS Ellis)

A: Proficient only in (at least one) African language
B: Proficient in one or more African languages and Afrikaans and/or English
C: Proficient in Afrikaans and/or English only
(e) South African Black English (spoken by South Africans with an African language as home language),
(f) Coloured English (spoken by the so-called coloured community who traditionally have Afrikaans as home language), and
(g) South African Indian English (spoken by the Indian community in South Africa).

Analogous to Black English, it is also possible to speak of Black Afrikaans (Van Rensburg 1983:17; Van Wyk 1983:163, cited in Van Jaarsveld 1988a:406) and pidginized Afrikaans (Stoltz 1982).

1.4.2 The language proficiency of employers compared with that of employees

The language of management in industry is predominantly English, and supervisors are mostly English- or Afrikaans-speaking and do not know an African language (see Figure 2 on the next page).

Figure 2 provides information about the language proficiency and occupational status of management taken in its broadest sense. It is disquieting to note the marked linguistic difference between employer and employee. A much larger group of employees (42.55%) can be classified as Category B (i.e. who can speak not only one of the official languages, but also one or more of the African languages) than employers (28.78%). This means that employees can communicate more widely than employers.

Compounding the communication problem caused by the absence of a common language and culture, a large section (38.2%) of the semi-skilled and unskilled labour force is illiterate in both of the erstwhile official languages, while the literacy rate for indigenous languages is 20.9% (Ellis MS). As was mentioned on page 6, these figures were obtained from self-evaluation, based on the 1980 census, and much higher numbers for functionally illiterate adults in South Africa are probably closer to the truth. French (1992:50) maintains that "there are anything between five and twelve million adults who are illiterate or who have a frustratingly low level of literacy, and who are unable to participate fully in a society that is saturated with the written word".

In the work situation where more than one language is in use, the potential for communication problems exists. The supervisor/foreman plays an important role in the process of communication and is the vital communication link between a predominantly white management and a predominantly black labour force. Many studies have identified the interface of white line management and black workers as the focal point for communication problems in the workplace in South Africa (Fourie 1977:32; Farrell 1978:1,2; Gilbert 1979:8; Wedepohl 1984:68-73; Kruger 1984:6; Reagan 1986:
LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY FOR EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES
(Source: C S Ellis)

- **Category A**: Proficient only in (at least) one African language
- **Category B**: Proficient in one or more African languages and Afrikaans and/or English
- **Category C**: Proficient in Afrikaans and/or English only

**Employers**
- Category A: 57% (8759)
- Category B: 29% (4388)
- Category C: 14% (2104)

**Employees**
- Category A: 33% (120183)
- Category B: 25% (69668)
- Category C: 43% (155408)

A: Proficient only in (at least) one African language
B: Proficient in one or more African languages and Afrikaans and/or English
C: Proficient in Afrikaans and/or English only
Levels of proficiency of the language(s) used vary greatly between supervisors and workers as there exist varying pressures for the use of a particular language at different work levels and in different relationships. This complex situation means that when people meet in the workplace, misinterpretation of speaker intent may occur, and often does. However, Reagan (1986:3) has indicated that language has very little impact on the effectiveness of communication in the multilingual workplace, and does not, as a rule, appear to constitute a particularly important barrier to communication.

1.5 Statement of the problem

Miscommunication (also referred to as misinterpretation of speaker intent, or dysfluent communication) often occurs when speakers of different languages meet in the workplace. One of the reasons for this obviously is linguistic incompetence in a second language (see 1.6.2.2 below). A further reason is that speaker intent may be misinterpreted because different speech communities have culture-specific conversational rules. Hymes maintains that messages themselves do not carry meaning but are constituted by the receiver and that many factors (as many as sixteen or seventeen) of the speech event can play a role in this process (Hymes 1972a:59). Miscommunication increases when speaker and hearer belong to different speech communities. The chances of miscommunication taking place in South Africa is therefore high.

To reduce this miscommunication there is a pressing need for a description of these culture-specific conversational rules that can be misinterpreted because they are not shared by all the speakers of a language.

Van Jaarsveld’s (1988a) model (see 1.6.2.7 below) is the most comprehensive for giving a fine-grained analysis and raising awareness of all manner of linguistic differences, ranging from phonological, syntactic and semantic differences through conversational strategies to cultural knowledge required for interaction in a speech community other than one’s own. Van Jaarsveld (1988a:29-30) lists phonological, syntactical, semantic and speech acts (including irony, sarcasm, and implicature) as reasons for miscommunication. In this thesis the focus is on the misinterpretation of speaker intent on pragmatic and discourse levels, and not on misinterpretation of speaker intent as it occurs on the phonological, syntactical or semantic levels identified by Van Jaarsveld. When rules on the lower (phonological, syntactic or semantic) levels are broken, utterances are conventionally marked with an * to indicate that are not well-formed. When rules are broken on the lower levels, listeners automatically attempt to understand a linguistic message by searching through their own knowledge store of what Frederiksen (1975) refers to as "data structures". A study by Bransford and Johnson (1972) corroborates this sense-making procedure and confirms that understanding, to a large extent, is a predictive process. They
report how messages were understood on account of the listeners thinking that they had heard information that was not explicitly conveyed, but obviously only inferred. Winograd (1983) calls this sense-making process the "best-fit principle".

The aim of this thesis is to uncover rules which cause misinterpretation that can be ascribed to sociolinguistic relativity (see 1.6.2.8 below).

1.6 A definition of terms underpinned by Hymes's ethnography of speaking

Sociolinguistic aspects of communication in everyday face-to-face interaction are the focus of this study. Included are verbal and non-verbal (prosodic, paralinguistic and kinesic) means of personal communication, but excluded are mass communication, media communication and written texts.

The systems theory underpins this study and because of a concordance of general systems theory and Hymes's (1962, 1967, 1972a) model on the nature of communication, the terminology used derives from Hymes's ethnography of speaking theory. The systems theory looks at the world in terms of relationships and synthesis, and in terms of the interrelatedness and interdependence of phenomena (cf. Capra 1982). Applied to the problem analysed in this study, a particular miscommunicative act must be interpreted against the wider background of the differences between cultures and speech conventions on the one hand and the way in which members of different communities interpret a particular speech event on the other. In terms of a systems approach to miscommunication these concepts offer the researcher one way of understanding the complex interaction between variables that play a role in miscommunication. In the paragraphs that follow these concepts will be outlined.

1.6.1 Taxonomy

Hymes (1967:13) presents an integrated theory that enables data to be seen as the interaction of language and social setting. Hymes (1962, 1967, 1972a) proposes a taxonomy that categorizes the interplay between language and society into (arbitrary) units that range hierarchically from sequences such as the speech field (which includes numerous speech communities that may be globally situated, for example, English in Australia, South Africa, America, through the speech community to the speech situation, and speech event to the smallest unit, the speech act. Hymes moves from the general to the specific in this discussion, indicating how each is influenced or conditioned by rules of conduct and interpretation.

1.6.1.1 Speech community

The most common reference found in the literature on speech community is to the definition of this concept by Hymes (1972a:54). He states:
Tentatively, a speech community is defined as a community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech, and rules for the interpretation of at least one linguistic variety. Both conditions are necessary.

It is important to recognize that speakers of the same language often constitute many different speech communities, each with its own norms and rules of speaking, and that not all speakers of a language belong to the same speech community because speech behaviour is dictated by the circumstances in which the interaction occurs. Each community has its own unique set of conventions, rules and patterns of conduct that must be seen in the context of a larger system which reflects the values and structures of each society. In South Africa, for instance, we can expect to find that the sociolinguistic rules of the dominant (but minority group) override the sociolinguistic rules of the majority, and indeed, this is what findings in the empirical study (Chapter 5) revealed.

There are instances in the South African situation in which there is a close relationship between language and ethnic identity, but it is problematic to assume such an overlap as being general. Most Indians speak English, for instance, and Afrikaans is not the sole property of white home language speakers. In different speech communities, speech situations (which in turn govern speech events) may be realised differently. In Chapter 3 this topic will be explored in considerable detail. It will be shown how components of the speech event play a role in the interpretation of the message.

Hudson (1980:25-30) reviews some of the most common definitions of the term *speech community*. He traces the origin of the term back to the original Latin *communitae* which means "held in common", and cites the criteria that have been given as the determining factors:

(a) Frequency of interaction by a group of people (Bloomfield 1933; Hockett 1958; Gumperz 1962).
(b) Shared language use (Lyons 1970).
(c) Shared rules of speaking and interpretation of speech performance (Hymes 1972).
(d) Shared attitudes and values regarding language forms and use (Labov 1972).
(e) Shared sociocultural understandings and presuppositions with regard to speech (Sherzer 1975).

Since shared knowledge depends on intensity of contact and on communication networks, speech community boundaries tend to coincide with wider social units, and it may be reasonable to expect that rules of speaking will be shared by such a group because interaction is maximal. In an urban society in which speakers may belong to
a variety of overlapping networks, people may be members of several speech communities at the same time. Furthermore, a single speech community may have, as part of its repertoire, two or more languages, and it must be borne in mind that competent speakers will vary their behaviour (or social identity) to suit the context of the total situation (Hymes 1967:9). Labov (1966), and many after him, have demonstrated that as everyone has a range of styles, no-one is a single-style speaker. Gumperz (1982:27) points out that people are free to alter their social personae according to circumstances, and the assumption that a speech community can be isolated is therefore called into question when we consider how fluid contexts may be. Deciding where the boundaries of each context are has not been easy, making the concept rather fuzzy. When we consider the nature of a speech community, we invariably call to mind the word holon, coined by Koestler (1978, cited in Capra 1982:27), that describes how subsystems are wholes and parts at the same time, emphasizing that "each holon has two opposite tendencies; an integrative tendency to function as part of the larger whole, and a self-assertive tendency to preserve its individual autonomy". Analogously an individual can belong to various speech communities at the same time, and at any particular occasion may identify with only one of them, the particular identification depending on what is especially important or contrastive in the circumstances (Wardhaugh 1987:118). On the work-floor in multilingual South Africa this could have unfortunate repercussions if speakers misinterpret speech events from their own perspectives.

1.6.1.2 Speech situation

For the purpose of this study, speech situation refers to any situation within the workplace (in a variety of factories and organizations) where there is interaction between people from different speech communities. The focus will be on interaction between supervisors (who generally have either English or Afrikaans as their home language) and operators or other categories of job (who have an African language as home language).

Sociolinguists routinely show how communication does not occur in a physical vacuum but rather in an environment or setting that creates the socio-physical stage that has an effect on linguistic choice. Hymes (1962, 1967, 1972a) posits that the speech situation itself is not governed by rules, but is influenced by the norms and conventions of a particular place or society in which it finds itself. It is not only the nature of the setting, the topic of discourse, the particular language selected, but also the status of the interlocutors that interact to determine the way in which someone will speak in a particular situation. Gumperz (1972:15) points out that qualities such as status and role are not invariable, and that most individuals have considerable freedom in choosing which of several role relationships to enact. In this study it will be shown how the request Don't you want to sell me your shoes? is interpreted differently by participants from different speech communities depending on the
speech situation and the relationship between participants in the speech situation. It will become clear that the power structure in a situation determines to a large degree how people react linguistically within that structure.

1.6.1.3 Speech event

The speech event is to the analysis of verbal interaction what the sentence is to grammar (Gumperz 1972:17). A speech event is a unit of communication governed by ways of speaking and norms for the use of speech, and usually involves the same participants focusing on a single topic. A speech event terminates whenever there is a change in major participants, their role relationships, or the focus of attention. The change in events is marked by different body positions or periods of silence. The purpose of describing speech events, according to Hymes (1972a:62) is to arrive at "customary or culturally appropriate behaviour". The speech situation supplies the context in which a speech event occurs and plays a role in the choice of linguistic features: in South Africa the language of a speech event in a supermarket in the (white) suburbs will probably differ considerably from that used in a spaza shop (the private sale of goods from a house) in a township.

The framework posited by Hymes makes allowance for all kinds of relationships among the (as many as seventeen) components identified in speech events (1972a:59). Hymes makes it clear that the communicative event cannot be defined in advance. He writes (1962:107):

The categories presented here for an ethnography of speaking must be taken as ways of getting at individual systems, as analogous to a phonetics and perhaps part of practical phonemics. The intent is heuristic, not a priori (emphasis added).

What this means is that any of the seventeen components could play a role in the interpretation of a speech event and that interlocutors should be sensitized to the many possibilities that could cause misinterpretation of speaker intent.

In this thesis those events which form the object of study include all forms of interaction occurring between members of the speech communities mentioned, whether these be the giving of instructions, formal meetings, or small talk.

1.6.1.4 Speech act

The smallest unit, the speech act, is associated with a single communicative function. Speech Act Theory attempts to classify utterances according to their functions. Austin (1962) was first in proposing a five-class taxonomy of speech acts (amongst others, representative acts, directive acts, commissive acts); since then several variations on these categories have been made. The key problem is that a speech act
cannot be equated with a sentence, an utterance, or a turn, since it is in essence an act and not only a unit of speech. It is possible for one utterance to perform more than one function, depending on the context or circumstances under which the utterance is made. In Chapter 3, speech acts, as described by Austin and others, will be discussed under the heading **Norms**, where it will be shown that very many speech acts have been subjected to cross-cultural investigations because so many are realised differently in different cultures -- with obvious consequences for second-language speakers. (The speech act referred to must not be confused with the component Hymes calls Act in his acronym SPEAKING, because in that component Hymes uses the term Act to refer to what is said and how it is said, and not to the speech acts identified originally by Austin (1962)).

In this study it was originally assumed that directives would be of importance for a fine-grained analysis of acts on the work-floor especially as van Jaarsveld’s (1988a) research indicates that second-language speakers displayed a great deal of difficulty in understanding the intended force of an indirect directive, e.g. *Kan jy die deur toemaak?* (Could you close the door, please?). This is not a question of ability (to determine whether the listener is capable of closing the door), but a request. Failure to interpret the utterance correctly indicates that the intended illocutionary force was misunderstood. It was assumed that examples of speech acts in the workplace would, for instance, be instructing (i.e. giving directives), giving advice, questioning or asking for reports on work done, finding out whether instructions had been understood, ordering material or finding out whether material had been ordered, asking for clarification, reporting, and so on, as these functions are what one finds in second-language textbooks. However, in the research that will be reported on in Chapter 5, it was found, contrary to expectation, that much of the interaction between the supervisor and workers was life-world related and not work-related and that directives did not occur in many of the verbal interchanges on the work-floor.

Now that the Hymes’s model, which provides the theoretical underpinning for this work, has been outlined, other terms that will be used in this study require attention.

### 1.6.2 Clarification of terminology

For a variety of reasons it is not advisable to simply refer to the dictionary meanings of the terms used in this thesis; additional clarification of terms is required. One reason for this is that the different disciplinary backgrounds of scholars from various fields has led them to approach the analysis of spoken interaction from different vantage points. As a result of this many kinds of linguistic and non-linguistic commentaries on language in use are presented, e.g. see the different terminology used in conceptual frameworks as described by Stern (1983:221) in Table 1 on the next page in which variables are employed, and no single cover term for these activities is now significantly accurate or informative. Stern compares three models,
that of a linguist (Jakobson), that of a social psychologist (Robinson), and that of a linguist and anthropologist (Hymes) to show what they have in common in terms of categories of language events.

It is clear that we have to contend with some terminological confusion because overlapping terminology is used in the literature; the same term is sometimes used for a different concept, or a different term is used for the same concept. All three models set out to answer the question of how language works by explaining how a message is transmitted from a source along a channel (where interference (noise) distorts the message) to where it is received by a receiver.

Further examples of overlapping terms: Hymes’s (1962, 1967, 1972a) notion of speech event is referred to as *schemata* in artificial intelligence, while in cognitive psychology the terms *schemes* (Bartlett 1932:45, 194, 195) or *schemas* (Abelson and Black 1986:5; Bransford and Johnson 1972:724) refer to abstract knowledge structures that speakers are aware of and intuitively respond to when they converse with others.

### TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of Language Events</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jakobson (19-60)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 addresser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 topic/prime focus of verbal act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 functions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Stern 1983:221)
Terms that will be clarified are (in alphabetical order):

1.6.2.1 communication
1.6.2.2 communicative competence, pragmatic competence 
intercultural competence, and sociocultural competence
1.6.2.3 culture
1.6.2.4 discourse analysis, conversation(al) analysis, and pragmatics
1.6.2.5 etic and emic
1.6.2.6 crosscultural, intercultural and intracultural
1.6.2.7 miscommunication
1.6.2.8 sociolinguistic relativity
1.6.2.9 sociolinguistic (conversational) rules.

1.6.2.1 Communication

*Communication* is a term, loosely used, for the intricate process of expressing and interpreting messages. Communication has been studied from many perspectives, as is evident from the 95 different ways in which the concept has been defined (Robinson 1988:98). Gumperz (1982:1) succinctly writes: "Communication is a social activity requiring the co-ordinated efforts of two or more individuals". Various models that explicate how communication occurs have been postulated, mostly originating from information (communication) theory. Some of these will be described in Chapter 2.

Language is but one form of communication. Using language entails constantly making communicative choices which are situated at every possible level of linguistic structuring: phonological, morphological, syntactic, lexical, semantic, pragmatic (Verschueren 1987). Because of this, we cannot assume that interpretation processes are shared. Community norms, strategies and values which characterize the speech activity as a whole in a community differ from speech community to speech community because the way people communicate is influenced by the values they hold and the way they perceive meaning.

Of importance for this study is that communication norms for speech events may differ from one speech community to the next, and we must know something about the norms defining appropriateness of linguistically acceptable alternatives for particular types of speakers (Gumperz 1972:117).

1.6.2.2 Communicative competence

Various terms are used to describe successful communication, all of which have
bearing on what is known as *communicative competence*, a term introduced into the literature by Hymes (1972b), in deliberate contrast to Chomsky's conception (1965:3) of linguistic competence. Some of these terms are: *communication competence, sociocultural competence, social competence* (Bell 1981), *intercultural competence* (abbreviated in the literature as ICC), *pragmatic competence* (Thomas 1984), and recently at a conference in Pretoria, the term *intercultural literacy* was used, and will probably gain currency (personal observation). Hymes's (1972a:277) much quoted formulation of communicative competence is "when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner". This concept is no doubt intended challenge to Chomsky's linguistic competence (which is confined to internalized rules of syntax and ignores the social rules of language use), but its main focus is to provide a term for an intuitive grasp of social and cultural rules. Communicative competence therefore refers to the ability of native speakers to use the resources of their language(s) in ways which are not only linguistically accurate, but also socially appropriate.

Reflecting on the wide reaction the term has had from many sources, Hymes (1992:33) -- twenty years after the term was coined -- confirms that it should be seen "as a comprehensive term" and goes on to stress "the fundamental question for the understanding of language is the nature of that selective relationship". How the speaker is expected to behave may vary situationally and cross-culturally.

For this study it is important to have a clear idea of the meaning of communicative competence because speakers are often stereotyped negatively precisely because they are using the rules current in their own culture.

1.6.2.3 Culture

*Culture* refers to a dynamic system of knowledge, values and actions by means of which individuals and groups give meaning to their lives and express themselves both tangibly and intangibly (Malan 1992:2). Thus culture cannot be treated as a static, homogenous concept. Of the many hundreds\(^3\) of definitions, three were selected, namely those of Keesing (1979), Tylor (1985) and Thornton (1988:25). Keesing (1979:14) defines culture as "a system of knowledge, a composite of the cognitive systems more or less shared by members of a society". Tylor (1985:1 in Chen 1990:3) defines it, in its broadest sense, as the way of human life in a group that includes "knowledge, belief, act, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". Thornton explains that culture is best thought of as a resource. He writes (1988:24), "... culture is the information which humans are not born with but which they need in order to interact with each

\(^3\) As early as in 1952 Kroeber and Kluckshon listed more than 200 definitions of this concept (in Knapp and Knapp-Potthoff (eds.), 1987:4).
other in social life. It must be learned during the long process of education, socialisation, maturing and growing old". These three definitions identify variables that play a crucial role in miscommunication, and when members of different cultures come into contact, it is predictable that differences in their systems of knowledge will cause problems in their interaction.

It was necessary to define this term for this study because it has to be borne in mind that culture controls behaviour in deep and persisting ways, many of which are beyond the conscious control of the individual (Hall 1959:25). A sociolinguistic feature embedded in culture (e.g. avoidance of eye-contact as a sign of respect) may be misread in a speech event without the speaker being aware that s/he is probably judged as underhand because of this. The impact of culture is evident when the untaught, unspoken rules of society are subject to scrutiny when they are challenged by a person or persons from outside that culture.

1.6.2.4 Discourse analysis, conversation(al) analysis and pragmatics

Despite a two thousand year-old tradition of rhetoric that forms the major historical background of the field, the discipline of Discourse Analysis is very young\(^4\). Its modern emergence may be traced back to developments in structural linguistics, anthropology and literacy studies in the mid-1960s.

The term *discourse analysis* was first used by Harris in 1952 to refer to the study of a unit bigger than the single sentence (Scarcella 1988:74) and has since become the umbrella term for studies in the disciplines of linguistics, sociology, English, text analysis, content analysis, and so on. Discourse has been studied by general linguists, rhetoricians, anthropologists, sociologists, communication scientists, psychologists and scholars of artificial intelligence. *Conversation(al) analysis*, which originated from micro-sociology, on the other hand, is the study of everyday, ordinary conversation, or natural language in use, and is concerned exclusively with conversation. The work of ethnomethodologists (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974), in which the organization of talk is analyzed, has offered substantial insights into the way in which conversation is organized. Ethnomethodologists regard meaning and meaningful activity as something people accomplish when they interact socially. Since much of human interaction is actually verbal interaction, they have focused much of their attention on how people use language in their relationships with one another.

Many factors govern our choice of language in social interaction. Both *discourse analysis* and *pragmatics* are centrally concerned with the analysis of conversation and

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\(^4\) For its scope and range see the four volumes of the *Handbook of Discourse Analysis* edited by Van Dijk (1985).
share several of the philosophical and linguistic concepts that have been developed to handle this topic. In this study the terms conversational analysis and discourse analysis will be used interchangeably, as is done in most of the literature (e.g. Toolan 1989), but it must be understood that the topic under discussion is everyday, spoken face-to-face conversation. For the purpose of this study conversation is defined as:

more than a series of exchanges; it consists of exchanges which are initiated and interpreted according to intuitively understood and socially acquired rules and norms of conversational cooperation, which can in turn be manipulated to create a wide range of meanings beyond the level expressed directly by the utterances in the conversations themselves (Richards and Schmidt 1983:122).

One factor that complicates the study of pragmatics is that in contrast with other components of linguistics that have basic units of analysis (e.g. phonology has phonemes, morphology has morphemes, syntax has sentences and semantics has propositions) pragmatics "cannot be said to have any basic unit of analysis at all" (Verschueren 1987:37). Pragmatics has been referred to as "language in use", the occasion on which a speaker’s knowledge of grammar comes into contact with his/her knowledge of the world. Alexander (1986:1) maintains that pragmatics is the area of language study which currently commands the least consensus as to what its central concerns are, and consequently what methods might be best employed in its pursuit.

1.6.2.5 Etic and emic

The term etic is derived from the linguistic term phonetic (as opposed to phonemic). In phonetic analysis linguists attempt to record the sounds of a language as accurately as they can, without assuming that they are phonologically related to each other in the way that is familiar to the linguist in his/her own language.

To avoid the characteristic pitfalls of participant-observation, the ethnographer, likewise, has to make etic observations without trying to interpret what they might mean (Fasold 1990:49). Hymes (1962:113) suggests how the researcher should go about interpreting the categories he (Hymes) has identified as constituting the speech event, using the framework as a "contrast-within-a-frame" approach (Hymes 1962:103). Hymes (loc.cit.) explains that he developed his descriptive framework for ethnographic patterning so that, "it should be a structured analysis, achieving the economies of the rules of a grammar in relation to a series of analysis of texts". This model was developed because he (loc.cit.) believes that the analysis of spoken discourse need "not be on principle interminable, nor endlessly ad hoc". Hymes believes this way of observing data will enable researchers to distinguish between sociolinguistic features that are "unmarked" (the normal or ordinary) and "marked". Markedness and naturalness are more commonly associated with phonology, syntax
and lexis, but in his model Hymes (1967:26) maintains that markedness and naturalness can exist at different levels of discourse.

1.6.2.6  Intercultural and cross-cultural communication

In the literature the terms intercultural, transcultural, cross-cultural, multicultural, interethnic, and interracial are used interchangeably. In this study the terms intercultural and cross-cultural are used to refer to communication between people in any domain who do not share a common linguistic or cultural background. It is not restricted to native/non-native interaction, but to whenever parties to a communication act bring with them different experiential backgrounds that reflect a long-standing deposit of group experience, knowledge and values.

1.6.2.7  Miscommunication

The inability to understand a speaker's intention causes miscommunication. When all participants are aware of sociolinguistic rules (see 1.6.2.9), interpretative processes are taken for granted and tend to go unnoticed. However, when a listener does not react as expected or is unaware of the functions of a cue, interpretations of spoken interaction may differ and misinterpretation of speaker intent may occur.

The asynchronous nature of the communication that causes misinterpretation of speaker intent may have consequences that range from mere irritation to serious international repercussions. Examples of some of these will be discussed in the chapters of this thesis that follow. Below is cited one example as illustration of misinterpretation of speaker intent.

In an interview between a staff member of the Department of Employment in Britain and a Pakistani teacher of mathematics, the interviewer failed to recognize the way in which "very nice" was said as the equivalent of an Urdu phrase, and which is used as a back-channel sign of interest, similar to urging the other speaker to continue. Instead the response was ignored and the interview ended unsuccessfully, probably because the "very nice" was equated to a response to children who behave properly. The interaction disintegrated due to lack of coordination, culminating in a burst of nervous laughter (Gumperz 1982:179). It is obvious that the response translated from Urdu was the incorrect one for the interview speech event, and that therefore speaker intent was misinterpreted.

In South Africa Van Jaarsveld (1988a) conducted research on cross-cultural miscommunication. Van Jaarsveld (1988a) analysed the responses to questionnaires completed by students of tertiary institutions throughout the country. The reason for students being used was to limit variables such as age, rural and urban distribution, with a view to generalizability of findings. The findings made it possible to contrast
views of speakers six South African languages (Afrikaans, English, Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho, Xhosa and Zulu) to determine stereotypes, perceptions of politeness, differences in the interpretation of directives and values in general. For the issue of values, views on education, respect, modesty, and money were examined.

In Van Jaarsveld’s model of miscommunication (1988a) four levels were identified. These ranged from language specific features (level one) to culture-specific features (level four) that cause misunderstanding. In the first two layers Van Jaarsveld includes phonological, syntactic, semantic and differences in illocutionary acts which could cause misunderstanding, one example of which is, for instance, judges taken for jas (the Afrikaans for coat) owing to mispronunciation because many speakers pronounce j as dj (compare jy and djou). Misunderstanding on this level is usually compensated for by the context of the utterance; and because the interpretive process is semantically driven, mispronunciation seldom interferes with the message when seen in the perspective of the speech event in which the utterance occurs.

Another example of misunderstanding that occurred on the first two levels of Van Jaarsveld’s model is that of a driver taking the list of goods urgently needed instead of the goods on the list to a far destination. Gxilishe and Van der Vyver (1987:10 et seq.) have documented examples of misunderstanding on the first two levels that have caused delays, waste and posed safety hazards (cf. Thomas 1984; Scarcella 1988:77; Richards and Sukwiwat 1983). The absence of two words for the colours green and blue are well-documented (in Xhosa the word for both is uluhlsa, in Sotho tala); the misevaluation of abilities that can result on account of this is reported by Kaschula (1989:101) who claims that, because of the inability to distinguish verbally between these colours, a labourer may be labelled as unintelligent. When African worker’s report that someone is “late”, they will most probably be indicating that the worker has died (analogous to my late uncle) and not that he has missed the train. Another example of miscommunication caused by linguistic incompetence based on Van Jaarsveld’s first level is supplied by Walker (1991). She reports that the unpaid electricity accounts of Mamelodi have been a major headache for the Pretoria municipality. When electricity is cut off during winter months, households are left without heating or cooking facilities, a matter of grave concern for thousands of people. Walker discovered that one of the residents thought that the basics on the account referred to the basins that had been installed fifteen years before and she thought she was expected to go on paying for them every month and refused to do so.

The third level of Van Jaarsveld’s model is based to a great extent on discourse strategies and the principles of the ethnomethodologists, such as turn taking, opening gambits and holding the floor. For the purpose of this study there is no reason for separating the third level from his fourth level. Examples of misunderstanding on level three will be given in Chapter 3 under the heading Act, where principles established by ethnomethodologists will be elaborated upon. Strategies used by non-
native speakers (topic abandonment, appeal to authority, self-corrections, signals for feedback and code switching) because of lack of linguistic knowledge are of no real concern for this thesis and will not be discussed further.

The fourth layer examines other social variables and shared knowledge (which includes shared cultural values), differences in politeness strategies and other sociolinguistic principles that hold for a particular speech situation. Examples of misunderstanding on this level will be discussed in Chapter 3 under various headings, for instance under the headings Setting (where it is shown how speech behaviour is dictated by the circumstances in which the interaction occurs), Participants (where differences in politeness norms are discussed) and Genre (where values are examined in the discussion of proverbs).

1.6.2.8 Sociolinguistic relativity

In this study the focus is on sociolinguistic relativity and not linguistic relativity as expounded in the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. According to Wolfson (1989:2) sociolinguistic relativity means

that each community has its own unique set of conventions, rules, and patterns for the conduct of communication and that these must be understood in the context of a general system which reflects the values and structure of the society.

As was seen, culture plays a role in all communication. Because each culture possesses certain conventions which are shared to a greater or lesser degree by all members of a group, culture plays a role in all communication. These conventions may be represented by sociolinguistic rules. This, in turn, enables us to state that, in order to act and speak appropriately, individuals must recognize that different situations are determined by different sets of rules: compliance and non compliance with these rules separate those who "belong" from those who do not "fit in". Sociolinguistics is a young field, and recently Wolfson (1992:8) was compelled to admit that we are very far from being able to write anything approaching a grammar of sociolinguistic rules for any group. This means that sociolinguists find it difficult to predict what rules play a crucial role in communication. Therefore, only after miscommunication has occurred can we determine the non-observance of which rules caused the miscommunication.

Most individuals are unaware that routines and formulas are not universal, and when the non-native speaker violates sociolinguistic rules, s/he is judged to be uncouth, may suffer harsh rebuffs, or is generally misjudged. Wolfson (1989:32) states:

we must recognize that the phenomenon that we are calling sociolinguistic relativity is a very difficult concept to accept, and that differences in
communicative or sociocultural conventions are all too often interpreted as intentional rudeness.

How conversation has culture-specific conventions that reflect the values and structure of the society will be explored fully in Chapter 3.

1.6.2.9 Sociolinguistic (conversational) rules/norms

Eisenstein and Bodman (1986) found that immigrants who have near-perfect grammatical competence and who have lived in the new speech community for a long time often do not grasp the sociolinguistic rules of the specific speech community. The reality is that speakers may have faultless grammar and an extended vocabulary, but this does not guarantee conversational competence as socio-cultural conventions affect all levels of speech production and interpretation. We therefore cannot assume that interpretive processes are shared.

One of the reasons for misinterpretation of speaker intent is that each community operates according to its own unique set of conventions (patterns for the conduct of communication which include all levels of the message, prosodic and kinesic). Because they have been subconsciously absorbed from childhood, these conventions are rarely recognised as specific sociolinguistic rules. However, once they are violated, their important role in the communicative process becomes abundantly clear.

The problem of misinterpretation is not confined to non-native speakers, but also to those who speak the same language or variety of language as oneself. Speakers may think that they speak the same language, but close analysis of why miscommunication occurs will reveal that the intentional forces underlying the communication they presume to be in operation are not always shared. The rules for speech behaviour are not necessarily shared by speakers of even the same language, e.g. a mainstream speaker of British English and a West Indian who has settled in England, and Britons and Americans who, apparently share a common language, have had many cross-cultural communication problems (Smith 1987). Hymes (1986:51) describes how Americans themselves have no uniform oral styles and conversational etiquette, and how this may lead to miscommunication. Smith (1987) draws attention to the theory of English as an international language (EIL) that asserts that linguistic competence equivalent to that of a native English speaker is not enough to ensure successful international communication. Wolfson (1989:28) and Thomas (1984:91) make the point that miscommunication is not confined to interaction between speakers of completely different cultures because speakers who share an apparently similar first language may also experience problems because they have different sociolinguistic rules.

Native speakers have strong intuitions about what the norms are, but in most cases
no empirical investigation exists to back up these rules or norms. Candlin (1976:238 in Thomas 1983:94) observes that the rules in pragmatics are probable rather than categorical, and Thomas (1983:94) cautions that the term pragmatic failure is more accurate than pragmatic error because it is not possible to say the pragmatic force of an utterance is "wrong". We cannot mark an utterance "very nice" (mentioned above in 1.6.2.7) with an asterisk to indicate that it is unsuitable in the way we do with ill-formed sentences, because in another context it would not be unsuitable because other variables could come into play. This leads us to consider what Hymes (1962:113) has to say about all the possible constituents that make up a speech event:

One way is to focus on a single instance or class, hold it constant, and vary the other components. As a sort of concordance technique, this results in an inventory, a description of an element in terms of the combinality of other elements with it. As a general distributional technique, this can discover the relations which obtain among various elements: whether co-occurrence is obligatory, or optional, or structurally excluded. Sometimes the relation will hold for only two elements (as when a certain category of Receiver may be addressed only by a certain category of Sender), sometimes for several. The relation may characterize a class of speech events.

The terms sociolinguistic rules, conversational cues, conversational routines, patterns of use, norms of interaction and routine formulae (Coulmas 1979) all refer to the same phenomenon, i.e. the generally unwritten and intuitively learned rules that allow for subtleties of register or tone which can change the meaning of an utterance completely, leaving the non-native speaker nonplussed for the reason for a rebuff or rejection.

It is concluded that communication systems differ from one speech community to the next. The way people communicate is influenced by the values they hold and the ways of speaking that are prevalent within their own speech communities. As pointed out, these rules are inculcated while speakers are still young.

1.7 Contents of other chapters

As misinterpretation of speaker intent across language barriers in the workplace occupies much of this study, theoretical frameworks that have been put forward to explicate miscommunication will be discussed in Chapter 2. In this second chapter it will be shown how implicit messages in Haworth and Savage's (1989) model have something to offer in terms of cultural differences, and it is concluded that communication theory falls short of accounting for the violation of sociolinguistic rules of speech communities. It is therefore proposed that the framework posited by Hymes be used to explore the data.
Existing studies of sociolinguistic relativity world-wide are reviewed in Chapter 3. The purpose of this review is three-fold. First, in this chapter, the universality of the phenomenon across speech communities is substantiated. Secondly, a review of the literature on sociolinguistic relativity gives some indication of the approaches used by researchers (thereby serving as a basis for the research design used in this study). Thirdly, the review will sensitize the researcher to the kind of sociolinguistic features that lead to misinterpretation of speaker intent in other speech communities. Numerous examples discussed in Chapter 3 will confirm that when speakers interact across cultures, they are prone to misinterpret the intentions of those from other backgrounds with whom they interact, and that similarly their own behaviour is open to serious misinterpretation. The examples mentioned illustrate that miscommunication occurs when individuals interact in a way that would be perfectly appropriate in their native language or culture and are consequently at a loss as to why their verbal or non-verbal contributions are misinterpreted.

In Chapter 4 the research design used will be defended. In the triangulation process various sources and different research paradigms are employed in the interpretation of data. The advantages and disadvantages of the two major methods of data collection (elicitation and observation) will be discussed. It will be argued that these methods must be seen as complementary in an accurate description of misinterpretation of speaker intent.

Empirical data is analysed in Chapter 5. Recorded interaction in factories and in-depth and semi-structured interviews with a variety of people at different levels of organizations are interpreted.

Chapter 6 contains conclusions derived from the this analysis of empirical data, and recommendations are made for the implementation of findings in courses in intercultural communication training and as a component in Adult Basic Education (ABE) language courses.

1.8 Conclusion

The aim of this study is to raise awareness of sociolinguistic relativity with a view to instilling tolerance of differences that have the potential of stigmatizing speakers. The problem was stated by reporting on the language diversity in the workforce in South African industry. By reporting on sociolinguistic differences and incorporating these in the courses, a contribution can be made to the eradication of ethnocentrism and therefore also stigmatization and (negative) stereotyping.

Terms that are used in the rest of the thesis were defined against the background of Hymes’s framework, and a broad outline was given of the contents of the other chapters.
CHAPTER TWO

MODELS OF (MIS)COMMUNICATION

2.1 The aim of this chapter

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that the conventional models put forward in communication theory fail to indicate the potential relationships among factors that cause misinterpretation of speaker intent which leads to miscommunication. To arrive at a greater understanding of the nature of both communication and miscommunication, theoretical frameworks that have been posited to explicate how communication takes place will be discussed in this chapter.

The British playwright Stoppard (1988:49) uses a fictional Russian nuclear scientist to express a scientist's discontent with the convention of using a graphic model to represent a concept that is difficult to grasp or abstract (in this case atomic and subatomic reality). The physicist says:

I cannot stand the pictures of atoms they put in schoolbooks, like a little solar system: Bohr's atom. Forget it. You cannot make a picture of what Bohr proposed, an electron does not go round like a planet, it is like a moth which was there a moment ago, it gains or loses a quantum of energy and it jumps, and at the moment of the quantum jump it is like two moths, one to be here and one to stop being here; an electron is like twins, each one unique, a unique twin.

This quotation was chosen to confirm the inadequacy of the convention of depicting the dynamics of a complex phenomenon graphically, yet models that explicate information theory and intercultural (mis)communication in industry in South Africa have made use of such graphic representations almost as a matter of course (see Appendix A for instances of such models). In order to substantiate the claim that graphic models postulated in information theory do not adequately represent the problem, some theoretical background will be provided by reporting on the absence of a theory for intercultural communication. Following this, a brief history of the study of intercultural communication will be sketched, and then some models developed in communication theory will be discussed.

In the poetics of scientific discourse many metaphors have been employed in various
disciplines (Ting-Toomey 1983:4; Jansen 1989:41), and we will attempt to show how mechanistic metaphors put forward to explicate the communication process by communication theorists do not capture the nature of communication as adequately as Hymes’s (1962, 1967, 1972a) model does. In this chapter some of these models will be described and it will be argued that this graphic convention is reductionist, as no graphic model is capable of accurately representing the relationships between the parts of a multidirectional phenomenon in which the elements constantly interact with each other. (Reductionism is defined by Reason and Rowan (1981:xiv) as "... a flight from understanding in depth, a flight from knowing human phenomena as wholes".) It will be demonstrated that in the model proposed by Hymes (1962, 1967, 1972a) the whole is constantly kept in mind while categories that constitute the speech event are seen in a kind of shifting relationship with each other.

There is no need to prove at great length here that any of the other linguistic perceptual frameworks, e.g. that of the linguistic philosophers (Grice, Austin, and Searle), or that of the ethnomethodologists (Garfinkel, Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson) are not universally applicable, because this task has been done admirably by scholars such as Wolfson (1989:55-78); Toolan (1989:251-274); Wardhaugh (1986:244-249), Frank (1987:9;23), Carroll (1988:23), and Fasold (1990:173-174), to mention but a few. Examples given in the next chapter are evidence that the maxims postulated by philosophers of language are far from universal, and therefore not useful in the study of misinterpretation of speaker intent on the work-floor. Some examples that indicate how Gricean principles (e.g. be informative) are violated will be discussed in Hymes’s category Participants in Chapter 3. Under the heading Act it will be demonstrated that the work of ethnomethodologists (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974), in which the organization of talk is analyzed, has offered substantial insights into the way in which conversation is organized, but is not universally applicable.

2.2 A short background to the discipline of Intercultural Communication

In order to arrive at the significance of intercultural communication for understanding the dynamics underlying language use in industry in South Africa, this section will be divided into a number of subsections. An account of the origins of the discipline is first given, then its role in the analysis of language in the workplace internationally is described in 2.2.2, and finally its role in explicating communication in industry in South Africa will be outlined in 2.2.3.

Intercultural communication is a multidisciplinary field and is influenced by

1 Jansen (1984:4) maintains that metaphors empower scientific vision; they provide the scaffolding for arguments, colour the language of assertion, put the poetry in the paradigms, and guide inquiry.
methodological models from the disciplines that feed into it. The social sciences that offer insights into intercultural communication are, amongst others, Linguistics, Anthropology, Sociology, Psychology, Theory of Literature, Rhetoric, Philology, and Speech Communication (Tannen 1989:7) while Tracy (1988:243) adds Sociolinguistics, Cognitive Science, Child Language and Communication Research, and Van Dijk (1990:134) adds Political Science. As was seen in Chapter 1, beating one's way through the undergrowth of overlapping terminology is not the major obstacle that prevents an understanding of the communication process. What is lacking in the depiction of the models is an explanation of how components interact, a process that Hymes (1962, 1967, 1972a) attempts to capture in the model he proposes. As will be explained more fully in the next chapter, Hymes used the acronym SPEAKING to list eight categories or components of speech which demonstrate the factors needing to be taken into account in a descriptive analysis of spoken discourse. In his own words, the pattern Hymes proposes "requires discovering a relevant frame or context, identifying the items which contrast within it, and determining the dimensions of contrast for the items within the set so defined" (Hymes 1962:103).

2.2.1. History from the origins to the present state of the art

There can be no doubt in anyone's mind about the importance of successful communication and co-operation between people who do not speak the same language, especially when it occurs in a place of work, yet intercultural communication is a topic that has not received much attention (Cere 1986:2; Holden 1989). It is only in the last decade or so that there has been an increase in research into cross-cultural business communication due to the phenomenal growth in the volume of international trade on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to a worldwide workforce that is becoming increasingly ethnically and culturally diverse. One reason why linguists have not addressed the complex problem of describing what can go wrong when people from different speech communities meet, is that up to the early seventies almost all conversational data analyses derived from verbal interaction in social and linguistically homogenous groups (mostly Anglo-American), and consequently the problem of cultural differences in ways of speaking was not identified.

Until recently very little was written about the field of intercultural communication other than in studies of mass communication. Robinson (1988) calls it dangerous territory, analogous to the Here be dragons that was written on old maps when much of the world was still uncharted. Intercultural communication is not a new concept and has existed since people have travelled for reasons of trade or exploration, but the systematic study of what happens when interaction takes place across cultures is a relatively young field. The history of intercultural communication is traced to the anthropologists Boas, Kluckhohn, Malinowski and Kroeber. Malinowski (1920:69 in
Hymes 1971:48) expressed the urgent need for the formulation of an "ethnolinguistic theory", but neither the term nor the theory received sustained attention. In Lado's (1957) work *Linguistics across cultures*, underlying systems (sound, grammatical, vocabulary, and writing) of various languages are compared, but in the section on how to compare cultures, no mention is made of how to compare spoken language in terms of differing-rules of speaking. Hall's seminal work, *The silent language* (1959), from which the axiom "Culture communicates" developed, is often cited as the crucial starting point for intercultural communication awareness (Leeds-Hurwitz 1990:262; Breen 1986:7; Kitao and Kitao 1989:4). At more or less the same time the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis was formulated in which Whorf (1956) maintains that language functions not simply as a device for reporting experience, but also, more significantly, as a way of defining experience for its speakers. Thereafter Gumperz's fieldwork amongst multilingual speech communities during India and Norway in the early sixties paved the way for sociolinguistic analysis.

Since the seventies things have changed drastically, and courses are being presented for the business(wo)man who has to conduct affairs with Japanese people, for example, because in business, people have now woken up to the fact that "entering a conference room in Japan to negotiate a complex technology transfer or joint-venture arrangement is not unlike entering a minefield blindfolded" (Zimmerman 1985:105). One reason for the introduction of these courses is that the Japanese are reluctant to say *no* to anything because they feel a flat rejection may offend the person being addressed and in presentations of persuasion the Japanese have at least sixteen (indirect) ways of refusing an offer. It has been acknowledged that a communication problem is more than a language problem, and that other factors (such as a set of conventions for the conduct of communication, i.e. sociolinguistic rules, of each community) play a part in preventing harmonious communication from taking place. Recently an *ABC Guide to International Travel* was published in London, alerting international travellers to differences they may encounter, e.g. "In Finland, business executives should be prepared for long periods of silence which may occur during conversations and negotiations", and "Samoa do not like to disagree with people or not give the anticipated reply. This means they often say *yes* when they really mean *no*". The guide warns: "Non-use by Zairians of expressions such as *please* and *thank you* is not due to impoliteness but simply a cultural convention". The guide explains that in Thailand "speaking loudly or showing anger in public is considered disrespectful. One should not touch the head of persons, not even that of children", and compares this to American behaviour where people may impulsively touch one another on the shoulder or arm during conversation. Concerning gestures and directness it comments on differences between the aloof English and other nationalities: "Directness is considered as impolite by the oblique English as pointing with the finger by Indonesians" (*The Pretoria News* 6 June 1992).

In recent years face-to-face contact among people of different cultural backgrounds
has increased and the workforce world-wide has become increasingly multiracial (Chen 1991:3). Fine (1991:260) estimates that in the year 2000 white persons will account for only 15 percent of the increase in the labour force in the United States. This means that in the United States the workforce is increasingly made up of people who do not have English as a home language, calling for a need in intercultural communication training, and in education and business there has indeed been a growing awareness of the importance of intercultural communication (Hofstede 1986; Merk 1987 in Wojnicki 1989; Fine 1989; and Limaye and Victor 1991). In other countries with a multicultural work force (e.g. the UK with its Asian workforce or Japan that owns international companies made up of a multicultural workforce), the growing integration of international trade and the need for cross-cultural training has been recognised and costly cross-cultural training programmes are offered by a number of consultants. In programmes aimed at improving inter-racial attitudes and behaviour, especially in the work situation, behaviour modelling courses have been introduced.

There has also been a rapid growth of scholarly activity in the field. The first international conference of the speech-communication arts and sciences was held in Heidelberg in 1968, the first intercultural communication conference in Tokyo in 1972 (where more than two thousand people attended from the fields of Politics, Journalism, Linguistics, Business Sociology, Physics, Psychology, and Communication) and in 1974 the first professional organization on intercultural communication, the International Society for Intercultural Education Training and Research (SIETAR) held its first conference in Maryland. Nowadays conferences and seminars are held regularly and at least one publisher in America (the Gildeane Group) and one in the United Kingdom (Multilingual Matters) derive their livelihood from publications in cross-cultural relations, while the bibliography compiled by Kitao and Kitao (1989) alone contains more than 200 pages on topics in the field.

2.2.2 Intercultural communication training in America, Europe and Australia

Leeds-Hurwitz (1990:262) credits the Foreign Service Institute and the needs of diplomats who have to interact in foreign lands with developing the discipline and ascribes the development of the new academic field as a response to the need for translating "anthropological insights into cultural differences to an audience that wanted immediate and practical applications". Intercultural communication training emerged in America from occurrences at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) and the US Department of State in the decade after the end of World War I. The quotation below illustrates the attitude not only towards language, but also to other aspects of cultural awareness, indicating that in the 1960s proficiency in a foreign language was undoubtedly not valued highly. Bradford (1960:25 in Leeds-Hurwitz 1990:226, emphasis added) reports that:
Selecting, training and promoting Foreign Service officers on the basis of foreign language skill (something that was often mentioned, but never done) is a little like picking chorus girls for moles and dimples. From the balcony it doesn’t matter”.

Things have changed greatly since then (Inman 1985; Martin 1989; Seabrook and Valdes 1988) and as the twentieth century draws to a close and international trade and scientific and political exchange intensify, there is a growing effort on the part of multinational organizations to improve communication. It is becoming increasingly apparent that in the pursuit of this goal it is desirable not only to learn foreign languages on a much wider scale, but also to show sympathetic understanding of customs and cultures other than one’s own. Foreign language and international commerce education courses are being presented at universities (Funston 1988:1124), many multinational companies have established in-house language and cross-cultural training programmes to master skills in the target language and culture (Seabrook and Valdes 1988:141) and many international bodies have been created, not only to enable companies to compete abroad, but also because of clashes between different racial, religious and ethnic groups within America.

Literature on intercultural employer/employee communication remains scarce, or there is relatively little published research, despite the growing number of studies in the area of cross-cultural communication (Asante and Davis 1985). The list that follows is all that could be traced before the work of Roberts, Davies and Jupp (1992) and the publication of the AILA Scientific Commission 4 in the summer of 1993. Etherton (1975) wrote an MA dissertation on the language of supervisors in a spinning mill (Smith 1987:26). Cooper and Singh (1976) did a survey of second language proficiency of factory workers in Ethiopia. Studies on native-immigrant contacts in European industrialized societies were written up by Klein (1975), Klein and Dittmar (1979) Schumann (1979), Stößlin (1980) and Apitzsch (1982 in Dittmar and von Stutterheim 1985:127). In Australia Clyne (1977) investigated pragmatic failure on the work-floor (and reviewed the work of Klein, opening it up to the English speaking world). In the United Kingdom Jupp, Roberts and Cook-Gumperz (1982) transcribed the discourse of immigrant workers, and Sayers (1983) explored topic collaboration and interview skills. Gumperz and Roberts developed a videotape Crosstalk, on three incidents of East Indian - Anglo-European workers interaction, which was used at the National Centre for Industrial Language Training in London. In his review of Klein’s work (1975), Clyne (1977:273) expresses the hope that projects will be undertaken in other countries with migrant workers, for example in the Netherlands where Surinamers and other south-eastern European and Middle-Eastern workers interact with locals, as well as in Sweden where emphasis is placed on integration. In America most work on the topic was done by Latkiewicz (1983), who analysed problems in the early eighties. He studied problems related to language and cultural differences and examined interviews with supervisors and personnel managers on the hiring of Southeast Asian refugees.
In South Africa extensive cross-cultural contact communication dates back to the early contact with the Khoikhoi at the Cape and then again to the first decades of the nineteenth century in the farming communities of the Eastern Cape (Kashula 1989). Here English Settlers and Xhosa were the first of the indigenous population to experience protracted contact. Since those early days when groups with radically different customs and cultural behaviour came into contact, one or both participants in the encounter has generally lacked adequate competence for communication to express anything other than the most basic requirements, and miscommunication and communication breakdown, whether intentional or unintentional, was often the result (see Fourie 1992:102-103 for instances of intentional misunderstanding on the mines in Namibia). In South Africa it would take more than a century and a half before any kind of intercultural communication awareness would manifest itself sufficiently for the Human Sciences Research Council to establish a forum in 1992 and to develop a (multidisciplinary) network for bringing interested parties together.

In the last decade where studies on different language encounters have been conducted with business and commerce in mind, they concentrated to a great extent on macro-sociolinguistic issues such as language policy (e.g. Fourie's (1992) study on language problems on the mines in Namibia). Research has been conducted on language problems in industries in metropolitan areas, e.g. in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage (Kruger 1984) where 50 organizations were consulted. Some work has also been done on the micro-sociolinguistic level: Adendorff et al. (1985) explored the negotiation of meaning in encounters between Afrikaans bankers in an English environment, Van Dyk (1986) examined discourse in two divisions of a major organization in Bloemfontein, reporting on the kind of language used in meetings, and made some recommendations concerning the kind of language superiors should use or avoid when addressing subordinates. Reagan (1986) developed a sociolinguistic model for the analysis of communication and communication problems in industry, recommending courses in which cultural awareness plays an important part in understanding the problem. (The present study was inspired by his findings.) Gxilishe and van der Vyver (1987) did research in industries in the Cape Peninsula and adjoining districts where more than 109 companies were studied. Van Jaarsveld (1988) conducted empirical research at universities country-wide, and with the aid of 550 questionnaires (translated into Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho, Tswana, Xhosa and Zulu) completed by undergraduate and post-graduate students indicated how directives in Afrikaans cause confusion and misunderstanding and how politeness, forms of greeting, values and phatic communication differ cross-culturally and cause negative stereotyping. De Vleeschauwer (1988) examined cross-cultural phatic communication.

In 1982 the Committee for Development Research (CDR) and the National Manpower
Commission approached the Institute for Research into Language and the Arts (IRLA) of the Human Sciences Research Council to investigate the role of language and communication skills in labour. A research programme entitled *Language in the labour situation* was consequently launched in the Division for Sociolinguistics. This thesis was undertaken as a direct result of the research programme.

One of the first tasks of was to obtain an overview of the languages spoken in the 271 magisterial districts of South Africa. Ellis embarked on an analysis of a 5 percent sample of the RSA's 1980 population census, as carried out by the Central Statistical Services and made available on computer tapes to the HSRC. Ellis (1986) consequently published literacy statistics based on the 1980 census, and the language characteristics of the country's (then) 24.8 million people were portrayed cartographically (Grobler et al. 1990). Ellis proceeded with a fine-grained analysis of language and literacy distribution in each of the nine economic sectors. (Figures for the analysis of the languages spoken in the nine economic sectors used in this thesis are based on Ellis's unpublished manuscripts.) Her research was terminated once the trend became apparent and it was decided to proceed with research that would find solutions to the problems identified, rather than continue with work that would more accurately give an account of literacy statistics and language-distribution. An American research fellow, Professor Timothy Reagan, was invited to lead the research team whose express aim was to make recommendations that would help to improve language and communication skills in the labour situation. Reagan recommended that intercultural courses be presented to white supervisors. He maintained that many of the communication problems between black workers and white supervisors stem from mutual ignorance.

This thesis sets out to determine what constitutes the mutual ignorance he refers to (see 1.3 for a statement of the hypothesis).

Some of the publications that flowed from the *Language in the labour situation* research project are:


Kruger, W.J. 1984. *'n Voorondersoek na die taalprobleme in die nywerhede van Port Elizabeth en Uitenhage.*


Ellis, C.S. 1986. *Geletterdheidstatistiek in die RSA.*
Reagan, T.G. 1986. *A sociolinguistic model for the analysis of communication and communication problems in industry.*

Ellis, C.S. *Taalkennis in die arbeidsituasie* (unpublished manuscript).


This section is concluded by observing that although there has been a considerable amount of growth in the field of intercultural communication it is only in the last decade that scholars have begun to consider theoretical approaches; initially concepts were accompanied by examples only, not by elaboration of theory (Winkin 1984:17).

In the sections that follow two fields of study that have developed theories related to the problem under discussion will be described. Some models that accommodate the dynamics of face-to-face interaction developed in information theory and which account for intercultural miscommunication are described in 2.3., followed by a motivation why the model proposed by Hymes is most suitable for describing "the organisation of diversity" (Hymes 1971:51) and therefore, for theoretical underpinning of this study.

2.3 Information theory

2.3.1 Shannon-Weaver

In the discussion that follows, differences and similarities in models posited in information theory over a period of forty years will be briefly referred to, starting with the Shannon-Weaver model (1949) and ending with a discussion of the Haworth and Savage model (1989).

A more detailed description of why the Shannon-Weaver model is not acceptable follows; suffice it to say here that in the past decades it has been found severely limited and has undergone radical revision. Its value lies in its having laid some kind of foundation and it was indeed the basis for other models explicating miscommunication in industry in South Africa, e.g. Van der Vyver, Engelbrecht and Gxilishe (1983) and Reagan (1986). Reagan (1986) was able to arrive at a model for industry in South Africa by pointing out the weaknesses of the Shannon-Weaver model, and many others that evolved from it. In models based on Information Theory,
factors that seem to interfere with successful communication are called *barriers* (or *noise*). In Reagan’s sociolinguistic model for a description of language use in South African industry *mutual ignorance* was postulated as the barrier that accounted for communication problems between black workers and white supervisors.

According to the Shannon-Weaver model, a sender encodes and transmits a message and the receiver receives and decodes the message. The Shannon-Weaver model proved to contain some fallacies, the major one being that people understand each other simply because they can repeat the same words. The model was originally developed to explain electronic transmission of data and is therefore known as the transmission model. In keeping with concepts that apply to communicating by telegraph, radio and telephone, this model depicts communication as linear. Bowman and Targowski (1987) draw attention to its weakness and criticize it for neglecting central aspects of communication and side-stepping issues that need to be addressed. Fallacies of the Shannon-Weaver model are that it tends to focus on the message preparation skills of the sender, it ignores the inferences that the receiver may draw, it implies that the receiver does not communicate while in reality communication occurs concurrently, and it ignores the continuous bi-directional nature of oral communication. The problem with this early, crude model is that real communication is far more complex than this model can represent because communication is an intricate process which consists of expressing and interpreting messages. Toolan (1989:255) condemns this “telementational” model, saying it is a fallacious assumption that Speaker B will “have” the same thoughts as Speaker A simply because the latter’s thoughts have been conveyed to the former.

To participate in verbal exchanges and to sustain conversational involvement requires knowledge and abilities which go considerably beyond grammatical competence. To determine what is meant at any one point in a conversation, interlocutors rely on schemata or interpretive frames based on previous experience in similar situations as well as relying on grammatical and lexical knowledge. The cultural background of participants therefore plays a role in drawing appropriate inferences from utterances. Communication is a social activity requiring the co-ordinated efforts of two or more individuals and it is not merely a matter of passive reception by the hearer.

The assumption that communication has taken place when a message can be replicated has been proven false, and numerous researchers have commented on the interactive nature or collaborative nature of conversational interaction, supporting criticism of early information-theory models that they do not recognize the two-way nature of human communication and do not recognize that speakers become hearers and the hearers provide feedback. White (1989:73), for example, shows that native speakers alter their conversational styles in interactions with non-native interlocutors, while Americans display significantly higher frequency of back-channelling in cross-cultural settings with the Japanese than in intracultural situations. This finding is
corroborated by LoCastro (1987) who observes that English-speaking foreigners, in Japan begin to use more hum’s and ee’s and head movements, even when speaking their own language with others. Stoltz (1982) demonstrates how pidginized Afrikaans (a simplified version of Standard Afrikaans) is used by white first language speakers when speaking to people who have an African language as a home language. Sherblom and La Riviere (1987) investigated the way in which sixty-five pairs of undergraduates (all speaking English) influence each other’s speaking patterns and rhythms, and findings showed conclusively that a conversational partner’s influence was substantial. Sherblom and La Riviere (1987:1) cite research on speech synchrony (also referred to as congruence, reciprocity, symmetry, inter-speaker influence and speech convergence) by Street and Giles (1983), Capella and Planalp (1981), Street (1984), Codon and Ogston (1966; 1967), Rosenfeld (1981) and Pelrose (1982) to prove “that when healthy speakers engage in conversation, their speaking characteristics tend to influence each other”. This research validates the collaborative nature of conversation and places the telementational model in an unfavourable light.

Crystal’s (1987:199) diagram on semiotics illustrates the place of language in relation to other aspects of semiotics and indicates that the process of sending messages through any channel of communication other than words, i.e. non-verbal behaviour, such as facial expressions, hand and arm movements, body movements and posture, is also an essential part of the communication process, invalidating the Shannon-Weaver model and its mechanistic conception of communication. The Shannon-Weaver model makes no provision for non-verbal content (which according to Birdwhistell (1970) accounts for as much as 67% of communication (in White 1990:80)) and is therefore inadequate because it omits many aspects of communication such as the manner of articulation, i.e. the speed of delivery, rhythm, stress, tone, etc. Other paralinguistic features, such as pitch, volume and intensity rate, vary drastically across cultures in so far as their function is concerned but this is not accounted for adequately in any of the models other than in the ethnography of speaking and that of Wolfgang (1984) and Knapp (1978 (referred to in Haworth and Savage 1989:245). Knapp (1978 in Haworth and Savage 1989:246) lists components that are of importance in the visual channel: environment, proxemics, appearance, kinesics, facial expression and eye-contact. Burgoon and Hale (1988 in Casimir 1991:233) report on how misunderstanding occurs when expectations are violated in non-verbal behaviour. (The topic of non-verbal communication is pursued fully in Chapter 3 in Hymes’s framework under the heading Instrumentalities. In Chapter 5 the empirical studies will reveal that it is in the area of non-verbal communication that the greatest ignorance of differences in rules of speaking exists.)

It is clear that this early model is not capable of representing the intricate process which consists of expressing and interpreting messages because it does not, for instance, provide for the role of social context which permits conflicting messages
to be transmitted by means of various channels in use. (Facial expressions and
gestures may contradict an utterance, for example.)

2.3.2 Haworth and Savage

Since the first information theory model was posited many others have been
developed that have overcome the weaknesses of the Shannon-Weaver model, e.g.
Berlo's (1960) model allows for multiple channels of communication, and the
influences of the sender's and receiver's phenomenal field (expressed as
communication skills, attitudes, knowledge, social system and culture). Another
model is the one proposed by Campbell and Level (1985). It is a detailed model which
allows for the influence of the sender's and receiver's value system. (Haworth and
Savage (1989:232) express their criticism of this model.) Not one of the models
proposed has been able to account specifically for what Labov (1972: 1) calls secular
linguistic considerations, in other words no attention is paid to natural speech in
natural situations with all the ramifications this has for intercultural communication.
Compare McAllister (1987) for the absence of speech analysis in anthropological
studies.

Of all the models proposed in information theory, the one that has come closest to
addressing this problem of natural speech is Haworth and Savage's (1989) channel-
ration model as it accounts for misunderstanding by means of explicit and implicit
components in various communication channels. The model subsumes elements of
other models in information theory in order to focus on cultural influences. The
authors make the point that implicit messages are misunderstood when speakers from
different cultures try to communicate. Haworth and Savage's channel-ratio model of
intercultural communication illustrates how information can be culturally and
contextually determined. They explain that the specific meaning of utterances
depends on the context, which provides both speakers and listeners who possess
more-or-less shared background with information which can alter the literal meaning
of any utterance. In the model they propose, Haworth and Savage point out that
other models in information theory do not account for problems arising from
interactions across cultural boundaries. They maintain that the ratio of explicit
messages versus implied messages may vary from situation to situation and from
culture to culture. This means that implicit messages are sometimes misunderstood
when speakers from different speech communities try to communicate, e.g. they
compare American and English phenomenal fields and American and Japanese
phenomenal fields. The reason offered for miscommunication is that interlocutors,
because of the lack of a shared background or common knowledge, have different
expectations concerning explicit and implicit messages and are therefore ignorant of
what is expected and acceptable in a specific interaction or communication episode.
Haworth and Savage (1989:238) formulate what they mean by "common
knowledge" as follows:
sets of symbols and meanings appropriate to the subject of the communication, specific knowledge about the topic, general background knowledge, cultural similarities, cultural awareness, information from previous interaction with the other party, and situational and environmental information.

If we compare Haworth and Savage's notion of "common knowledge" with other attempts at a definition of culture, it becomes clear that cultural differences can be regarded as a barrier that distorts or prevents successful communication. However, because the concept of speech community (as identified by Hymes 1972a:54) is not built into communication theory, the influence of culture on cross-cultural communication cannot be accounted for. It is clear that models postulated in communication theory have not paid sufficient attention to linguistic aspects of communication that can play a role when people from various speech communities come into contact. Their models do not account for the dynamic relationships between components, as set out by Hymes in his model. Hymes (1972a:65) explains the possibilities of his model as follows:

A shift in any of the components of speaking may mark the presence of a rule (or structured relation), e.g. from a normal tone of voice to whisper, from formal English to slang, correction, praise, embarrassment, withdrawal, and other evaluative responses to speech may indicate the violation or accomplishment of a rule. In general one can think of any change in a component as a potential locus for application for a "sociolinguistic" commutation test: What relevant contrast, if any, is present?

When the potential of Hymes's model is compared with other communication theory models, it becomes clear why Lima ye and Victor (1991:284) berate Haworth and Savage's model for being "a one-variable-oriented model which is essentially a reduced reconfiguration of the Shannon-Weaver model", saying that it fails to account for the multiple communication variables in the intercultural communication environment. Haworth and Savage (1989) themselves acknowledge weaknesses in their (business) model by admitting that future research should focus holistically on intercultural communication, and by lamenting the lack of comparative information on non-verbal communication. On the other hand, the model proposed by Hymes (1962, 1967, 1972a) makes allowance for the inter-connectedness between the constituents of the speech event and various factors that play a role in successful communication. He believes that his model of sociolinguistic description will offer "linguists, ethnographers and others a way to see data as the interaction of language and social setting" (1967:13). He believes his model will enable researchers to distinguish between sociolinguistic features that are "unmarked" (the normal or ordinary) and "marked".

As was mentioned in 1.6.2.5, markedness and naturalness are more commonly associated with phonology, syntax and lexis, but in his model Hymes (1967:26)
maintains that markedness and naturalness can exist at different levels of discourse.

2.4 The Hymesian model

The models described have enriched our understanding of the complexities involved in communication and throw some light onto reasons for the misinterpretation of speaker intent. Hymes's ethnography of speaking (1962, 1967, 1972a) seems more suitable for use as a framework to underpin the phenomenon of sociolinguistic relativity because he perceives communication as organic, as a system in which various components are co-determining phenomena. The Hymesian model was originally referred to as the ethnography of speaking but clearly encompasses the whole process of communicating (Hymes 1962:10).

Hymes (1967:20-25) uses the acronym SPEAKING as a mnemonic device to list the components of a speech event. The purpose of this device is to discover whether a particular constituent "can occur in particular contexts, characterizing it in terms of its subsuitability for other items of that set" (Hymes 1972a:103). He (1967:13) explains that "A shift in any of the components of speaking may mark the operation of a rule" and that "a non-defining component may yet condition the success or other aspect of the outcome of a speech event" (Hymes 1967:25). He maintains (1967:26) that a great defect in many studies which examine the interaction of language and social setting has been the failure to state precisely the difference, and the interrelationship, between the normal, ordinary, or "unmarked" value of a sociolinguistic feature, on the one hand, and the "marked" or specially loaded values, on the other.

His framework is not meant as a mechanical device against which analysis of speech behaviour should be gauged, but as a guide to prompt investigators to consider the scope and patterns that communication assumes in different speech situations within speech communities. Hymes suggests that for one group rules of speaking will be heavily bound to setting, for another group primarily to participants, and for a third perhaps to topic. In his framework relationships between components have the potential of influencing each other, constantly redefining themselves in relation to each other in a process that is, in Heritage's terms, "context-renewing" (Heritage 1989:22). The framework proposed by Hymes (1962, 1967, 1972a) is regarded as most suited for describing how "speech in use" works in different speech communities because the framework he puts forth indicates that each of the components interacts with the other components dynamically, thereby providing insight into the network of possible variables that may come into play to form the basis of analysis. Hymes (1967:25) himself says of the relationship among components:
any component may be taken as a starting point, and the others viewed in relation to it. When individual societies have been analyzed, hierarchies of precedence among components will very likely appear and be found to differ from case to case.

As someone who has done considerable work in the field of communication during face-to-face encounters, Wolfson (1989:5) underwrites the importance of Hymes's ethnographic framework when she states that his framework is probably the most significant contribution to the study of speech in use.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter a brief history of intercultural communication theory was sketched in preparation for the critique of various models that attempt to explicate the misinterpretation of speaker intent that causes miscommunication. It was noted that communication theorists embrace mechanical metaphors which fail to give account of all the variables that could play a role in the complex process of spoken discourse. It was argued that no information model satisfactorily accounts for the phenomenon of misinterpretation of speaker intent, whereas the Hymesian model is able to discover the relations which obtain among various elements and to indicate whether co-occurrence of marked features is obligatory, optional or whether it is structurally excluded.

In the next chapter it will be demonstrated how ways of speaking (can) vary substantially from one culture to another owing to differences in "rules of speaking".
CHAPTER THREE

A SURVEY OF DIFFERENCES IN SOCIOLINGUISTIC RULES OF SPEAKING

East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet ...

The Ballad of East and West (Kipling 1889)

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter Hymes's model of the ethnography of speaking (1962, 1967, 1972a) is used as a model for the discussion of differences in sociolinguistic rules of speaking. The purpose of the framework developed by Hymes makes it possible to describe underlying rules of speaking and by implication a description of the communicative competence that enables members of a speech community to use and interpret language successfully. His framework offers a way of discovering the social rules and patterns in operation in speech communities. A description of differences, in turn, enables us to account for misinterpretation of speaker intent.

The major portion of this chapter (from 3.2 to 3.10) is devoted to a discussion of examples from the literature that demonstrate how the components Hymes (1962, 1967, 1972a) proposed for analysis of the speech event are realized differently in various speech communities. The value of a survey of differences in sociolinguistic rules of speaking is described in 3.11. In 3.12 counter-arguments are given to the criticism levelled at ethnography as a mere strategy for describing differences (instead of theory building or theory testing).

3.2 The ethnography of speaking as postulated by Hymes

In this section a motivation for the development of Hymes's framework is sketched.

3.2.0 Introduction

Hymes (1967:13) argued that failure to develop a model and taxonomy of sociolinguistic systems would perpetuate the failure of scientific study to address itself to the unity of language and social life. He was concerned that there had not
been a theoretical marriage of linguists and anthropologists and that the scientists studying exotic societies were unable to bring linguistic knowledge to bear on their observations. Anthropologists recorded that different communities have rules which determine communicative behaviour. It was known that communities differ significantly in patterns of code-repertoire, code-switching, and generally in roles assigned to language. Hymes hoped to add "comparative speaking" to the body of comparative studies in other fields, e.g. comparative religion and comparative law, to name but two. Saville-Troike (1982:6) reports that the earliest sociolinguistic records are those of White (1880) who reported that the Apache form of greeting differs from those of Americans when he was struck by the fact that the Apache do not kiss each other when greeting, even after a long absence, while Jenness described (as far back as 1929) how girls of the Carrier Indian tribe wore a stone labret to remind them that they had to speak slowly and with deliberation. Sterns (1983) suggests that Malinowski was probably the first to record a particular speech situation when, in 1923, he described in detail the language used in a fishing expedition. In 1930 Volosinov, a Russian linguist, became aware that different kinds of discourse are used in different situations. He wrote, "village sewing circles, urban carouses, workers' lunchtime chats, etc. each will have their own type. Each situation, fixed and sustained by social custom, commands a particular kind of organization of audience" (in Macdonnell 1989:1, trans. 1973:97). These studies were the first attempts at describing what Hymes' ethnography of speaking was to do: to provide a coherent universal structure through which language in all its diversity within a culture and across cultures could be studied.

In his model Hymes facilitates the search for data. He sees the ethnography of speaking as a theory of speech and a system of cultural behaviour concerned with the organization of diversity (Hymes 1971:51). He claims (1967:14) that the absence of a theoretical framework may have led to observations "of great sociolinguistic interest" but, lacking precedent and format for their presentation, "... lie fallow as at best a matter for anecdotes".

Hymes later modified and elaborated on the 1962 model, but early on (1962:111) he acknowledged the influence of Jakobson's\(^1\) work especially, as well as his "pervasive debt" to Burke, Pike, Sinclair (1951) and Barker and Wright (1955). Hymes's model attempts to elucidate what it is one needs to know about a group's verbal behaviour in order to participate appropriately and effectively in its activities. This framework consists of two major systems for the analysis of discourse:

1. a taxonomy of technical terms, and
2. a framework of components for the speech event.

\(^1\) Compare Chapter 1, Table 1 of this thesis for an analysis of the similarities between his model and that of Jakobson.
As Hymes's taxonomy of technical terms was discussed in considerable detail in Chapter 1 (see 1.6.1), the components will now be described.

### 3.2.1 Components

In the theoretical framework he created Hymes uses the acronym *SPEAKING* to list categories or components of speech which need to be taken into account in a descriptive analysis of any speech event. He claims that at times as many as sixteen or seventeen components have been distinguished, and that the acronym used for eight components is one that makes the set of components mnemonically convenient. In the acronym the variables that could govern the rules of speaking in speech events are as follows:

- **S** represents the setting,
- **P** is for the participants in the interaction,
- **E** is for the ends or goals, i.e. the reason for the interaction,
- **A** stands for act (which in Hymesian terms means the topic and the manner in which it is discussed),
- **K** represents key, which has to do with the manner or spirit in which something is said (e.g. playful, sarcastic or serious),
- **I** stands for instrumentalities, i.e. the channel used,
- **N** stands for norms, which can be seen as values and how speech acts are realised differently in different speech communities, and finally the
- **G** represents genre.

These variables may affect the way in which language is realised in the speech event, but Hymes points out that not all the components in this framework come into play all the time. He adapted the acronym for French, changing it to **PARLANT**, thereby illustrating that the categories proposed are not mechanical or "fixed" but are merely offered as a mnemonic device to supply a framework that the researcher can refer to easily when considering all possible factors that might be operative in any particular speech situation. Hymes suggests that in French the heuristic set of components might be presented as **P** for *Participants*, **A** for *Actes* (form or content), **R** for *Raison* or *Resultat* (ends, outcomes), **L** for *Locale* (setting), **A** for *Agents* (channels or codes), **N** for *Normes*, **T** for *Ton* (key) and **Types** (genre.) In his own words, the pattern Hymes proposes "requires discovering a relevant frame or context, identifying the items which contrast within it, and determining the dimensions of contrast for the items within the set so defined" (Hymes 1962:103). The rules of speaking thus established are rules of communication which form part of a whole network of social rules.

In the rest of this chapter the components proposed by Hymes will be discussed in
order to highlight differences that could lead to misinterpretation of speaker intent. Conversational exchange in a variety of languages and societies will be surveyed. Speech communities included in the survey are located in both North and South America, Europe, Africa (including South Africa), Australia, Asia, and the Pacific. The survey will indicate how different discourse strategies are realized by native speakers, and in some cases, by non-native speakers in a range of situations. The accumulation over the years of ethnographic information about verbal practices in human groups illustrates how the meaning of such behaviours may vary from one culture to another. These examples will confirm that the principles of how conversation works are far from universal and underline the need for a bringing to book of conversational rules. Hymes (1967:12) pleads for extended empirical work, saying that what is needed is a widely ranging series of sociolinguistic descriptions because a particular model, let alone an integrating theory, is not convincing unless it has met the test of many diverse situations, or a mass of systematic data.

3.3 S for Setting

The letter S in the acronym SPEAKING stands for the two components in which any speech event can take place, i.e. setting and scene. Setting refers to the time and place (concrete physical circumstances) in which a speech event takes place and scene refers to the psychological or cultural setting.

3.3.0 Introduction

The context in which the speech event occurs determines how participants see their role relationships with one another and the manner in which they think of the goals of the interaction. Schiffrin (1987:3) describes the setting as ranging from "cultural contexts of shared meanings and world views, to social contexts through which definitions of self and situation are constructed, to cognitive contexts of past experience and knowledge" and concludes that understanding how language is used and how it is structured depends on consideration of how it is embedded in all of these contexts.

Some examples of how the context in which speech occurs has an influence on what is said and how it is said follows.

3.3.1 Geographical regions and court settings

Geographical regions can influence the choice of variety. Smith observes that one should not expect the same language, English, to be used in the same ways in London and Los Angeles, Manila and Melbourne, or Tokyo or Toronto (1987:4). Greetings in Germany differ in various geographical regions of the German speaking countries: in Bavaria Gruess Gott is as common as Guten Tag in northern Germany.
The form of the greeting thus varies according to the region. Keenan (1976:68) demonstrates how setting determines rules of speaking in Malagasy society. She describes a society where new information is a rarity which gives its owner prestige. The Malagasy speaker regularly violates Grice's maxim "be informative" by refusing to impart what he or she knows. In this (much reported) research, the status that new information gives people in a near-subsistence peasant economy, bestows prestige on them in the eyes of other villagers and creates norms of interaction that violate the "be informative" principle. It is the setting, the plateau of Malagasy, that renders the Gricean principle invalid. On the plains of the Camdeboo in the Karoo, on the other hand, the opposite is true because here rules for behaviour and then value system of the community are substantially different. Here everybody knows everybody else's business to the extent that the telephonist at the telephone exchange could, until his/her recent replacement by an automatic system, be relied upon to say who was visiting whom and would be have been able to locate anyone who was not at home.

In most societies different speech events are clearly demarcated, but for the Yakan, Philippine Moslems on the island of Basilan, it is difficult for an outsider to distinguish when a group of people talking is in fact in litigation or merely in discussion or negotiation. The reason for this is that the Yakan have no distinctive feature that sets this action apart from others because they have no distinctive settings, such as courtrooms where litigation takes place, and the site of a trial is usually the porch of the house of one of the judges. None of the judges wears robes (Frake 1972:111). For the Yakan the Setting component is therefore irrelevant for the genre identified as court settings in other speech communities.

Differences exist regarding what the accused say in court. Frake (1972:129) compares some of the differences between the Yakan and the Eastern Subanun in participation in litigation. The Subanun devote themselves to trivial disputes in scenes of formal festivities whereas the Yakan try relatively serious cases in scenes of informal discussion. All over the world a court setting, by its very nature, compels the accused, under oath, to reveal all in the proceedings, no matter whether all dignity will be stripped away. On the other hand, until recently in Kangaroo (or "People's") Courts in South Africa, the accused did not have much of an opportunity of saying anything, because the customary procedure did not apply at all; the accused was sentenced quickly without a hearing, the verdict often Death by "necklace!"

(In the discussion of the findings in Chapter 5 we will see the important role setting plays in the realization of certain speech acts (specifically requests) on the work-floor. We will see that objections raised by speakers of Afrikaans or English concerning a request for articles of clothing, for instance, are considered taboo at work and purported not to be made by speakers of one of the African languages. In these instances the rules of speaking are defined in terms of location or social context, and
not in terms of participants or message form. In other words, the S in Hymes's framework is the defining ("marked") component of the speech event.)

3.3.2 Telephonic discourse as setting

Although the telephone is a relatively recent invention, definite rules for its usage exist and telephone behaviour varies from culture to culture. The study of telephone conversations has developed from the work pioneered by Schegloff, as he was particularly interested in conversational openings. Schegloff (1972:351) identifies the distribution rule that determines that "the answerer speaks first", and in a corpus of roughly 500 phone conversations found that only one conversation did not follow this pattern. Schegloff (1972:374) comments on how "in the replacement of men by machines, a small corner of the social world (telephone interactions) has not escaped". He says:

It is possible, nowadays [1972!] to hear the phone you are calling picked up and hear a human voice answer, but nevertheless not be talking to a human. However small its measure of consolation, we may note that even machines such as the automatic answering device are constructed on social, and not on mechanical principles. The machine's magnetic voice will not only answer the caller's ring, but will also inform him when its ears will be available to receive his message, and warns him both to wait for the beep and confine his message to fifteen seconds.

Various cultures have different rules of self-identification when answering a telephone. Rings (1989:463) describes the culturally determined convention according to which German speakers answer the telephone by stating their surname. This convention may seem very abrupt when compared to the American and British response which is usually a "hello". According to Sifianou (1989:527) the initial response in England seems to be functional whereas in Greece the response seems to be interactional, but Yli-Renko (1989:29) reports that the British and Americans are more chatty and casual on the phone compared to Finns, even when talking business. Finns answer their home phone calls by identifying themselves while Americans stay anonymous until they know the nature of the call. In Norway the caller identifies her/himself first, while in France it appears that the obligation on the part of the caller is so great for having possibly intruded and imposed, that a routine sequence of questions must be initiated, checking as to the right number having being reached before it is proper to open the topic of the call. Schmidt (1975) examined interactions between dyads of Egyptians, Americans and Germans and found that only Germans identified themselves; American callers tended to verify that they had reached the right number, but a dozen or more turns were sometimes necessary for Egyptians who seemed unwilling to be the first to be identified. Clark and French (1981) examined the closing section of telephone exchanges and found that there was no straightforward correlation between speech behaviour and social reality in their study.
of telephone exchanges which end, not with the standard Good-bye, but with a Thank you (in Wolfson 1989:97). Rabinowitz reports that thank you is used frequently to mark partings but that there were no good-byes in 89% of face-to-face encounters in her study (1983 in Wolfson 1988:29). Have a nice day is gaining currency in South Africa while in Los Angeles good-bye has apparently been replaced with Missing you already! In television programmes produced in America, it is noticeable that speakers seldom say good-bye when they terminate a telephone conversation, a trend that has recently emerged in the South African soap opera, Egoli.

Differing rules exist for the giving of apologies in telephone calls in the USA and France, causing speakers to follow different sets of rules (Godard 1977). The times when a call may be made differ from country to country and visitors to South Africa are surprised to hear that it is not acceptable to phone a colleague late at night, unlike in Europe or America, for instance.

This section is concluded with the observation that there are culture-specific rules for opening and closing conversations on the telephone, open to misunderstanding by speakers of other speech communities.

3.4 P for Participants

Social rules are as diverse as the speech situations that prescribe them, and much depends on the relationship between participants, as we will see in this section in which senders and receivers are discussed. The way in which different participants react depends on factors such as distance (social relationships and how these differ), status (power) and how much imposition exists between the participants, but these are influenced by the setting in which the interaction takes place. The context, wider than the immediate palpable setting, may naturally have tremendous influence on the behaviour of participants: in research conducted into encounters between native speakers of English and native speakers of Zulu at a South African university (Chick 1987), the Zulu speaking students were found to act in a way that can only be termed powerless, and the broader context of the system of apartheid was found to be responsible for the behaviour of students and the perpetuation of negative racial stereotypes.

3.4.0 Introduction

In this section power and status differences, forms of address, the notion of face, and conversational openings that are found in different societies will be discussed. (Gender differences have not been discussed.)

By participants we traditionally understand the speaker and hearer. However, various configurations of this combination exist, and Hymes also includes audience and
spokesman as further categories. In debates there are multiple audiences as well as multiple speakers. When the addressor is a head of state or some other dignitary whose message is read to reporters by a press agent, the addressor may not even be present (Fasold 1990:44). Furthermore, the hearer or receiver of the message and the addressee need not necessarily be human either. Answering machines are gaining acceptability as addressees although many people initially seem to display some resistance at having to resort to a monologue when leaving a message because a machine cannot follow the normal turn-taking pattern.

In Western societies it is usually accepted that the addressee is human. Prince Charles is therefore ridiculed by some because he supposedly talks to plants, thereby deviating from the norm, but in other societies he probably would not be considered odd at all. Thunder is considered to be a valid sender by the Ojibwa, an Indian tribe (Hymes 1964:27). Among the Wishram Chinook the addressees are not the audience, but the spirits of the surrounding environment (Hymes 1967:21). In South Africa whites are generally suspicious of Africans who speak to the spirits of their ancestors, and Africans, in their turn, find it strange that whites speak to animals such as house pets.

In fiction we find countless examples which transgress what our society regards as being the norm that only humans are receivers, for example in the film Shirley Valentine the protagonist addressed a wall in the absence of her husband, who did not acknowledge her as someone worthy of having or expressing an opinion, and every time she spoke to the wall she raised a laugh. However, this behaviour is not as strange as it seems, because in real life the Midewiwin Indian tribe elevate inanimate stones to the level of social interaction common to social beings (Hymes 1964:26). Hymes (1962:111) also reports that a stone is one type of potential sender among the Fox, an Indian tribe.

3.4.1 Social roles

The relationship between the sender and the receiver dictates sociolinguistic rules, and social roles determine the speaker’s choice among culturally available features. Politeness levels remain fairly constant in an on-going relationship and are a good indicator of the social closeness and degrees of relative power of the interlocutors. The same relative status of two speakers may be conveyed by their choice of pronominal forms in one language; in another, by the distance they stand apart or their body position while speaking; and between bilinguals, even by their choice of which language to use in addressing one another. Even egalitarian societies have linguistic features that express politeness.

A L2 speaker who is unaware of rules of formality, and is not sensitive to differences in status, can offend the receiver: Preston mentions that L2 learners who have
learned formal varieties of the target language may inadvertently introduce newly
learned slang creating inappropriate utterances like: *How's it going, your eminence?*
(Preston 1989:184). Canale and Swain produce another humorous example of a
waiter in a high-class restaurant asking his clientele: *O.K. chump, what are you and
this broad gonna eat?* (Canale and Swain 1980:30). Scarcella (1988:77) reports a
speaker saying *Hi sir!* and Wierzbicka (1985a:147) records the utterance of a Polish
host: *Mrs Vanessa! Please! Sit Sit!* This incongruous request, which sounds like a
command addressed to a dog (because the English deferential request *Would you like
to sit down?* would sound like a question to a Pole as an equivalent speech act does
not exist in Polish) is perfectly acceptable in Polish because in Polish first names and
titles are readily combined.

Based on data obtained from diverse cultures, Brown and Levinson (1978) postulated
a universal theory of politeness, and found that features that play a role in politeness
strategies are status (a quality assigned to those who have power) and social
distance. (One is more polite to someone of higher status, and more polite to those
who are socially distant.) Wolfson’s (1988) "bulge" theory owes much to Brown and
Levinson’s (1978) universal theory of politeness, as it concerns the relationship
between speakers. The variables that are involved are status, power and distance.
There are many linguistic features that encode politeness. Both pronouns and terms
of address serve as symbols of social structure and indexes of social change; *tu* and
*vous* in French (Brown and Gilman 1960) or their equivalents *ty* and *vy* in Russian
(Friedrich 1964), or in other languages (Fay 1918). Korean differences have been
described by Martin (1964) and Japanese by Howell (1968).

As late as the nineteenth century the titles *Sir, Lady* or *Lord* marked the differences
between the upper class and the bulk of the population in British society, but in an
egalitarian society linguistic features that indicate rank or express social differentiation
are statistically fewer. Whereas an American superior initiates a reciprocal first-name
naming pattern after working together with subordinates for some time to avoid being
regarded as snobbish or unfriendly, in Chinese society it is not uncommon for
colleagues of different status or the same status to address each other with formal
address forms for many years (Lii-Shih 1988:29). (In Chapter 5 the topic of formal
versus informal forms of address is explored in some depth; in one phase of the
research project the sample is bigger than one thousand respondents. See the first
four sub-questions of the section entitled "Effective communication in the workplace"
in 5.6.2, and questions 4 to 7 in Appendix B.)

Brown and Levinson assume that most relationships between people are relatively
stable, and suggest that the most common reason for a change in the level of
politeness will have to do with the degree of threat to the interlocutor involved in the
speech event. Wolfson’s "bulge" model of social interaction is based on her findings
in research into the speech behaviour of middle class Americans, more specifically the
way in which compliments are given and accepted or rejected among intimates and status unequals on the one hand, and non-intimates, status-equals, co-workers and acquaintances on the other. Wolfson (1989:32) reports on a consistent finding that the two extremes of social distance (minimum and maximum) elicit very similar behaviour, while relationships which are more toward the centre show marked differences (hence the bulge shaped curve). Wolfson's reason is that the more status and social distances are stable, the easier it is for speakers to know what to expect from one another. In an urban society in which speakers may belong to a variety of non-overlapping networks, relationships are often uncertain and the relatively uncertain nature of such relationships is reflected in the care people take to signal solidarity so as to avoid confrontation (cf. Brown and Gilman 1960). Put differently, the more status and social distance are seen as "fixed", the easier it is for speakers to know what to expect of one another. This is important for the present study when we consider how relationships are changing because of the rapid transformation in South African power structures. (Forms of address are examined in the pilot study and both of the quantitative surveys in this study. One reason why forms of address was chosen for intensive exploration is based on what Gumperz (1982:3) has to say, "For intercultural communication to be successful we need to know what the expectations of cultural norms of other parties are".)

Geertz (1960:167) reports that a complicated system of stylemes (conjugation of words) and honorifics in Javanese makes it almost impossible to say anything without indicating the social relationship between the speaker in terms of status and familiarity. (Status in Javanese society is determined by, amongst other things, wealth, descent, education, occupation, age, kinship and nationality, to mention but a few.) In Javanese even a simple greeting like Are you well? is phrased to indicate status. High honorifics occur only with the high style and low ones only with the low style, therefore a speaker of one of the class dialects has five possibilities to choose from! (Geertz 1960:172). A similar situation exists in Japan, prompting O'Neill (1966) to say: "an understanding of respect language is as necessary to a student of Japanese as a slide-rule to an engineer, for it is involved in any exchange of Japanese between one person and another, including the simplest phrases of greeting" (in Wolfson 1989:85). The idea that all individuals can be placed in a hierarchy and that the language reflects this hierarchy, plays an important role in Japanese society. Hori maintains: "Unless we know the relationship of the interlocutors, we cannot begin conversation because the language has internalized such pragmatic information in its structure" (1987:1). Sherzer (1977:46) adds to this list by reporting on Blount's research (1975) who found that the Luo have created a "genealogical structure" that indicates seniority among village elders. Similarly associated with the concept of respect, the Hlonipha custom among the Xhosa dictates that a woman consciously avoids syllables occurring in the husband's family's names (Finlayson 1982).

In his study of the Ilmongot, Rosaldo (1982:207) indicates that concepts such as
power, domination and status are not universal. This of course complicates matters for someone from a different speech community; for example in Korea deference and politeness are considered to be two different sociolinguistic concepts (Hwang 1990:53), and an outsider who uses the incorrect form is likely to be considered rude. The simple greetings How are you?; Good morning?; Good evening carry a cultural message and the various sentence endings are accompanied by an appropriate gesture of a bow or a nod and depend on politeness and formality. Korean culture emphasizes a hierarchal social system with inherent distinctions between high and low, young and old, superior and subordinate and these distinctions are reflected in Korean speech through the use of honorifics and noun, pronoun, verb endings and hedges (Armstrong 1986:30). Ignorance of these differences can label the speaker as rude. In a society where modesty and humility are regarded as high virtues and where reservedness is a typical form of politeness, hedges of various kinds abound. Hwang (1990:50) cites lexical hedges, for example pretty much, almost, perhaps; phrasal hedges such as a sort of, so to speak, in a sense; and structural hedges used as a softened statement, for example Shouldn’t we say that it’s a hasty conclusion? The Chinese show respect using linguistic means (such as turn-taking in conversation, speech style, honorific forms) as well as non-linguistic means (seating at the table, the order of eating and order of entrance and exit).

In Japanese a distinction is made between "older brother" and "younger brother", a distinction not made in English (Brislin 1986:157). The observation by Friedrich (1964:274) that "all classes of Russians interjected brother, little mother, and other terms when consciously or subconsciously trying to create an informal, congenial atmosphere with non-relatives" rings familiar to South Africans. In African languages in South Africa kinship terms and quasi-kinship terms exist that denote the relationship of brothers and sisters of one’s parents. Ignorance of this is a source of irritation for employers when employees claim they once more have to go to the funeral of (yet another) "father". An African child would not dream of referring to an older friend of her/his mother or father without a suffix -golo (meaning main, eldest or senior) that indicates respect, for instance mamagolo. In Afrikaans oom (uncle) and tannie (aunt) are just as commonly used for people who are not one’s real uncle and aunt.

Forms of address differ cross-culturally: Americans feel uncomfortable with titles, especially status-connected official titles, and superiors often use informal language or informal language forms of address and invite others to do the same. Yli-Renko’s research (1989:28) reveals major differences between cultures: in Finland children never use Mr, Mrs or Sir, while the British and Americans reported that the Finns seldom use personal names. In Japan children in school are addressed by their surnames and even fairly close friends are likely to use surnames as it is not common to call a Japanese by her/his first name (Sherman 1989:16). A Westerner who greets a manager with a Good evening, Mr Suzuki would be making a faux pas because one
does not use names with greetings in Japanese (Sherman 1989:3). Although the Japanese may appreciate the attempt of the Westerner to speak Japanese, he/she may also be affected negatively if the greeting is used incorrectly.

While English and some Indo-European languages have overt markers for politeness forms, many other languages, e.g. Igbo (spoken in Nigeria, some parts of the West African coastal region and in the Cameroon and equatorial Guinea) mark politeness in various other ways such as protracted solicitations about the health of the interlocutor, that of his parents and other known relations. In Kaschula's (1989:101) research on cross-cultural communication in a north-western Cape farming community almost identical findings are reported.

In Burundi each individual, except at the extreme top and bottom of the social scale, learns verbal formulas and styles appropriate to a variety of roles, some those of a social superior, some those of an inferior (Albert 1972:77). Albert described how among the Burundi of post-independence Burundi someone of lower rank uses ungrammatical utterances when in the presence of someone of higher rank and to signal deference when speaking to someone of higher rank. Lower ranking persons are expected to speak in a bumbling and hesitating manner. This "competence of incompetence" is embedded in the social structure of Burundi society (Albert 1972:75). In Wolof, for the highest of the nobles incorrectness in certain aspects of speech is considered appropriate, since high-ranking persons are not supposed to be very skilled at speaking, at least in terms of superficial elaboration (Irvine 1974:164). Turns to contribute to a debate are strictly controlled by relative status among the Burundi: the most important participant speaks first and the least important last (Albert 1972:81). Irvine reports on her field observation (and informants' statements) among the Wolof that the lower status speaker greets first because the principle of social inequality is fundamental to the organization of social life among the Wolof. Hymes (1967:21) reports that if a participant is a member of the Hohéri (warrior class) in conversations of the Abipon of Argentina, -in is added to the end of every word.

Speech acts will be described fully under the heading Norms, because rules of speaking reflect the values of the society in question, but as the question of status plays a role in speech acts, it should be mentioned here that, depending on social constraints embedded in the situation, there may be systematic differences in the realization of speech acts. Wolfson (1989:143ff) discusses research by Cohen and Olshtain (1981), Olshtain and Cohen (1983, 1987) and Beebe et al. (1985) that investigates "how and to what extent first language norms interfere with second language learners' ability to conform to the norms of the target language community". Beebe et al. (1985) for instance, report on the differing responses amongst English and Japanese subjects to requests, invitations, offers and suggestions. Their research reveals that the way refusals and apologies and regrets are expressed differed for
Americans and Japanese depending on whether the subject was speaking to someone of a higher, lower, or equal status. After refusing offers to someone of a higher status, Japanese offered an alternative or a suggestion, while Americans did not. Neither group offered alternatives to someone of equal status, but the Japanese subjects offered alternatives to status unequals, especially if they had higher status. To someone of lower status all respondents added two additional formulas, one a statement of philosophy, *This kind of thing happens*, and then followed this up with a future alternative, such as *Be more careful from now on*.

The saying *People do not blame a person for being too polite* is an indication of Chinese values. The Chinese would prefer to be regarded as being too formal rather than as too casual or as showing a lack of respect (Lii-Shih 1988:39, 44). This is in sharp contrast to American values as Americans view informality as an indication of friendship, closeness and intimacy, and formality is often distrusted as a mask of insincerity (Lii-Shih 1988:44). Because of the different cultural values toward formality, the Chinese appear too reserved and too formal to Americans, and Americans seem brash or disrespectful to the Chinese.

Goffman (1967) introduced the notion of "face" when he described the ritual that occurs in interaction in natural settings. He explains the Anglo-American notion of losing face (1967:5): "The term face may be defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" and cites the opposite of this, the Chinese notion of "giving face" when one arranges for another to take a better line than he might otherwise have been able to take.

In Vietnam the social hierarchy prevents the "face" of a superior being challenged and the customary peasant response to a question by someone socially superior is *do phai*, meaning *that's OK* or *that must be*. Here agreement is intended to avoid contradicting the superior person by making him look ignorant (Applegate 1975:278). Armstrong (1986:30) reports that in Korean *yes* is not employed in the same way as *yes* in English, and in order not to appear disagreeable, Koreans easily say *yes* with the result that there is a mismatch between their intentions and their answers.

These reports tie in with Applegate's (1975) report of the apparent reluctance of Africans who feel obliged to offer information, although they know full well that they do not know the information asked. In order to save the face of the interlocutors, they offer any (incorrect) answer. It has been the experience of many lecturers at a tertiary institution where the present researcher taught that African students, on the whole, are reluctant to admit that they do not understand something, and may confirm their understanding rather than deny it, for the sake of politeness, because in some African cultures the "face" of a superior has to be considered (compare with "ground rules" in the *Ends* category below).
3.4.2 Conversational openings

The relationship between participants plays a role in the exchange of greetings, and norms of interaction vary as to how this takes place, whether it is the subordinate who utters the first part of the accepted formula or the superior or whether it is the stationary person or the passer-by who greets first.

Kissing, which is generally regarded as an expression of affection, is never practised by the Apaches, and neither do they have any other form of greeting or salute (Basso 1970). Basso reports that the Apache do not feel compelled to introduce two strangers to put them at ease with one another. Because of the tendency to regard one's own rules not as culture-specific but as natural, this would probably lead to someone from the English speaking world, where the situation calls for an introduction, as interpreting the Apache as sullen or distrustful.

In the German Basic Course for Diplomats at the Foreign Service Institute in America the culture notes inform the student that s/he may not inquire about someone's well-being when meeting a person for the first time (Armstrong 1986:5). American diplomats are cautioned that if they were to follow their own conventions of addressing a female hotel clerk at the reception counter with Guten Tag, wie geht's? they could be faced with an indignant response because a German woman is not accustomed to such inquiry from strangers.

Tsuda (1984:7) reports that, unlike Americans, the Japanese do not introduce themselves by their own names and their jobs, but that the first means of identifying themselves is to share their background, because in the Japanese speech community, group identification is more important than personal status or names. Wolfson (1989:53) cites Paulston's (1976:369) description of personal embarrassment because of different ways of greeting between Swedes and Americans when introductions are made. The latter wait to be introduced whereas the former go around a room introducing themselves. Students learning German need to learn how to introduce someone to a third person because a German does not introduce himself (Armstrong 1986).

Generally, the more tradition-oriented a society is the richer its repertoire of situational formulas is likely to be. Applegate (1975:276) gives an example of a violation of the Greek ritual when the person who was sitting greeted a passer-by; for the Greek it is the person on foot who utters the first greeting. Nwoye (1989) reports that for the Igbo of South-eastern Nigeria, morning greetings are the most significant and people refrain from speaking to those whom they know or suspect can bring ill luck, since it is believed that the sort of person you first encounter in the morning determines your fortune for the day. In the West Indies a greeting is called out to any acquaintance who passes within shouting distance (Reisman 1972:113).
In South Africa van Jaarsveld (1988a, 1988b) has done considerable work on the correct forms of greeting and the required responses. In traditional South African black societies it is customary to stand still, and when enquiring about the hearer's health, one does so in the plural, not only as a sign of respect, but because one could expect an answer to relate to any member of the family. These kinds of preliminary discussions are considered to be very important and an essential part of conversation (Finlayson 1991:10). (This topic was explored in the empirical phase of this study. See question 14 of Appendix B and questions 14, 16, 17 and 21 in Appendix C.)

3.5 E for Ends

The E in the acronym SPEAKING exploits the English homonym: ends can refer to ends in view (what the sender hopes to accomplish) and outcomes.

3.5.0 Introduction

When we study how ends and goals of speech events are achieved in various speech communities and cultural settings, we again find that sociolinguistic rules depend on the speech situation and cultural norms. Rhetoric (norms and techniques of persuasion or manipulation), logic (rules and uses of evidence and inference) and poetics (aesthetic criteria that govern discourse) are concepts from Western culture that entail risk of culture-bound distortion.

3.5.1 Different kinds of logic in the achievement of ends

Studies have revealed that there are ways other than the Platonic-Aristotelian sequence (that typify the Western way) of structuring the world. Kaplan (1972) compares styles of writing employed in English, in the Arabic language, and some Chinese and Korean writing, and he demonstrates that logic per se is a cultural phenomenon, a fact that has been long known among sociologists and anthropologists. The research indicates that in English-speaking countries a linear form of argumentation is the dominant structure, but in the essays of foreign students, four kinds of discourse structures that differ from English linearity are to be found. He indicates how an English expository paragraph usually begins with a topic statement and is then followed by a series of subdivisions of the topic statement, each supported by examples and illustrations which proceed to develop the central idea. In the Arabic language, on the other hand, paragraph development is based on a complex series of parallel constructions. This means the first idea is completed in the second part. Chinese and Korean writing, again, is characterized by "an approach of indirection" (Kaplan 1972:251) because the topic is looked at from different tangents. In Russian, on the other hand, material extraneous to the argument is introduced and elaborated upon. This option of introducing material that contains parenthetical amplifications of subordinate elements is entirely different from the
structure of the English sentence. In Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic stylistic embellishment is highly valued and the logical pattern has been described as "circular". Once again this system of logic differs from that of the Platonic-Aristotelian model and may be perceived as unwieldy and convoluted by Western standards (Frank 1987:8). These different thought patterns and styles of writing could be a source of misunderstanding and misjudgement.

Studies have been conducted to examine native and non-native differences in interpreting written text and Bouton (1988) found that cultural background plays an important role in predicting relative success in drawing appropriate inferences from utterances. This may naturally interfere with the non-native speaking reader's ability to infer the intended inferences and jeopardize efforts to achieve business objectives in cross-cultural communication.

Clyne (1981) reports that academic students in West Germany are inclined to exhibit expertise and general knowledge, digressing from the central theme to a related one in a manner that is difficult to follow for anyone not familiar with the structure of academic debate he likens to "cooked spaghetti". When Dittmar's book Soziallinguistik, "a landmark in the development of sociolinguistics in West Germany" (Clyne 1981:64), was translated into English, it was described as "chaotic" and criticised for its "lack of focus and cohesiveness", but none of the four reviews of the original German text by scholars from central European universities made any criticism of this kind.

The logic of telling a story differs across cultures. Research conducted in America examined the use of a non-preferred narrative style by some non-white children which resulted in discrimination in the classroom. Michaels and Cazden (in Clyne 1981) conducted a pilot study to test the hypothesis that children who do not use a topic-centred style in their story telling are less likely to receive collaborative and instructional help from their teacher than children who do use a topic-centred style. White and black graduate students rated the topic-association stories differently. Some of their comments read that the stories were "incoherent", "hard to follow" and "mixed-up". Black students, on the other hand, found the topic-association stories easy to understand, well formed and interesting, and felt that they contained "lots of detail and description". All commented on the non-linear quality of the stories and nobody was unable to follow the strategy used. Some white students predicted reading problems as well as emotional problems for children who had used a topic-associating style.

We have seen that there are different kinds of logic and various ways of arriving at an answer or achieving a goal in written text, and the same is true for the spoken word. Pearson and Xu's study (1991) of cultural variation between Americans, Taiwanese and inhabitants from Mainland China reveals differences in the ways
groups of speakers reach consensus.

These studies prove that there is more than one way of structuring discourse in the achievement of a goal and that cross-cultural differences play a role in the assessment of the degree of success achieved.

3.5.2 Different communication styles in the achieving of aims

Different ways of achieving a particular goal may call for a difference in communication style. It may result in misinterpretation of the speaker’s intention, causing him/her to be judged as uncouth, as Dodd (1977:45) reports. While in conversation with a Nigerian, the latter became extremely loud, raised the pitch of his voice and increased the rate of his speech, which, according to North American standards, would have labelled him as hostile. In reality, he was quite amiable but simply discussed issues on a one-to-one basis much more intensely. Dodd concludes that for dyadic communication his own (American) culture called for quiet reason, whereas that of the Nigerian demanded assertive argumentation. (During the interview phase of the empirical investigation this feature topped the list of sources of irritation mentioned by speakers of one of the erstwhile official languages. See 5.3.3.2 (a). Also see 3.7.2 below.)

3.5.3 Different pragmatic "ground rules" for achieving ends

Ignoring what Thomas (1983: 106) refers to as "ground rules", may result in ends not being achieved successfully. Thomas (loc. cit.) explains that expected behaviour differs cross-culturally and tells of how "Over the centuries, the British traveller or colonist, tired of being told that the village was just over the hill, when it was really ten miles distant, or that work would be done mañana when there was really no possibility of its being completed before the following week, has inveighed against the untruthful, unreliable native".

Applegate’s report (1975) on the apparent reluctance of Africans who feel obliged to offer information knowing full well that they do not know the information asked for was mentioned on page 54. A doctor back from border duty in Namibia reported similar experiences: although the life of the patients depended on the operation in progress, nurses were reluctant to admit that they did not know which instruments were being referred to and kept on handing instruments to the doctor until the correct one was eventually found (personal communication).

Kaschula (1989:101) studied interaction between Xhosa-speaking labourers and English-speaking farmers and reports that the "diplomacy of labourers" is a reason for misunderstanding. Kaschula maintains that the respect the labourers feel they need to pay the farmers in the unequal relationship results in longer interchanges that cause
the farmers to become impatient and intolerant.

3.6 A for Act

In Hymes’s list of variables that could determine rules of speaking for the speech event, the A stands for \textit{ACT sequence} and not to speech act as identified by Austin (see 1.6.1.4 in Chapter 1, and 3.9 below where this issue is referred to). This component includes both message content (what is said (Hymes 1972a:60)) and message form (how it is said, i.e. syntactic structure (Hymes 1972a:60)), and therefore includes turn-taking, "fillers", back-channels, differences in respect of silence in conversation, responses to questions, and so on.

3.6.0 Introduction

The what refers mainly to topics that are discussed, and some of the features discussed under the heading how could equally as well be discussed under the heading Key, e.g. tone, volume, and these features will indeed be discussed in the next section. Perhaps it needs to be repeated here that the components Hymes identified are merely a matter of convenience for identifying those features of the speech event which are realised differently in other speech communities. He states (1972a:59) that his mnemonic device (SPEAKING) "has nothing to do with the form of an eventual model and theory".

3.6.1 Message content

Speech communities vary with respect to the topics which are considered appropriate to talk about. Ignorance of these conventions can cause acute problems for an outsider. Language learners need to know which topics have language-specific conversational restrictions.

Acceptable topics

Commenting about the cost of furniture or the taste of a meal may be acceptable in one society but not in another (Crystal 1987:117). In Thailand (Richards and Sukwiwat 1983:123,124) people avoid praising family members in public, whereas Americans view family members as topics for discussion. It is not only topics of discussion that are considered suitable which differ; even sermons or lectures, jokes and questions have culture-specific rules (Wolfson 1989:19). In the Ukraine it is acceptable behaviour to talk about a stranger’s income, politics, religion, marital status whereas the British regard such questions as intrusive (Thomas 1983). Arabs are inclined to ask how much things cost, while Asians want to know how old someone is and whether the person is married or not (Richards 1980:424). The intent behind such questions is not to pry but to show personal interest in a stranger.
The same is true for the Chinese who consider questions about someone's age, income, the price of his possessions or marital status as a way of showing concern or admiration (Lii-Shih 1988:47). Among Chinese friends of the same generation, asking the other's age is one way of finding out the order of seniority, an important factor for deciding who should be treated as the elder.

**Taboo topics**

Certain topics are considered taboo but the constraints on the topic are seldom categorical and are usually conditioned by the situation in which the talk takes place and the social identity of the participants (Wolfson 1989:19). One should never ask an Arab about his mother, sister, daughters or any other women, and one should not admire any of the Arab's possessions because these will promptly be donated! (Cross Culture, S.a.:7). (In this respect also see 3.9.3 for differences in norms for interpretation of compliments.) In Indonesia talking to strangers and whistling are forbidden, and so is all mention of land animals, particularly dogs and buffalo (Watson 1991:81, 169). Asking someone what her/his name is, a question which we regard as perfectly innocent, is offensive to the Navajo (Hall 1959:34). All language may be banned under certain circumstances, e.g. when sacrifices are made by Igbo speakers the officiating priest usually imposes the observance of strict silence, particularly when the purpose is diverting the attention of malevolent spirits from the carrier. If the silence is violated (a rare occurrence), the sacrifice must be repeated, and the offender has to make an additional sacrifice. Greetings are also taboo between Igbo from different villages during times when there are smallpox epidemics, because of the belief that disease can take human form (Nwoye, S.a., in Saville-Troike 1982:201).

Albert (1972:97) concludes that the Burundi regard questions about childbearing and/or food as taboo because questions about these topics are often met with silence or evasion. In South Africa a pregnant African woman may flinch when asked about the pregnancy, a topic one of her white countrywomen would not hesitate to discuss with someone of equal status and with whom she is familiar. To enquire about the highest level of school standard completed is another topic that is often considered taboo (own observation). The Navajo may not talk about hibernating animals except during winter months, and traditional stories about them are therefore told at certain times of the year. Orthodox Jews are constrained from discussing secular topics on the Sabbath (Saville-Troike 1982:138). Albert (1972:84) says that the Burundi may not say what they have eaten for dinner, nor mention the name of a dead person in the presence of relatives, and euphemisms are required when referring to excretion. Respect forms include avoid using the name of a ruler, the aged, a husband, or a mother-in-law in their presence (Cohen 1956, in Saville-Troike 1982:203). In the Igbo culture the names of dreaded diseases like small-pox and leprosy are avoided and during some festivals speech is totally prohibited because the elders are said to be
communing with the ancestors who are present. Certain animals, like snakes, are not referred to directly at night for fear that they might "hear" and come to the speakers. One reason for resorting to euphemisms and avoiding direct mention of diseases is the fear or dread the people have of them. It is also believed that words have supernatural or magical powers that can transform them into reality, causing harm to the hearers. It is also not unusual for Igbo children to grow up without knowing the real names of older men and women of their clan because the avoidance of the real names is a sign of respect (Nwoye 1989:268-271).

How topics influence style and choice of variety

Geertz observed (1960:177) that the Javanese use lower stylemes when speaking of commercial matters and higher ones for speaking of religious or aesthetic matters. Blom and Gumperz (1972:431) report how the topic under discussion can influence choice of a variety: local Norwegians switch from the standard language, Bokmål, used for formal education and official transactions, to Ranamål, for topics that have to do with family affairs. Albert (1972:84) reports that if the subject of discussion is a bull-session (the favourite topic of the Burundi) the social inferior drops the polite form of address, bodily stance and use of voice are transformed from humble respect to relaxed and the respect form becomes not merely irrelevant, but improper. Voices rise higher as differences of opinion are defined and defended, the expression of various emotions being permitted and expected for a specific topic.

The introduction of topics

The act of introducing the topic of conversation also differs across cultures. In many parts of the world, the normal pattern is to ease gently into talk about a particular subject through exchanges of greeting formulas, polite enquiries about the health of the other person’s family and friends, and sage observations on weather, crops, politics, or life. The central topic is mentioned last. If this routine is disturbed in Afrikaans, the speaker normally apologizes for introducing the topic immediately by saying Ek is jammer dat Ek met die deur in die huis val ... (I am sorry to be so blunt, but ...). In English change of topic is often introduced by remarks such as By the way, that reminds me ... or Speaking about ... or Speaking of ... or Incidentally ...

Hall (1959:15) reports on a meeting between American and Greek officials ending in a stalemate over precisely this difference in approaching a topic:

Americans pride themselves on being outspoken and forthright. These qualities are regarded as a liability by the Greeks. They are taken to indicate a lack of finesse which the Greeks deplore. The American directness immediately prejudiced the Greeks.

When speakers of Chinese, Korean and Japanese use English, they are inclined to
introduce topics in ways which English-speaking Westerners find strange (Scollon and Scollon 1991:113). They report that the Asian delayed mode of introducing of topics leaves Westerners confused about what the topic is and leads them to conclude that Asians are evasive. Conversely, Westerners introduce topics early in the conversation, which strikes the Asian as abrupt or rude.

3.6.2 Message form

How things are said differs from community to community.

3.6.2.1 Turn-taking

Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) suggest that for American English there is a conversational rule that only one speaker speaks at a time, yet among (American) blacks conversations may involve several persons talking at the same time. This practice violates white middle-class rules of interaction and is another example of how speaker intent may be misconstrued because of different expectation patterns for interpretation (Abrahams 1973, in Saville-Troike 1982:23). In Antigua the phenomenon of several people speaking at once during a conversation is a perfectly normal occurrence (Crystal 1987:117; Reisman 1971:113). On this Caribbean island a person, on joining a public group, will continuously try to break into the conversation until he is eventually given a turn. In Japanese conversational routines and overlapping speech are common (Hinds 1978 in Smith 1987:105). Hinds reports that the listener uses various back-channelling forms, while keeping up a constant stream of language so as to reinforce what the speaker is saying, often completing the speaker’s utterances. Hata (1982) reports that it is not the quantity and variety of the back-channelling that is important, but the timing involved (in Smith 1987:105).

Tannen (1981:137) contrasted New York Jewish and Los Angeles non-Jewish conversational styles and found that New York Jewish speakers talk faster and tell more stories, interrupt other speakers more and use "machine-gun" questions. In her study of Thanksgiving dinner conversations among Americans of differing geographical and ethnic backgrounds, she found that Jews of East European Jewish background living in New York use very different conversational strategies from those non-Jews from areas further West. She maintains that New Yorkers of Jewish background often speak simultaneously but that this is not interpreted within the group as interrupting, but is rather seen as normal, co-operative interaction. A Swedish student adopted the practice of interrupting while living in America and, on returning to Sweden was criticized for a lapse of manners when she continued the interrupting behaviour. She concludes that in America interruptions are tolerated more than in Japan and northern Europe, where they are considered to be ruder and are consequently less frequent (Applegate 1975:277). According to Applegate
interruptions are common in the Mediterranean area, in the Philippines and in India. In the West Indies interruptions are normal; therefore failing to greet a passer-by is regarded as an offence. This interruption in the flow of conversation with the first interlocutor does not require an apology (Reisman 1971:114).

Saville-Troike (1982:23) reports that certain American Indian groups are accustomed to waiting several minutes in silence before responding to a question or taking a turn in conversation. This research was confirmed by Virginia Hymes (1975:33 in Wolfson 1989:59) who says:

Unlike our norm of interaction, that at Warm Springs does not require that a question by one person be followed immediately by an answer or a promise of an answer from an addressee. It may be followed by an answer but may also be followed by silence or by an utterance that bears no relationship to the question. Then the answer to the question may follow as long as five to ten minutes later ... The fact is that at Warm Springs there just seems to be no rule that a question demands immediate response. In fact, answering without time for sufficient thought is explicitly considered stupid, or heedless.

Hymes (1971:75) lists more differences in the way speech communities respond to questions: among the Araucanians it is an insult to be asked to repeat an answer, a prompt answer from a Toba means he has no time to answer questions, a Wasco prefers not to answer a question on the day of its asking.

3.6.2.2 "Fillers" or "place holders"

The term filler is used to refer to expressions such as um, ah, etc. There are cultural differences in the way in which speakers deal with encoding difficulties or hesitations. Hymes (1972a:64) explains how a white middle-class American uses um or er to indicate that s/he is still holding the floor and is stalling for time, while for many black Americans the pattern is to recycle to the beginning of the utterance. In his report Hymes suggests that this feature is interpreted by whites as a defect because it is similar to the way white children stop midway through a grammatical structure. In South Africa, many African speakers sprinkle fillers, such as in fact, I can say, I mean and By the way, liberally in every-day speech. Some lecturers have reported that they are struck by the difference in the way speakers of Afrikaans and English ask for extensions for assignments, and add that African students are inclined to open a conversation with: in fact, I can say I have a problem ... (personal communication).

3.6.2.3 Back-channelling

With back-channel we mean the process according to which smooth and harmonious interaction is maintained. Back-channels are instrumental in conveying to the speaker that the listener is constructing meaning, as intended by the speaker. When Prime
Minister Botha addressed the Zionist Christian Church one Easter, every sentence that echoed over the loudspeakers was met with clapping of hands, as if to acknowledge that the message had been heard and understood.

Research (White 1989:59) indicates that back-channels of several types are displayed far more frequently by Japanese listeners. Japanese students who gave back-channel responses during a lecture, saying *yesss* at appropriate places fooled the teacher into thinking that they had understood the lectures, and only later did he learn that the responses simply meant that students were attending (Hatch 1980:31). LoCastro (1987) reports on a form of back-channel called *aizuchi*. It is used constantly by Japanese as a collaborative signal to let the speaker know that the listener is listening or attending to what is being said. He cites a case that was reported in *The Japan Times* (on 29 January 1983) in which the defence councillor stated that his client's use of *yeah* and *uh huh* was not a show of agreement, but simply a way of indicating that he was listening to what was being said and that he had not agreed to steal the information documents that were being discussed!

### 3.6.2.4 Silence

There seems to be a distinct difference in the way many cultures handle silence. Watson (1991:198) compares the Eastern and Western systems, commending the meaningful pause used in the East. He says of Western ways:

> Emptiness makes us uncomfortable. Silence is usually interrupted by applause from someone who thinks the symphony is over. We try to abolish intervals by our manic insistence on keeping busy, on doing something. And as a result, all we succeed in doing is destroying all hope of tranquillity.

Likewise silence is used by the Japanese in ways that often signifies a response other than what British people might interpret it to mean. It is often employed deliberately to indicate thoughtfulness and quiet appreciation (Sherman 1989:12).

Communities vary greatly in the amount of talk expected or tolerated and the place assigned to talk in relation to touch or sight, in trust or distrust of talk and in the proportion and kinds of roles dependent on verbal skills (Hymes 1971:81). Applegate (1975:273) quotes Glenn (1973:278) as saying that if you express an opinion and there is a little silence and then the subject is changed, one knows you have said something with which the person you are talking to does not agree. In many other cultures, in contrast, silence is a sign of agreement. When the Russians, French, Portuguese, Spanish, or Italians express an opinion and you do not reject it explicitly, they assume you have accepted it. Later, when they find you haven't, they regard you as being hypocritical. Reisman (1971:112) compares American and Scandinavian attitudes toward silence as follows:
Many Americans (and many English people) have a rule that in social conversations silences must be filled. A silence maintained too long is a sign of some kind of failure of rapport (unless it is defined as somehow seeking the solution to a problem, etc.). In Denmark by contrast there is a tendency to treat silences as valuable signs -- perhaps of the well being of those present, at least a kind of affirmation that people speak only when moved to do so, that their feelings are genuine, etc. Some Danes appear to "nourish" a silence as one might appreciate a cozy fire.

According to Applegate (1975), Moroccans and Persians have the same perspective as the races mentioned above. To complicate matters, the Egyptians interpret silence in the same way as the Americans, i.e. as disagreement.

In the Orient there is a tradition of respectful silence before elders (Applegate 1975:273). Finnish children are trained to be silent from early childhood. They are not expected to converse with adults unless encouraged to do so and during meals especially, silence rather than talk is to be expected (Yli-Renko 1989:11). The Anang value speech highly while the Wolof hold the opposite view. Both groups train their young according to their values and consequently grow up with different rules of speaking in this respect (Coulthard 1977:48-49). Research confirms these cultural differences in the quantity of speech: French children are encouraged to be silent when visitors are present, Russian children are encouraged to talk.

It is difficult to generalize about what is normal, polite, or antisocial in conversational practice, as there is so much cultural variation because silence, for instance, varies in status. Coulthard (1977:49) reports on research in Iceland and Denmark where silence is valued highly, therefore Americans have been perceived as talking too much by people from the Scandinavian countries (Yli-Renko 1989; Coulthard 1977:49). Apaches remain silent in the presence of strangers and are suspicious of talkative strangers - "like Anglos" (Applegate 1975:272). Lehtonen (1990: 87) suggests that on a silence-talk scale, the Anglo-American culture is near one end and the Finnish culture at the other end. Yli-Renko (1989:6) says of the difference: "While the Finnish culture is a silent one, *small talk* is of great importance in American culture". In the Finnish culture silence is a way of communicating. Social intercourse does not require continuous talking as in the American culture where silence is a negative value. Likewise, an Arab who withdraws indicates that he wants to be alone with his thoughts, and not that anything is wrong (Hall 1966:148). Americans talk faster, talk more and have fewer pauses than the Japanese. The Chinese have many sayings and proverbs about speech that have been passed down from generation to generation. Two are: When being asked a question by an elder, if one answers off-hand without showing any hesitation and modesty, he is impolite and When dealing with others one should be careful not to talk too much. Talking too much is sure to lead to errors" (Lii-Shih 1988:59).
Gardner (1966:398 in Hymes 1967:10) reports that by the time they are forty or so, the Pualiyans of South India hardly seem to talk at all. Verbally communicative persons are regarded as abnormal and often as offensive. Total silence is observed by widows in some communities (Cohen 1956). Among the Araucanians there are different rules for men and women, and a new wife is expected to be silent for several months (Hymes 1971:45). Kendon (1986:24) reports that when bereaved the women of the Warlpiri of Central Australia remain silent for a long period as a mark of mourning -- in many cases for several months, but in traditional times this period lasted for as long as a year or more.

Van Berkel (1988:691) maintains that the Dutch may perceive silence as threatening and avoid it in conversations. According to Van Berkel the Dutch are inclined to use hedge-like expressions or non-determinate expressions, which act like pause fillers, such as *um, uh*, and *de* that lengthen the utterance and even *krijg Het idee dattie* (*get the idea that*) (that acts as a pre-start before a description), all used in an attempt to escape embarrassing silence. Silence is also regarded as embarrassing in English conversations, unless there are special reasons (such as in moments of grief).

Crystal (1987:116) reports that in some cultures (e.g. Lapps, Danes, the Western Apache) it is quite normal for participants to become silent, while Wardhaugh (1987:234) reports on Marshall’s (1961) research on the !Kung of Namibia, who are talkative. For the !Kung talk offers an emotional release, and is used as a means of alerting individuals that they are stepping out of bounds. It therefore has the potential of heading off dangerous conflicts between individuals.

For Americans to give someone the silent treatment is tantamount to rejection and a sure sign of displeasure (Hall 1966:13 in Applegate 1975:273). The English idiom *to send to Coventry* conveys the same bleak message of ostracism. In some cultures a verbose person is considered offensive and taciturnity is valued above verbosity as is evident in the Paliyan speech community (Preston 1989:130).

We can conclude that the work of ethnomethodologists (Sacks 1974 and Goffman 1976) has yielded important insights into speech behaviour, and that valuable findings have emanated from their work. Criticism has been expressed, however, because findings are not universally applicable, nor does the work of ethnomethodologists define explicitly how to apply principles that have been established.

3.7 K for Key

This term refers to the tone, manner or spirit in which a particular message is conveyed. *Key* indicates whether a given sentence is serious, mocking, sarcastic, solemn, ironic, formal or informal, and so on. Non-verbal means of communication will be discussed under the sub-heading *Channels* in the next component (I for
Instrumentalities), but Hymes (1972a:62) provides for non-verbal means of communication in this category as well. He says, "The signalling of key may be nonverbal, as with a wink, gesture, posture, style of dress, musical accompaniment ...

3.7.0 Introduction

Features of this component of the speech event which cause miscommunication and that will be discussed are intonation and stress, volume, and rate of speaking.

3.7.1 Intonation

Hymes (1967:24) maintains that tone will override the message content if the two are in conflict and when there is a lack of fit between what someone is saying and the key the person is using, listeners are likely to pay more attention to the key than to the content of the message. The importance of intonation is usually played down because it is not used in writing (except for such crude devices as question marks and underlining) and in cross-cultural studies intonation is generally neglected in favour of more tangible language differences.

Applegate (1975:274) maintains that intonation is crucial for conveying intent successfully, because a compliment with the wrong intonation is not regarded as a compliment, and a polite request with the wrong intonation is not perceived as being polite. He cites Lamedella’s example of how a polite request in German "may have an imperious intonation to American ears": Lamedella illustrates how the example of the German student who said: Give me perhaps an example aroused ire because the intonation, more than the wording, changed what was meant as a polite request to a rather curt command. An American teacher of Portuguese reports that his students have trouble with yes-no questions because the proper Portuguese intonation for the question You speak Portuguese? sounds like a challenge in English (Applegate 1975:274).

Vocalizations include such things as crying, laughter and giggling, and once again, ignorance of these cultural norms can have adverse affects. Newly hired Indian and Pakistani women at a British airport were perceived as surly and unco-operative by cargo handlers because they used a falling intonation pattern (instead of a rising one) when enquiring what they wanted to be done. Because of the falling intonation pattern the enquiry was interpreted not as an offer but as a statement, which in the context seemed redundant, and consequently rude (Gumperz 1982:173). Gumperz ascribes the problem to differences in norms of interaction. He also cites the incident in which a West Indian ticket collector on a London bus repeated the request for Exact change, please, emphasizing the please more loudly and with a higher pitch, and was regarded as rude by speakers of British and American dialects.
3.7.2 Volume

When foreigners speak their own language, American listeners who understand none of the words may attribute attitudes and emotions to them which are based on intonation, stress, rate of speaking and volume characteristics. When an Italian speaks, for instance, he may be perceived by Americans to be excitable or angry because he speaks faster and more loudly than the accepted standard (Ogden 1988:15).

Even voice qualities of speech can be misunderstood. Hoar (1991:9) reports that misunderstanding can result from the Japanese norm for male voices: masculinity and authority are communicated by low-pitched, loud, gruff voices, qualities that communicate hostility and nastiness to Americans. Nwoye (1989:273) reports on the research of Haviland which indicates that among the Igbo in Africa and the Guugu Yimidirr of Australia it is disrespectful to speak to elders or the relations of one’s wife in a way that is indicative of anger, and to speak respectfully is to avoid the strident tones and rapid speech that characterize ordinary conversation. Haviland says: "One speaks to a brother-in-law or a father-in-law in a deliberately subdued voice, drawing out words and dropping into a near whisper. At the same time it is impolite to attempt physical proximity with one’s in-laws; instead one "... 'speaks sidewise' or 'crosswise', neither facing one's interlocutor nor if it can be avoided, addressing him or her directly".

The issue of volume of speech is one that causes conflict as there are degrees of loudness that are acceptable in various cultures. Increased volume means anger in English but the Navajo express anger by using enclitics, which are not recognized as emotion markers by speakers of other languages (Saville-Troike 1982:14).

Americans are often judged to speak too loudly by people from Great Britain and other European countries. On the other hand, the normal conversational volume in many Mediterranean and African societies, as well as the West Indies, often strikes Americans as loud and what most Americans regard as normal for conversations may sound far too boisterous in the Far East (Applegate 1975:273). Mesquaki Fox children interpret the normal loudness of voice and directness of American teachers as "meanness" and "getting mad" (Polgar 1960 in Coulthard 1977:49). This phenomenon is confirmed in Saville-Troike (1982:14) who reports that American Indian students often interpret the normal levels of classroom projection by Anglo teachers as anger and hostility, and teachers interpret students’ softer level as shyness or unfriendliness. At tertiary institutions in South Africa where many white lecturers have come into contact with black students for the first time, the lecturers have been worried that they were going deaf because they could not hear what the African students in their classes were saying, only to be told that their students were speaking softly as a sign of respect (compare van Jaarsveld’s research 1988a: 130).
At one of the universities a lecturer (who had found a solution to the problem of students' inaudible speech) advised a new colleague to tell the students that he was slightly deaf and that they had to speak up (personal communication).

Differences in the American and Arab cultures regarding expression of emotion and the volume of speech may affect business transactions. The volume of speech of Arabs often reaches levels that are much louder than the typical conversation in North American culture. The American businessman may perceive the loudness as aggression and find it objectionable, while the Arabian businessman again may feel that loudness is a sign of strength and sincerity and that a soft tone of voice implies weakness, and he himself may be suspicious of others who speak in that manner (Hall and Whyte 1979).

3.7.3 Rate of speech

In Japan a wise person is expected to speak slowly, quietly and with many pauses (Sherman 1989:12). Etiquette in the Javanese language dictates that the higher the styleme one is using, the more slowly (and softly) one speaks (Geertz 1960:173). Studies show that the average Finn speaks at the rate of six syllables per second (which is the universal norm for a spoken language), but Finns require more silence and space between one speaker and the next and are less tolerant of interruptions than speakers in Central Europe or in the United States and Britain (Yli-Renko 1989:12).

Chick (1985) discovered that the accepted rate of speech was a variable that was not shared between South African English speakers and Zulu speakers of English. He found that the Zulus spoke more slowly and did not regard long pauses as necessarily signalling the exchange point in an interaction. Whereas Zulus believe that whites are constantly interrupting, whites are inclined to believe that the Zulu speaker is being evasive and does not have an opinion. Chick (1985:315) concludes that these and other differences, notably culture-specific face-saving strategies, could lead to misinterpretation of motives and attitudes and "negative evaluations of the abilities of the members of the other group". Chick (1986:484) maintains that culture-specific interactional styles can lead to asynchronous intercultural encounters, which combined with larger, structural, historically determined forces to sustain a culture of racism.

As the term key refers to the tone of speech, it is closely linked with not only message form but Hymes (1967:24) says it can also be non-verbal, for example a gesture, or attire. Other kinds of non-verbal behaviour may also play a role, for instance posture and gesture may influence the way the message is received, or may even be part of the message itself (non-verbal channels are discussed fully under the heading Instrumentalities).
3.8 I for Instrumentalities

Hymes used this term to explain the way a message travels from one person to another. He (1971:65) specifies channel and code as means of conveying messages and mentions "Mazateco whittle-talk, Jabo drum-signalling and horn-calling, Tagalog speech disguise, and the like" in this category.

3.8.0 Introduction

The term Instrumentalities includes both channels and forms of speech. The term channels refers to the medium of communication (whether the message is written or conveyed orally by means of the telephone, radio and television, telex, fax or even satellites in the sky) and code refers to varieties, registers, argots. Stern (1983:222) simplifies the terms medium or channel by referring to the channel or medium that carries the speech act as either air, paper, or wire.

Successful communication may require knowledge of culturally bound rules, including rules that dictate the selection of the appropriate discourse channel, for example a personal visit, a letter or a telephone call, yet only a few studies have been directly related to the importance of non-verbal communication in business and trade, although several studies involve intercultural awareness (Vilarrubla 1987: 1018). Some examples of how code and channel contrast cross-culturally will be discussed under this heading.

3.8.1 Channels

Cross-cultural differences in choice of channels are well known, not only in the presence or absence of writing, but also in the elaboration of instrumental channels among West African peoples such as the Jabo, and the whistling of tones among the Mazatecs of Mexico (Hymes 1962:111). When face-to-face interaction is not possible, messages may be relayed by means of smoke signals and drums, or in gaols convicts are known to play the pipes that conduct water in order to send messages, creating a "pipe" vine. Saville-Troike (1982:4) lists drums and shells as channels through which to convey messages, while thunder, dogs, musical instruments are considered vehicles of speech, and stones and bones play a role in some societies.

As the channel of communication may be non-verbal, participants may misinterpret a message or be unaware that another participant is signalling something, for instance, the Koori in Australia purse their lips to indicate direction or intent. Hannan (S.a.: 7) reports that it can be very frustrating if one is not aware of this use and critical information is sometimes not received. He explains that in response to questions a Koori is likely not to respond verbally, but to indicate by pursing the lips to point in the general direction. This has been observed in response to such
questions as *Who owns this pen?* The owner responds by pursing the lips quickly. (A Koori joke tells of two hitch hikers, the one making his request with his arm outstretched and his thumb extended in the international convention while the Koori is reclining against a tree, hands in pockets, flicking his pursed lips in the direction he wants the lift.)

At conferences and in lecture theatres it has become customary for speakers to wave their hands in the air, almost like a conductor in front of an orchestra, to indicate quotation marks. This convention is, in a way, a marrying of the written channel with the spoken one, as the speaker presents written text orally, but wants to indicate that what is being said should be enclosed in quotation marks. It is unusual to come across this in face-to-face small talk.

Other differences: in Japanese organizations, intra-organizational communication is often conducted face-to-face or by telephone, rather than by inter-office memo, as is often the case in American organizations (Hoar 1991:8). In Greece letter writing as a means of communication has not developed as it has in the English speaking world, therefore Greeks will most probably rather use the telephone (Sifianou 1989:542). Sifianou ascribes this to the oral orientation of the Greek society.

A culture which is typically oral, rather than written, places a premium on clear, memorable speech. One strategy to divide the flow of oral speech into manageable units is "oral paragraphing" as used by American Indians. Cashdan (1987:2) shows that this strategy consists of a speaker prefacing each new advisory statement with an *I think*.

Concerning differences in written messages, Hoar (1991:9) reports that in American society some invitations are not perceived as legitimate invitations unless they are offered in writing (a wedding invitation, for example), while others can be valid if delivered orally (for example a Saturday night dinner invitation). Hoar maintains that misunderstanding about the appropriate form of invitations can result in hosts being insulted because they believe they have been stood up, or hosts being perceived as comically formal and stodgy. In Japan the written form serves a special purpose and a Japanese business card is more than a mere convenience. It serves the purpose not only of providing the caller's name and address but also reveals the social status which is of great importance in Japan (Sherman 1989:14).

In industry in South Africa, as in most countries, sirens, bells and whistles summon people to the conveyor belt, the sewing machine or the workbench, and sometimes also give the signal to release the workers for tea breaks, lunch or the end of the work day. This might not be a very friendly or effective way of communicating to the workers. One farmer has intimated that the most effective way of getting people to start working, is to switch on a machine, e.g. a tractor or milk separator. He
maintains that the chugging of the machine summons workers in a less objectionable way than a whistle or siren.

3.8.1.1 Non-verbal channels

Non-verbal codes include body movements, touch, voice characteristics, interpersonal space. These are all powerful means that can trigger automatic, and often erroneous, judgements of intent and attitude. Westerners often find interaction with the Japanese very difficult, mainly because of their restrained facial expressions and habit of smiling and laughing unexpectedly. Saville-Troike (1982:30) elaborates further:

A burp at the end of a meal is not a communicative act if it is merely a sign of indigestion, but it is a communicative act in societies where one burps to symbolize appreciation and thanks for the meal; the way stones, shells or bones configure when thrown is considered communicative in many parts of the world, but they are not considered potential elements of communication in others.

Non-verbal signs may carry over half of the total information that we receive from a speaker (Birdwhistell 1970; Ogden 1968:13) and the chances of misreading these signs increase greatly when dealing with foreigners whose non-verbal codes may vary as widely as their verbal codes. (Thiederman (1992:81) estimates the actual face-to-face communication that comes about by means other than words as high as 70 to 90 percent.) Brown (1987:209) notes the importance of non-verbal gestures in communication when he says that "the expression of culture is so bound up in non-verbal communication that the barriers to culture learning are more non-verbal than verbal".

Gesturing for come here in Arabic is done by motioning towards the speaker with the whole hand, while it is done in America with only the index finger. The American student has to be made aware that this is offensive in the Arab world because gesturing with the index finger is generally used for dogs and other animals. Haworth and Savage (1989:238) corroborate this and report on the difference between the Korean and American way of trying to attract attention, and state that the typical American come-hither gesture may result in the American not being served because that particular gesture is used to call dogs in Korea. (In Chapter 5 we will see that this gesture is highly offensive to speakers who have an African language as a home language. See question 8 in Appendix B, the discussion of the last sub-question of the section entitled "Effective communication in the workplace" in 5.6.2, and question 8 in Appendix C.)

To illustrate to what extent human communication differs across cultures, Saville-Troike (1982:14) mentions that even expressions of pain and stress are culturally patterned: while people in an English speech community learn withdrawal and anger,
the Navajo remain silent while the Japanese revert to nervous laughter or giggling. These differences make it difficult to try to interact with people from other communities.

Some gestures seem universal, but the way in which they are perceived may vary considerably. The Chinese recognise the importance of non-verbal communication and in *The Book of Rites* in which the ethical norms of Confucianism are recorded, the third error a man can make in the presence of his superiors is to talk without examining the facial expression of the person being spoken to. This is regarded as being tantamount to blindness (Lii-Shih 1988:57).

Some forms of greeting occur in most cultures, while other forms are culture specific, e.g. clicking the heels, the deep bow, the gallant hand kiss, kissing beards, and so on. Researchers who systematically recorded gestures in various cultures indicate that some gestures are universal, others are used in one culture and not in others, and that the same gesture can have different or even opposite meanings depending on where it occurs. Bochner (1986:190) reports that in the United States a raised thumb is used as a signal of approval, the "thumbs up" signal, while in Greece it is regarded as an insult, often associated with the expression *katso pano*, meaning *sit on this*. Dittmar and Stutterheim point out another major difference when they state: "Everybody knows that Central Europeans move their heads from left to right whereas Greeks move their heads up and down when saying yes" (1985:125). Hand gestures are a good example of differences: a hand held palm up with one finger beckoning means *come here* in English whereas in Japanese the same meaning is expressed by holding the hand with the palm down, but this gesture could easily be confused with the English way of saying *good-bye* (Sherman 1989:6).

The communication need not necessarily be verbal, but can be symbolic: in most Western cultures a white dress is indicative of happy occasions (e.g. weddings), whereas in many Asian cultures, wearing a white dress is often indicative of mourning (Knapp and Knapp-Pothoff 1987:12).

In order to comprehend Rundi communication fully one requires knowledge of conventional gestures, because these sometimes replace statements, for example the action or phrase "I pull grass for you" is a sign of subservience and gratitude (Albert 1972:85). To indicate drinking, southern Europeans will raise the head, extend the thumb and mime drinking out of a bottle or glass whereas the Japanese lower their heads and make a half-circle with the thumb and index finger in front of their mouth, then suddenly tilt the whole hand because they are miming drinking from a saki cup (Sherman 1989:9). In Russia foreigners have to be made aware that at the theatre it is rude to walk with one's back to someone, therefore one must walk to one's seat with one's back to the stage (Lord and Shektman 1986), and in Arab countries foreigners have to be made aware that the soles of their shoes should not be exposed...
Several non-verbal gestures are used by various cultures to communicate the same phenomena. Surprise, for instance, is communicated by gaping mouth and raised eyebrows by Americans and Europeans while Eskimos, Tlingits and Brazilians slap their hips and the Ainu of Japan lightly tap the nose or mouth (Krout 1942; 1971 in Corder 1989:22). Breen comments (1986:8) on such differences by saying:

Thus Japanese men may giggle, Arabs may hold hands, Latin Americans stand close together and Australian workers may be very offhand with their bosses. All the above behavior may cause many North Americans to be ill at ease, all because of patterns which were learned informally and never subjected to conscious evaluation by any of the cultures involved.

Messages may be conveyed by "rolling eyes" by American black women whose aim is to express disapproval of the person who is in the authority role (Johnson 1976:261) while a Latin American may use "hissing" to attract the attention of someone to his needs (Jaramillo 1973:59). African children signal reluctance to do something by impatiently flapping their elbows without saying anything (own observation).

When a Japanese person nods her/his head in response to a statement, this may not necessarily indicate agreement. It may simply mean that he has heard what has been said and is continuing to pay attention (Baglan 1988:5). Often Asians smile even when upset! (Baglan 1988:5; Sherman 1989:6). Sherman (1989:6) reports that the Japanese smile when they are happy or giving a friendly acknowledgement, but they may also smile on occasions where Westerners would frown.

In order to show respect a Korean will avoid looking a superior in the eye (Armstrong 1986:30). In African societies, too, avoidance of eye-contact indicates respect (a feature that will be tested in the empirical study). Downcast eyes in the Japanese culture often do not indicate rejection but rather agreement or even attentiveness (Baglan 1988:5). Finns avoid eye-contact and have little facial expression (Yli-Renko 1988:29).

Japanese bow to each other whenever they meet. The bow originally had the meaning of submission but has now become formalized and is performed as a sign of respect. The habit of nodding and bowing is so ingrained in the Japanese that secretaries have been observed nodding and bowing when talking to their bosses over the telephone. A recent study showed that an employee working for a large manufacturer bowed 123 times on one day while a conductor on a commuter train of thirteen coaches bows each time he checks a ticket, a total daily average of 2132 times! (Sherman 1989:9). The bow in Asian cultures is affected by the relative status
of the individuals involved, and Japanese department stores send their newly hired sales clerks to a special workshop on the art of bowing so as not to offend customers (Armstrong 1986:36).

By studying some differences in the ways different cultures respond to, or view, sneezes and hiccoughs, for example, the point of non-verbal channels is illustrated further. Saville Troike (1982:45) reports that in Japan or Korea a sneeze is interpreted to mean that someone is talking about you, in English speakers say *bless you*. There are also differences in the ways people respond to hiccoughs: in Germany the person makes a wish, in Puerto Rico the common response is *Did you steal something?*.

The dress of participants may also be relevant to the interpretation of their communicative behaviour, and thus requires description: e.g. Arab males may stand closer to females when talking if the woman is wearing a veil (Saville-Troike 1982:142).

3.8.2 Codes

Included under the heading of *codes* is the choice of the level of language which is to be used, such as technical jargon, slang, or the standard as opposed to the colloquial variety, therefore also the level of formality. The literature abounds with examples of the "high" and "low" forms, e.g. Geertz (1960) has documented the very complex system used in Javanese. Hymes (1967:24) states that the choice of code is linked to every other component and often there might be some social meaning in the choice of one code rather than another, especially where the status of a particular language or dialect is concerned.

The differences in respect of code are beyond the scope of this study, therefore only English will be mentioned when briefly referring to misjudgement on account of the different communication and rhetorical devices used by non-native speakers of English. There are more non-native users of English than native users (Smith 1987:xii). Crystal (1988:2) estimates that there are as many as 300 million first language speakers and 400 million people who use English as a foreign language. It is accepted that in the recorded history of mankind there has never been a language that matches the present global spread and use of English. There are differences between the "Englishes" of the Americans, Australians and the British speakers and those of speakers in India or Africa where users have adapted the language to suit their cultural requirements and individual needs, and these differences could lead to miscommunication. The differences in pronunciation, from American twang, and the Scottish burr to Australian strine are the least problematic. It is of course also true that miscommunication can occur between speakers of a language within the same country who speak a regional variety and who do not belong to the same speech community. These differences are usually restricted to variations in vocabulary or
pronunciation, but could also include rules of speaking.

Native speakers, including linguists, make evaluative judgements on the language use of others, and such judgements lie at the heart of language prescription and language-based social discrimination. An experiment to rate the suitability of candidates for jobs, based only on different accents (Kalin, Rayko and Love 1980:197), confirms the prejudice that exists. The prejudice can be lethal: a blacksmith who moved to the South of England in the early seventies committed suicide because he was ridiculed for his Yorkshire accent (Crystal 1988:61). It is understandable that different accents will cause misunderstanding. Traditionally the reaction of native English speakers has not been one of acceptance or understanding and strong social stereotypes are evoked when speakers use forms other than the expected standard. Lambert’s (1967) matched-guise experiment in Canada and Shaw’s fictional flower seller, Eliza Doolittle, who is passed off as a princess once her "vowels have been cleared up" are but two examples that illustrate the point. In biblical times shibboleth was a dead give-away to categorise an "outsider", as is a dropped h in English, or an added d in Afrikaans (in djy and djou).

The researcher scoured the literature for a feature she had observed while teaching at a tertiary institution where the majority of students are black. She had noticed that students made a cluck of dismay ("aish!" or "ish!") when disappointed with marks when their work was returned to them. The search for a report on this feature proved fruitless. When an article titled The Indians do say Ugh-Ugh (Law 1990:4-7) was found, hopes were raised, but this turned out to be no more than a report on negative stereotyping of American Indians who were depicted in cartoons and anecdotes as saying Ugh! and Ugh! Ugh! (This feature was explored in the second quantitative survey. See question 13 in Appendix C.)

3.9 N for Norms

Hymes distinguishes between norms of interaction and norms of interpretation. In his discussion of this component he (1967:24) states: "Here, too, may be considered shared rules for the understanding of what occurs in speech acts, e.g. as to what can be ignored or discounted". The term norm therefore refers to the interaction of specific behaviours which are considered appropriate in a given society. Saville-Troike (1984:148) underwrites this understanding when she says:

The norms of interpretation component should provide all of the other information about the speech community and its culture which is needed to understand the communicative event.

3.9.0 Introduction

Austin’s (1952) interest in speech acts has brought about a shift in philosophy, and
this was also influenced by the work of Wittgenstein, who in the 1920s had tried to analyze the logic of propositional language as a key to philosophical understanding. The shift has been from a focus on logic and language as the statement of propositions (of which it could be asked "true?" or "false?") to a concern with other kinds of things language is able to accomplish. Some of the typical uses of language in use were captured by Searle in his speech acts. Commenting on Searle's five basic speech acts, Hymes says (1986:58): "The basic point remains the one that the dimensions are useful, but not to be applied \emph{a priori}". He elaborates by showing how Rosaldo's (1982) examination of Searle's five categories among the llognot of the Philippines shows how the dimensions could not be predicted from Searle's classification. Wierzbicka (1985b:492) was not the first to point out the ethnocentric bias (mostly Anglo-American) of the work of language philosophers, and indicates that terminology used in speech act theory may be unsuitable for describing interaction: in Australia for the Walmatjari the concept \emph{order} does not exist because no such speech act is performed in that society!

Differences in the interpretation of speech acts (requests, the expression of gratitude, compliments, invitations and apologies) will be contrasted with differences across cultures in this section.

3.9.1 Requests

The literature abounds with examples of \emph{faux pas} of speakers who fail to convey their intended meaning when expressing requests. An example that illustrates misinterpretation of speaker intent occurs in the conversation below, where an (indirect) request to call someone is misinterpreted as a request for information because the addressee is not able to infer the intended meaning of the utterance, making it seem "as if it were an existential question rather than a summons" (Richards 1980:418 in Wolfson 1989:16).

\begin{verbatim}
A: Hello, is Mr Simatapung there please?
B: Yes.
A: Oh . . . may I speak to him please?
B: Yes.
A: Oh . . . are you Mr Simatapung?
B: Yes, this is Mr Simatapung
\end{verbatim}


Requests are sometimes formulated differently in different societies, e.g. in the Igbo and Malinka cultures many requests are accomplished by the use of proverbs, which are considered to be more polite because they are inherently indirect (Nwoye 1989:271).
Blum-Kulka's research (1983, 1984, 1987) indicates that native speakers of Hebrew are far more direct in their requests than their English-speaking counterparts and consequently speakers of Canadian English often fail to convey their intended meaning because the forms they choose are too indirect for Hebrew speakers to interpret as requests. The difference in usage suggests that the learners transfer request forms from English without realising the depletion in illocutionary force that occurs through translation.

In Russian an indirect request such as Can you pass the salt? would not be interpreted as a request but it would be understood as a question (Wolfson 1989:16). Thomas (1983:101) concurs that in Russian the conventionalized polite request Would you like to read? could well be answered with No, I wouldn't because students would genuinely think their preferences were being consulted. This is an example of pragmalinguistic failure in that the hearer does not know how to respond to an utterance because the illocutionary force is lost on him/her.

Most forms of request in English contain the word please, and from an early age good manners requires the use of please and thank you. Speakers who do not use these forms are likely to be judged as impolite or uncouth. An example from South African soil that illustrates pragmalinguistic differences: in many of the African languages there are different ways of asking for something, all varying in degrees of politeness. The enclitic hie apparently does not change the politeness of the request and none of the ways of asking includes a specific word directly equivalent to the English please; the most polite form translates directly as I am asking for ... (This particular feature will be researched empirically and will be reported on in Chapter 5. See question 10 in Appendix B and questions 11 and 22 in Appendix C.)

3.9.2 Gratitude

Different speech societies have different rules for expressing gratitude.

In traditional Chinese society the relationship between intimate family members obviates the need for expressing gratitude verbally, because gratitude is assumed. This means that a parent does not thank his child for doing errands, a husband does not thank his wife for cooking, and the wife does not thank her husband for fixing something. Appreciation is not verbalized for it might offend the addressee and this is indicated in the old Chinese saying Among the most intimate, gratefulness is not verbalized (Lii-Shih 1988:79). This behaviour is obviously in sharp contrast with Western values where saying please and thank you amounts to "having good manners".

The Tsawataineuk Tribe do not have a word for thank you in Kwakawala (Craven 1967:13), and these speakers, who do not use these forms in English, are likely to
be judged as impolite or uncouth. Rubin (1983:46) maintains that in India verbal
gratitude is expressed less because acts of assistance are accepted in the spirit of
mutual co-operation without words. In Morocco thanks is used sparingly and is
reserved mainly for when someone has gone far out of his/her way to do some
favour, while in Japanese culture politeness calls for thanking someone not just at the
time of the favour, but also on the next occasion that they meet (Applegate
1975:276). Apte’s (1974:79) research that indicates in South Asian languages,
unlike the Western custom, there is no thanking routine in service encounters (in
Wolfson 1989:22). It stands to reason that when no gratitude is expressed, South
Asians may be stigmatized as ungrateful or rude. When expressing gratitude in
American English, on the other hand, intention to reciprocate or repay seems to be
an important part, and when this is omitted, as is indeed often the case in the
responses of non-native speakers (Eisenstein and Bodman 1986) this omission is
perceived as incomplete or lacking in the appropriate level of gratitude. According
to Yli-Renko (1988:28) the British and Americans found that the Finns apologize and
express thanks less than is the custom in Britain and America (but the Finns have a
custom of sending thank-you cards with photographs after a formal occasion, such
as a wedding or an important birthday).

English speakers may be unaware that in Zulu the expression of gratitude differs in
important respects from that of English (Wood 1992:4). Wood maintains that part of
the misunderstanding by English speakers of an African request occurs because the
gestural acknowledgement of thanking in Zulu often goes unnoticed, since English
speakers are not accustomed to observing this action as an indicator of appreciation.
Apart from non-verbal gestures, surnames and praise names also serve as a way of
thanking, e.g. if a person’s surname is Mfeka, one can say E, Mfeka, or use his
family’s praise name E, Mzimela as a way of expressing gratitude (Wood 1992:14).
Non-verbal gestures that are used are (i) grasping the right wrist or elbow with the left
hand, (ii) cupping both hands, and (iii) lowering the body position by curtsying slightly
or bending the knees with a stooped body and lowering of head or eyes.

3.9.3 Compliments

Many researchers have documented how in other societies compliments are less
frequent and responses somewhat different from those in the English-speaking world.
There is for instance a tendency for the Japanese to compliment less frequently than
Americans, to compliment for different topics, to use a more restricted adjectival
repertoire and a tendency to deny or politely accept more compliments more
frequently than Americans (Billmeyer 1990:34). In many parts of the Middle East a
compliment requires that the receiver make a gift of it, in other words, if an object is
admired, the speaker is offered it as a present. In some cultures a compliment requires
a disclaimer from the receiver, in others a thank you and even a reinforcement or a
reciprocal compliment (Hoar 1991:8). A compliment given by a male student to his
Malaysian teacher caused embarrassment because he was unaware of the restriction on compliments given by males to females and by lower status to higher status individuals (Holmes and Brown 1987).

In China deference and modesty are highly regarded; thus on receiving a compliment, it should be rejected to show some degree of modesty, and on receiving a gift, most Chinese refuse to receive the gift at least once but usually several times (Lii-Shih 1988:28, 29). There are many expressions to express modesty, for example when being introduced one may use the ritualized courtesy expression Please give me more instructions, implying that the speaker is not as knowledgeable or competent as the hearer (Lii-Shih 1988:81). A host will show his modesty by saying There is not much food or My wife is not good at cooking. Westerners not used to the Chinese way of expressing humbleness may regard the Chinese as insincere or overly subservient. A Thai hostess is not supposed to respond verbally to a compliment (Richards and Sukwiwat 1983). By rejecting a compliment the recipient proves that he/she is well-mannered and polite, because modesty and deference are highly valued. The extent to which the Chinese try to downgrade or deprecate themselves or their belongings may puzzle and irritate Westerners. Craig (1979 in Wolfson 1989:25) reports that an innocent remark, intended to pay respect to the guests by saying that nothing can be considered worthy of the honourable people he was entertaining, ended in embarrassment for a Chinese businessman. Because he said that the food and drink were not fine, he was sued by the management of the hotel.

In similar vein Crystal (1987:120) reports how, at a dinner in an Arab community, he made the mistake of remarking on the excellence of the food before him. The host immediately apologized, and arranged for the meal to be replaced. This may sound far-fetched to Western ears because the taken-for granted structures deviate so far from our own, but Ting-Toomey (1984:12) confirms that in Iranian each compliment episode contains counter-compliment strategies. She describes a typical after-dinner compliment in Japanese. The guest says: The dinner is so rich and sumptuous. I'm very full. The host replies: The food was prepared by my humble wife or We should really invite you to a nice restaurant next time.

In some parts of the Mediterranean world compliments are associated with the evil eye and as an expression of envy; they may be the actual vehicle of the evil eye. In Egypt, compliments are followed with the disclaimer I really didn’t mean it (Applegate 1975:275). (In a way this reminds one of the Break a leg custom used in the theatre because Good luck is superstitiously believed to mean bad luck.) In Turkey, complimenting children is thought to be harmful to their health because it may attract the evil eye, but this danger may be lessened considerably by immediately repeating the ritual phrase What God hath wrought (Saville-Troike 1982:200). In Morocco one follows up a compliment on the good looks of a child, for example, with the formula May the blessing of Allah be upon him. These formulas negate the possibility of
conveying the evil eye via the compliment. If one fails to use the formula, then the recipient of the compliment may utter the counter-formula *Five eyes of the covetous* to ward off the evil. In Yiddish, the formula *No evil eye can* is used not only with compliments but with any expression of well-being or good fortune (Matisoff 1972:52 in Applegate 1975).

Wolfson (1981:117-124) describes how the American custom of giving compliments was interpreted incorrectly in the French press. The French were unaware of the American custom of making favourable remarks about the accomplishments of fellow politicians, and Jimmy Carter’s comments to newsmen about the good work done by officials were a fiasco. In French editorials his behaviour was interpreted as an attempt to interfere in the internal politics of France and it was viewed as another example of American imperialism. On a similar tack (i.e. compliments that are not seen to be compliments) but closer to home: in the South African context a petrol attendant or any casual passer-by who asks the driver of a car to sell his vehicle elicits anger from the receiver of the message. In Northern Sotho a remark such as *Your coat is very beautiful, and you must give it to me* is meant as a compliment, but in English the second half of the utterance is perceived as being impolite by the hearer. Similarly, a shop whose assistant asks a familiar customer to sell a garment she is wearing may cause the customer to show her disapproval by withdrawing, probably because the interchange would be regarded as a breach of the boundaries of familiarity. (The issue of compliments being interpreted as requests was one of the matters explored in the pilot study, but it was found that the relationship between employer and employee at work, and the rules that applied when people do not know each other, are different. The setting in which the interaction takes place makes this the marked component of the speech event.)

These examples illustrate how African, American and French people have different conventions regarding compliments, and how, in cross-cultural encounters, the intent of the speaker can be misinterpreted.

### 3.9.4 Invitations

Wolfson (1989:75) reports that numerous international students at the University of Pennsylvania complained about Americans being insincere because they were invited to spend time with the Americans, but these invitations were not followed up later. Applegate (1975:276) confirms these differences in the report of a Punjabi who felt rejected by the consternation of his host when he showed up for an appointment that had apparently not been made because he had taken the *Let’s get together again next week* literally.

Arabic speakers also report that they doubt the sincerity of the American invitation. When they do attend a function, the difference in behaviour patterns acquired in
childhood continues to be confusing: Americans are unlikely to repeat an offer of refreshments more than twice. The customary *Please help yourself* of a host at a party is regarded as inconsiderate by the Japanese who translate this as meaning *Nobody else will help you so you have to fend for yourself*. Rubin (1983:14) reports how an Arab refused the second offer of his hostess and the offer was not repeated as he had expected. Consequently the food was wasted. A further example that confirms this difference was found by Jamaluddin *et al.* (1986 in Wolfson 1989:18) who reported that in Malay culture it is inappropriate to ask whether someone wants to eat or drink something, because it is customary to serve the guests in any case.

### 3.9.5 Apology

Situations which elicit apologies in our own society might not do so in others because these rules are culture specific, e.g. middle-class Americans apologize when they are late for an appointment, and share the obligation not to appear to expect another person to be available at all times (Wolfson 1989). Insulting someone or physically hurting another person unintentionally seem to be universally accepted situations which call for an apology, yet different degrees of severity of the issue or different circumstances related to the behaviour which results in the need to apologise, might call for different types of apologies and different intensities of such apologies in different cultures. Borkin and Reinhart (1978) found that *I'm sorry*, although usually referred to as an expression of apology in English, is not necessarily used to apologize at all but that it is used as an expression of regret or dismay. *I'm sorry* is used to express regret when refusing an invitation even though no social norm has been violated.

Sherman (1989:15) advises that Westerners should not be insulted if a Japanese offers no excuse when declining an invitation. He asserts that the Japanese simply say *I cannot* or *Sorry, I am busy* without intending a slight. An incident that illustrates differences between the Japanese and the American use of apologies is described by Smith (1978:1). An American woman refused to write an apology when her unaccompanied luggage could not be found. The root of the misunderstanding was that the woman was unaware that in Japan apologies are a social lubricant and not an admission of fault, as they are in the United States.

Studies by Cohen and Olshtain (1981) compare native speakers and non-native responses to a variety of situations in Hebrew and English. They found that Hebrew-speaking Israeli learners of English are less likely to accept responsibility for an offence or to make offers for damages they might have caused. In her 1983 study Olshtain set out to discover the extent and type of transfer in the speech act of apologies made by both English and Russian-speaking learners of Hebrew. She found that English speakers perceived less need to apologize in Hebrew than in English, and that Russian speakers apologize more than Hebrew speakers.

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Apologies are, in some societies, an implicit self-judgement that speakers make against themselves, a recognition that they have broken a social norm and are responsible for whatever harm this has caused, but once again "rules" are far from universal. In South Africa *Sorry, sorry!* is often uttered, not by the offender, but by an African speaker of English commiserating with someone who has dropped something, or tripped over something, or in some way landed in an awkward situation.

These studies confirm that we do not have sufficient information on the aspect of transfer among learners from different cultural backgrounds, and that misreading of speaker intent can easily occur because of this.

### 3.10 G for Genre

Under the rubric *genre* we find types of communication such as prayers, jokes, letters of recommendation, entries in a ship’s log, oath taking, punning, catechism and confession, newscasts, advertisements, graduation ceremonies, praise poems, and funeral rites, and ritual insults among black teenagers in Harlem (Labov 1968, 1972 in Dundes et al. 1972), to mention put a few.

#### 3.10.0 Introduction

Genre is a term more commonly used in the study of literature, as a way of demarcating the categories *novel, poetry* and *drama*. For discourse analysis Chick (1987:48) clarifies the meaning by observing that genre refers to utterances that can be clearly distinguished from unmarked casual speech by the high frequency of characteristic formal markers. For example, Hymes (1967:23) reports that gossip is characteristic among the Makah Indians of Northwestern Washington and among fox-hunting English aristocrats.

To illustrate the possibilities of this genre, Albert (1972:76) lists the "curriculum" of boys in the upper social strata of the Burundi, which has well-defined criteria for rhetoric, logic and poetics. She mentions that the boys are given formal speech training in the composition of impromptu speeches which are appropriate in relations with superiors in age or status, formulas for petitioning a superior for a gift, the composition of praise poems, quick-witted, self-defensive rhetoric intended to deflect an accusation or the anger of a superior, correct formulas for addressing social inferiors, for funeral orations, for rendering judgement in a dispute, or for serving as an intermediary between a petitioner and one’s feudal superior. Closer to home, Finlayson (1991) elaborates on the role of praise poems and formal speeches at ceremonies in some of the African languages. Dundes, Leach and Özkök (1972:132) researched the strategies of Turkish boys’ verbal duelling rhymes and conclude that participation in verbal duels requires both specific linguistic skills and general cultural
knowledge. A competent performer is therefore required to know a large number of set rhymes; he must display ingenuity in inventing new metaphors and combining them within the constraints imposed by the medium.

Proverbs can also be discussed as a category that fits the Hymesian grid under the heading genre. By proverbs we mean ritualized, precoded or fixed sayings. These are often a reflection of cultural values and give an indication of what is regarded as important by the speakers. Proverbs may also express the belief of a speech community about the importance of thriftiness, timeliness or cleanliness, etc. Each of these marked utterances, or series of utterances, has its own particular conventions, some of which are universal while others are culture specific. Dogancay (1990:2) maintains that pre-coded utterances are conventionally triggered by certain events and serve as politeness formulae in a society.

3.10.1 Proverbs

Proverbs and other pre-coded expressions (e.g. idiomatic expressions, greetings and apologies) are generally made up of routinized linguistic formulae. Ferguson (1976:137) refers to these routinized formulae as "little snippets of ritual used in everyday encounters between people". The use of these is more or less triggered by everyday communication situations. These pre-coded conventionalized routines can be found in the linguistic repertoire of almost every society.

Gleason and Weintraub (1975:129), Applegate (1975:271) and Dogancay (1990:2) are in agreement that certain rules of speaking (e.g. please and thank you) are taught consciously by adults during the course of the socializing of children. Literal translations of these formulaic, prefabricated expressions into other languages can cause communication problems when their equivalents do not exist or are not required in other languages.

Proverbs reflect the norms of the society in which they are used. Albert (1972:97) found that the Burundi habitually terminated descriptions of events or persons or observations about cattle or the weather with an appropriate moral proverb or other evaluative statement. In Turkish proverbs put a great deal of emphasis on patriotism, bravery, wisdom, patience, hospitality, family, friendship and justice, many of them prefaced with the phrase As our ancestors say ... (Dogancay 1990:5). Günther (1990) analyzed audio-taped conversations between Chinese learners of German and native Germans and found that Chinese speakers reveal a frequent use of proverbs whenever they are asked to comment on the social norms and values in the Chinese society. The proverbs of everyday wisdom are "maxims of adequate behaviour" and are announced by such formulas as We Chinese say, followed by a proverb characterized by an increase in volume and special rhythm, which was regarded as quaint by the German speakers.
The use of proverbs or expressions of ritualized wisdom and the ability to use similes, metaphors, proverbs, and rhymes in appropriate contexts is a highly regarded language skill in some speech communities. When members of such societies are studying at English-medium universities, "where 'directness' is the valued style and 'cliches' are penalized" these same skills have to be suppressed (Saville-Troike 1982:174).

Among the Igbo in Africa proverbs play a prominent role in all discourse and the possession of a large stock of proverbs and appropriate applications of them in speech enhances the reputation and social standing of the speaker (Nwoye 1989:269). In Igbo the most common way of prefacing a proverb is by either *Our ancestors say* or *Our fathers say*. This preface has the dual effect of absolving the speaker from any possible offence the utterance may cause the hearer and offers both participants a share in the collective wisdom of the ancients which they may not normally be expected to possess. Igbo proverbs therefore serve the purpose of hedges in English.

Apart from presenting cultural values, metaphors and proverbs are also a common strategy for depersonalizing what is said. They allow more indirectness for example in criticism: Sherzer (1974) reports that the San Baas Cuna Indian tribe of Panama express opinions in a metaphoric song pattern. In an explanation of how his model language and social life interact, Hymes (1972a:66) cites research by Arewa and Dundes (1972) in which it is illustrated that the heuristic set of components can be used negatively as well as positively. Arewa and Dundes found that among the Yoruba proverbs are used only by adults (i.e. the status of the participants dictates who may use proverbs). In this speech community, however, children are permitted to use a different channel, i.e. the drum, for beating out formulaic apologies.

3.10.2 Precoded or fixed sayings

One says *Auf wiedersehen* to strangers when leaving the table in a restaurant in Germany, but *Excuse me* in Britain (Alexander 1986:13). Cultural differences observed in various kinds of genre (especially precoded or fixed sayings) and how these can lead to misinterpretation of speaker intent will now be discussed.

Crystal (1987:120) observes that many of the European languages do not use their word for *Please* as frequently as English does. Applegate (1975:275) remarks that there is a formulaic equivalent to *thanks* or *thank you* in most languages as an expression of gratitude. But in France or Germany, if you accept the offer for a cup of coffee with *merci* or *danke*, just as you would say *thanks* in American English, you must say something like *please* or *I would like some*. In Japanese and Korean, a question is more polite when phrased negatively: *Wouldn’t you like more tea?* In accepting this offer, an American would say *Yes*, the implication being that you
would like more tea. But the Japanese, Korean, and the Filipino all respond with No, logically for No, it is not the case that I would not like more tea.

These examples illustrate that it is a total fallacy to think that yes and no are some of the most basic words to master when learning a new language, because differences in their use in various cultures often result in misunderstanding by non-native speakers.

Equally confusing for interaction between speakers of Afrikaans and Dutch is another common conversational rule, that of please and thank you. In Afrikaans asseblief is used in situations where the Dutch say danku, and in Afrikaans one says Dankie where the Dutch say alsublief. To complicate matters even more Clyne (1982:105 in Wolfson 1989:142) reports instances where sociolinguistic transfer takes place when German learners of English reply in German with the English form Ja, danke, or simply Danke meaning Yes, thank you as a positive reply to an offer, while in Standard German Danke is a negative reply. (In the second quantitative survey, described in 5.7, we see how the politeness markers asseblief and thank you are transferred to the home languages of workers on the work-floor.)

The consequences of different interpretations for statements that are automatically processed are illustrated below. The example concerns two people who hear the same message but respond differently to it and shows how first language interference from an African home language causes misunderstanding when speaking to an English speaker.

Isn't it raining?

(The sun is shining)

No, it isn't raining
English speaker

Yes, it isn't raining
African speaker

Lanham (1965).

The reply of an English speaker to a question negatively stated reports on reality alone, whereas the reply of an African speaking English reports on the accuracy of the statement matched against reality (Lanham 1965:199). Along the same lines Steinfatt (1989:54) comments that in English, whether it be Standard Anglo American English or British English, one responds to the logic of the situation when answering a negatively phrased question, while in Japanese one responds to the logic of the sentence.

In Russian of course (cf. indeed, yes, certainly in English) is often used instead of yes to convey an enthusiastic affirmative (Thomas, 1983:101), and if a Russian were to respond with an of course to a question Is the restaurant open on Sundays? the
answer could be construed as *Only an idiotic foreigner would ask!* Similar examples may be found in interaction with speakers of African languages: Afrikaans-speaking South Africans are familiar with the response of African speakers, who when questioned whether there is enough of any particular article answer, not with a *Yes, (there is enough)* but with an emphatic *Hy is (it is)*, the emphatic used rather than an affirmative. As illustration: after completing the Comrades Marathon recently Sam Tshabalala was asked by the interviewer on television *Dink jy ooit aan daardie dag toe jy gewen het? (Do you ever think about that day you won [the race]?)*, and Sam’s answer was an enthusiastic *Ek dénk! (I think! [about it])*). This answer, in which the *yes* is conspicuously absent, is not likely to cause misunderstanding, but possibly reinforces a negative judgement of abilities, similar to the judgement made when a German makes an incorrect semantic choice by saying *Please?* instead of *I beg your pardon?* when he wants a phrase to be repeated. Native speakers of English are quick to notice when *Excuse me* and *I’m sorry* and *Pardon?* are used incorrectly by non-native speakers, something that can happen easily when there is only one equivalent for these forms in the home language of the non-native speaker.

In every culture certain social situations demand conventionalized utterances for acts of greeting, leave-taking, apologies, consolations, congratulations, and so on. Different cultures may not agree in having a formula for a particular act, nor can one literally translate a formula: the English formula *Good morning* for instance, is *Have you slept well?* in Korean. The social conventions for greeting forms are different in six dialects of Arabic: Egyptians say: *How is your outfit?*, Iraqis say: *How is your colour?*, the Moroccans: *How is your news?* Algerians: *How do I see you?* while the Syrians, Lebanese, Jordanians and Palestinians say either: *How is your situation?* or *How is your health?* (Armstrong 1986: 14), while the conversation opener *Nice weather?* is acceptable in Britain, but not in Germany (Alexander 1986:13). The English *How are you?* or *How are you doing?* asks about the person addressed whereas in Japan when a Japanese refers to another person’s health, it is in the context of weather conditions, e.g. *It is cool these days. Please take care not to catch a cold* (Kitao and Kitao 1989:68-69). In Ghana where Ewe is spoken, the question *Has the visitor drunk some water yet?* will be asked before anybody says any greetings. What this question really means is *Does your friend speak or understand Ewe?* (Ohene 1991:34).

An incident with grave implications is reported by Rubin (1983:11). According to Rubin the Vietnamese doubted whether the Americans were sincere in negotiating a peace settlement because the President said *I’ll talk peace anywhere, anytime.* This was interpreted as being insincere, analogous to Americans saying *drop in anytime.* Because the President had used the words *anywhere* and *anytime*, which seemed as unspecific as *drop in anytime*, the North Vietnamese doubted whether the President was willing to negotiate at all. In similar vein, Okushi (1990:69) reports on the Japanese Prime Minister Sato’s answer to President Nixon at the 1970 Summit
Meeting. In response to Nixon's political pressure to limit textile exports, Sato said: 
*I'll do my best.* The original Japanese expression is often used when one cannot 
easily answer another's request in a political situation, but Nixon understood that Sato 
had promised to remedy the situation. Obviously the interpreter had failed to render 
the true meaning of the words the Japanese Prime Minister had said, with grave 
consequences for international relations.

3.10.3 Verbal rituals at ceremonies

Funerals in most parts of the world are solemn occasions, but the musical and choral 
accompaniment differs from place to place. In England singing and organ music is the 
norm, across the border in Ireland, the funeral song is accompanied by wailing and 
professional wailers can be hired for the occasion. Keening is the accepted norm. It 
seems to be recognized that some people have a capacity for using their lungs and 
in certain old English towns, like Chester for example, the town crier cries out when 
it is midday, a function relegated to a cannon in Cape Town (i.e. a different form of 
channel is used).

Graduation ceremonies in South Africa are a natural outcome of the English tradition, 
and academic robes and hoods are worn at this formal academic occasion. In African 
societies it is customary to ululate spontaneously on joyous occasions and 
consequently at some South African universities it is not uncommon to have a proud 
family member ululate in celebration when a student is capped. It is understandable 
that a merging of two traditions can raise eyebrows or even mar the occasion for 
those who are unaware of the African custom.

3.11 The value of this survey

One of the aims of the ethnography of speaking is to describe and to systemize the 
interpretive rules used by the members of a speech community. This survey has 
provided evidence of rule-governed verbal behaviour which results in sociolinguistic 
differences across cultures. The value of this survey is that it yielded information as 
to specific formulas and routines which are in use in a particular speech community, 
and from the data it becomes possible to learn about the patterns of frequency and 
appropriateness of formulas in specific-speech situations. Hopefully the pessimistic 
words uttered by Kipling more than a century ago and cited at the beginning of this 
chapter will be proven wrong as a result of knowledge gained in this way.

3.12 Some criticism, and defence of ethnography

Research in the ethnography of speaking has been criticized for the repetitive 
collection of data from numerous societies at the expense of an attempt to build a 
general theory of human communication that would have application in all societies.
A catalogue of sociolinguistic differences could therefore invite criticism if one were to see it as merely an addition to "a growing collection of ethnographic titbits from around the world" (Sherzer 1977:47), and as far back as 1967 Hymes (1967:11) himself said that "a prospect of endless descriptions, whatever their quality and quantity" would not contribute to present theory. Sherzer (1977:48) voiced a number of criticisms concerning the sub-discipline, saying the field lacks "precise, cross-culturally valid terms and definitions for features, dichotomies and patterns". Another criticism levelled by Sherzer (1977:48) at the ethnography of speaking is the preoccupation with exotic studies, i.e. a "fascination with ritual, ceremonial, verbally artistic, and other marked and special uses of speech", in other words, events which are most striking to the outsider, while the subtleties of everyday communicative behaviour are neglected. In spite of his grievances Sherzer concedes the need for reliable information and analysis of speech patterns in other societies.

Other scholars, however, have expressed the need for ethnographic descriptions of other speech communities. Wolfson (1989:5), for one, values the importance of Hymes's ethnographic framework, and states:

> Perhaps the most significant contribution to the development of the study of speech in use has been the theoretical framework called the *ethnography of speaking* proposed by Hymes in 1962.

Support from other scholars (Candlin, Auroux and Kouloughi, Applegate and Fasold), will now be adduced.

Candlin (1987:23) maintains that, if the goal is to understand the social bases of cross-cultural discourse, we need to start from a standpoint of variability, i.e. in terms of cultural assumptions about encounters and the communicative behaviour considered appropriate for each kind of encounter, in particular in terms of norms of interaction and interpretation, degrees of explicitness and directness, patterns of politeness. Also to be considered is an awareness of the variety of means of structuring information and argument (Candlin calls this "social rhetoric"), and an awareness of locally conventional sequencing and presentation of information, as well as an awareness of different modes of speaking and writing. Candlin (1987:25) accordingly advocates an *explanatory* approach to discourse analysis, because this approach attempts to describe discoursal features and pragmatic markers characteristic of particular types of encounter as embedded in the social structure or culture in which they are produced. He believes that these features and markers reflect the social relationships between participants or groups. Candlin therefore regards an explanatory approach as superior to one which is merely descriptive because it is a means of learning about the value-systems held by the participants (1987:26).

Fasold (1990:64), again, defends a description of differences and questions rigorous methodology and theory-construction at the expense of what can be achieved by
ethnographic records. In this he is supported by Auroux and Kouloughi (1991:162), who, after having considered various options, concur that "the important thing for the philosophy of linguistics is not to generate philosophical theories about language but to follow and support the development of linguistic research".

Chick (1992:215) alerts the reader to possible criticism from another angle, namely the danger that ethnographic studies in South Africa can be seen as providing some support for the ideological assumptions that underpin apartheid. He quotes Kuper (1985:1), who warns that ethnography "lacks the intellectual means to analyse a society which is so urban and industrialized, and undergoing such rapid and radical change". The fear expressed seems to hinge on finding support for "tribal" and "traditional" institutions and claiming respect for these. Kuper clearly has a narrow view of ethnography. As expounded here, ethnography very clearly does have the intellectual means to analyse urban and industrialised societies. Roberts et al. (1992:179) point out that ethnography can be regarded as the most basic form of social research.

When considering the history of intercultural communication (see Chapter 2) and discourse analysis, one is struck by the similarity of the development in the two disciplines, in that both can be described as disciplines in search of a theory, and both have immediate application in modern society. There are applications for both the subdisciplines of intercultural communication and discourse analysis, in that they can help to provide solutions in the field of communications in a world that is constantly becoming more globalized in areas such as tourism, international marketing, international economics and intercultural communication (McLuhan 1967; Hoar 1991:3).

There are scholars who value the descriptions in sociolinguistic research and who see descriptive research as having application in intercultural communication. Applegate (1975:280), for instance, is of the opinion that the value of research lies not in mere multiplication of examples, but in the realizations that cultural differences in the use of language can be subtle and far-reaching. He says that the goal must be to eradicate stereotypes, e.g. the perception that "Greeks are pushy" may make place for "Greek politeness requires that offers be made with firm insistence". The breaking down of stereotypes can only come about once general sociocultural and specific situational sociolinguistic rules have been researched and recorded and become available for use by course designers, material developers and language practitioners.

The explanatory approach seems to be favoured internationally when one considers how information gleaned from ethnographic studies has been built into courses on intercultural communication. Lord and Shektman (1986) have produced instructional materials for the Russian language training programme of the United States Foreign Service Institute, Armstrong (1986) gives an account of the cultural awareness
programme at the Defense Language Institute (for military personnel who have to learn Arabic, German, Japanese and Korean), Chow (1988) reports on Chinese and Japanese conversation classes to meet the needs of people who are already active members of the business community and who are involved in trade relations with China or Taiwan, and Sherman (1989) gives advice on Japanese etiquette and body language. Frey-Hartel and Kasum (1988:1000) describe language and non-verbal communicative techniques used by the French, with the aim of sensitizing individuals to French culture. Armstrong (1986) explains that cultural and sociolinguistic features are emphasized throughout the course and are designed to make the military personnel aware of the values, attitudes, and norms of behaviour of the host country. Lord and Shektman’s (1986) course is based on the diary of a fictitious foreign service officer stationed in Moscow and in it observations on differences of verbal and non-verbal behaviour are recorded. These differences include, meetings and greetings and what to do and say in restaurants and the theatre.

3.13 Conclusion

In this chapter the descriptive framework of components that constitute a speech event was used to describe rules of speaking in a great many speech communities, to give some idea of the known diversity. Another reason for conducting the survey was to prepare the ground for the kinds of questions to ask when trying to identify sociolinguistic variables that could account for miscommunication between people in industry in South Africa.

The interrelationship among Hymes’s categories becomes apparent in the discussions above. Many of the examples given could just as well have been discussed under one of the other headings, e.g. funerals or graduation ceremonies could just as well have been discussed under the heading of Setting and the topics could equally as well have been mentioned with verbal and non-verbal channels in the category Key or with agencies of communication in the category Instrumentalities. The reason for the choice is supported by Hymes’s words. He regarded the framework as a point of entry into the complex patterning of uses of speech in speech communities. He (1962:109) says:

Let me emphasize again that what I present is not a system to be imposed, but a series of questions to be asked. Hopefully, the questions will get at the ingredients, and from the ingredients to the structure of speaking in a group.

The many examples of different sociolinguistic rules in various speech communities served as a basis for the research design (which will be described in the next chapter), because the examples sensitised the researcher to the possibilities of differences that may cause misinterpretation of speaker intent. The model developed
by Hymes, in which the components that make up the speech event are described, made it possible to discuss differences in what constitutes communicative competence. It was not possible to comment on the diverse research methods employed in arriving at the findings, because in some cases data was incidentally reported on. At times it was stated that the methodology\(^2\) had its origins in the microsociological and ethnomethodological approaches (as in the case of topic control and turn-taking) or that it derived from introspection and self reporting or from the discourse analysis tradition.

\(^2\) In this dissertation "method" refers to techniques employed in empirical research, and "methodology" to social theory or frameworks or paradigms (Hammersly and Atkinson, 1983:x).
CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN

The act of observing determines the reality... The experimenter makes the choice. You get what you interrogate for (Stoppard 1988:12).

These words, spoken by a fictional character in a contemporary British play, to some extent embody the dilemma, not only of the scientist confronted with wave-particle duality in physics, but also of the analyst of discourse.

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the methodological issues and related problems of data collection for discourse analysis are spelled out. This is no mean task because the analysis of conversation is characterized by a multiplicity of theoretical and methodological approaches. Two research approaches used in sociolinguistic research will be described, one that relies mainly on elicitation, the other mostly on observation.

In 4.2 the problematic nature of data collection is described. In 4.3 different perspectives that influence methods of data collection are described; then in 4.4 it is reported how the actual means adopted have a critical bearing on the results obtained: two areas that obviously overlap and are in fact difficult to examine separately because they are so intertwined. In 4.5 the advantages and shortcomings of the quantitative (or experimental) approach are discussed, and in 4.6 the qualitative or observation method (ethnography and ethnomethodology). In 4.7 a solution (triangulation) to the problem of data collection is offered, followed by the conclusion in 4.8.

The problematic nature of data collection will be reported on before a brief discussion of the strengths and weakness of the quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection.

4.2 The problematic nature of data collection

Problems that will be discussed concern the conceptualization of the method(s) that could ensure reliability of data collection, and the analysis thereof in 4.2.1; overlapping terminology in 4.2.2; the difficulty in obtaining access to places of work in 4.2.3; technical matters (which include transcription of data) in 4.2.4; and ethical problems in 4.2.5.
4.2.1 Conceptualizing the problem (assumptions)

Data collection of spoken interaction, and the analysis thereof, has proven to be problematic on a number of counts, the most difficult of which was probably on the conceptual level.

Problems of data collection in sociolinguistic research do not differ greatly from the problems encountered in most social enquiries. All kinds of approaches to sociolinguistic research require some form of disciplined enquiry and each approach has a critical effect on the validity of the results. To date, no tests of the reliability of deployed data collection instruments have been reported in the literature in which research methods in interlanguage pragmatics were reviewed (Kasper 1991:216).

For reliable data collection it makes a great difference whether the discourse analyst tries to answer questions from primary interactional data alone, or whether s/he relies on other data (for example participants’ own accounts of their interactional goals) and on their judgments concerning the success of the interaction. Furthermore, we need to make a distinction between real and ideal when working with linguistic data (Roger and Bull 1989; Wolfson 1986:697; Saville-Troike 1982:10). This matter will be touched upon in 4.4.2.2 when intuition is discussed.

4.2.2 Terminology

Scholars from a diversity of disciplines share an interest in various forms of discourse and have brought the research traditions of those disciplines to bear on verbal interaction, resulting in overlapping terminology and lack of standardisation. Confusion can arise from the use of different terms for the same concept: what is commonly known as background knowledge and what most researchers call schemata, Varonis and Gass (1985:336) refer to as belief space. The experimental perspective, which is classified by Wolfson (1989) only as a method of elicitation, is termed the social psychological by Roger and Bull (1989:9-20) and Hopper (1989:48-65). Wolfson, who has done extensive research on the topic of everyday speech behaviour, never uses the common term discourse, but instead refers to it as spontaneous speech.

When it comes to actual analysis, Roger and Bull (1989:5) and Roger (1989:75) report on differences in terminology for verbal and non-verbal signs that have been referred to collectively as listener responses. Duncan (1977 mentions five forms (sentence completions, requests for clarification, brief phrases, head nods and head shakes) that he uses as the basis for quantitative analysis and calls these back channels, Yngve (1970) also refers to these utterances as back channels or back channel behaviours, while Kendon (1986) speaks of accompaniment signals. Waite (1991:13) refers to uh huh, and um as acknowledgment tokens, while Heritage (1989:29 et seq.) speaks of response tokens when he refers to brief utterances such as mm hm, uh huh, yes, oh.
Once the concepts to which the different terms refer are clear, it becomes easier to overcome the work of different researchers and overlapping terminology ceases to be problematic.

4.2.3 Access to observation and problems related to methods of elicitation

To a great extent the kind of speech event that would produce data for analysis is not predictable at all, therefore the researcher would constantly have had to be present on the work-floor in order to observe interaction. The most daunting obstacle in the process of data collection in the present study has been an attempt to observe (mis)communication itself.

Observation of interaction proved to be problematic because:

(a) The unpredictable nature of the kind of exchange that results in miscommunication made samples for analysis difficult to obtain.

(b) Time constraints made monitoring difficult.

(c) Gaining access to factories proved to be another obstacle, mainly because of the nature of work in many factories and the reluctance of management to allow outsiders onto the work-floor. In cases where miscommunication was anticipated on the work-floor, the presence of an outsider doing research on miscommunication could possibly have defused the situation, or, on the other hand, the presence of an outsider could equally well have caused participants to exaggerate differences in the hope of winning sympathy. Purposeful elicitation on sensitive issues, on the other hand, has the potential of heightening consciousness regarding those factors that cause friction. Both approaches were obviously an undesired exercise as far as management was concerned, because of the potential for creating a climate of dissatisfaction.

(d) Noise on the work-floor made it impossible to follow interaction successfully and made the use of audio-recording that could be studied after an event prohibitive.

(e) Suspicion and the need to win confidence was another issue. In the factory where the longest period of observation was spent, the presence of the researcher on the work-floor was initially regarded with suspicion, as it was generally believed that the stranger was there to observe and report unproductive workers to management.

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4.2.4 Technical matters

Of a more technical or practical nature is the transcription of recorded data into written form. "Recorded" data refers to audio-recorded interaction. Video recordings would naturally give a far better account of differences in paralinguistic features, but this method brings with it other constraints which take away the naturalness of interaction. Decisions that have to be taken when translation occurs from one medium (spontaneous talk) to another (transcription) and the concomitant decisions of anemic nature that have to be made, form another obstacle that had to be overcome.

Transcription of tapes in itself provides many problems, the least of which is that it is tremendously time-consuming. As will be seen in Chapter 5, noise on the work-floor prevented this from becoming a problem. Almost 100 hours of interaction, spread over a three-month period, was recorded in the pilot study but a large portion of this is unusable as it contains mostly factory background noise interspersed with supervisor-operator interaction that is hardly audible. Only one (impromptu) address by the manager to the entire floor was recorded without interference, this lasting approximately 6 minutes.

4.2.5 Ethical considerations

From an ethical point of view concealment of microphones is problematic for obtaining naturalistic data. The collection of large amounts of naturally occurring speech poses problems as there is the danger that people may not behave naturally when they know they are being observed, cf. the observer's paradox above. A solution to this problem is to ask for consent after the event.

In the factory where most time was spent observing supervisor-operator interaction, a tape recorder was left in full view on the supervisor's table and interaction between him and operators was recorded. Whenever an operator spoke to the supervisor, mostly to discuss a problem or ask advice, operators were asked whether they wanted the tape recorder to be switched off. This was never deemed necessary.

4.3 Different perspectives mean different assumptions: contrast between social psychological and conversation analysis

In this section two opposing perspectives are discussed. In the literature the experimental (or quantitative) approach is also referred to as the quantitative approach or called the traditional (social) psychological method (Roger and Bull 1989:1). The qualitative perspective, on the other hand, is known as conversation or discourse analysis.

The choice of perspective from which to study interaction is crucial, as this influences
the whole process of data collection, and each approach in the discipline emphasizes different sets of dimensions of on-going speech. A particular theoretical perspective will obviously affect the method of data collection and different sets of assumptions will come into play when carrying out research, because the questions of what constitutes data and how it is to be treated are fundamental to the entire enterprise. Whereas conversation analysis is based on a number of assumptions about the nature of communication, the experimental method is based on the assumption that the systematic control and manipulation of variables will establish a rigorous body of scientific knowledge on the topic of communication (sophisticated statistical techniques being the hallmark of social psychological methods).

Most of the early work in Sociolinguistics was done using Labov's sociological sampling techniques (which relied mainly on elicitation) but for the past thirty years there has been a swing to Hymes-Gumperz's ethnographic method (which relies mainly on observation). Labov (1972c) used quantitative data to relate measurable social variables and phonological features, and quantitative sociolinguistic techniques have come to be employed in a wide range of urban communication studies. It is only relatively recently that the dominance of the experiment has seriously been threatened in the social sciences. Research in applied linguistics has only very gradually adopted the qualitative methods in the related disciplines of psychology and sociology.

The qualitative paradigm involves naturalistic, uncontrolled, subjective and process-oriented observation, while the quantitative paradigm is obtrusive, controlled, objective and product oriented. However, not all qualitative participant observation is necessarily completely naturalistic or unobtrusive, nor do experimental, controlled procedures necessarily elicit non-natural behaviours for measurement (Cook and Reichardt 1979:18). Hopper (1989:61) likewise cautions that it may be tempting to characterise conversational analysis as qualitative and to characterise an approach that relies on methods of elicitation as quantitative. He says this assumption is false because in reality conversation analysis sometimes provides frequency counts for phenomena (see Jefferson's (1989) research in which silences in conversation were timed), while in a number of social psychological inquiries quantification is avoided (see for instance Collet's (1989) study Time and Action). Collett (1989:235) objects to the notion of action being composed of variables, and pleads for a place for relativity in the study of human action when he says: "Einstein pointed out that space and time cannot be defined absolutely, but only in relation to a particular observer". What is important to note is that conversation analysts do not oppose quantification, merely its premature use. This is a matter that will be pursued at some length in this chapter.

Strictly speaking, not all linguistic data fit neatly into the two divisions of elicitation versus observation or social psychological versus conversational analysis, for example the work of the language philosophers (Austin and Searle who developed speech act
theory; Grice, known for his work on conversational maxims and implicatures) is based to a great extent on introspection, and therefore resists being classified as either elicitation or observation in the strict sense of the word. This observation, in turn, raises the question of intuition, another source for debate, whether it be native speaker intuition or informant's intuition. This matter is discussed below. Although these compartmentalisations sometimes are termed differently depending on the discipline from which each is derived, they should not be seen as mutually exclusive when doing research and each can, and should, inform the other.

A graphic comparison of the approaches is given below to assist in contrasting and comparing procedures in data collection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social psychological</th>
<th>Conversation analysis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Theory</td>
<td>Tape recording</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Tape recording</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Transcription</td>
<td>Transcription</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Coding</td>
<td>REPEATED LISTENING</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Analysis</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Writing</td>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Hopper 1989:52)

The primary difference between the two is that in the socio-psychological model the process is linear, whereas in conversation analysis the researcher moves back and forth between data and theory formulation. This recursive process allows for greater freedom to re-examine and re-assess data in the light of new insight gained, thereby arriving at an understanding of the data.

4.4 Actual means adopted have a critical bearing on results obtained (incorrect classification in observation)

Reliability, characteristic of the pure psychological approach, is an essential prerequisite of any classification system, since it needs to be demonstrated that the system is sufficiently objective for other investigators to replicate the observations. However, the following reports of research conducted in the last decade highlight the need for ethnographic research. The reports indicate how an a priori classification of features affects the entire process of data collection and the interpretation thereof. They demonstrate how critical features could have been classified differently and in
so doing, would have led to a different data set. The whole process casts aspersions
on the reliability of the classification system. This insight emphasizes the need for a
combination of ethnographic research and social psychological methods by means of
a process of triangulation.

(1) Research by Eisenstein and Bodman (1986:168) indicates that thank
you serves functions other than gratitude functions, as thank you can
also be used for complimenting, or signalling the conclusion of a
conversation, for example. Eisenstein and Bodman explain that in their
investigation they started off by gathering natural data in order to
identify situations in which gratitude was commonly expressed, and
then eliminated instances in which thanks was expressed verbally but
did not in fact fulfil the function of thanking: for example the thank you
in the utterance That will be all, thank you is used to signal that the
interaction is over.

If the researchers had counted every thank you as an instance of
gratitude, the data would have been corrupt.

(2) Wolfson (1981) likewise illustrates how compliments serve numerous
other functions and are used by speakers of American English to
reinforce or even to substitute for other speech acts such as thanking,
found that compliments, contrary to the claims of ethnomethodologist
ists, can be reduced to compliment/response sequences, and frequently
occur as conversation openers.

If she had decided in advance what the role of compliments was, other
functions may have gone undetected. This example underlines the
possibility of the researcher superimposing his/her own analytical
categories on the data instead of discovering ways in which members
of a community themselves categorize their own behaviour.

(3) Drummond (1989) reports on a study on interruptions in which
subjects were asked to view their interactions on videotape and point
out instances which, according to them, constituted interruptions.
Drummond (1989:165) says of the result: "[T]hey "missed" 18 of the
81 interruptions coded by the experimenters. Furthermore, when asked
to classify the 18 events they had missed, subjects agreed that only
three of these were successful interruptions. Five were regarded as
back-channels, and the remaining ten were classified as overlaps".

Here, differences of opinion about what constitutes an interruption
could have led to the data being skewed.

(4) In her distinction between two kinds of floor Edelsky (1981:416) found that a priori categorisation of who "has the floor" may be significantly altered if the same persons were observed in the context of other kinds of floor. She maintains that two kinds of floors exist: in the first type (F1) one person speaks at length, and in the second type (F2), several conversational participants speak at the same time. It was established that men took more and longer turns and did more of the joking, arguing, directing and soliciting of responses in the first type whereas women did more in F2. Edelsky comments that previously the appropriate general question about gender and language was to determine whether the sexes negotiate interactional time and space as equals, and if not, to determine what differences exist. After analysing data it became apparent that the questions to consider should rather be to establish under what conditions sexes interact more or less as equals, and under what conditions they do not (Edelsky 1981:417).

In this case a revised definition of what constitutes floor (because it is seen in its broad context) had had a direct bearing on data classification until Edelsky pointed out the difference.

(5) Further evidence of a priori classifications that proved to be problematic: Heritage (1989:29) points out that the conventional treatment of the phenomenon of what he calls response tokens, such as yes, oh and really has been underestimated by the use of this classification, because these tokens can serve a variety of communicative functions. Heritage (1989:28) discusses research by Jefferson (1981) that indicates that response tokens

(i) can indicate a desire to shift topic,
(ii) promote the telling of news,
(iii) acknowledge receipt of information.

Once again, coding data without an awareness of other functions that a particular feature may possess, under different circumstances, can lead to skewing of the findings.

(6) The language used by women has been commented on in terms that make clear that it is seen as inferior, as an object of scorn. Brouwer et al. (1979a:9) list the Dutch descriptions of vrouwenpraat (women's talk), which obviously is regarded as inferior to mannenpraat (men talk) as kletsen, kiappen, kekelen, kwekken, rebbelen, roddelen en ratelen,
tateren, snateren, snappen en babbel. Kramer (1974 in Coates 1988:2) found that students of both sexes characterised women's speech as stupid, vague, emotional, confused and wordy. However Coates (1988:71) maintains that certain features of women's speech (hedges, minimal responses, and so on) are not a weakness, but may be used to save the face of other participants. The greater use of hedges can also be attributed to choice of topic; they are used more in topics relating to people and their feelings, whereas men prefer to talk about things.

If hedges or minimal responses are seen as "weak" forms of speech (see Lakoff 1975:5) instead of as a system of support, it is obvious that incorrect conclusions will be arrived at. This demonstrates that discourse which has been recorded, can only be interpreted correctly with ethnographic knowledge about social norms that govern linguistic choice in the specific situation under observation.

(7) Wolfson (1984) and Brouwer et al. (1979b) point out that the sex of the addressee may be a more important sociolinguistic variable than the sex of the speaker in conditioning the choice of speech forms. This corroborates Lakoff’s (1973:53) finding that men, when addressing women, use adjectives largely confined to women’s speech (such as cute and divine) when complimenting.

(8) Chick (1991:112) points out that in Herbert’s (1985) study of compliment responses, the coding system does not adequately take into account the fact that responses can be used to play off one kind of compliment with another, as these were sometimes negotiated over an extended sequence of turns.

By deciding in advance that a compliment belongs to a single adjacency pair, instances of compliments expressed later in the conversation could easily have been missed.

The examples cited above indicate that categorization should be an open-ended process that entails operations not provided for in classification procedures, or indeed, in any stated set of procedures for using the classification. These examples serve to warn that the researcher should not attempt to observe any situation armed with what Hymes (1962) calls an etic grid (see Chapter 1.6.2.5) as check sheet for an observation and classification instrument, ready to tick off the number of occurrences of a particular behaviour displayed, but should rather be sensitive to the context of the interaction and must strive to relate it to the larger context within which it is embedded. Hymes (1962:113) advises that the initial (etic) framework should
function as "a sort of concordance technique", which would result in an inventory or
description of an element in terms of the combinality of other elements with it. He
continues:

As a general distributional technique, this can discover the relations
which obtain among various elements: whether co-occurrence is
obligatory, or optional, or structurally excluded. Sometimes the relation
will hold for only two elements (as when a certain category of Receiver
may be addressed only by a certain category of Sender), sometimes for
several. The relation may characterize a class of speech events.

What emerges is that the difference in approaches in sociolinguistic surveys has
resulted in an understanding of how human interaction is carried out which, in turn,
has led to a greater awareness of speech as a kind of action between human beings
of varying situational identities. Consequently, we have developed a much richer
understanding of the ways in which discourse helps to construct the fabric of social
life.

In the rest of the chapter the two perspectives (traditional psychological and
discourse analysis) are juxtaposed with a view to describing the advantages and
disadvantages of using a particular approach. The weakness and strengths of each
are discussed, but it is not possible to find a counter argument for every shortcoming
mentioned, neither is it possible to arrive at a satisfactory solution as to which
approach is most valuable for data collection.

4.5 The experimental (elicitation, quantitative) approach

In sociolinguistic experimental studies researchers are interested in discovering in a
systematic way the relationships which obtain between all the variables of the speech
situation. A typical experiment comprises independent and dependent variables, and
the term experimental broadly includes any method which entails the direct
manipulation of an informant’s responses. Quantification is regarded as important
because there is a need for categorization, statistical information and scoring
systems. The statistical information or analysis arrived at allows for an objective
decision about the importance of a particular aspect of behaviour.

The following sociolinguistic research studies, conducted by means of the quantitave
or experimental method, are cited from among many:

(1) Labov’s (1966) work on the Lower East Side of New York is based on
a sample of 122 speakers.

(2) To test the hypothesis that the Japanese language reflects its society’s
and the speaker’s psychological attitude, Hori (1987) surveyed 500
individuals (256 men and 271 women) concerning the choice of verb form used in different social situations. He concluded that individuals choose verb forms in Japanese according to whom is being addressed; the status of the individual and the relationship to the addressee determining the choice of honorific morpheme.

(3) In their early study on overlaps and interruptions Zimmerman and West (1975) found that in same-sex conversations both overlaps and interruptions seem to be equally divided between speakers, while in cross-sex conversations nearly all interruptions and overlaps are by men (98% and 100% respectively). Zimmerman and West therefore conclude that American men deny women status by interrupting them, deny turns and do not provide support in development of their topics through appropriately timed minimal responses e.g. yeh, um, hmm, etc. Subsequent research in this rapidly expanding area of study (West and Zimmerman 1985) revealed that when researchers have turned their attention from gender as an isolated variable, they have discovered other features of interest. They cite research by Shaw and Sadler (1965) which indicates that the local context of a particular conversational event is crucial to determining the analytical status of a particular feature.

A statistical analysis of interruptions of men and women therefore allows the researcher to ascertain whether this is an effect which occurs at a level significantly greater than would be expected by chance alone.

(4) A fourth example of elicitation methodology (this time not narrowed down to discourse analysis but used more broadly for sociolinguistic research) is that of research reported by Kocks (1988). In order to establish the foreign language needs of firms in the Steel and Metal industry in the Ruhr area in Germany, Kocks (1988), working closely with the Niederrheinische Industrie- und Handelskammer in Duisburg, sent 77 questionnaires to firms that had been identified as employing more than twenty workers. Sixty questionnaires were returned, indicating how frequently a foreign language was required for the effective business of each firm. The research report listed the languages most frequently used as well as the areas (e.g. marketing, research, export, accounts, etc.) for which each language was required.

(5) In her study of compliment response behaviour in New Zealand, Holmes (1989 in Wolfson 1989:136) reports on 484 compliment

From the above it is obvious that the quantitative method is well established. However, the advent of quantum physics dealt a fatal blow to the idea that scientific knowledge can lead, in any strict sense, to a complete and definitive description of reality (Capra 1982:33).

4.5.1 The advantages of the quantitative approach

The advantages of laboratory research into interpersonal communication, and the use of sophisticated techniques (made possible by technical equipment such as video cameras and multi-track audio-recording), enable the researcher to make precise and accurate observations of interpersonal communication that are not easily captured outside the setting of the social psychology laboratory. An advantage of a laboratory setting for interpersonal communication is that it allows for inferential statistical analysis of data, because the researcher is able to determine whether it occurs at a level which is significantly above what would be expected by chance. In laboratory experimentation the participants are pre-selected and the setting and topics provided, while sophisticated technical apparatus can be used for high-quality recordings of social interaction. The value of quantification and the use of inferential statistics is that it supposedly\(^1\) provides an economical account of a complex data base and allows for an objective decision to be made about the significance of a particular finding. In addition, complex statistical procedures such as analysis of variance allow the researcher to investigate the interactive effects of a number of independent variables simultaneously (see the discourse completion test below).

Advanced statistical designs make possible an examination of complex interactions and the interpretations of the statistics enable the researcher to arrive at a decision about the significance of a particular behaviour, e.g. men and women can be selected for participation in an experiment on the basis of their scores on an extroversion/introversion questionnaire, enabling the researcher to explore whether only men with a certain type of personality interrupt women more than they allow women to interrupt them. Roger and Bull (1989:14) maintain that problems of this kind can only be addressed using research designs which allow an analysis of the interactive effects of independent variables such as sex and personality. The behaviour in question can be examined comprehensively because it can be classified into the discrete categories, coded, revised and refined when a deeper understanding of interpersonal

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\(^1\) The proviso "supposedly" points to an inherent weakness in this approach as examples discussed in 4.4 Means adopted. .... (above) indicate.
communication emerges.

In the experimental approach the independent variables are experimentally manipulated to produce two or more conditions, the effects of which are observed on the dependent variables, e.g. the manipulation can range from minimal pair and commutation tests developed by the American structuralists, through the formidable battery used by Labov (1966; 1975; 1981) and the matched-guise techniques developed by social psychologists (Giles and Powesland 1975), to the discourse completion test (DCT).

The DCT presents a short description of a specific situation, the setting, the social distance between interlocutors and their status relative to each other, followed by an incomplete dialogue. The respondents are asked to complete the dialogue, thereby providing the speech act aimed at in the given context. The DCT can be constructed in such a way to systematically vary factors that need to be isolated, e.g. sex, familiarity, status, level of education, and so on. The use of the DCT in crosscultural studies of speech acts enables researchers to search for features of universality in speech act behaviour as well as for features of variance among languages. According to Wolfson (1989:69) this method of elicitation was first developed by Blum-Kulka (1982) and further employed by members involved in the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP) Project. (The languages studied are Hebrew (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain), Danish (Faerch and Kasper), British English (Thomas), American English (Wolfson and Rintell) Australian English (Ventola), German (Vollmer and House-Edmondson), and Canadian French (Weizman).) This technique was also used extensively in Edmonson et al.'s project (1984) in which the data base was 24 specified situations between native speakers in English and German. The situations were manipulated in terms of speech functions and in terms of the social parameters of dominance and social distance, enabling researchers to study cross-linguistic variation as well as intercultural variation.

The predominant technique employed in the DCT is role play. Role play, in which participants take on roles that are not always their own, is a step removed from real life authenticity, and can be used to manipulate variables such as power or dominance, social distance, or any other variable considered necessary.

Advantages of employing a discourse completion test are that it permits, in a relatively short time, the gathering of a large amount of data on a given type of speech behaviour. It also permits the researcher to control specific variables (e.g. social status, age or home language). Ohlshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985:25) mention another advantage of the discourse completion test in that it can validate data from the receiver's point of view because the opinion of both the speakers and hearers can be obtained. Discourse completion tests have been used increasingly both within and across language groups. Administering a test requires much less effort and time than
observation, but obviously has its disadvantages.

One of the main criticisms levelled at the discourse completion test is that it is not natural speech and therefore cannot be seen as reflecting unselfconscious speech using actual wording in real, personal interaction, nor does it capture the range of formulas and strategies used in natural language. An instance that illustrates how data obtained from a discourse completion test differs from natural language, is that of the length of response or the number of turns. Research by Eisenstein and Bodman (1986:172) indicates that utterances in real speech are far longer than utterances in the discourse completion test and that different formulas are sometimes introduced in the discourse completion test.

Another note of artificiality that creeps in is that rules for speech differ from those of written communication, and this obviously cannot fail to have an effect on results obtained by means of a discourse completion test. On the other hand, though, role play will reduce this artificiality. Although this type of elicitation procedure can be very useful in some respects, it can have serious limitations as well. It would therefore be unwise to depend solely on this method and it should be complemented through the collection of naturally occurring speech patterns. In this study the DCT was used in the Pilot study (see Chapter 5, 5.5) , the first and second quantitative surveys (for which see 5.6 and 5.7), as well as with mother-tongue speakers of one of the official languages (see 5.8).

Concerning the difference between written and spoken language, Wolfson (1989:71) reminds us of the elaboration of speech acts in actual conversation and the difficulty of recording such responses in written form. In spontaneous interaction speakers often responded with a series of refusals and thanks, sometimes interrupted by narrative and comments which constituted a sequence in which different formulas appeared. Eisenstein and Bodman (1986) found that a topic often surfaces in conversations that may be far separated in time from the original act, calling forth renewed thanking routines. Therefore, if we wish to capture the true nature of culturally appropriate speech behaviour, it is essential to observe these phenomena in everyday conversation since, in some societies, it is literally required that an act such as that of expressing gratitude be performed more than once and/or after a considerable interval has passed.

4.5.2 Some shortcomings of the elicitation approach and pitfalls of which the researcher has to be aware when using elicitation methods

4.5.2.1 Inauthentic data

When elicitation is used in an experiment, the reasons for communication are usually
contrived, and this could make conversation stilted if the interlocutors are instructed to talk to one another. If it is spontaneous speech one wants to study, it is obviously unwise to make people self-conscious. This raises the question of the authenticity of the data to be studied. To remedy the shortcoming of artificiality and to overcome the observer’s paradox, researchers must devise situations which are sufficiently ingenious to evoke the kind of communication they wish to examine while keeping from the subjects the true purpose of the investigation. Labov (1966) was the first to use this technique in his (now classic) study of English in New York City. He used elicitation techniques designed to record talk in a variety of formal and informal contexts sufficiently large to be representative of the area as a whole. By isolating the phonological and grammatical features most subject to stylistic variation, he was able to chart class-stratified features.

Another solution is that of the ‘waiting-room technique described by Roger and Bull (1989:72), in which participants are given an explicit task to perform, but are unaware of the reason of the "experiment", and are therefore not inhibited in their interaction. Chick (1987:141) sound-recorded 12 post-examination student interviews that would have taken place even if there had been no need to collect data, thereby ensuring the authenticity of the data collected. Schmidt (1983:145) analyzed 18 one-hour tapes made by a Japanese learner who had to communicate important information. These tapes were therefore not made for the purpose of investigating spoken interaction for sociolinguistic analysis. In the present study, one of the sources of data derives from interaction between a "gatekeeper" and the operators who had to be informed about the option of taking out newly introduced insurance. The "gatekeeper" in this case was a secretary cum spokesperson for management in a factory with less than thirty employees, and the presence of an outsider was soon forgotten once the operators were absorbed in the information that was being conveyed as it concerned deductions from their monthly salary.

4.5.2.2 Reliance on intuition

Researchers warn against trusting one’s own intuitions when it comes to sociolinguistic rules, yet some of the best-known work of the Sapir era was conducted far from the original setting where interaction took place, and was based on the speech of native speakers who had long been isolated from other native speakers of the language. Sapir's informant on Nootka was a student in a Pennsylvania college while Whorf derived his basic data on Hopi from an Indian resident of New York City (Hoijer 1954).

Almost three decades ago Labov (1972c:186) warned against trusting the behaviours of informants. He comments on studying social aspects of language by examining the intuitions of one or two individuals, saying we can profitably exploit the Saussurian paradox. Briefly this boils down to the Saussurian postulate that langue can be
studied from the speech of any one individual, while the study of individual features of parole requires a social survey.

When quantitative methods are employed, communication is classified into discrete categories in order to provide a sufficient number of observations for reliable statistical evidence. This means that a researcher, bent on demonstrating the statistical significance of a particular feature, may be influenced to categorise a feature with a view to recording its frequency, leading to an oversimplified version of communication instead of identifying the variety of functions that such a feature may possibly serve. Wolfson cautions that categories decided on in advance (based on intuition) are misleading. She (1986:693) comments that if the researchers had to identify the factors that condition the speech behaviour before having actually studied the behaviour, their native-speaker intuitions could easily mislead them. Most people take their own behaviour patterns for granted and are unaware that rules of speaking are far from universal. Most people are surprised and many are shocked when they listen to a recording of their own speech after having claimed that they say (or don’t say) certain things. One example of this is the research by Blom and Gumperz (1972:431) who tape-recorded the conversations of two groups of locals (one group having spent a year away at university) and found that the latter group switched towards standard phonology in spite of claiming to be pure dialect speakers.

The limitations of intuition have to do with the ability of native speakers to give accurate descriptions of their own speech behaviour. What is therefore needed are empirical studies of the communicative behaviour of native speakers under observation. Many studies in sociolinguistic literature (Labov 1966; Blom and Gumperz 1972; Brouwer et al. (1979b) attest convincingly that when native speakers are asked to explain or to identify forms which they or others in their community use in a given speech situation, their responses do not necessarily coincide with observed speech behaviour. This proves that rules operate below the level of consciousness and may be independent of the speaker’s overt intentions. Most people are unaware of the existence of rules of speaking and generally become aware of them only when a sociolinguistic rule is broken, or when expectations of behaviour are not met. Wolfson (1989:40-44) points out that there is a great deal of empirical evidence to show that great differences exist between intuitive reports of native speakers and their own use of speech when actually recorded and analyzed. To substantiate her claim, Wolfson (1986:694-696) gives six examples of how native-speaker intuitions enable them to judge the accuracy and appropriateness of speech behaviour and not the ability to recall or to describe with any degree of reliability the actual patterns of behaviour.

4.5.3 Recapitulation of the value of elicitation methods

From the discussion so far one can deduce that there is much to be gained when
using the experimental approach, but because the questions asked of respondents are decided in advance, the research may focus on only certain aspects of the possible data available. In other words, the researcher may start out with a theory or specific research question and the possibility exists that he/she may not be open to other interpretations or other aspects of reality.

* A priori * conceptions about the nature of cross-cultural differences affect the choice of a research topic, the way the study is carried out, and the kind of inference which is drawn, e.g. the contrasting methodologies and treatments of back-channels or response tokens could result in different starting points: in conversation analysis the use of these features is viewed in respect of their (local or sequential) occasion of occurrence, while the quantitative approach is to count the features, lump them together and see them in relation to a specific variable (for instance as a consequence of a particular kind of personality or sex). This topic was explored in some detail in the section entitled *Actual means adopted have a critical bearing on result obtained* in 4.4 above. The importance of these examples affirms that the researcher must be aware that the context in which speech occurs is part of the data. For this very reason the etic grid proposed by Hymes (1962:113) proves to be a useful tool for observation.

The notion of context has been extended to apply not only to linguistic context or environment, but also to the social-situational circumstances of the speech event. In this respect ethnography, ethnomethodology and interactional sociolinguistics share a methodological stance, in that they are critical of social science measurements which neglect to show how the researcher’s categories relate to the actor’s perceptions of what is taking place. Qualitative methods of research, developed from the methodologies of anthropologists and sociologists concerned with examining human behaviour within its natural setting, do not affect the normal behaviour of the subjects.

4.6 The qualitative paradigm: observation of discourse

Unlike researchers working within the quantitative framework, those working within the qualitative framework do not have the same constraint of having to provide cell frequencies (or other advanced statistical designs) for the use of inferential statistics. No sophisticated apparatus is used to record a conversation, which is allowed to follow its natural course. When analysing conversations researchers working from the qualitative perspective resist premature theory formulation and their methods are essentially inductive, and few (if any) decisions regarding research questions or data are made before the research begins.

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2 Ethnography was discussed at length in Chapter 3 and will not be discussed again. Ethnomethodology and interactional sociolinguistics are referred to below.
In contrast to the methods used in experimental research where the selection of participants is usually made on the basis of independent variables, conversation analysts (whether they are doing an ethnography or working from within the framework of ethnomethodology) do not pre-select participants for observation because they assume that the features which are of real interest for the analyst occur independently of factors such as gender, personality or acquaintanceship. Researchers using the qualitative approach believe that it is only possible to see what the patterns and rules of interaction are after studying a particular setting. Hymes (1980 in Salami 1986:475) stresses the significance of ethnographic information and maintains that local needs of connection, the community-specific ways of putting the encyclopedia of culture together, cannot be assumed in advance of inquiry, and that ethnographic information can only be discovered through participation and observation over time. Researchers using this approach (whether they are ethnographers, ethnomethodologists or interactional sociolinguists) seek to describe the social organization of natural interactions, observing the order and how it is constructed by those who produce it.

In the paragraphs that follow some indication will be given of the methods employed by ethnographers, ethnomethodologists and interactional sociolinguists.

4.6.1 Ethnography

Wolfson (1989:5) advocates an ethnographic approach because of the hypotheses that derive from the process of collecting and analysing data. She underwrites the theoretical framework proposed by Hymes as a way of discovering the social rules, patterns, and meaning of language, and considers it to be ideally suited to uncover the information most needed. Wolfson (1986:689) says:

It is, in fact, my conviction that ethnographic fieldwork is the only reliable method of collecting data about the way speech acts function in interaction. Intuitions about speech usage are, as I have pointed out, notoriously unreliable, since speakers tend to be aware of the societal norms and are too often misled into believing that these norms represent the actual speech patterns of the community. For this reason, the intuitions of sociolinguistic researchers working in their own speech communities are primarily of use in the analysis of data once they are collected. The data themselves can only be obtained through actual fieldwork. Similarly, data collected by means of tapping into the intuitions of naïve native speakers, useful as they may be in pointing out some of the general outlines of differences between norms of different language groups, cannot, in themselves, provide us with the range of possible situations in which specific speech acts may occur or with the distribution of the various forms under investigation. A realistic study of speech must involve the actual observation of speech in use.

Discourse analysts typically describe message phenomena through repeated listening to tape-recordings, through transcription, and through example-driven analytic
induction. A search is made for recurring patterns across many records of naturally occurring conversation (Roger and Bull 1989:52). One of the strengths of this approach is that, contrary to the quantitative approach in which many unexamined practices are taken for granted, the practices of ordinary people that escape the attention of research methods are picked up in systematic observation methods. One of the disadvantages of the qualitative method, however, is that researchers who merely record everything that occurs in a free-floating manner, run the risk of ending up with a mass of unrelated and unmanageable data that are difficult to interpret or quantify.

4.6.2 Ethnomethodology

Ethnomethodology, as a branch of sociology, is interested in the processes and techniques that people use to interpret the world around them, and in their interaction with that world. Ethnomethodologists assume that no detail should be overlooked as disorderly, accidental or irrelevant. They regard meaning and meaningful activity as something people accomplish when they interact socially. Since much of human interaction is actually verbal interaction, they have focused much of their attention on how people use language in their relationships to one another. The analysis of conversation within the framework of ethnomethodology (i.e. an examination of structures of ordinary conversation) was pioneered by Garfinkel (1972), who asserted that no coding manual or set of instructions can ever wholly account for what actually happens in social interaction. The approach was further developed by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974). Ethnomethodologists do not conduct large-scale surveys of populations or devise theoretical models of social organization, or hypothesize that some social theory will adequately explain social organization. They go about their task focusing on the phenomena of everyday existence, in an attempt to show how those who must deal with such bits and pieces go about doing so (Wardhaugh 1986:243).

Ethnomethodologists adopt a phenomenological view of the world; that is, they see the world as something that people must constantly keep recreating and sustaining for themselves. In this view, language plays a significant role in creating and sustaining reality. Ethnomethodology is a rejection of the standard ways of doing sociology and is critical of any claims for objective order. Ethnomethodologists such as Garfinkel (1972) were opposed to quantitative research, and assumed that the best analyses are data-driven rather than based on a priori speculation by researchers. That is, instead of using data as a resource to test theories and so to arrive at the nature of social organization, ethnomethodologists examine the social organization of data to describe and understand the nature thereof.

The aim of ethnomethodological analysis is to uncover speakers’ unconscious cultural assumptions, which affect the way in which they react to and interpret their experi-
ences. Garfinkel, Sacks and his colleagues, Schegloff and Jefferson established the study of conversational analysis and in the early seventies they described how individuals open and close conversations, take turns, construct narratives and achieve interactional synchrony. By means of a carefully worked-out set of conventions, conversations are transcribed. The transcriptions are then analyzed to discover patterns or regularities in conversational structure during spoken interaction, e.g. turn-taking principles and the adjacency-pair rule. Strategies for managing brief overlaps have also been identified.

This kind of analysis is important because it recognises interaction as a process in which speakers create the events they are engaged in, thereby creating what McDermoot (1977:26) calls "environments for each other". To keep a conversation going, therefore, conversational partners have a fine-tuned ability to react to subtle verbal and non-verbal responses. In terms of this framework, members of a culture use shared (but often unstated) knowledge to interpret utterances. An example of this is, for instance, the adjacency pair rule, which states that some kinds of utterances can only be interpreted as a response to utterances which precede them.

4.6.3 Interactional sociolinguistics

Interactional sociolinguists advocate methods totally different from those used within the positivist approach to linguistics because participants in the interaction themselves are asked to interpret the situation (Chick 1987). Interactional sociolinguistics offers one way of overcoming the problem raised by Saville-Troike (1982:10) who maintains that experimental design which is based only on the researcher's own cultural presuppositions has no necessary validity in a different speech community. This type of problem is solved in an interactional sociolinguistics because methods and mechanisms involved in the interpretation of events are uncovered in this approach. Gumperz and others working within the ethnographic approach have demonstrated the value of interactional sociolinguistics. In this approach they attempt to elicit participants' interpretations of what is going on in a transcribed episode (to deduce underlying schemata) and so establish empirically what linguistic, prosodic and paralinguistic signs are perceived as salient by the participants themselves. This technique avoids the subjective biases inherent in classification of speech produced by someone else.

Chick (1987) points out how in an Interactional Sociolinguistic approach participants can help to provide answers. In the discussions, subjects are required to evaluate their own conversations. However, in an industrial setting it is not always possible to obtain data in this manner. Reasons for this are that time constraints forbid long interviews. Secondly, consciousness raising of problem areas could have an undesired effect in a place of work, straining relationships and causing tension. In the unequal relationship that generally exists between supervisor and operators, an evaluation or
discussion of what went before could be problematic and results obtained would need to be scrutinized very carefully.

Another tricky issue is the relationship between researcher (from outside the normal work sphere) and employees. See 4.2.3 (f) above, where the need to break down suspicion of the aims of the project was outlined and the need to win the trust of the participants, before meaningful data can be obtained, was described.

4.6.4 Recapitulation of the value of observation and elicitation methods

When one compares the advantages of the elicitation approach with those of the observation approach, it is evident that both approaches are relevant for determining important variables to investigate, and for describing the relationships between variables. A combination of these methods for the collection of data concerning speech behaviour may therefore provide the answer to complement the study of spontaneous speech, because this will offer the opportunity to compare and generalize findings.

4.7 The solution: triangulation

Wolfson (1986:697) suggests that, given the complexity of human speech behaviour, the researcher will need to move back and forth between observation and elicitation or experiment, an exercise that will have to be repeated a number of times as it is refined. She concludes that observation and elicitation will have to be used as necessary complements to one another. Wolfson says:

I am convinced that a two-pronged approach toward data collection and analysis is necessary. Because the design of an experiment or an elicitation instrument forces the researcher to decide in advance what variables will be tested and because native-speaker intuitions about the factors which condition speech behavior are so unreliable, it is safer to begin by systematic observation and to allow hypotheses to emerge from the data themselves. Then, an elicitation instrument can be developed which is sensitive to what has been found to occur in actuality, and the hypotheses which have emerged can be tested for generalisability and validity.

The research strategy suggested by Wolfson is comparable to one in the social sciences that is known variously as triangulation, convergent methodology, multi-method or multi-trait (Campbell and Fiske 1959). All these concepts relate to the use of a variety of methods, which as a result of their complementarity, are employed to correct for their respective shortcomings. Denzin (1978:291) defined triangulation as "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon". The metaphor of triangulation derives from navigation and military strategy in which multiple reference points are used to locate an object's exact position. This method rests on the assumptions that, like the basic principles of geometry, multiple
viewpoints allow for greater clarity of the object that is being scrutinized.

A dialectical approach to research is also supported by Rowan (1981:105) who advocates a cyclical model in the so-called new paradigm research. According to him, multiple cycles allow for more flexibility than a "one big bang" type of research. In the new paradigm research, qualitative and quantitative research methods are combined: in the first cycle descriptions and inferences are made that feed into other cycles. Rowan (1981:105) says of the cycles:

We can either use them sequentially, to go deeper into a phenomenon, thus turning a cycle into a spiral or helix; or we can use them concurrently, approaching the same phenomenon from a number of different angles, and in effect triangulating it or 'knitting a pattern' of cycles. By making each cycle fully rigorous in its own terms, we can achieve a recursive validity or a cumulative nature -- yielding a deeper and more extensive truth than that given by a linear approach.

By collecting different kinds of data and using multiple methods bearing on the same phenomenon, researchers in the social sciences are therefore able to arrive at an understanding of the subject of study, thereby achieving the object of their study. According to French (1987:17) the role of the scientist is not to explain phenomena, but to understand them. He says: "... science is essentially verstehen, or an understanding which arises out of, and is integrated into a critical and reflective commitment to problem solving".

Wolfson (1986:690), in a paper on research methodology and the question of validity, supports the methodology of triangulation and declares that each methodological approach has its advantages and disadvantages. She maintains that the great disadvantages of collecting naturalistic data are that examples of a particular feature of speech behaviour may occur so rarely or so unpredictably that large samples are difficult to come by. Even if it were possible to collect and analyze a large body of data, there really is still no way of being certain that the findings would be generalisable. She (1986:690) concludes that human behaviour is not neat, and that the factors that condition the patterns of everyday interaction are complex and dynamic. When one observes without intervening, then there is no real way of controlling one variable from another.

Apart from Wolfson, other scholars working in the field who back the strategy of triangulation are, for instance, Milroy (1980), Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985:20), Chaudron (1986), and Roger and Bull (1989). Milroy (1980) demonstrates that a synthesis of methods proves to be advisable for the analysis of language behaviour within a given speech community. Roger and Bull (1989) and Wolfson (1986:118 in Valdes 1986) argue that we need not "take sides" and choose one or the other, but that one needs to use these methods as complementary.
In the quotation below the fictional Russian scientist, Kerner, is marvelling at the impossibility of deciding in advance which method of observation a scientists in quantum physics must adopt, because what is a particle one moment, is a wave the next, proving that even in the exact sciences it is impossible to capture the essence of reality. He says of an electron (Stoppard 1988:48):

"[It] defeats surveillance because when you know where it is, you can’t be certain what it’s doing: Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle; and this is not because you’re not looking carefully enough, it is because there is no such thing as an electron with a definite momentum; you fix one, you lose the other, and it’s all done without tricks, it’s the real world..."

The ethnographers Hammersley and Atkinson (1983:12) concur with this view and maintain that it is naïve to think that "we can part the veil of prejudice and preconception and observe things as they really are". This view is corroborated by findings in physics: Heisenberg (1971 in Zukav 1979:136), the renowned German physicist, says: "What we observe is not nature itself, but nature exposed to our method of questioning". Zukav explains that to cling to Newton’s laws is as untenable as to adhere to structural or phenomenological models of thought. He maintains that, once one has been introduced to quantum physics, to "understand" something is to give up some other way of conceiving it.

He says (1979:328):

"Reality is what we take to be true. What we take to be true is what we believe. What we believe is based upon our perceptions. What we perceive depends upon what we look for."

This thinking reflects the work of the constructivist studies of science. Social constructivism is a general intellectual movement aimed primarily at stripping the veil of positivist epistemological security from modern science (Bazerman 1990:78). The earliest constructivists attempted to show that scientific knowledge is constructed rather than being the inevitable result of a discovery process.

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter methods of data collection employed in sociolinguistics for the purpose of conversation analysis were discussed.

Weaknesses of methods employed in the elicitation model, when the researcher starts with preconceived notions of what to include in a questionnaire or which method to use to obtain data (that will be processed statistically), were highlighted. It was indicated how, in the observation model, on the other hand, the researcher once again
is vulnerable and runs the risk of looking for what s/he expects to find. It was reported that the solution to the problem of observer variables seems to be to use a process of triangulation and a two-pronged approach in which the researcher has to move between data and theory, constantly revising and reinterpreting data by means of a variety of methods.

It was indicated that, as in physics, there is no absolute guarantee of objectivity, merely of probability. Bertalanaffy (1956:3) says of this:

Modern science is characterized by its ever-increasing specialization, necessitated by the enormous amount of data, the complexity of techniques, and a breakdown of science as an integrated realm: The physicist, the biologist, the psychologist, and the social scientist are, so to speak, encapsulated in a private universe, and it is difficult to get a word from one cocoon to the other.

It was therefore proposed that triangulation be used for obtaining data in a spirit of free movement between universes, instead of restricting the methodology to "one private cocoon of knowledge". By doing this it was hoped that insight into the organization of discourse in the workplace without any premature or preconceived theory would be gained.
CHAPTER FIVE

DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

In the ideal linguistic universe, all members of the speech community would line up and await their turns to provide the investigator with fascinating (and publishable) data. The ideal linguist, with unlimited time, energy, and money, would talk at length with each speaker, transcribe the entire interview (both impressionistically and with the aid of machinery), and emerge with a definitive statement about the nature of speech in that community (Anshen 1978:37).

What had she expected? Nothing, certainly, so like the satanic mills of the early Industrial Revolution. Robyn's mental image of a modern factory derived mainly from TV commercials and documentaries: deftly edited footage of brightly coloured machines and smoothly moving assembly lines, manned by brisk operators in clean overalls, turning out motor cars or transistor radios to the accompaniment of Mozart on the soundtrack. At Pringle's there was scarcely any colour, not a clean overall in sight, and instead of Mozart there was a deafening demonic cacophony that never relented. Nor had she been able to comprehend 'what was going on. There seemed to be no logic or direction to the factory's activities. Individuals or small groups of men worked in desperate tasks with no perceptible relation to each other. Components were stacked in piles all over the factory floor like the contents of an attic (Lodge 1988:121).

5.1 Overview of the chapter

In this chapter the process of data collection is described and the data obtained analysed.

In 5.2 the many sources that informed this investigation are identified. The qualitative research phase (which consists of the interview phase (section 5.3) and the ethnographic phase (section 5.4)) precedes the pilot study (section 5.5), then the two major quantitative surveys are described in sections 5.6 and 5.7 respectively. In 5.8 the findings of the quantitative surveys are contrasted with the views of speakers of Afrikaans or English, thereby confirming the hypothesis stated in 1.3 in Chapter 1. The hypothesis derives from Reagan's (1986) research report on communication and
communication problems in industry in South Africa (see 2.2.3).

The conclusion (section 5.9) looks back at the strategies employed in various phases of the empirical research.

5.2 Sources tapped

The sources drawn upon for data collection were extremely diverse. As was explained in Chapter 4, the method of triangulation was used to obtain data from as many sources as possible in an attempt to gain insight into the problem of miscommunication on the work-floor. It was argued that a combination of methods for the collection of data from several sources would provide a more conclusive test of the hypothesis.

Data were collected in different areas in one of the four metropolitan areas of the country, that is in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging (PWV) area. (The other three areas are: Durban-Pinetown, Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage, and the Cape metropolitan area.) During the interview phase interviews were conducted as far afield as the Eastern Transvaal and the East Rand, and the quantitative surveys were conducted in the Western Transvaal and finally in the Johannesburg area, where, in the industrial heartland in the PWV area, there is a concentration of factories and other organizations. Organizations will not be named because access was often granted on condition that confidentiality was guaranteed. Instead of naming organizations, only the region where the research took place will be mentioned.

As was mentioned in Chapter 4, gaining access to workers on the work-floor to record authentic interaction was a major problem because, on the whole, the managers who were approached did not think their companies had a communication problem and had to be convinced that the time spent interviewing staff would be to the advantage of the company. Managers wanted to see immediate returns for the company in the form of better intercultural relationships, yet maintained that the presence of an outsider would distract workers or could "create suspicion with the unions". Permission was, however, obtained to visit major industrial employer organizations that operate country-wide. In one of the organizations where access was granted, only the Human Resources manager was interviewed. However, one of the quantitative surveys was conducted in another organization of equal size. To provide a balance for the number of employees in an organization, participant observation took place in two local factories with fewer than fifty workers. In one of the two bigger quantitative surveys the speakers were predominantly Tswana-speaking (479 respondents or 25.9%). In the other survey, not one of the respondents was Tswana-speaking, and Sotho (40%) and Xhosa (24%) dominated the language groupings.
From the above it can be seen that the interaction examined on the work-floor in South African industry represents the universe in so far as geographical areas, size of organization, and language representativeness are concerned. Age and gender variables, however, were not controlled.

Many people were interviewed, both rural and urban. Some were training managers in large organizations, some were supervisors; one was the owner of a factory in Rosslyn (the industrial area to the north of Pretoria) and another the owner of a restaurant in the eastern suburbs of Pretoria. Human Resources Managers in a few large organizations were consulted, and the researcher was invited to participate in an intercultural workshop held in one of the organizations. Often permission was given to inspect first-hand what was happening on the ground. For instance, the owner of the restaurant allowed the waiters to be interviewed to express their views on what they felt people of speech communities other than their own said or did that could be misinterpreted.

The course of the research project is outlined below:

* The investigation started with a review of the literature. An extensive literature survey was undertaken after computer searches were run to obtain information from local and overseas data bases. During this preparation period some issues that seemed amenable to exploration began to become salient, but were modified and adapted during the next two phases. (A review of the literature on the topic of miscommunication from the point of view of sociolinguistic relativity was discussed in depth in Chapter 3 and will therefore not be reiterated.) During this period two intercultural training workshops were attended, one in Witbank where the researcher participated with staff members of a well-known national organization, the other in Pretoria where training managers from organizations in the PWV area shared experiences and discussed mutual problems.

* The background reading mentioned above provided information for the unstructured interviews with training managers, supervisors, managers of organizations or factories, an experienced ethnographer, and with employees on the ground during the interview phase.

* The interview phase was followed by ethnographic studies in factories in the industrial sector in and around Pretoria. This period of participant observation prepared the ground for the pilot study.

* In the pilot study questions were tested with twenty-four workers on the work-floor of the factory where one of the participant observation studies had taken place. The pilot study provided the first opportunity of testing the reaction to questions that were later used in the more extensive surveys. For the first time it was possible to quantify data
and to arrive at some kind of interpretation of the mass of information that up to that point seemed to have no pattern or meaning other than the purely anecdotal.

* Two quantitative surveys that can be termed sociolinguistic experimental were then conducted, one in the far Western Transvaal, the other on the East Rand. (According to Roger and Bull's (1989:9) criteria, sociolinguistic experimental studies are those in which data are experimentally manipulated to produce two or more conditions, findings are quantified and inferential statistics applied in the analysis.)

* Finally, some of the most revealing findings of the surveys mentioned above were then tested with speakers of either Afrikaans or English.

Each phase will now be described in greater detail.

5.3 The interview phase

5.3.1 The objectives of the interview phase

This phase can be regarded as the qualitative research phase of the investigation. The aim of this phase was to obtain first-hand opinions on the topic of miscommunication from as many people on the work-floor as possible. The purpose of the intense probing in interviews was to establish what individuals considered the causes of miscommunication to be, and then later to test findings that emerged from the interviews with larger samples.

5.3.2 Strategies employed in the interview phase

During the interviews the "Free Attitude Interview" (FAI) technique of interviewing was used. The FAI is a method of obtaining information used by social workers, therapists, lawyers, journalists, amongst others (Meulenberg-Buskens S.a.). When this technique is used, strategies that encourage interviewees to talk freely on the topic and to express as much they wish without interference from the interviewer are employed. After an initial question, the interviewer constantly summarizes what the interviewee has said because there is no structured schedule that has to be completed. Calteaux (1993:5) describes the process as follows:

After the respondent has answered the first question, the interviewer may only ask for clarification on certain points, no further questions, e.g. why? or what?, may be asked. The clarification elicits further detail from the respondent. The next step is to reflect what the respondent has said back to him/her to make sure that the interviewer has understood the respondent correctly. Any misunderstandings will be clarified by the respondent, and this summary will often lead to further information, as the respondent gets the opportunity to reflect
on what he/she has said and to elaborate on what was meant by certain statements. This also leads to further development of the initial thought processes when the question was first answered, so that more detailed information will often be shared by the respondent. By repeatedly asking for clarification and reflecting what is said back to the respondent, the interviewer embarks on a journey with the respondent through his/her thoughts, feelings, attitudes and experiences on the subject. A good interviewer will be able to peel the layers of the respondent's thoughts and emotions away, and get to the core of what the respondent really feels about the subject. Often this is a growth experience for the respondent as well, as he/she may never have thought about the topic in such depth. The interviewer therefore has an enormous responsibility towards the respondent, as he/she may never let the respondent feel vulnerable, not listened to, or not taken seriously.

As the aims of the interviews were to find examples of language use that cause misinterpretation of speaker intent, examples of such behaviour were given before the interviewees were asked to describe instances of differences in speech behaviour that they found irritating or puzzling. If this could be identified, this data could be analysed and help to improve intergroup contact. (It would have been methodologically unsound to use discourse completion tests at this stage because of the argument developed in Chapter 4. Furthermore, the objections to native-speaker intuitions about their own speech production does not apply here. Interviewees were requested to give examples of speech behaviour of other people that they found irritating.)

Once the aim of the investigation was understood, interviewees had no difficulty in expressing very definite views. One interviewee referred to the different sociolinguistic rules as irritations, another called the differences language etiquette and most ascribed the differences in behaviour to different cultural orientations. During the discussion, the researcher took great pains to avoid the terms black and white and spoke of differences that could arise because of differences in language use in different speech communities (although this term was not used), but respondents soon referred to "What whites do that I find puzzling" or "What blacks do that I find strange or annoys me ...", in other words respondents were aware of differences in other racial groups and did not recount these experiences in terms of language distinctions.

During interviews the researcher was often told about customs and traditions (funeral rites, the virtues of modesty) and unfair labour practices that were not directly language-related; she had to listen to all aspects attentively and could not cut short data that she considered irrelevant because the interviewee had considered it important to relate. Concerning funeral rites, it was reported that anyone who had died accidentally should, strictly speaking, be buried as close as possible to the scene of the accident, e.g. buried along the river bank if he had drowned or alongside the road in the case of a car accident; and women should not be allowed to see the
corpse. It was mentioned that in modern times it was no longer possible to bury people along the roadside, but other traditions were honoured even though people had moved from rural areas to towns. This kind of information is important for this study because many informants confirmed that, although they had moved away from the rural areas, they nevertheless honoured and respected traditional customs. We could, therefore, expect to find a similar carry-over into other linguistic variables under scrutiny in this thesis.

At times the researcher felt she had much in common with the fictional character in Lodge’s work (quoted at the beginning of this chapter). In the fictional work, a university lecturer (whose field of study is the English novel set against the background of the Industrial Revolution in England) studies activities at a local factory and finds the real world rather different from her safe world, seen through the eyes of an idealistic academic. Similarly, the researcher of miscommunication on the work-floor in South Africa was, at times, amazed to find what happens after the siren has signalled the start of a new working day. One incident that springs to mind is that of two men (one black, one white) huddled over a chess board during tea-time, a heavy-duty crane weighing several tons suspended over their heads. She was surprised to find green areas between heavy industry lathes, the workshop itself "the biggest of its kind in the southern hemisphere" (36 000 square metres). This huge floor area was divided into smaller work areas that contained not only signboards indicating which protective clothing items had to be worn, but also dart boards and personal notice boards and bright posters on room dividers and real pot plants that were alive and cared for. Amusing cartoons and interesting notices were observed (e.g. We work for money, if you want loyalty, get a dog and I can’t be fired: slaves are sold or shot!). On other notice boards safety regulations and reports of accident-free days for the organization, or reasons for fatalities and injuries, were displayed. Reasons for accidents (usually given in English only) ranged from Seismic event to Industrial accident owing to safety regulations ignored. Only very rarely was a notice translated into the language of the majority of the workers and displayed alongside the English one.

Unlike the character mentioned in Lodge’s book, the researcher did come across workers dressed in clean overalls, and, although she did not hear any Mozart, she heard local radio stations loudly competing with each other, at times in air-conditioned work areas! (The noise produced by the radios augmented normal factory noise and made it almost impossible to record speech data, thereby ruling out the possibility of electronically capturing authentic interaction on the work-floor.)

Often stories poured out that were not directly relevant to the objective of the research, but were nevertheless of ethnographic interest. Once the speakers realized that they had a willing ear, it was difficult to stop the flood of complaints and personal grievances. The researcher was, for instance, told about a foreman who
refused to call operators to the public phone whenever there was a call for them and that caused antagonism and frustration. She was told about the unfair practice of black workers being searched when they went home or left the premises, while whites were able to drive out without the boots of their cars being opened or searched. A Human Resources Manager of a large concern recounted an instance where the word "boy" (the "buoy" of Lifebuoy Soap) was regarded as discrimination, and led to a dispute. Black workers claimed they were being discriminated against because red soap (Lifebuoy) was provided in the showers for them while the white workers received green soap.

These anecdotes reflect an underlying attitude of suspicion and distrust in which misinterpretation of communicative intent is very easy. The soap example illustrates very clearly this underlying attitude and its effect on perceptions.

To a certain extent, much of the information gathered by means of interviews confirms what Gumperz (1972:6) says when he complained that most native speakers are unaware of the formal features to which linguists want them to pay attention because they (the respondents) generally think of language only in terms of meaning. The problem is that the sociolinguistic rules that may cause interactional problems are, by and large, not rules learned consciously and are recognized as such only when a rule is broken.

In the Eastern Transvaal, one of the training managers of a large concern set aside a morning to discuss problems he had witnessed during a period of more than twenty years in industry. As the only Xhosa-speaking manager among other whites, he could recount incidents that had led to miscommunication or frustration, and he expressed disappointment in the degree of ignorance that existed and lack of interest that people in authority had in the lives of the people they had to oversee. He felt that white people assumed that everyone in the workforce belonged to one homogeneous Western culture and they were apparently not aware that the set of values in black cultures differed from Western values. To him the differences concerning respect were the most telling. He maintained that respect is not something anyone automatically commands because of the position held in the company or because of qualifications obtained. (He himself was a graduate.) He insisted that respect must be earned and maintained, and that this should be kept in mind when people are appointed to positions of power. He also added that the "face" of a superior must be protected and explained that this was the reason one does not disagree with superiors or ask questions after something has been explained because it implies that the explanation was inadequate.

The importance of respect for elders was confirmed during interviews with a (black) Human Resources Manager and his colleague on the East Rand. It was reported that it was humiliating for a father-in-law to share the same shower facilities and ablution
blocks with his son-in-law. (The solution offered was that separate facilities should exist so that those who deserved respect were seen to be receiving it.)

The importance of seniority was stressed repeatedly. It was reported that the role of seniority was understood by all and that one's position in the family hierarchy played an important role in one's say in affairs. This value of respect for elders has ramifications in the workplace: one does not, for instance, question any instructions because this can be interpreted as an act of defiance. Instead of a subordinate saying that s/he has not fully grasped what to do, s/he should try to figure out on her/his own what procedure needs to be followed. This culture of agreeing with authority had had repercussions for the firm where the manager and his colleague worked. They reported that the authority of shop stewards was never questioned and, as a direct consequence of their advice, some hundred workers had lost their jobs.

5.3.3 Findings of the interview phase

The most recurrent findings of this phase are reported below. Those reported by speakers who have one of the African languages as their home language will be discussed before the grievances of home-language speakers of Afrikaans or English. Topics raised by African speakers include a variety of forms of address (ways of attracting attention, ignorance of surnames, derogatory ethnic labels), lack of communication because the opinion of Africans is not valued, constant questioning (Did you understand?), and resentment at being controlled.

5.3.3.1 Grievances voiced by speakers who speak an African language

Before listing the grievances against the background of Hymes's model, it is perhaps necessary to refer again to what Hymes (1967:25) has to say about the relations that exist between the various elements of speech events. He writes:

Rules of speaking do not usually refer to all components of a speech event, and often to as few or two or three. Choice of code may be defined in terms of code and interlocutor alone; or code and topic alone; or code interlocutor, and setting, etc. It is necessary to distinguish the entire range because in a given case any one may be defining. Moreover, a non-defining component may yet condition the success or other aspect of the outcome of the speech event.

In his tentative postulation of the ethnography of speaking in which he sets out a "schema of the components of the speech acts", Hymes (1972a:58) points out that the common denominator in approaches to communication and the analysis of speech is that of participants. In this phase of the research it is clear that social relations between the participants (the P component) play an important role in causing misunderstanding.
(a) **Forms of address**

(i) **Attention getters**

Ways of attracting someone's attention, such as *Haai, jong!* or *Haai, jy!* (*Hey, you!*) or whistling and non-verbal gestures were sources of irritation mentioned most frequently. Unacceptable linguistic choice of forms of address is a major cause of the misinterpretation of speaker intent.

A characteristic strategy of getting attention that interviewees found most offensive was the non-verbal gesture of attracting someone's attention by pointing a finger and then beckoning with the hand. On further probing, it became evident to the researcher that this was the way one called dogs; to call people one was to make a large sweeping movement from the elbow. It is interesting to compare this with the literature survey in Chapter 3 (see 3.8.1.1 above) where Birdwhistell (1970), Ogden (1988:13) and Haworth and Savage (1989:238) report on the importance of non-verbal channels and how this particular gesture is regarded as suitable for calling dogs only.

Beckoning with the hand was a feature included in the pilot study (question 8 of Appendix B) and both the quantitative surveys (the last sub-question of the question entitled "Effective communication in the workplace" in 5.6.2, and question 8 in Appendix C).

(ii) **Lack of use of surnames**

The lack of use of surnames by speakers of Afrikaans or English was mentioned occasionally as illustration of how little interest was taken in the lives of people with whom whites frequently interacted. Both Malan (1980:4) and Finlayson (1991:10) have commented on this, but when questioned whether it was a source of irritation that surnames were seldom used, many interviewees did not regard this as a major stumbling black, some explaining that African surnames are often difficult to pronounce, and the interviewees seemed resigned to being called by first names.

Rules of speaking for forms of address that depend on the relationship (status, power and imposition) between interlocutors in the speech event were discussed in the *P* component of Hymes's framework in 3.4.1 in Chapter 3. Forms of address were tested in the pilot study (i.e. questions 1 to 4 in Appendix B), and the first four sub-questions of the question entitled "Effective communication in the workplace" in 5.6.2, and questions 4 to 7 in Appendix C).
(iii) Derogatory ethnic labels

During the interview it was observed in one of the factories that operators jokingly referred to each other as Black mampara or Kaffir. It was anticipated that derogatory ethnic labels (such as kaffir or meid) would be mentioned as potential grievances, but it transpired that it was a generally accepted norm that no derogatory ethnic labels are allowed at work. However, many people commented on the despicable habit whites had of referring to people as monkeys or baboons; African speakers found this abhorrent and were puzzled that whites sometimes referred to their own children as "naughty little monkeys". It was generally agreed that animal terms should not be used for human beings.

During the intercultural training workshop held in Pretoria, it was discussed why the term boy is regarded as being so offensive. One of the participants recounted the incident of how a foreman had proudly said to a visitor, My boys did this ... when complimented on work done, and this remark was not regarded as being insulting, yet a few weeks later, on returning from an initiation camp (where the boys had become men), one of the workers interpreted a similar remark as degrading and this lead to a brawl. In terms of company regulations both the white and the black man were fired. Most of the participants present at the intercultural workshop were surprised at the severity of this, but the person reporting the incident stated that one could not afford to go back on decisions and in his company it was internal disciplinary policy that verbal and physical abuse would not be tolerated.

Here we observe the interaction between components posited by Hymes in his framework SPEAKING; at the same time we observe how, according to general systems theory, forces between components in a system come into play: in essence the participants (P) were the same people, but owing to norms of the speech situation (S) that had come into operation (in the eyes of the person who felt insulted when referred to as a boy), the man was offended and felt obliged to defend his manhood and act in the manner he did.

Derogatory ethnic labels are a feature that was tested in the pilot study (question 17 in Appendix B), but after these preliminary findings, this topic was not explored further in the second of the quantitative surveys. (Findings of the first quantitative survey had not been analysed at the time the pilot study was conducted.)

(iv) Obligation to greet when entering a room

Also mentioned as a custom that speakers of Afrikaans or English were not aware of is that whoever enters a room of people is obliged to greet first. On further probing as to whether this rule applies to older people as well, it was established that neither status nor age are factors playing any role at all. It transpired that for the rules for
greeting \((N)\) at work, the defining component is the setting itself \((S)\). The rule that indicates that the power and status of the participants \((P)\) controls use is inoperative here.

(b) Use of the left hand

It was established that what is said on a particular occasion, and how it is phrased or co-ordinated with non-verbal signs, is not simply a matter of free individual choice, because it is affected by subconsciously internalized constraints similar to grammatical constraints. Also reported as being insulting is the use of the left hand when handing something to someone. When questioned what the reaction was when this was done unwittingly by someone who was left-handed, it was said that allowances could be made, but the general feeling was that this was a very basic rule of good manners and that people should think before acting and should therefore not use their left hands. Because communicative language behaviour is subconsciously linked to good manners, sincerity and good character, non observance of accepted norms leads to some kind of judgement of the speaker who breaks the unwritten rules and inferences are drawn about speakers’ cognitive capacities. (See 3.8.1.1 for the use of non-verbal channels.)

The "correct" hand for handing something to someone was a feature included in the second quantitative survey (questions 12a, 12b and 12c in Appendix C).

(c) Lack of recognition

(i) No form of greeting

Again see the \(P\) (Participants) component in 3.4.1 in Chapter 3 for how rules of speaking depend on the relationship that obtains between interlocutors in the speech event.

Some informants mentioned lack of recognition of blacks and described how, often, a white man would come into a room without acknowledging the presence of the black people already there and, to boot, would talk without stopping. That talking "while on the hoof" is rude is also mentioned by Finlayson (1992).

In one factory an operator who had heard that the researcher was interested in incidents that had resulted in miscommunication explained that lack of communication was the real problem. He maintained that he had come up with a better and faster way of completing a task, but that his suggestions were brushed aside. He believed that his suggested change would have been an improvement that would have benefited the company, but that because he was black, he was ignored. He maintained that blacks were never consulted, only instructed. As proof he mentioned
a consultant agency that, at the time of the observation, was working with the operators to improve the productivity by making each member of the workforce aware that, like in a game of soccer, each member played a vital role. He claimed that they had not been consulted and had to participate in the exercise simply because the meetings had been arranged during work hours. He felt the company was pandering to the workers' interest in soccer as a means of trying to make them more productive. He bluntly summed up the communication problem by saying: *Die moeilikheid hier is dat hulle nie kak van 'n kaffir wil vat nie* (The trouble here is that they don’t want to take shit from a kaffir.) When asked who the *they* were that he was referring to, he volunteered that *they* were *Die boere* (The boers). When prodded as to whom he regarded as a *boer*, he looked the (white) researcher straight in the eye and replied ominously: *A goeie boer is 'n dooie boer* (A good boer is a dead boer).

It was decided not to test this grievance (lack of recognition) directly because of its potential for arousing passions in a particular workplace; instead concomitant sociolinguistic features, namely whose “duty” it was to greet first upon entering a room, would be tested.

(ii) **Resentment at being controlled with a *Het jy gehoor?* (Do you understand?)**

Much resented was the question *Het jy gehoor?* (Do you understand?). Workers also resented being asked whether something had been done. This was a theme heard many times, and was described as *Always being "checked upon"* by one informant. A waitress in a restaurant in the eastern suburbs of Pretoria felt that the biggest communication barrier was caused by the supervisor who kept on reminding her that certain tasks had to be completed, e.g. the waitress had to see to it that the cutlery on the table was clean. She resented being reminded because she felt that she was denied the opportunity of taking responsibility for her work and felt insulted that the supervisor thought that she would dream of leaving dirty cutlery on the table for the next customer. At this restaurant it was interesting to be given access to what happens behind the swing doors that lead to the kitchen. The waitress explained how the chef had the power to favour waiters who spoke the same language as he did and took a long time to prepare the orders of other waiters. The result was that customers became irate when they had to wait a long time for their food to arrive while observing customers who had arrived after them being served before they were. This, of course, played a role in the size of the tip or whether the restaurant would be visited again.

In the pilot study, respondents (question 9 in Appendix B) were asked how they felt about a supervisor or foreman asking whether a message was understood. After analysis of their responses this feature was not included in the other quantitative surveys.
(d) Differences in interpretation of speech acts

(i) Resentment of the speech act of thanking concluding with a *hoor?* or a *see?* [i.e. a *Dankie hoor?* (Thank you, see?)]

Two colleagues, both of whom had undergone tertiary education (one Zulu, the other a Tswwana), said that they disliked the *hoor* in *Dankie, hoor?* (the English equivalent of which is *Thank you, see?*). In both Afrikaans and English the *hoor* and *see* are semantically empty, but were apparently understood literally by the respondents. On further probing, the respondents who had proffered this information said they at first found this form of thanking demeaning and felt whites used this form only when speaking to blacks. However, once they got to know the people who used this form, they were less offended but nevertheless puzzled by it. When they were told that it is a common form used by whites when speaking to one another, they were rather sceptical.

Differences in norms of interpretation of speech acts were discussed in 3.9 in the N component of Hymes’s framework, but the semantically empty *hoor?* could equally well be categorised with the A component (the manner in which the message is conveyed (Hymes 1972a:59).

This feature was included in the pilot study (question 9 in Appendix B) and adapted for the second quantitative survey (question 9 in Appendix C).

(ii) Indirect accusations

Many interviewees reported that they were insulted by indirect accusations. Often a situation was described in which something could not be found immediately and instead of accusing them directly, whites were reported as saying *Haven’t you seen my ...?* or something in similar vein. Here we have evidence that corroborates Van Jaarsveld’s research (1980:375-405) that revealed how problematic the interpretation of illocutionary acts was for students. This confirms how utterances can be misinterpreted when participants in interaction do not share the same home language. Indirect requests were discussed in 3.9.1 in Chapter 3 where the N component (Norms) was discussed as the marked feature.

Indirect requests misread as accusations were tested in the pilot study (question 16 in Appendix B) but, after analysis of the responses, were not repeated in any of the other surveys. This finding indicates the discovery of a sociolinguistic rule: in the work setting the relationship between P (Participants) is the defining component. On the other hand, perhaps it is the interaction between the components S (Setting) and P that comes into operation to cancel out the misinterpretation that otherwise arises between interlocutors for this N (Norms) component.
Grievances of speakers of an African language interpreted

The major grievances of speakers who have an African language as their home language will now be interpreted in terms of the model proposed by Hymes.

In the differences in rules of speaking discussed in (a) we see that for forms of address the P (Participants) is the dominant component. It is the status, or rather lack of it, that determines which form is used. The same can be said for (c) in which lack of recognition is described. A close second to the P component is the non-verbal channel, the I (Instrumentalities) component of the speech event as described in (a). In 3.8.1.1 in Chapter 3 gestures and other non-verbal forms of communication were discussed.

In Chapter 3 differences in interpretation of speech acts were discussed in 3.9.1 in the component N (Norms of Interpretation), and in (d) it was observed that the misinterpretation of the indirect question Haven't you seen my...? and the statement Dankie hoor? can be ascribed to the relationship that exists between the participants (P). Differences in intonation patterns, i.e. K (for Key), could also account for differences in interpretation.

What is surprising in this phase (and confirmed in the pilot study and the second quantitative survey) is the discovery that the rule governing who greets first is not determined by the status or age of the participants (the P component of the speech event), but by the component S (for Setting). In the discussion of the role of setting in 3.3.1 in Chapter 3 we noted the differences between the plains of Malagasy and the plains of the Camdeboo. It was illustrated how the Gricean principle "be informative" was not operative in the former, but very much in evidence in the latter. What research on the work-floor revealed is that the movement from elsewhere to where people are cancels the sociolinguistic rule of power and status of P and, instead, determines that the person entering a room (S) is obliged to greet first.

5.3.3.2 Grievances voiced by those who have Afrikaans or English as a home language

When home-language speakers of Afrikaans and English were interviewed, a completely different set of reasons for misinterpretation of speaker intent, as well as grievances, was voiced. As was the case when speakers of one of the African languages were interviewed, topics not directly relevant to the aim of the research were mentioned.
(a) Volume of speech

Volume of speech (noise) easily topped the list. (In Hymes’s framework, volume is discussed under the heading $K$ for Key (see 3.7.2 in Chapter 3).) Also mentioned by informants was irritation with people talking at the same time while not paying attention to the person addressed (contrapuntal conversations).

Whenever the issue of loudness was raised, it produced visible discomfort with speakers of one of the African languages, and often made them defensive. Malan (1980:17), too, attempts an explanation as to why African speakers speak louder than their white counterparts. At one of the intercultural workshops attended by the researcher it became obvious that this source of irritation was something that the subjects were aware of and that it was concluded that whites would have to accept this difference. Hurley (1992:272) discusses this (prosodic) feature and admits:

> Speaking more, or less loudly than is normal in a target culture could result in negative evaluations analogous to those recorded in response to gazing more or less than normal.

This feature was tested in the pilot study only (question 15 in Appendix B).

(b) Deviant forms of the speech act

(i) Requests, begging and unsolicited requests to sell articles of clothing

Interviewees complained that they found it repugnant when newspaper sellers begged for money saying they were hungry and wanted to buy bread. Irritation was also expressed when approached by complete strangers to sell their cars or articles of clothing. At times an explanation for this kind of behaviour was offered spontaneously. The explanation given usually referred to the custom of selling or giving away of old clothes which, according to one informant, had created a culture of begging. This corroborates research by Van Jaarsveld (1988:169). Van Jaarsveld reports how the white reaction to a black man saying *Samblief, my baas* (Please boss/master) was interpreted as *Daar bedel hy al weer* (There he is begging again [as usual]).

(ii) Different realization of the speech act of request

It was reported that blacks often demand something, instead of asking for it politely. Finlayson (1991:10) gives an explanation for the difference in sociolinguistic rules as follows: "African languages are as polite and sensitive to mood as any other language and there are no special words to indicate that something is a request. The problem of translation and interpretation is often where most difficulty is experienced by the
non-mother tongue speaker and a request incorrectly translated may often emerge as a demand”.

As was mentioned before, differences in interpretation of speech acts was discussed under the heading N (Norms) in Chapter 3 (see 3.9.1 for a discussion of requests). This feature was tested in the pilot study (question 12 of Appendix B).

(c) Transgression of boundaries of familiarity

This topic which concerns the relationship between participants belongs to the P (Participants) component.

Another complaint often heard was that strangers were "too familiar". When prodded about when someone was "too familiar" the answers given often referred to strangers asking How are you? after saying hello or being introduced, and to people sitting down without being offered a seat. Commenting on this topic, Finlayson (1990:9) says: "Signs of respect are very important within the black society, and are usually shown to someone older or senior. If visiting someone’s house, the visitor will sit down as soon as possible, while the host will not stand up if the guest is an older person. Conversation will not take place while standing".

These features were tested in the pilot study (question 14 in Appendix B) and again in the second quantitative survey (questions 14, 16 and 17 in Appendix C).

One informant said she did not like the way black people breathed down their necks (making one watch one’s handbag) when waiting in a queue in, for instance, the Post Office. But allowances were made for this and the criticism softened by her saying "Blacks were used to sharing a smaller space in their match-box homes". Finlayson (1991:11) confirms the differences in body space by saying: "One may notice in queues that typically black people will stand up much closer to the next person in the queue, while this measure of social distance might offend a white person. Whites prefer to stand at a greater distance from the person with whom they are talking while a black person will be quite happy standing much closer".

As these features explore the potential of non-verbal communication differences in body space (proximics) they belong to the I component (Instrumentalities) Hymes identified in his model for the interaction of language and social setting.

This feature was not tested in the pilot study or any of the surveys.

(d) Kinesics (hand gestures and body signalling)

A few respondents mentioned that they have noticed that blacks often say Sharp! and
give a thumbs-up sign of approval, but it was not thought that this sign could cause misinterpretation of speaker intent. It was merely observed as a different form of non-verbal communication.

Another source or irritation mentioned, is the custom of toy-toying energetically during demonstrations, as witnessed more often on TV. One interviewee described this as the expression of "a primitive form of warfare".

**Grievances of speakers of Afrikaans and English interpreted**

To sum up, the major grievances of Afrikaans and English speakers are:

- Volume of speech and contrapuntal conversations. (K for Key.)
- Differences in realization of speech acts: "demanding instead of asking politely" and "begging" - asking for money or requesting articles to be sold. (N for Norms.)
- Transgression of boundaries of familiarity (e.g. asking about well-being and sitting down before being offered a seat). (P for Participants.)
- Different concept of personal space, standing too close. (I for Instrumentalities.)

When we compare the reasons for misinterpretation of speaker intent of speakers of African languages and speakers of Afrikaans or English, it already is apparent that they are somewhat different for the two groups (compare with the last paragraph of 5.3.3.1)

The major irritation expression can be categorized in the K (Key) component, followed by differences in interpretation of speech acts N (Norms) and I (Instrumentalities). Grievances expressed by speakers who have an African language as a home language, by contrast, mentioned features in the P (Participants) component first, whereas for speakers of Afrikaans and English this category was least important, probably because of the dominant position occupied by this group.

If the expectations of the speakers of Afrikaans or English and speakers of an African language are compared, it becomes apparent that principles of politeness are language-specific. The speech event of greeting when visiting someone is an illustration of this. When greeting, someone who has an African language as a home language knows the unwritten sociolinguistic rule of greeting first when entering a room; whereas speakers of one of the official languages are totally unaware of this rule. A second example: someone who has an African language as a home language knows the unwritten sociolinguistic rule of lowering him/herself on entering the home of a host. Speakers who have Afrikaans and English as a home language have a rule that is exactly the opposite of this: politeness calls for the visitor to stand until
offered a seat.

At the end of the interview phase it was already possible to conclude that the opinions expressed by people interviewed confirm the hypothesis posited in Chapter 1.

5.4 The ethnographic (observation) phase

5.4.1 Objectives of this phase

The aim of this interpretive phase of the empirical research process was to gain an understanding of what actually happens "on the ground" in industry because data collected can be interpreted meaningfully only with knowledge about the social norms that govern linguistic choice in the situation recorded. Ethnography has been referred to as "the most basic form of social research" (Roberts et al. 1992:179). According to Spradley (1979:69) an ethnographic record consists of field notes, tape recordings, pictures, artifacts, and anything else which documents the cultural scene under study. In this phase the researcher set out to study a particular setting (the work-floor) to explore a particular kind of speaking (the interaction between a supervisor and operators). The researcher expected to find patterns of typical speech in a factory and hoped to record large stretches of unstructured, naturalistic interaction. The primary concern was to search for patterns that would in some way reveal why miscommunication occurred. The researcher expected to find meaningful patterns in openings or closings, thought she would record the length of gap between the turns in turn-taking sessions, and was prepared to take note of asides, repairs and other features of discourse that she hoped to observe.

As the intention was to be data driven, the researcher had to try to rid herself of preconceived ideas about what happens in a factory. (However, she read up on Fraser's (1978) framework of directives, ready to observe interaction between the supervisor and operators (see 5.4.3.2); but this preparation proved to be misguided.) It was hoped that contentious issues in terms of sociolinguistic rules would be observed, which would then be tested and after the data had been analysed, new questions could be asked and in this recursive process, a greater understanding of the problem could be arrived at.

Wolfson (1986:697) points out the dangers inherent in setting up a research instrument developed without observation; therefore the researcher regarded it as of the utmost importance to spend time observing and talking to operators on the floor, instead of using a series of Discourse Completion Tests after completion of the literature-study phase of the research. It was argued that important features could have been overlooked. (In Chapter 4 it was shown how an a priori selection of features can skew data collection.)
5.4.2 Strategies employed in the ethnographic phase

Saville-Troike (1982:4) cautions that "doing ethnography" entails "an openness to categories and modes of thought and behavior which may not have been anticipated by the investigator" and Faso Id (1990:49) cautions that "[e]thnographers must be very careful that the understanding they think they have is really accurate since learning second cultures, like learning second languages, is usually imperfect: you 'behave with an accent' in the new culture". It is for this very reason that triangulation was used for data collection (see 4.7 above).

At the outset of this phase Wolfson's (1989:76) suggestions were kept in mind. Her advice is to note areas where miscommunication seems to occur, then to take careful notes not only of the situation, but also of what was said by both parties to the interaction, and then to decide whether the incident was an isolated instance or something that occurs regularly, while all along listening to comments by the speakers.

The question of miscommunication could not be pursued without some kind of organizational framework for observing the process, and for this purpose the framework proposed by Hymes was again used. He (1962: 109) states emphatically that his framework is not a system to be imposed; but that his taxonomy offers a possible solution to the problem of arriving at a description of the rules of speaking of a particular speech community.

Two ethnographic studies made in the course of this research will now be discussed.

5.4.3 Two industrial sites in and around Pretoria

5.4.3.1 Rosslyn

In Rosslyn, the industrial area north-west of Pretoria, the owner of a factory allowed the researcher free access to the work-floor.

A major problem that presented itself once on the floor was the noise (and live sparks!) from the welding plants in the factory and the inability to understand the interaction when African languages were used, this being the rule rather than the exception. Instead of being able to record interaction between operators, supervisor and foreman, it was found that the approximately fifty workers went about their work without the Afrikaans-speaking foreman intervening at all, while the supervisor (who acted as go-between) spoke Tswana to the operators when the need arose. When questioned about this, the researcher was told that "Everybody knows his job". It was totally impossible to record (or understand) any of the interaction that took place among the workers themselves, as the majority were Tswana-speaking. There was
one Mozambican refugee who muddled his way through because he could not understand much of the spoken interaction and had to rely on gestures.

The venue for observation was therefore shifted to where most of the black-white interaction took place: i.e. the office of the receptionist, who was also responsible for handing out the monthly pay packets and the general well-being of the workers. It soon became apparent that a relationship of trust had been established between her and the workers. She had taken it upon herself to have a cold drink machine installed, and because she took calls for the operators, could know who was having extra-marital relationships (and was quick to scold the person after the phone was returned to the receiver). She handled loans from petty cash whenever the need for this arose.

During the first visit only one person came to the office to report that the drain in the toilets was blocked. It was realised that hoping for valuable interaction would be too costly time-wise, and it was decided to visit the factory when operators would be called together as a group when an announcement was to be made.

This brief encounter was observed (but not taped because permission had not been obtained) when workers were called together so that the receptionist could explain why a sum was going to be deducted from the salaries of those staff members who wanted to become members of a provident fund. As this was a relatively new concept, she called each person to her office because she felt each one had to be told individually how he was going to be affected. Documentation in which the benefit of the scheme was set out was handed to each with the instruction to take it home to get someone to read it and to explain if anything was not clear. In these authentic encounters (authentic because they were not setup or arranged specifically for linguistic analysis) it was observed that turn-taking was extremely limited. Each interview started with the worker removing his hat when he entered and greeting the receptionist in a friendly manner and asking how she was. She responded by saying she was fine, and often mentioned some personal issue. The researcher was greeted politely, with a More, miesies (Good morning, Missus). The workers remained standing as there were no extra chairs in the confined space. The receptionist nominated the topic, controlled the exchange throughout, and terminated it. She explained to each one what the benefits were, how many years he would pay before retiring, gave the amount each one would pay (this differed depending on years of service) while asking after each statement whether they had understood clearly. In the few instances where questions were put to the receptionist, the workers were usually interrupted before they had completed the questions (often haltingly formulated). This can be interpreted in two ways, namely that she was doing this because it was clear what was going to follow, in other words that she had anticipated problem, and was responding to speed matters up, or, on the other hand, it could be interpreted as a denial of turn-taking rights. Seen in the light of the relationship of trust and understanding that was witnessed, the former explanation

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seems more acceptable.

About a week later each worker reported to the receptionist's office. These encounters were taped and analysed immediately afterwards while the interaction was still fresh in the memory of the researcher. There were distortions and sound interference in the background (e.g. a siren from the factory next door that went unnoticed during the interviews masked out part of what was said in the office). Each worker was asked whether he understood what the benefits were, whether he had discussed it with someone at home, and whether he was interested in taking out the policy. Initially the receptionist displayed some awareness that she was being observed as she started rather formally, speaking a very correct Afrikaans, but soon she switched to pidginized Afrikaans (for which see Stoltz 1985). In the two examples below it is clear that she was using inversion in the same way as the workers, and the form of Soek jy (Are you looking for?) which resembles the Sotho Wena o batla?

*Daai papiere wat ek jou gegee het, jy het gedink? (Those papers that I gave you, you have thought [about them]?)

*Soek jy daai policy waarvan ons gepraat het? (Literally: "Are you looking for?" and not Do you want ...?)

A third occasion witnessed was the encounter between the owner himself, the receptionist and the staff. This was recorded when the operators came to receive their Christmas boxes and their December pay packets. The contrapuntal conversations that took place were totally unusable for analysis, and the only interpretation that can be made is to comment on the camaraderie that existed amongst the workers themselves and playful teasing about not drinking too much over the holiday period.

An analysis of the observation phase in Rosslyn

On the three occasions that interaction was observed, it was noticed that most of the interaction between black and white was punctuated by the Afrikaans-speaking (superior) saying Verstaan jy? (Do you understand?), but seen in the light of the relationship that existed between her and the workers, and the nature of the information conveyed, it was interpreted by the workers as a genuine request to find out whether the message had been understood.

At this factory it was observed that interruptions were not displays of power, but could rather be classified as rapport displays (as discussed by Goldberg (1990:883-903)). Here the familiar relationship between interlocutors (P) overruled the vertical status dimension of power, thereby diminishing the social distance between the
secretary and the operators, which in turn played a role in her style (K) of communication. Here we have an example of why it was necessary to spend time observing and not simply to go on with an analysis of a recording. The turn-taking in the interaction (A for Act in Hymes's framework) could very easily have been misinterpreted were it not for knowledge of the relationship between the interlocutors (P) in this place of work (S).

No other features mentioned by informants during the interview phase were observed at this factory. No attempts were made to establish the level of education of the workers nor how long they had been employed at that particular place of work.

5.4.3.2 Pretoria West

During the second (longitudinal) observation period, the sample consisted of all workers who worked in a particular section of the factory. Lonner and Berry (1986:87) call this type of non-random sampling samples of convenience, because this kind of sample is selected on the grounds of its accessibility and cost-effectiveness. Floor sweepers and messengers who spent only limited time on the floor were also included. When one undertakes participant observation, one is not able to "intervene" by controlling one variable or another. As far as level of education is concerned, all but the floor sweeper and the messenger-cum-tea-maker had passed standard six; most were Sotho- or Tswana-speaking, in either their late teens or mid-twenties and had worked in the factory for at least two years. The messenger-cum-tea-maker was the only woman who worked in this section of the factory. In this study the researcher sat next to a supervisor who, although he understood the dominant African language of the region (Tswana), always answered in only Afrikaans or English.

The focus was on everyday interaction between a supervisor and the people he had to oversee. Everyday incidents were noted and participants were asked to interpret events as they had experienced them. Raw data consists of many hours of audio-taped, unstructured, naturalistic interaction, yet the actual extent of interaction that could be used for analysis was very limited. Owing to practical difficulties and the obtrusiveness of video-taping (as opposed to audio-taping) it was not possible to record non-verbal responses in this phase, although this was mentioned as a source of irritation and misunderstanding by respondents during the interview phase of the research. Noise produced by hammering and sawing, chairs being pushed back, tables being moved, tools thrown into tool boxes, lids being slammed, talking, shouting and competing radio stations was interspersed with announcements over the public address system that someone was needed somewhere, or one of the managers was asked to take a telephone call, or that sandwiches were on sale, and so on. All announcements were made in English only.
As was mentioned, the question of miscommunication could not be pursued without
an organizational framework for observing the process, and Hymes's framework was
used during the observation phase. Field notes were kept and analysed afterwards.
The categories S (Setting) and P (Participants) were determined by the specific factory
setting described above; what the researcher was to study was the interaction of the
other categories listed by Hymes, i.e. Ends, Act, Key, Instrument, Norms and Genre.

Although the researcher embarked on this phase of the research with the intention of
being data driven, she expected that directives would be the dominant speech act
under the heading Hymes classified as Norms. Therefore various forms of directives
were studied beforehand and she went into the factory armed with Fraser’s (1978)
framework of directives -- as the assumption was that directives would be one of the
main features in the interaction between a supervisor and the workforce he had to
oversee. Fraser (1978:5-6) uses Searle’s classification of speech acts and further
refines directive acts into six subclasses, which either appeal to the hearer’s sense
of moral duty, to the hearer’s sense of mutual co-operation, sense of well-being,
sense of pride, lack of status, or sense of fear. Fraser lists no fewer that 41 verbs
that can be classified as being directives. The acts identified by Fraser (1978:6) and
"denoted by their verb name" are:

admonish, advise, appeal, ask, beg, beseech, bid, call on, caution,
charge, command, counsel, dare, demand, dictate, direct, enjoin,
forbid, implore, inquire, insist, instruct, invite, order, petition, plead,
pray, prohibit, prescribe, propose, proscribe, recommend, request,
restrict, require, solicit, suggest, summon, supplicate, urge and warn.

Of the above, requests seemed to dominate, with requests by the operators for the
supervisor to confirm a particular interpretation of technical drawing for the building
of harnesses; and requests to borrow a heat gun, masking-tape, glue or other tools
came closest to any form of directive. Another kind of request was that of asking
permission to go over the head of foreman to the general manager to ask for sick
leave. (This was planned unashamedly as the operator confided in the researcher that
he wanted to go to a soccer match.) Many requests were of a social nature, e.g. one
operator asked which doctor the supervisor would recommend, another if the
supervisor could tell him where to buy a fish tank; another (this time work-related)
request was to ask when the supervisor thought would be a good time to approach
the foreman to ask for leave. Contrary to expectation, it was not the supervisor who
was responsible for making the request, but the operators themselves.

The act of complaining was also observed regularly: e.g. complaints were voiced
about toilets that were out of order, as well as the insensitivity of someone who did
not call workers to the phone when there were long-distance calls. (This complaint
was also mentioned by interviewees during the interview phase.)
But instead of finding directives (all those specific acts whose function is to get the hearer to do something), an area likely to cause miscommunication, it was discovered that "small talk" made up most of work-day talk. The function of small talk is described by Schneider (1988:1) as maintaining social contact. Hymes (1972a:65) classifies "casual" speech in the G (Genre) component as unmarked speech. Small talk has much in common with Brown and Yule's (1983:3) description of interactional language. In their distinction between transactional and interactional language, Brown and Yule (1983:1-4) point out that the primary function of interactional language is not that of the transmission of information but of maintaining interpersonal relationships. And this was what was observed in the period of approximately four months of observation in the factory in Pretoria West. Apart from various forms of greetings, requests and complaints, small talk dominated the interaction. Although someone was occasionally scolded in the presence of other workers, no incidents of misinterpretation of speaker intent were witnessed. When the researcher complained about lack of progress in this regard, someone rated the chances of witnessing a specific incident of miscommunication as practically nil, and likened it to setting up video cameras on the highway in the hope of recording car accidents.

An example of scolding (admonishment) interaction in everyday small talk follows a brief description of the variables that make up the acronym SPEAKING, as identified by Hymes in his model (1962, 1967, 1972a). The setting (S) is the work floor. The interlocutors (P) are the foreman and supervisor (superiors) and operators (subordinates) and their relationship can be described as formal, yet familiar. The aim of the dialogue (the E in the acronym represents Ends, or the goal of the interaction) that follows is to reprimand; therefore the speech act (N for Norms) is one of admonishment, but this was toned down by the way in which this is done (K for Key). I (for Instrumentalities) refers to the channel used and in this case it is face-to-face speech. What is said (the topic, or A for Act sequence) is work-related: a dirty overall.

The foreman approaches and sees someone wearing a dirty overall. The act of scolding is toned down by his tone and jocular manner. By modifying the accusation of wearing a dirty overall to work (by referring jokingly to Spiderman), the potential face-threatening act (FTA) is minimized and shows consideration of the cost to the hearer. Brown and Levinson (1978:128) list the use of jokes as "strategy 8" in their list of strategies that can be used to minimize an FTA.
Morel Morning!

pause

Voormann: Foreman:
Wat het jy op daai overall gegooi?

What have you spilled on that overall?

Operator:
Nee, die is ‘n ou overall (on the defensive).

No, it’s an old overall.

Voormann: Foreman:
Jy lyk nes Spiderman.

You look like Spiderman.

’n Gelag volg.

Laughter follows.

This kind of behaviour can be considered fairly typical of what was observed in the setting at work because whenever anyone had to be reprimanded and the matter was not considered serious enough to warrant a call to the (private) glass-enclosed office, the reprimand was administered jokingly, as the dyadic interchange described above illustrates.

Another incident in which a potential FTA (dismissal) is modified or the act of scolding is toned down was one in which the foreman said to the tea maker that he was going to swop her for her (retired) mother. The reason given: Want jy slaap (Because you are asleep). Again this remark was greeted with laughter from all present and the potential conflict defused.

Seen against the framework proposed by Hymes, topics, i.e. what is said, is categorized under the heading Act. Topics that dominate and which reveal the life world of the workers are listed below:

* The lack of money was a topic that was often jokingly referred to. One operator asked whether anyone knew what the colour of a R20 note was, the implication being that he had not seen one for a long time. Another appealed to all present to think of him when they had supper because he had no money for the rest of the week as his entire pay packet was spent on buying shoes for his children.

* Problems experienced because of trains were frequently discussed (trains played a role in being late for work, as well as a role in being able to report for overtime on a Sunday when trains did not run regularly).
Concerning the category Hymes termed Ends, i.e. what speakers hope to achieve, it was observed that, in the heat of the moment when it was discovered that a drawing had been altered in one department without the changes being noted on the copy on the work-floor, heads were put together and Sotho, English and Afrikaans spoken in an effort to sort out what had to be done. Although the official language policy of the firm was English, and the supervisor usually spoke Afrikaans (except to the Indian home-language speaker of English) it was clear that nobody would have paid any attention to any kind of language policy when it came to finding a solution to a pressing problem.

An analysis of the interaction observed in the factory in Pretoria-West

The major purpose of the ethnographic approach was to search for sociolinguistic features that caused miscommunication on the work-floor. It was argued that it was only after examining a particular setting that it would become apparent what the patterns and rules of interaction were. Once identified, these features would be tested using larger samples. This would be done in the form of unstructured interview schedules, the design of which was not without its problems.

As was mentioned, the researcher was surprised (and disappointed) that no incidents of misinterpretation were witnessed. On two occasions, however, situations that, in terms of Brown and Levinson’s theory, were potentially face threatening, were defused when the K (Key) component neutralised the message. Clyne (1977:130 in Wolfson 1989:142) distinguishes between communication conflict and communication breakdown; but neither breakdown nor conflict was observed.

During this phase participants gradually came to accept the presence of the researcher on the work-floor, and here again she was told by one of the operators that the communication problems could be ascribed to a lack of communication. From this it can be concluded that the components S (Setting) and P (Participants) are closely related, and that the status and power roles of speakers of Afrikaans or English make these the defining components. Role relationships and the denial of status are examined in the pilot study: questions 4 to 7 in Appendix B, in the first quantitative survey the first four sub-questions of the question entitled "Effective communication in the workplace" in 5.6.2, as well as in the second quantitative survey (questions 4 to 7 in Appendix C).
5.5 The pilot study

5.5.1 The objectives of the pilot study

In the pilot study, 22 operators plus the floor sweeper and the messenger in a factory in Pretoria West were interviewed.

The aim of this phase of the empirical research process was to obtain quantitative data on findings that had emerged during the interview phase. Early on it became evident that if permission were granted to interview workers en masse, the interview schedule (see Appendix B) would have to be kept short so that workers were not kept away from the production line too long. As it would not be possible to include all the interesting features mentioned during the interview phase or those observed during the ethnographic phase, criteria for inclusion had to be established. At the end of this phase, decisions had to be made about which questions to include in the interview schedule for the pilot study and, after refinement and reconsideration, in the quantitative survey(s) that were to follow. It was decided that for a feature to be included, it had to be nominated by at least three informants and had to have the potential for misunderstanding, and not merely be a source of personal irritation (e.g. the mechanical response Shamel! after statements). Van Jaarsveld's (1988:11) valuable advice on potential pitfalls was heeded, especially regarding the avoidance of terminology (1988:14) and the language spoken by the person(s) conducting the interviews. (Consequently the word senior was chosen instead of superior when forms of address were investigated.)

The difficulty of getting management to allow workers to be interviewed must again be mentioned, and it was only possible to interview the operators during the quarterly stock-taking period. Because operators had to display material on tables for stock-taking, they could not do any work. This meant that the normal noise level in the factory was reduced considerably, making it possible for the responses to be recorded on tape and to be transcribed afterwards.

An assistant researcher familiar with various techniques of data collection and herself an instructor in the Free Attitude Interview technique of interviewing (see 5.3.2 above), conducted the interviews. As a Tswana home-language speaker she could conduct the interviews in the home language of most of the workers on the work-floor. At the time she was an Honours student in Applied Linguistics, had already made a contribution during the interview phase of the research, and could be considered sensitive to the issue of sociolinguistic relativity.

Respondents were interviewed individually on the work-floor. A standard interview schedule was used for all the interviews and the responses of each respondent were not entered onto an answer schedule individually, but recorded to be transcribed
afterwards. This was done to make the interview seem more like a conversation and less like a questionnaire that had to be completed. Respondents were asked whether they had any objections to their answers being recorded, but after months of the presence of the tape recorder on the supervisor's table where they were always asked whether they wanted the tape recorder to be switched off, not a single one objected. Age differences were not asked (although this would have been an interesting variable). Qualifications, or highest standard passed, was considered too sensitive a matter by the researcher from Mamelodi, who asked for this information casually after the tape-recorder had been switched off. She did not write this response down with her other notes but instead memorized it.

5.5.2 (Socio)linguistic features tested during the pilot study

(a) The language used for communicating with the supervisor

As the first three questions of Appendix B concern the code used at home and at work, they account for the I in Hymes's acronym SPEAKING; code is classified as Instrumentalities in his model that explicates the interaction of language and social setting. (This topic was discussed in 3.8.2.)

Respondents were asked what their home language is and which language they used (and which they would prefer) for communication with the supervisor. This question was asked to find out whether workers were satisfied with the status quo. The responses of the operators are given below. Only one home language speaker (an Indian from Natal) said that English was used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LANGUAGE USED WHEN TALKING TO THE SUPERVISOR</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In answer to this question only 4% said this was English, and for the rest Afrikaans was used. What is interesting is that this company is one of the few with an articulated language policy. Everybody knew that the official language of the company was English, yet on the one occasion that the researcher was present when the manager addressed all the members on the work-floor, he, too spoke Afrikaans only -- though the Indian from Natal understood very little Afrikaans.

This finding indicates that most of the workers would prefer English to be used. When questioned about reasons for their preference, answers ranged from it being the official language of the company, to it being an international language; but most claimed that it was the language best understood. One said that Afrikaans was "too
deep" when it came to technical matters. Not even one evaluated it as being impolite, nor was it called the language of oppression, as it was done in Van Jaarsveld's (1988:120) study in which respondents were asked which language they considered the best for expressing politeness. Van Jaarsveld's study shows that when students were given options from which to choose, they consistently answered that it was easier to be polite in English and that it was not easy to be polite in Afrikaans.

Of the seven (29.2%) who said they preferred Afrikaans, only one chose it because it was his home language, while two of the others were unskilled (the floor sweeper and the messenger-cum-tea-maker). This means that all workers who had had any form of formal training preferred English as a medium of communication. The kind of skill required for the work means that all the workers on the work-floor had passed at least standard six. When 1976 is borne in mind as the year in which parental choice for the medium of instruction shifted unequivocally to English, and when the ages of those interviewed (mostly late teens up to middle twenties) is taken into account, it can be assumed that all the operators had had English as a medium of instruction since standard three. This greater familiarity with the language could therefore be the reason for opting for English.

The question on language preference was repeated in the other two quantitative surveys (see 5.6 below and questions 1 to 3 in Appendix C).

(b) Forms of address

See questions 4, 5, 6 and 7 of Appendix B. These questions can be classified in terms of Hymes's P (for Participants) and S (for Setting) components as they explore the interaction of these two components on the work-floor.

It was decided to ask operators how they were addressed and how they wanted to be addressed, because forms of address as a linguistic indicator of social structure, or of speakers' perceptions of social relationships, is a topic that has received considerable attention. (See the discussion in 3.4.1 in Chapter 3 for how status and seniority and other social roles are expressed in other speech communities.)

The possibility of gaining insight into forms of address was therefore not to be missed as this is a lacuna that was observed as far as African languages are concerned.

Braun (1988:2) lists forms of address from data collected on at least thirty languages, namely Arabic, Chinese, Dari, English, Finnish, Georgian, German, Greek, Hausa, Hebrew, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Kazakh, Korean, Kurdish, Mingrelian, Norwegian, Pashto, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Rumanian, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish, Swedish, Tigrinya and Turkish. In these studies, one to four native speakers (students) per language were interviewed originally, but because it was felt that a
high degree of subjectivity may skew the findings in data of such small samples, more comprehensive investigations were carried out and twenty to thirty informants were interviewed to satisfy the need for statistical representativeness.

When factory hands were questioned about which form of address they preferred, the overwhelming majority claimed that they were happy with the current state of affairs, namely that their supervisor used their first names only. Three (12.5%) said that they would like to call their seniors by their first names instead of using the informal titles, but on the whole they were satisfied with the state of affairs, claiming that "one had to show respect". (As was observed during the interview phase, respect was a quality that was highly valued by members of speech communities that speak one of the African languages.)

The questions on forms of address were repeated in the other two quantitative surveys (see 5.6 and 5.7 below)

(c) Beckoning with hand

See question 8 of Appendix B. Under the heading Instrumentalities in 3.8.1.1 it was seen that Haworth and Savage (1989:238) have documented differences between Korean and American ways of attracting attention and that the American come-hither gesture is seen as offensive because it is the same as the gesture used to call dogs.

When asked How do you feel when your supervisor has to call you to come to him because you are far away and there is too much noise for you to hear your name? and the customary gesture using only the hand, beckoning with one or two fingers was demonstrated, only two operators did not say that they disliked this way of calling. It is extremely interesting that one of these was the Indian, who has English as home language and the other one claimed to have Afrikaans as home language.

(d) Response to the question: Do you understand?

This feature (question 9 of Appendix B) was included in the interview schedule because so many informants had expressed objections to this question, saying it implied Ons is dam (We are stupid).

Here another myth was exploded as only 12% said that they objected to being asked whether they had understood when something had been explained. Some of those who answered that they had no objection to the question motivated their answers by saying that it was often necessary to check whether the information had been clearly conveyed and that the message was understood, and therefore the speaker had every reason to ask the question. Once again it was inferred that the categories Hymes identified as (S) Setting and (P) Participants play a role in determining what is
acceptable in one situation but not in another: in the workplace it is regarded as acceptable for a supervisor to ask this question. This issue displays what Hymes (1972a:66) has to say about the relationship among the S, P and N components in his framework. Here the Setting (S) influences the Participants (P) in the interpretation of a speech act (Norms or N). (In 3.9 in Chapter 3 other speech acts that are misinterpreted in various other speech communities are discussed.)

This feature was not explored in this form in the quantitative surveys, but in the second survey the modified form Dankie hoor! (Thank you, see?) was used. (See question 9 of Appendix C.)

(e) Polite form for expression of gratitude when given something

In terms of Hymes’s framework, two components P (Participants) and G (Genre) are implicated here. See question 10 of Appendix B, and see 3.10.2 in Chapter 3 for a discussion of precoded or fixed expressions and differences in expression of gratitude.

Respondents were asked whether they thought it necessary to say thank you when handed something. All but one answered that it was. Many qualified their answers, saying it was necessary to do so to show that you had had a good upbringing. Many mentioned that one could show good manners by supporting the hand with the other to show respect. A few mentioned that children did not have to say thank you as long as they used this gesture of holding the wrist with the left hand. It was mentioned that one had to use the right hand, and not the left when handling something.

Because of these responses this feature was built into the questionnaire used in the second quantitative survey (questions 10, 11, 12a, 12b and 12c in Appendix C).

(f) The exclamation Sorry! Sorry! used as a speech act of sympathy.

Respondents were first asked whether they had ever heard anyone saying the words Sorry! Sorry! Every one of the operators immediately said they had, and when asked to describe the context in which this would be uttered, sketched situations in which somebody had dropped something, or had tripped, or in some way or another had caused a minor mishap.

The reason for including a question on this exclamation was two-fold: to illustrate deviation from English and Afrikaans patterns in respect of the speech acts of sympathy and that of apology (although the deviation in no way posed a threat of communication breakdown) while at the same time preparing the ground for the next question to control for the variable distance (embodied in power and status). The next question set out to test whether subordinates would ask the supervisor (a superior) to sell them something or to give them something that they admired, or no longer
used, for example a pair of shoes or an old jacket. (The deviation from the English and Afrikaans norm was previously noted (Ribbens 1990)). It was pointed out that the expression of concern "Sorry, Sorry" was used instead of something like Are you okay? This could be construed as an apology instead of an act of sympathy when someone else was clumsy.

When asked whether they would say this if the (white) foreman were to accidentally trip over an extension cord, every operator said that he would as it was only good manners to show sympathy with someone in the case of a mishap. A few added that they would offer to help if they could.

This question was not used again as it was clear that this form of response was commonly used, even in the case of socially distant participants in the speech act.

The defining components of the etic framework devised by Hymes here are P (Participants) and N (Norms of interpretation of a speech act).

See question 11 in Appendix B and 3.9 in Chapter 3 for a discussion of differences in the interpretation of speech acts.

(g) Request to sell a personal article

As motivated above, the respondents were then asked whether they would ask the (white) foreman to sell them something he had or perhaps even give it to them because they admired it very much (see question 12 in Appendix B).

After a few respondents had indicated their surprise at the question, the assistant researcher checked whether the question should indeed be part of the interview schedule because of the reaction of the operators to the unlikelihood of this ever happening. It was clear that the speech situation (S) here provided the context for rule-governed speech behaviour for the speech event and the kind of language used in the speech event dictated the specific rules and conventions prescribed for the speech act. It was clear that the members of the speech community that had one of the African languages as home language would never consider asking the foreman to sell them something because the dominant relationship he had was too distant to allow this familiarity. Here we have an example of the speaker selecting what to say according to his/her perceptions both of the relative rank of the addressee (P) and the place (S) where the utterance was used. From this it can be inferred that the work setting (S) played a major role in defining relationships between operators and foreman, preventing them asking for something.

Consequently this feature was not used in the second quantitative survey.
(h) Eye-contact

Respondents were asked whether it was acceptable to look someone in the eye. This feature was included because in speech communities where members speak English and Afrikaans "shifty eyes" are associated with dishonesty. Finlayson (1991:9) reports: "Downcast eyes are an indication of respect, while whites would look upon such a form of facial expression as shiftiness". Downcast eyes as a form of respect is also mentioned by Malan (1980:16) who says: "Jy kyk jou meerdere so nimmer as te nooit in die oë nie, a-nee-a! Dit is blantante minagting en onopgevoed!" (One never looks a superior in the eye, oh no! That would be regarded as blatant disrespect and as uncultured behaviour.) Van Jaarsveld (1988b:104) has also reported how this feature may lead to misunderstanding in the South African context and Finlayson (1991:9) expands on other non-verbal differences. She says: "Facial expression may also convey the wrong message inter-culturally. The often false expressions of glee at meeting acquaintances among whites would not generally be given among blacks who might appear in contrast to be somewhat glum".

Non-verbal communication may easily be misconstrued. In Hymes's framework differences in eye-contact fall in the category I (instrumentalities). See 3.8.1.1 for a discussion of some differences in norms for eye-contact between participants.

When this question (question 13 in Appendix B) was put to the respondents, all respondents said that it was necessary to look at the person spoken to while at work. Too late it was realized that the manner of questioning did not take the variables age and status of the addressee into account and consequently this would have to be rectified in the quantitative survey. The eye-contact feature was repeated in the second quantitative survey (question 15 of Appendix C).

(i) Wait before sitting

This question (question 14 in Appendix B) was included in the interview schedule because during the interview phase a number of informants had commented on the difference between whites and blacks in respect of showing respect by lowering oneself. (This was also discussed in (c) Transgression of boundaries of familiarity in 5.3.3.2 (c) above.) Finlayson (1990:9) says; "If visiting someone's house, the visitor will sit down as soon as possible, while the host will not stand up if the guest is an older person. Conversation will not take place while standing. Transferred into a white environment, one should not feel put out if a black guest takes a seat without being asked to".

Almost a third of the interviewees (31.25%) said that they would sit immediately, as they would do when visiting friends, the rest said they would wait until offered a seat. More than half (58.3%) said that at home they would sit down immediately.
(This question was repeated in the second quantitative survey (question 17a and 17b of Appendix C).

(j) **Volume of speech (noise)**

Operators were asked whether they thought they made too much noise at times and whether they were ever asked to quieten down. (See question 15 in Appendix B.) This question was asked because during the interview phase this feature was mentioned by many informants as a major difference between the two major language groupings (see 5.3.3.2 (a) above and also see 3.7.2 for a discussion of different sociolinguistic rules concerning volume of speech).

Three-quarters (75%) of the operators objected to being told that they were making a noise when talking to fellow operators. The rest conceded that at times they were a bit noisy and perhaps management had the right to ask them to make less noise.

This question was not used again.

(k) **Question interpreted as an indirect accusation.**

Differences in the interpretation of speech acts were discussed in 3.9.

As was mentioned during the interview phase, many informants reported that, whenever whites could not find something, they asked accusingly: *Haven't you seen my ... ?* Consequently, operators were asked (question 16 in Appendix B) how they would feel if someone put the question to them. Only one person thought that the tone of voice of the person asking the question may be a give-away; the rest all said that they would not be offended if asked this question, and would interpret it literally and would look in their tool boxes to see whether they had not put the missing tool in their own box by mistake.

This question was consequently not used again because it was clear that the different interpretation that seemed to be operative outside the work setting (S1) was inoperative at work (S2) where the question was not interpreted as an indirect accusation. In the outside world (S1), the rule specifies that a question is interpreted as an indirect accusation, whereas in the factory setting (S2), this rule is cancelled. The cancelling effect of the setting is further strengthened by the familiar relationship between the supervisor and the operators (P) which probably allows for the tone of voice K (Key) to be interpreted correctly.

(I) **Derogatory ethnic labels**

This question involves the P component in Hymes's framework as it concerns the role
relationship of the participants in spoken discourse.

Operators were asked (question 17 in Appendix B) whether any derogatory terms were ever used by superiors, and if so, how they felt about this.

All respondents agreed that if terms such as kaffir were ever used by superiors, it would be done in good spirit and no-one would be offended. (This illustrates what Hymes (1972a:62) has to say about Key overriding the content of the message.) Many said that co-workers used it jokingly when speaking to one another, confirming what had been observed and this corroborates data collected during the interview phase. One operator said everybody knew this was not allowed, and if a senior were to use such terms he had the right "to take the matter up".

This question was not used again either.

5.5.3 Concluding the pilot study

In the pilot study interviews in the vernacular confirmed the features mentioned during the interview phase and observed during the observation period. On the other hand, surprising new insights were made, e.g. the idea of requesting someone to sell an article, and so on was rejected as being totally unacceptable, and nobody interpreted the question Haven't you seen my... anywhere? as an indirect accusation. This example illustrates how the work place (S) and the relationship between interlocutors (P) are factors that determine the rules of speaking and interpretation for the speech act of requesting (N).

5.6 The first quantitative survey

5.6.1 Objectives of the first quantitative survey

The aim of the quantitative survey was twofold. In the first place it would present a broad picture of certain features of language use in industry (the central topic of this thesis) in a particular area. In the light of what President Mandela was to say when opening Parliament in May 1994 the decision to examine forms of address seems justified. He pleaded for racism in the workplace to be ended in a common offensive against racism in general and said, "No more should words like kaffirs, Hottentots coolies, boy, girl and baas be part of our vocabulary" (The Pretoria News, 25 May 1994:11). In the second place an important aspect of this survey is that it would provide a unique opportunity of testing some sociolinguistic features with a very large sample of speakers. As the question on sociolinguistic features formed part of a much larger survey that focused on non-language issues, it can be conjectured that the responses from informants on sociolinguistic choices were fairly unselfconscious as these were not the main issues at stake.
5.6.2 Part of the workforce in the Western Transvaal

As has been mentioned repeatedly, it was not an easy task to gain access to workers on the work-floor, but fortuitously, during the participant observation phase, the opportunity for coming into contact with a large contingent of the workforce in the Western Transvaal presented itself. This came about when the management of one of the major mining companies in the area undertook research to establish the educational and training needs and aspirations of the local communities (Wydeman and Ribbens 1993). The mining company wished to establish the educational needs of three communities in the Western Transvaal (Kokosi, Wedela and Khutsong) as well as the hostel dwellers who worked on the mines of the company.

The goal of the research was to find ways and means of reaching the communities and to involve them actively in establishing a culture of learning. By establishing their specific needs it was hoped that provision could be made for the education and training needs of the adults. (In 1.2.1 in Chapter I of this thesis it was mentioned that one of the expected outcomes of this project was to provide information that could be used in the development of ABE courses.) In order to obtain this information, representatives of various groups in the region were identified, a number of meetings were held to ensure that all interested parties were involved, and the Community Education concept thrashed out by means of workshops. (Community education is an educational concept through which existing educational provision can be expanded to create a culture of learning in the community.) When those concerned were satisfied that all relevant issues had been discussed, an interview schedule was drawn up.

After relevant questions were decided upon by leaders of the communities, 2 300 structured interviews schedules were handed out. Of these 1870 (81.3%) were returned. This exceptionally high response rate validates the data collected as being statistically representative of the total populations of Khutsong, Wedela, Kokosi and the hostels of the mining company concerned. Together the three communities and the mine workers represent a total of 152 000 people.

The sample drawn from each community took into account variables such as age, sex, educational level, status of employment, living conditions, and so on. The interview schedules were pilot tested by the field workers, and after ambiguities were eliminated, were completed by members of each of the communities. The interview schedule was prepared in English only, but the field workers from each community who volunteered to interview members of their respective communities acted as interpreters. This means that every respondent was interviewed in the language of his or her choice. The schedules were completed by the field workers on a one-to-one basis because of the high rate of illiteracy among the population surveyed.
The sample of adults who completed the entire interview schedule were not all employed at the time, but most of the people (63.4%) were employed full-time. It was argued that many may have been employed before the economic recession or would be employed in future again; consequently all the interview schedules were used for the analysis of the sociolinguistic section of the survey. The high percentage of employed within the population surveyed can be ascribed to returns from the workers on two mines (who in total represent 90,000 people) and as they are in the service of the mines, were naturally all employed. The employment picture in the townships is totally different, as here only 464 (40.7%) of the respondents were employed full-time.

The largest number of responses was received from the mining division, namely 645. Workers employed elsewhere totalled 157 and represented 39 different occupations.

In order to interpret the mass of information of the 1870 schedules that were returned, appropriate statistical techniques were applied by a statistician consulted for this purpose. Initially a series of multi-way frequencies were obtained to enable the researchers to identify tendencies in the variables under consideration and the Chaid computer programme was used to clarify the results of a categorical dependent / response variable in reaction to certain independent /response variables. The dependent variable in this project was the place of residence (because it was important to establish what each community preferred) while the independent variables were age, sex, income, home language, level of education, work status and language preferred for the medium of instruction. For the final phase of the statistical analysis, statisticians recommended relevant multivariate techniques to be applied to enable finer-grained analysis of data. The findings of the ABE research project are beyond the scope of the present study and may not be referred to until findings have been released by the company concerned. What is not confidential, though, is that English was chosen as the preferred medium of instruction. Of the 1,648 respondents who answered this question, more than two-thirds (68.4%) indicated that they wanted English as medium of instruction, while Sotho (9.4%) and Xhosa (8%) were the only other languages selected enough times to be of any statistical significance.

In total eleven languages were represented by the responses received. They are given on the next page in alphabetical order together with the percentage they represent of the total response.
## HOME LANGUAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number of speakers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndebele</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedi</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shangaan</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sotho</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swazi</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tswana</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venda</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xhosa</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zulu</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statisticians advised that it would not be possible to apply statistical tests or to make meaningful inferences when groups are small; consequently the smaller language groups (Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Pedi, Swazi, and Venda) were lumped together in a category termed *Other* instead of being treated each on its own. After this was done the order of representation (number of speakers) of the languages was the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number of speakers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sotho</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xhosa</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tswana</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shangaan</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zulu</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While all the other languages of the sample were distributed more or less equally between the hostels and towns, Tswana was well represented only in the towns and not in the hostels.

One question entitled "Effective communication in the workplace" was included to ascertain what learners wanted to be called when in an ABE class. It was assumed that people would probably show the same preferences for forms of address on the
factory floor as in the classroom. The question consisted of five sub-questions. The questions on forms of address included first name (FN or familiar name), surname and title (which range from mnnumzane, inkosikazi, morena, Mister, mosadi, Miss, Ms, meneerto madoda). Respondents were asked how they as subordinates are currently addressed in the workplace and how they in turn address a supervisor (or superior). Then they were asked how they would like to be addressed and how they would like to address superiors. One question on non-verbal behaviour was included in order to obtain quantitative data and so confirm verbal reports that a commonly used gesture is regarded as offensive by some people. (Respondents had to indicate which hand or head gestures they found offensive as a way of attracting someone’s attention when there was too much noise for verbal forms of address to be heard.)

Below is a breakdown of how the respondents want to be addressed, compared with what form of address they prefer.

### HOW SUBORDINATES ARE ADDRESSED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of Address</th>
<th>Current usage</th>
<th>Preferred form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First name</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>57,7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surname only</td>
<td>20,6%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title plus surname</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10,%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall impression is that respondents are more or less satisfied with the address form used when they are addressed. Two thirds (66% of 1109 respondents) indicated that their first names are used, and 57,7% indicated that they wanted to be addressed in this way. Of the 1153 respondents only 20,6% are called by their surnames, while 31% would like this to be the case. This indicates a slight dissatisfaction with status and a desire by some to be awarded more status; yet titles (*Mr* and *Mrs* or *Miss* and their equivalents) were not favoured by respondents: only 11% are addressed in this formal way and even fewer (only 10,9%) would like this form to be used. Below is a breakdown of the forms of address used when communicating with a superior.

### HOW SUPERIORS ARE ADDRESSED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of Address</th>
<th>Current usage</th>
<th>Preferred form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First name</td>
<td>33, %</td>
<td>41,7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surname only</td>
<td>32, %</td>
<td>31,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title plus surname</td>
<td>32,3%</td>
<td>25,7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When analysing how workers address seniors or supervisors, a desire to be on equal footing, or to use more familiar terms, becomes apparent. Of the 1161 respondents,
a third (33.4%) indicated that they addressed their seniors by their first name, while two-fifths (41.7%) of the 1158 respondents indicated that they wanted to do so; a third (32.3%) of the workers used titles, while only a quarter (25.7%) wanted to use this form. Subordinates seemed to be happy with the use of surnames when addressing superiors as 32.2% used this form and 31.3% said this is the form they wanted to use. When the two formal terms (Mr plus a surname) are grouped together, the picture that emerges shows that almost two-thirds (64.5%) use formal terms, while slightly more than two-fifths (41.7%) want to use more familiar first-name terms.

Non-verbal communication (body language)

This feature was included because, during the interview phase of the research project, a considerable number of interviewees indicated that a gesture that is commonly used by whites is sometimes construed as offensive by African speakers. This form of beckoning entails pointing to someone and then indicating with one or two fingers of the hand that the person must come towards the person who is calling.

More than two-fifths (44% of the 1048 respondents) indicated that they found the calling movement offensive. Slightly more than a quarter (26.8% of the 1048) respondents indicated that they found the calling movement in which the whole hand was used offensive. When these two figures are added, it totals 70.8% of respondents that are repelled by this form of calling someone, while only 15.1% indicated that neither the head movement nor the hand gestures were offensive.

5.7 The second quantitative survey

5.7.1 Objectives of the research phase in the Johannesburg industrial area

The specific aim of the second quantitative survey was to establish findings with which to compare the findings of the first quantitative survey and to explore other features that had emerged during the interview and observation phases of the empirical research process. It must be remembered that in the first quantitative survey questions that have a bearing on sociolinguistic differences were included, while not being the focus of the investigation. Apart from the questions on home language, the preferred medium of instruction, and English language skills deemed necessary for work, it was possible to ask only five questions of direct interest for the present study. This was done under the guise of learning which forms of address would be most suitable for use in an ABE centre.
5.7.2 Research procedures used in this phase

The statisticians consulted advised that for a universe of 400 workers n = 50 would be adequate to apply sophisticated statistical techniques. These tests would make it possible to investigate the interactive effects of several independent variables simultaneously. Therefore, in a large organization with approximately 400 staff members, 50 workers who do not have one of the official languages as a home language were selected for the sample. Another variable that came into play was that the sample was selected on the basis that the workers on the first nine-hour shift of the day could be called away from their tasks and that their absence from the workfloor would not cause a work stoppage thereby. Workers on the second shift were not considered because it would not have been safe for the researcher to travel in the industrial area of Johannesburg late at night on her own. All the respondents were male. Apart from selecting the sample of the groups available, no other criteria were used, but it was important to ensure that the sample represented the workers in the place of work from which it was chosen.

A variable that could have played a role and affected the data is that of duration of acculturation, in other words, the length of time spent working in an industrialized society away from rural roots. Here, all but 6% of the workers had been working for the organization for a period of five years or longer. It was thus argued that they could be considered representative of workers in the workplace in an industrialized urban society. At this place of work, most of the operators had been in service for more than eleven years, and twenty percent had already received gold watches in recognition for twenty-five years of loyal service. When the question was asked how long they had been working there, it was a moving sight to see the sleeves of overalls pushed up to display the watches with pride; yet it was surprising to find that so many of the interviews with people who had been working for a long time had to be conducted with the help of interpreters.

Number of years of service and biographical data (which includes home language, age and level of education) will be given before a discussion of the questions or the discourse completion tests. The (final) interview schedule is to be found in Appendix C. In the final version some adjustments were made because comments made by respondents necessitated a change in the coding system. The coding system was therefore modified, and after that frequency counts for each item were calculated.

Below, the issues will not be discussed in the same order as listed on the interview schedule, which was used as a guide when interviewing workers in situ.

Biographical data obtained in question 1, 18, 19, 20 and 24 are given first to throw some light on Hymes's P (Participants) component in this place of work (S), which happens to be one of the biggest organizations in the Johannesburg area. Question

157
19 Are you a man or a woman? was obviously not asked, but simply noted by the interviewer. This information was required as an independent variable that could be analysed in the computer programmes that were run but, unlike the random sample in 5.6, here it was a sample of convenience and it so happened that all the people interviewed were male. (This highlights the problem of drawing conclusions when samples of such a diverse nature are used.)

During the discourse completion tests, interviewees at times explained at length what they would say or do, or why a particular form was offensive; consequently some interviews took as long as twenty-five minutes (much longer that the ten minutes agreed upon when permission was granted to interview staff).

5.7.3 Findings

The responses to question 1 in Appendix C are given below. The languages given by the respondents as their home languages are listed alphabetically:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOME LANGUAGE</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pedi</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shangaan/Tsonga</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venda</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xhosa</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zulu</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A breakdown of the ages of the workers (question 18) is given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGES</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-29 years</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39 years</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49 years</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59 years</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69 years</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above it can be seen that only four percent of the population surveyed was under the age of 30. A reason for this is that the policy of the company is to retain members of its workforce with long years of service. During the recent round of retrenchments, younger workers with fewer years of service were the first to lose their jobs; hence the older population.
It is interesting to observe the level of education of the workers (question 20):

**LEVEL OF EDUCATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No formal schooling whatsoever</th>
<th>14%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard 2 or lower</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 3 - 6</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 7 and 8</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 9 and 10 and post matric</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answers to question 24 are given below.

**YEARS OF SERVICE**

| 0 - 5 years   | 6%  |
| 6-10 years    | 18% |
| 11-14 years   | 24% |
| 15-19 years   | 24% |
| 20-24 years   | 8%  |
| 25-29 years   | 8%  |
| 30+ years     | 12% |

With the biographical information of respondents as background, the sociolinguistic features examined will be discussed. These include politeness forms in requests, the language used when speaking to the supervisor, how subordinates want to be addressed (and are in fact addressed), how a superior is addressed and how the subordinate wants to address the superior, non-verbal gestures, Dankie hoor? and/or Thank you, see? understood literally, grasping the right wrist or elbow with the left hand to show gratitude, the clapping of hands (with or without a curtsey) to show gratitude, the "correct" hand to use when giving and receiving something, carrying on a conversation while walking, eye contact, and whether respondents would take a seat without waiting to be offered one.

(a) **The language used by the supervisor**

Code forms part of Hymes's I component (Instrumentalities). This issue was discussed in 3.8.2 in Chapter 3.

What is important in this study is that the choice of code was decided by the official status of Afrikaans and English. The situation has since changed, and it will be interesting to see whether in future, with eleven official languages, the home language of the supervisor will still be the preferred medium of communication.
In Appendix C, questions 2 and 3 tested current usage and the preferred language used by the supervisor. In answer to the question as to which language the supervisor used when speaking to them, 88% said that this was English, while 12% said Afrikaans was used. On the whole the workers suggested that they were happy with the current state of affairs, as 82% said that they wanted the supervisors to use English, 6% said that they wanted Afrikaans, 4% would have preferred Pedi, 6% Xhosa and 2% Zulu.

As the researcher was present during the interview, she could observe the reaction to the question as to which language they wanted the supervisor to use. Most who answered saying that they wanted the supervisor to speak English seemed surprised that anyone could consider any other possibility. Only 12% thought it would be good if the supervisor could speak their language, but, judging by their facial expressions, those who had answered English seemed astounded at the thought of not speaking English. Without being requested to do so, some motivated their preference for English by saying that English was an international language. English was seen as the language of social status, progress and development and therefore respected as a means of economic and vocational advancement.

(b) Forms of address

(i) Preferred forms of address for subordinates

Forms of address were discussed in Hymes’s P component in 3.4.1 in Chapter 3. Questions 4 to 7 in Appendix C are the same as those used in the first quantitative survey (the first four sub-questions of the question entitled "Effective communication in the workplace" in 5.6.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current usage</th>
<th>Preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First name</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surname only</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title and surname</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In total, 78% said that their superiors used first-name terms, 14% said that only their surnames were used, and only 8% said that the formal manner of address (title plus surname) was used.

The same tendency observed in the bigger sample was found here, namely that only 66% wanted to be addressed by means of an (informal) first name. It is interesting that 12% would prefer to be called by their surnames only, whereas 22% would prefer the more formal combination of title and surname.
(ii) Preferred forms of address for a superior

FORM OF ADDRESS FOR A SUPERIOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current usage</th>
<th>Preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First name</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surname</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many respondents volunteered that it was necessary to be respectful towards someone who held a higher position at work, hence the high percentage who selected titles as forms of address. "Respect" and "polite" were two words that cropped up like a *leitmotiv* during the interviews, not only in the interview phase but in the pilot study and again in the second quantitative survey. It is not possible to comment on this aspect for the first quantitative survey as field workers completed the questionnaires and no reasons for answers were given.

The "other" in the first column was the term *Baas*. When the operator was asked why he used this form instead of the surname or title or first name, he looked surprised and laughed foolishly. This is reminiscent of the dyad reported by Braun (1988:25) in which a sixty-year old Norwegian speaker retained the formal *De* in the face of the twenty-two year old speaker using *du*. Braun believes that the asymmetry was maintained because the older speaker could not force himself to break his internalized rules, and therefore used the more formal form, as did the man who could not stop himself from calling the supervisor *Baas*.

(c) Non-verbal gestures

Non-verbal gestures were discussed in 3.8.1.1 in Hymes's I component for *Instrumentalities*. As was pointed out there, the chances of misreading these gestures increase greatly when members of different cultures come into contact.

At this juncture (question 8 in Appendix C) the interview schedule changed from asking opinions about the real situation in the factory to a discourse completion test. The respondents were given a range of choices from which they had to select the least appropriate form of behaviour.

The scene described was very close to their daily experiences on the work-floor. It was put to the respondents that, because of the noise on the work-floor the supervisor could not be heard when he had to call someone, that he (the supervisor) had to use some form of non-verbal communication to call the subordinate urgently. Various beckoning gestures were demonstrated and the respondent asked which
one(s) were not acceptable.

The researcher witnessed expressions of disgust passing over the faces of the people being interviewed when the hand movement commonly used by speakers of Afrikaans or English was demonstrated. One or two shuddered or looked away. Some said immediately that this form of calling was abhorrent to them. Others responded that no gesture was acceptable and that the supervisor was compelled to call the operator by name. It had to be explained again that in the imaginary situation described, the noise level on the work-floor ruled out any possibility of a name being heard and therefore some kind of gesture was the only option. Reluctantly, the whole arm movement was then declared to be acceptable.

**BECKONING GESTURES**

The following gestures were considered inappropriate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gesture</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arm movement</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand movement</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both arm and head</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For "other" respondents said that whistling, shouting and pointing were not acceptable forms to use for calling someone. These findings show that non-verbal channels can play as an important a role in communication as the verbal ones and that breaking the underlying rules can lead to the same type of miscommunication.

(d) **Dankie, hoor?" and/or "Thank you, see?" understood literally**

Question 9 was included in the interview schedule because many speakers of African languages had intimated that they were offended by the *hoor* (literally *hear*) that followed the *Dankie* (thank you) in a speech act that expresses gratitude. It was said that the *hoor?* conveyed something similar to the *Did you understand?* (This was discussed in (d) in 5.3.3.1 where it was stated that this could be interpreted as belonging to the A component of Hymes’s framework.) The objection to this was the implication that because the persons were black, they were not able to grasp things easily and requests, or expressions of gratitude in this case, had to be repeated. The researcher herself was surprised when told about the perceived insult implied in the tag part of the act of gratitude, and then kept track of how often she herself used this when speaking to status equals and found that she herself was often on the receiving end of this form.

The interviewees who had alerted the researcher to this tag question at the end of an
act of gratitude had a fairly high level of education compared to the sample on the work-floor as they (the informants) had all passed matric, some had degrees and all were working in a research institute where they were doing research or did administrative work. The findings below show that factory workers generally did not experience this feature as causing miscommunication. It is suggested that differences in levels of education may have played a role in the responses given. It must be remembered that most of the interviews were conducted by interpreters and the researcher surmises that the level of comprehension was so low that the only words that had any meaning were Dankie and thank you and that the tag question was lost on the hearers. The researcher could read the facial expressions on the faces of respondents and is convinced that they did not experience the supposed malice the interviewees who had offered this feature claimed to hear.

The workers on the factory floor responded as follows:

**LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF "DANKIE, HOOR?"

The gratitude expressed is sincere and/or this form is acceptable 86%
Feel insulted 8%
Other 4%
Never heard 2%

This finding leads us to conclude that the tag question was probably interpreted only in cases where the recipients of the message were fairly proficient in the target language.

(e) **Supporting the right wrist or elbow with the left hand**

Question 10 was included to test whether respondents were aware of the politeness form they used and to establish whether this form was in use in an industrial environment, or whether this had fallen into disuse due to acculturation.

Respondents were asked whether they supported the hand used when something was handed to them, as during the interview phase this feature was mentioned as a gesture used to show respectful gratitude.

It was interesting how the respondents who up to this point had listened rather passively to the interpreter to ask the next question suddenly looked up with a sense of surprise or recognition that this was being investigated. As can be seen when studying the table below, this form is an accepted gesture for expressing gratitude. Because some interviewees in the early phase of the research project had said that this form was used only by the young, this possibility was built into the possible
answers from which respondents could select. The possibility of an "other" category soon fell away when many (12%) said that did not support the hand held out to receive whatever was being proffered, but that they cupped both hands.

The question that read *Do you support the hand that you hold out to receive something?* was answered as follows:

**HAND USED TO SUPPORT THE OTHER WHEN RECEIVING SOMETHING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not any more, but I did when I was younger</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I cup both my hands</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As more than three-fifths said that this form was used, it was decided to use this feature when interviewing speakers of Afrikaans or English.

(f) The clapping of hands (with or without a curtsey) to show gratitude

Question 11 was included because it was mentioned that this form could be used instead of verbally saying thank you. In the literature review this was confirmed by Wood (1992:272-273).

The respondents answered as follows:

**CLAPPING HANDS TO SHOW GRATITUDE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I clap hands and say &quot;thank you&quot;</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I only say &quot;thank you&quot;</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only children use this form</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes use it</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As such a high percentage answered that this was regarded as good manners, it was decided to use this feature when interviewing speakers of Afrikaans or English.

(g) The "correct" hand to use when giving and receiving something

Questions 12a and 12b were included to test whether it was indeed offensive to be given something with the left hand, as claimed by informants during the interview phase of the research project. Then a question followed to test whether allowances were made for whether the person giving something was white or black.
Once again a form of discourse completion test was used: the scene sketched was one in which the respondent was told that he had money and wanted to send someone to buy fish and chips, for instance. A second scene was sketched in which the person was told he had a gift he wanted to give to someone. He was then asked whether there were any rules that dictated which hand was the correct one when giving something to someone.

When asked which hand they used when handing something to someone, the answer was unequivocal: all but one respondent said that they used the right hand. The only dissenter was a man in his forties who claimed he was left-handed.

The answers to the question *When you give something to someone, which hand do you consider to be the correct one to use?* are given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A &quot;CORRECT&quot; HAND FOR GIVING SOMETHING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My right hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My left hand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked whether they regarded it is impolite when a black person handed them something with the left hand, the answers were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A &quot;CORRECT&quot; HAND FOR RECEIVING SOMETHING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptable if the person is left-handed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptable if this happens in the factory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked whether they would regard it as offensive if they were handed anything by a white person, many respondents made allowances for what was regarded as deviant behaviour in their own culture. Some respondents said that white people "have a different culture", but the majority added that apart from being insulted, they felt the gift was not heartfelt if it was handed with the "wrong" hand. A few of the respondents pointed to their hearts and shook their heads to suggest the feeling of disappointment that accompanied something handed with the left hand. Another category had to be added to the interview schedule to possible answers because 14% added that they would not accept anything handed to them with the "wrong" hand. Some claimed that they would ask the person handing them the object why they were using the wrong hand (but all the whites interviewed denied this ever happening).

Responses to the question *How do you feel when a white person hands you something using his LEFT hand?* are given on the next page:
A WHITE PERSON USING THE LEFT HAND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Would not be insulted</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would feel insulted, disappointed or hurt.</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other feelings expressed</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would not accept the gift</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because of the high percentage of people who said that they would feel disappointed if the left hand were used, this feature was to be tested with whites.

(h) The meaning of the exclamation aish! or ish!

This exclamation of dismay was included as question 13 in the questionnaire after the researcher's observation during a six-year stint of lecturing at a tertiary institution where most of the students had one of the African languages as home language. It was observed that students who often made this cluck of dismay when work was returned always seemed disappointed with their marks. The reason this feature was not tested in the pilot study was mentioned in 5.5.1, i.e. criteria had to be established to decide which questions to include in the interview schedule for the pilot study and the quantitative survey(s). It was decided that only those features nominated by at least three informants as having the potential for misunderstanding were to be included. This feature was not mentioned by any of the informants, but was nevertheless included here because it had been observed so often. As was mentioned in 3.8:2 no literature could be found on expressions of dismay that caused misunderstanding between interlocutors in intercultural interaction, because the article *The Indians do say Ugh-Ugh* (Law 1990:4-7) had proved to be a wild-goose chase.

When operators were asked to sketch the circumstances in which the exclamations "aish!" or "ish!" were used, most of the respondents were quick to sketch a scene in which disappointment or disillusion of some sort featured. One worker said that he would use this to express his frustration with himself if he were playing soccer and he "did" a mistake that caused his opponent to score. Another said he would use this when he realized he had left something at home after intending to bring it to work. One operator said that he would use it when he realized how much work still had to be done. Another said he would use it when "Someone fucked me up" [sic].

When questioned which language it was, many respondents claimed that it was their home language, a few respondents saying that it was English. Two said it was not a language, but just something anyone could say when they were disappointed.

This is how the respondents answered:
THE MEANING OF "AISH!" OR "ISH!"

Disillusion, disappointment, and so on  86%
Never heard  14%

Because of the high percentage of people who claimed this form of interjection expresses disillusion, this feature was retained for testing with speakers of Afrikaans or English.

(i) Conducting a conversation "on the hoof"

Question 14 was included to confirm what informants had said during the interview phase (see (c) in 5.3.3.1) and was corroborated by Finlayson (1991:10). She claims that it was not acceptable to talk to someone while "on the hoof". She says (1991:10), "Traditionally in black society one stood still when greeting..."

This is how respondents answered:

CONDUCTING A CONVERSATION WITHOUT STOPPING

It is acceptable 42%
The person is obliged to stop. If the person talks while "on the hoof", he/she is considered rude 40%
Acceptable in factory when the person is in a hurry 18%

Respondents said that, on the whole, they were not satisfied with this form of communication. However, allowances were made for the realities of work where people had to hurry along and did not have time to converse in the manner that they would have had they been at home.

In the light of allowances made for the demands of work, this feature was not tested as it was argued that it would not be misconstrued in the workplace nor lead to miscommunication on the work floor.

(j) Eye contact

Question 15 in Appendix C corresponds with question 13 of the pilot study. See (h) in 5.5.2 above. Avoidance of eye contact as a manner of showing respect was discussed in 3.8.1.1 in the I component of Hymes's framework.

Again a discourse completion test was used. The scene sketched was set at home. The imagined participants in the role play were described as a young person in the presence of elders, perhaps an uncle or a grandparent. The question asked was
whether it would be acceptable or impolite for the younger person to make direct eye contact with a superior or whether, as a sign or respect, eye contact had to be avoided.

The responses to the question *Is it acceptable, or polite, for a young person to look a superior in the eye?* are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>48%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The responses given here show that workers are almost divided on this issue. Some of those who said that it was impolite, added comments such as: *They have to look sideways* or *They must look away* or *They must show respect*. Respondents who said that it was the accepted behaviour, added comments such as: *They must look straight*. 

(k) Greeting first

This issue was raised during the interview phase (see (a) in 5.3.3.1 above).

The responses to question 16 show that 90% of the people who were questioned regarded it as obligatory for anyone who entered a room to greet first, while only 8% said there was no rule for this, and only 2% that it was the duty of the person already present to greet first.

If one considers how often the physical setting of a typical workplace determines that the workers remain within the confined space of a work station, while it is the supervisor or foreman who moves about, one realises that it is regarded as the duty of the latter to apply a rule of which he may not be aware.

(l) Wait before sitting

This was question 17 of Appendix C. Refer to the pilot study (5.5.2 above) where Finlayson’s views on this are quoted and the findings of the pilot study are discussed. Again a discourse completion test format was used and a scene sketched in which informants were asked to say whether they would sit immediately or would wait until they were offered a seat.

The responses to the questions *What is the correct thing to do when (a) you visit a friend’s house and (b) you are called to the foreman’s office?* are given on the next page:
TO TAKE A SEAT OR TO WAIT?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>At home</th>
<th>At work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would sit immediately</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would wait until offered a seat</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are no rules for this</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here we have a prime example of adoptive processes at work in changing socio-cultural circumstances. When we study the above, it is obvious that workers have adapted their behaviour to conform with what happens in the white culture: whereas more than a quarter said that they would sit immediately when visiting a friend’s house, only 6% would do so at work.

(m) Smile instead of greeting

This question (21 in Appendix C) was asked because during the interview phase a few informants had remarked on how white people did not greet but smiled when they met while passing each other or when entering. On probing, it was discovered that the objection was to the absence of a verbal greeting. The smile was at times described as a grin and the conclusion was that someone who used this form of greeting was insincere because they did not use a proper greeting form.

The responses to question 21 show that 42% did not object to a silent form of greeting, whereas 42% regarded the person who did not greet, but smiled or grinned instead, as insincere.

In this case people who grew up in Western societies may use non-verbal communication only, whereas people in African communities expect non-verbal communication to be accompanied by verbal interaction. These differences could lead to miscommunication. Differences in smiling conventions were mentioned in 3.8.8.1 in Chapter 3 where research by Baglan (1989:5 and Sherman 1989:6) was cited.

(n) Politeness forms used in requests

This topic belongs to the N component of the framework suggested by Hymes (1967:24). See 3.9.1 in Chapter 3 for differences in norms of interpretation of speech acts of request.

This feature (question 22 in Appendix C) was included to test which politeness forms were used by African speakers to show politely that they wanted to borrow
something. Finlayson (1991:10) shows that misunderstanding occurs when the non-home language speaker finds it difficult to express the degree of politeness he/she would have done in the home language because the terms are not equivalent. She says (1991:10): “African languages are as polite and sensitive to mood as any other language and there are special words to indicate that something is a request”.

Although many workers had not undergone formal schooling and needed an interpreter to complete the interview schedule, only 4% could not formulate a request to borrow an instrument or a pencil in either Afrikaans or English. This question was included to test whether asseblief (please) was used in the request. Respondents were first required to ask whether they could borrow something in their home language, and after the interpreter had written down what was said, were asked to repeat the request in one of the official languages. It was interesting to observe how either please or sorry or askies (sorry) were used in the home languages; in other words, transfer had taken place from the target language into the first language.

Some examples of this kind of answer are given below.

A Shangaan dictated to the interpreter:

*Sorry, lomba pencil.

His attempt in English was:

*Sorry, please you can borrow me your pen?

Another Shangaan dictated:

*Askies, lomba ballpen.

His "English" version was: Askies, you can borrow a ballpen?

Pedi respondents said:

*Sorry, ke kgopela go shomisha pen ya goga.

*Miesies, ek vra daai pen, gaan skryf.

*Sorry, ek vra pencil.

5.8 What first-language speakers of either Afrikaans or English know about sociolinguistic rules of speakers of African languages

5.8.1 The objectives of this phase

The objectives of this final phase was to compare the findings of the two surveys by questioning members of speech communities who have Afrikaans or English as their home language.
5.8.2 The strategies employed in this phase

A cyclical model of research was used instead of one "big bang" type (as described by Rowan 1981:105). In the beginning cycles of the research process the researcher constantly moved back and forth between observation and elicitation procedures. This method made it possible to achieve recursive validity of a cumulative nature.

While using the structural framework proposed by Hymes as a way of placing data in an articulated set of categories, it was observed that speakers of Afrikaans or English and speakers of one of the African languages did not nominate the same features when asked to describe what they considered to be barriers to successful communication. Age and gender variables of interviewees were not controlled, nor was any attempt made at recording the home language other than which one of the erstwhile official languages versus African languages was spoken (as discussed in 5.3.3.1 and 5.3.3.2 respectively). This means that, in this early qualitative phase of the empirical study, the answers arrived at will not qualify as "good answers" in terms of statistical evidence and no objective decisions about a particular feature can be made on the strength of these observations. However, this was not the aim in this early phase of the research. The aim of this qualitative research phase was to identify and describe features that would later be verified with randomly selected samples.

As was mentioned, as early as the interview phase it became apparent that speakers of the two identified groups were unaware of the rules of speaking in use in the other group. During the interview phase it was noted that forms of greeting (or the absence thereof) and differences in forms of address were potentially interesting for the purposes of this study, and at the time an opportunity which would make it possible to control variables of a large sample (see 5.6) presented itself. Statisticians were consulted (at considerable expense) for the ABE project of which the 5 questions on sociolinguistic issues made up only small section. The statisticians gave advice on the phrasing of the questions which would make it possible to use complex statistical designs to investigate the interactive effects of a number of independent variables simultaneously.

In the meantime, the interviewing phase continued alongside the literature study while permission was being sought to observe interaction in a place of work. Once this was obtained, the ethnographic phase could begin (all the time the process of interviewing still went on and interviews were conducted whenever and wherever an opportunity presented itself). The process could have continued for considerably longer than it did but as Rowan (1981:99) recognizes, at some stage in the research cycle the researcher has to abandon the gathering of yet further information. It was therefore decided to test the sociolinguistic features that had been identified with people who have Afrikaans or English as a home language and who were currently employed.
As interviewees in the earlier phases had turned out to be predominantly male, it was decided to maintain this imbalance and more men than women were interviewed in the final phase. The sample used in the final phase for speakers who have Afrikaans or English as a home language was not "fixed": some questions were put to eighteen people, but when other issues became apparent, they were added to the list and put to new informants. The universe, therefore, was a sample ranging from eighteen to twenty people who had spent at least fifteen years of their working lives in close proximity to people who had neither of the official languages as their home language. The liberty of not using only data supplied by all informants was taken after considering what Roberts et al. (1992:179) have to say about ethnographic methods:

Ethnographic research is a detailed investigation of the cultural and social patterns of interaction and the values, beliefs and assumptions that account for such interaction. Ethnography developed as a reaction against positivism and the influence of positivistic research on the social sciences. In particular, it was a reaction against a scientific method which assumes there are universal laws which can be uncovered through experimental and standardised procedures and described in neutral, objective terms.

It was decided to use a sample smaller than that of the second quantitative survey for two reasons, the first one being purely practical, the other methodological. From a practical point or view it was impossible to find a sample the same size as that used in the second quantitative survey who had Afrikaans or English as home language in the organizations where the pilot study and second quantitative survey were conducted. In the second place, the methodology that underpins the study militates against using figures to uphold the hypothesis. Instead, to increase the reliability of subjective interpretations, a process of triangulation was used. The whole operation was conducted in the light of Walker's words. Walker (1988:56), while lauding what Keats called "negative capability", reminds us of the need to be comfortable with uncertainties. He cites work in which forty years of research on the experimentation of teaching methods was reviewed: out of 780 experiments 580 had inconclusive outcomes, and the other 200 had mutually contradictory ones. Like Rowan (p. 90 below) Walker pleads for research to identify "what matters". He argues that even if large-scale experimental research could control its variables and be authoritative, it may not even be informative (as the inconclusive results mentioned above prove).

As was mentioned in 1.4.1, the magnitude of the "language gaps" quoted earlier in this thesis are based on Ellis's unpublished manuscripts, and her analysis of the linguistic diversity in the nine economic sectors (see Figure 2 on page 9 in Chapter 1). These figures, in turn, are based on a 5 percent sample of the 1980 census. However, as the first democratic election (April 1994) has shown, the census data are notoriously unreliable and all figures quoted can serve only as an indication of trends. Lyster's (1992) remarks on (literacy) statistics can be repeated here. She (1992:13) says: "They are absolutely not absolute". When comparing the actual
figures in Figure 2 on page 9 in Chapter 1 where the ratio of employers:employees is represented graphically, it is clear that the number of employers in the smaller pie-graph (15,252 or 4%) represent a much smaller number compared to the much bigger slice of employees (365,259 or 96%) in the pie-graph that represents those in a position of power. Therefore, in this final section, when comparisons are made and views are expressed and quantified in percentages, they must not be regarded as absolute. It is important not to attach too much significance to the actual percentages as they should rather be viewed as indications or relative types and frequencies rather than as absolute, empirically tested items.

In the meantime, the development of more questions that could be included in the questionnaire for use in the semi-structured interviews was being considered. Only the discourse completion test that examined offensive gestures was used in the same manner as those for speakers of African languages and for Afrikaans- or English-speakers. For the rest the emphasis was on politeness strategies used by speakers. Respondents were interviewed informally, and not all the questions were put to all the respondents in one session or on the same day, and some were unaware that their answers were being recorded for analysis.

From the above it becomes apparent that, in an attempt to be systematic and rigorously to search for underlying rules, the researcher employed methods advocated by methodologists who believe in triangulation: she synthesized methods employed by positivists (and for five sociolinguistic features tested used a sample of more than a thousand people) and balanced these by employing methods advocated by qualitative researchers. For the latter she interviewed people informally and formally and made use of an assistant researcher to conduct Free Attitude Interviews in the home language of the workers on the work-floor.

(a) Language preferences

The features under consideration (*Code*) fall in the I component of Hymes’s mnemonic.

Speakers of Afrikaans or English languages were not tested on this issue as it was observed throughout the study that they spoke either Afrikaans or English and not once did anyone attempt to speak one of the African languages. When asked why no African language was spoken, many people expressed regret that they had not learned one of the languages at school and were now at sea about which one of the many they would have to learn. Many said that although they could not speak one of the languages, they believed the people they worked with could read the goodwill expressed in their attitude and body language. (It is ironic, as this study revealed, that non-verbal behaviour for the different speech communities differs so considerably!)
(b) Forms of address

In Hymes’s framework the selection of the sociolinguistic variable for forms of address falls in the P (Participants) component because selection of a form of address is based on what is known about the interlocutors involved in the speech event.

This issue was raised during the interview phase and explored in great detail in the pilot study -- see 5.5.2 (b) and the two quantitative surveys: the first four sub-questions in 5.6.2 and 5.7.3 (b) -- but was not included in any of the interview schedules conducted with speakers who have Afrikaans or English as a home language. The reason for this exclusion is that it was observed that when the researcher was introduced to employees in an organization, the form used for speakers of Afrikaans or English differed from that used for speakers of one of the African languages. With speakers of one of the (then) official languages, the surname was always included in the introduction, preceded by either a title or a first name.

In a vertical status relationship, it is customary to use the plural or polite pronoun or form for superiors, and the familiar pronoun for inferiors. In all cases observed, the familiar pronoun used suggests that addressees were regarded as inferiors. Evidently the speakers of the official languages reserved more formal terms for those they viewed as deserving status and respect. For black employees, the first name only was mentioned while a surname was very seldom given; only once was an interpreter introduced as Mr.

(c) Beckoning someone

As gestures are non-verbal, this variable forms part of the I (Instrumentalities) component in Hymes’s framework.

The discourse completion test on how to call someone -- see the last sub-question in 5.6, and 5.7 (c) -- was repeated with respondents who have either English or Afrikaans as a home language. The findings are startling: the greatest majority (94%) used the offensive gesture to show how they would call an imaginary person. Only 6% knew that it was offensive and that one had to use the whole arm movement manner when calling someone not within earshot.

Again this finding confirms the hypothesis posited in Chapter 1.

(d) Objection to Did you understand? as a tag to a statement or instruction

This feature can be classified as A (Act) as it has to do with the form of a message, i.e. how a message is conveyed.
This tag question was not tested with speakers who have Afrikaans or English as a home language. Discrepancy between speaker intuition and actual speech behaviour is well documented (Gumperz 1970:207; Brouwer et al. 1979b:47; Wolfson 1989:41) and therefore it was decided not to tap native speakers on this tag question.

Findings of the pilot study showed that where the S component was marked, no objections were raised when this question was used.

(e) Politeness forms used by blacks

*Do you know any gestures that black people use to show that they are being polite?*

This was the second question put to interviewees (the first was how they could tell when someone was being dishonest -- see below). This question was asked to compare answers given by respondents in the second quantitative survey in which a range of features were quantified.

The answers supplied by home language speakers of Afrikaans or English were diverse. Some respondents said:

* They clap their hands and bob when receiving something.
* They walk ahead of you when entering the lift.
* They sometimes bob or curtsey when you give them something.
* They cup their hands when you give them something.
* They call you “Ma” (“Mother”) instead of “Mrs” to show respect and that they have accepted you.
* They say “yes” when in their hearts they mean “no” because they do not want to hurt your feelings.
* They respect their elders.
* They believe fervently in the idea of ubuntu (the commonly-used term that denotes "humanism").

After respondents had named all the features of which they were aware, the researcher worked through a list of the other features not mentioned by them to test whether they were aware of these politeness rules but which they were not able to recall immediately without being prompted. These are discussed below:

(i) Hand clapping

This gesture was the one that most speakers of Afrikaans or English could recall. It was mentioned by almost two-thirds (65%) of those interviewed and the other third (35%) readily admitted that they had observed this gesture. All identified it as a form of politeness when questioned.
When we compare 65% (almost two-thirds) of speakers of one of the official languages who mentioned this feature with approximately three-fifths (62%) of respondents of the second quantitative survey who have an African language as a home language and who claimed they use this form, this is evidently one feature that has not gone unnoticed.

(ii) Support of one hand with another when receiving something

When speakers who have Afrikaans or English as their home language were asked which gestures speakers of one of the African languages use to express politeness, this gesture was hardly mentioned, suggesting that it were not observed consciously by speakers of one of the two erstwhile official languages. Only approximately one-fifth (17%) mentioned this without being prompted, but when it was read from the list, another two-fifths (40%) admitted to having observed it.

This is a revealing finding when we consider that three-fifths (62%) of the respondents in the second quantitative survey (speakers who have an African language as home language) said that they used this form and another one-fifth (18%) that they had done so when they were younger.

In view of this finding the hypothesis posited in Chapter 1 is upheld. The hypothesis was that the "mutual ignorance" that leads to communicative breakdown in language contact situations is caused by ignorance of, or insufficient knowledge of, sociolinguistic norms.

(iii) A "correct" hand used when giving and receiving something

In the second quantitative survey (see (g) of 5.7.3.) almost all (98%) respondents said that the right hand was the only acceptable hand when giving something to someone or when receiving something.

This feature came as a total surprise to speakers who have Afrikaans or English as a home language. In contrast to the responses of African speakers, not one respondent admitted to knowing that it was regarded as impolite by members of the black communities to give something with the left hand. Most said they used their right hands simply because they were right-handed and those who are left-handed used their left hands. Usually some discussion followed. Some people admitted that they knew that the left hand was not acceptable in some countries in the Middle East, but expressed amazement when told how members of the black communities had responded to the question. Ten percent of those interviewed wondered whether this custom was not probably more prevalent in the rural areas, but when told that the research was based on responses from people who had been working in industry in the Johannesburg area for many years, disbelief was once again expressed.
This finding can be seen as further support for the hypothesis posited in Chapter 1.

(f) How does one know when someone is dishonest?

This question was asked to compare findings with the question put to African speakers in the second quantitative survey (see (j) in 5.7.3) where African respondents were asked whether it was acceptable to look a superior in the eye.

This was the very first question put to them to have them reflect on how they knew when someone was telling lies or being dishonest. Care was taken not to specify the language spoken by the other person because the researcher wanted to ascertain whether speakers who had Afrikaans or English as a home language were aware of differences between members of speech communities other than their own and wanted to see whether differences would be mentioned spontaneously.

Approximately three-quarters (75%) mentioned lack of eye contact. Answers for this feature were:

* I will know when someone is being dishonest when I see shifty eyes.
* The person will look away or fidget.
* He will hold a hand in front of his mouth.
* Perhaps he or she will laugh.
* They will speak English. (The latter was said of grandchildren of an Afrikaans-speaking informant.)

Only one respondent (a woman) added wistfully that blacks who do not look one in the eye are obeying a cultural rule that signals respect and should therefore not be thought of as deceitful.

When one compares this finding of three-quarters (75%) of the sample with that of the respondents of the second quantitative survey where slightly more than half (52%) indicated that it is not acceptable to look a superior in the eye, it is clear, on the whole, that members of different speech communities in South Africa are unaware of this difference.

In view of this finding the hypothesis posited in Chapter 1 can be accepted. The responses to the other features tested confirm that members of different speech communities in South Africa are unaware of each others' sociolinguistic rules.

(g) Exclamation "aish!" or "ish!"

In the second quantitative survey, more than four-fifths (86%) of the respondents who had one of the African languages as a home language immediately identified this
exclamation, saying it was used to express disillusion or disappointment. When speakers of either Afrikaans or English the official languages were asked to say whether they knew what it meant, the picture that presents itself is almost the exact opposite of that portrayed for this feature in 5.7 above as not even one-fifth (only 18%) could identify the sound or sketch a scene that matched any of those described by workers on the work-floor.

In the speech event where "aish!" is used and this disclaimer goes unnoticed, it means that the expressive and emotive function of this discourse marker is lost on the other interlocutors in the interaction. When speakers of Afrikaans or English do not grasp what the exclamation of disillusionment suggests (some problem(s) on the content level of the preceding interaction), they miss a vocal cue that is an important indicator of dissatisfaction. In her discussion of Oh! as a marker of information management, Schiffrin (1987:73-101) claims that this form of interjection or exclamation indicates shifts in subjective orientation and "is said to indicate strong emotional states, e.g. surprise, fear or pain" (1987:73). She explains that speaker orientation to information is more than just a matter of recognition and receipt of informational content of discourse and that it also involves the evaluation of information. "[S]peakers respond affectively and subjectively to what is said, what they are thinking of, and what happens around them" (Schiffrin 1987:95).

Once again the findings confirm the hypothesis that mutual ignorance exists between members of different speech communities in South Africa.

5.8.3 A summing up of the findings

The findings discussed in 5.8 indicate that members of the speech communities that have Afrikaans or English as their home language are ignorant of sociolinguistic rules used by members speech communities who have an African language as a home language. The major differences are to be found in the area of non-verbal communication behaviour. In the discussion of the findings of the features tested with speakers of one of the official languages we see that the greatest degree of ignorance is to be found in the exclamation "Aish!" or "Ish!" and in the use of non-verbal gestures. It is revealing that speakers of Afrikaans or English believe this to be the very area that makes communication possible; but it is the area in which speakers of one of the (erstwhile) official languages may unintentionally cause the greatest offence.

In trying to "go beyond mere reporting" and "attempting to explain why" (Chick 1992:217), an explanation for the findings can be offered. What is seen is that the values of South African society are reflected in the micro-interactional contexts studied in industry. This conclusion can be reached when observing how the preferences of the speakers of Afrikaans and English are respected; in contrast the
preferences of the speakers of one of the African languages are not regarded as worthy of consideration, and in the rare cases where speakers of Afrikaans or English are aware of certain preferences (e.g. choice of language), these wishes are blithely ignored.

5.9 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to search for sociolinguistic rules that are unconsciously broken in interaction between speakers who do not share a common language, and have unequal status. The methods used in the elicitation and observation of such behaviour were described and the results of each phase reported and analysed.

Where misinterpretation of speaker intent occurred, this could be ascribed to ignorance of differences in rules of speaking between the two groups (first language speakers of Afrikaans or English languages and African languages).

It was indicated that, in the interaction of language and social setting, the components of the speech event within a particular speech situation (here the workfloor) has specific rules of speaking. It was, for instance, shown that the irritating request to sell a personal article would not occur within the work setting.

It was also shown that differences in the component Hymes termed Instrumentalities were most disturbing for speakers of the African languages, but that speakers of the (erstwhile) official languages were unaware of the kinesic rules. The Hymesian approach enables us to see non-verbal means of communication as an integral part of communication. Ignoring them or misinterpreting them will therefore cause the same type of miscommunication problems as when features of verbal communication are misinterpreted. It was show that non-verbal gestures played a very important role in communication. Non-verbal communicative gestures that were analysed were supporting the right wrist, clapping of hands, the correct hand to use when handing something to someone and the correct hand to use when receiving something, eye-contact, smiling instead of verbally greeting, sitting down and standing up, and so on. Because the message conveyed by these gestures is learned when young, it is often perceived below the level of consciousness. Incorrect messages at this level could, therefore, have a serious effect on how the corresponding verbal messages are interpreted. Therefore giving with the "wrong" hand could negate any verbal messages of gratitude. Other verbal messages can be negated by gestures, by breaking eye-contact, and so on. In African communities non-verbal gestures seem to play a more important role and this is therefore, predictably, an area in which miscommunication or misinterpretation can occur.

Some speakers of African languages had transferred politeness forms from English and Afrikaans (please and askies) into their own languages, but speakers of Afrikaans
or English were, on the whole, unaware of the politeness markers of the people with whom they were interacting. These findings indicate the reflexive relationship between interaction in industry and the larger South African society.

Rowan (1981:99) describes the final stage of the research cycle as the one in which the researcher has to ask what it all means. He explains that there is some sense of contradiction in the final phase. He writes (1981:100):

The contradiction here is between reduction of the data to an understandable simplicity, and adding more connections to the data to make them more understandable in that way, expanding them until they say everything.

In Chapter 6, therefore, "connections" will be added to the data, indicating how findings can be fruitfully implemented in courses in South Africa.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

It is not uncommon for people to be judged as evasive, irresponsible or even deceitful on account of differences in conversational styles (Applegate 1985:279).

When people coming from different backgrounds interact, they tend to judge each other's behaviour according to their own value systems. The more we know about other cultures, the more we are able to recognize that being different is not a question of being better or worse - it is merely a question of being different (Wolfson 1989:14).

6.0 Overview of this chapter

The aim of this chapter is to present a review of the other chapters in order to pull the strands of the thesis together and to identify insights that follow from a synthesis of the research findings. The overview is presented in 6.1. Recommendations for consciousness raising regarding differences in intercultural communication training and language courses are made in 6.2 and the thesis is concluded in 6.3

6.1 Review

6.1.1 Chapter 1

As the title of the thesis is Language use in industry, the multitude of languages spoken in the nine economic sectors in South Africa was identified in the first chapter. The large number of languages implies the existence of various sociolinguistic speech communities. The possibility that these exist implies that people could be unaware of the existence of different rules of speaking, and that because of this ignorance, miscommunication may occur in cross-cultural contact situations. In South Africa the most frequent cross-cultural contact occurs at work (Marais 1985) and for this reason the immense language gap between management and the greater workforce was presented graphically. These descriptions served as backdrop for the identification of the research problem, which was formulated as mutual ignorance of sociolinguistic conventions in various speech communities in contact on the work-floor. It was pointed out that when speakers of different languages interact, misinterpretation of speaker intent is bound to occur on many occasions. Two reasons for miscommunication were
identified. One is the linguistic incompetence of speakers who use a language other than their home language, and the other reason was that of ignorance of the sociolinguistic rules of other speech communities. What aggravates matters in the second instance, is that interlocutors may make ethnocentric judgements based on the ground rules of their own home languages.

It was concluded that when speakers of various languages meet on the work-floor, speaker intent may be misconstrued for both these reasons, but when this occurred owing to ignorance of the correct use in respect of the first level identified by Van Jaarsveld (1988:27), listeners automatically activated a sense-making process in order to decipher the linguistic message (Frederiksen 1975; Winograd 1983). In Van Jaarsveld’s model, the first level comprises phonological, syntactic and semantic categories. Van Jaarsveld concurs with Thomas (1983:6) who says, "Once alerted to the fact that S is not fully grammatically competent, native speakers seem to have little difficulty in making allowances for it". Of a more serious nature for intercultural communication breakdown is the misinterpretation of speaker intent that is attributed to dissimilar (unwritten) sociolinguistic rules. Some of these sociolinguistic rules that have not been learned consciously come to people’s attention only when interactional problems occur.

One of the aims of the study was to establish which sociolinguistic features were misconstrued by speakers of various speech communities. The framework proposed by Hymes (1962, 1967, 1972a) was selected as the most suitable means of describing the problem. His taxonomy was therefore explicated, and other terms relevant to the study were defined and elaborated on where this was considered necessary. In order to determine the causes of the misinterpretation of speaker intent, the sociolinguistic rules of the speech communities concerned had to be uncovered, because for intercultural communication to be successful, it is necessary to know what the expectations or cultural norms of other parties are. An important aspect of communicative competence is the ability to react in a culturally acceptable way in a particular kind of interaction, and the ability to choose stylistically appropriate forms for that particular situation.

6.1.2 Chapter 2

In Chapter 2 models posited in communication (information) theory were described, and found wanting for the purpose of rendering a fine-grained description and analysis of sociolinguistic differences which give rise to misinterpretation of speaker intent. It was deemed necessary to explore the possibilities of these models because they were used in earlier studies by researchers in their description of languages in contact in South Africa (Reagan 1986, Gxilishe and Van der Vyver 1987).

In this chapter a description was given of how mechanistic models in information
theory were developed in the quest for examining spoken communication, and it was shown how, starting with the Shannon Weaver model (1949) right through to the Haworth and Savage model (1989), these models were not able to account for the interplay of the sociolinguistic components of the speech event identified by Hymes.

Hymes's (1962, 1967, 1972a) model, the ethnography of speaking, was defended as being most suitable for using as a framework for the description of sociolinguistic differences.

6.1.3 Chapter 3

In Chapter 3 examples were given from the literature to illustrate how each of the components identified in the acronym SPEAKING can be the "marked" component in the determination of sociolinguistic rules. One of the reasons for scouring the literature was to identify what had been written up, because it was argued that this identification would prepare the groundwork for the empirical study that was to be conducted in industry in South Africa. Initially it was assumed that the literature survey would throw light on research methods used for obtaining data, but on the whole this aspect was poorly reported on in the literature.

6.1.4 Chapter 4

Research methodology was the topic of Chapter 4. The two most widely-used methods of data collection (elicitation and observation) were discussed and the advantages and disadvantages of each debated. Because the uncertainty principle posited in the discipline of physics is regarded as one of the major advances into scientific inquiry made in this century, Heisenberg's theory, which was developed in the 1920s, served as a backdrop to examples in sociolinguistic research that confirm how an a priori identification of features to be studied affects the very data collected. As a solution, a process of triangulation was proposed. Methods used include a literature review, participant observation, elicitation procedures such as the Discourse Completion Test in structured interviews, and Free Attitude Interview techniques in unstructured interviews.

6.1.5 Chapter 5

In Chapter 5 problems encountered in gaining access to the work-floor, the collection and interpretation of data were described. The findings arrived at and reported on in Chapter 5 indicate that extra-linguistic features which play a role in miscommunication of speaker intent are at times not interpreted accurately.
Conclusion

One of the findings was that miscommunication is likely to occur where one culture has developed a complex structure while the other has none. Thus African cultures seem to have a more complex status and respect structure than modern urban Western cultures. Furthermore, African cultures seem to communicate many aspects of this status and respect structure non-verbally. Members of Western culture groups are therefore likely to misinterpret eye-contact conventions, conventions of who sits and who stands when a superior enters a room, and other means of showing politeness and gratitude.

When the research was started, it was foreseen that findings would have application in both L2 and intercultural training courses. The assumption was that not only learners of Afrikaans or English but also course developers of African languages would benefit from this research. The analysis and interpretation of the findings, however, indicate that Afrikaans or English learners of one of the African languages stand to learn more from the current study, because in most cases their responses revealed that these speakers were unaware of many of the sociolinguistic rules applied by members of a speech community which had one of the African languages as its home language.

When asked whether language posed a problem in the work situation, speakers of Afrikaans or English intimated that, although they could not speak the language of other population groups, they believed that people could judge what their attitude was by reading their body language. The assumption was obviously that cues are read, meanings interpreted and values judged on the strength of non-verbal behaviour. It is clear that these speakers were unaware that when they rely on non-verbal forms of communication in the absence of a common language, the interpretation of these non-verbal forms is based on their own cultural framework and therefore may convey a different meaning to the one intended.

The hypothesis posited in Chapter 1 was upheld by the findings reported in Chapter 5 and it is therefore possible to concur with Reagan (1986:106) who asserted that mutual ignorance was the reason for miscommunication problems.

6.2 Recommendations

The study has indicated that a complex system of status and respect underlies communication in African cultures and that some aspects of this system are communicated non-verbally. The study also revealed that a significant portion of Afrikaans or English speakers were ignorant of sociolinguistic rules that determine how this complex system and other aspects of culture are communicated. It is self-evident that some kind of educational strategy must be implemented if people from different speech communities at work are to communicate more effectively. The prime aim of
such a strategy should be to facilitate intercultural understanding, which, according to Ting-Toomey (1984), is a prime construct in the study of intercultural communication. Various strategies are possible.

One strategy might be to sensitise L2 learners who attend a language course to the role of sociolinguistic rules, in general, in everyday conversation. However, as was mentioned above, the findings indicate that speakers of Afrikaans or English stand to learn more from such a sensitising course, yet this group is not at present actively involved in language learning. It seems highly likely that this situation might change in the New South Africa. Language courses are presented mostly for employees who are learning English, usually after attending literacy classes in one of the African languages, and therefore it is unlikely that speakers of Afrikaans or English would be among the learners. Another strategy might be to include a specific module on sociolinguistic differences in courses on intercultural training. It is hoped that, after attending intercultural training programmes in which learners are made aware of contextual variables that affect the choice of a particular sociolinguistic feature, some sensitivity to differences will be fostered. The important point that must be made is that there is no right or wrong when it comes to sociolinguistic diversity, but that participants must be made aware of differences without being judgemental. Participants will have to realise that meanings that are assigned to gesture are not necessarily the same for members of different speech communities.

Both these strategies necessitate looking at what is currently being done in language teaching and intercultural communication training courses elsewhere and in South Africa before specific recommendations can be made.

6.2.1 Elsewhere

In Chapter 2 it was sketched how, in the last twenty years, a greater awareness of improving relationships between trading partners who speak different languages has developed. In many parts of the world vast resources are already committed to the provision of courses in the instruction of intercultural communication. In America, the Defence Language Institute and the Foreign Service Institute realised the importance of language and cultural training, and cultural awareness and understanding of the culture’s sociolinguistic features are included in the training of military students and prospective members of the diplomatic corps of that country. In these language courses information on cultural differences is incorporated from the start because it is considered important for the learner to be aware of the different values, attitudes and norms of behaviour.

In the literature on cross-cultural training, the many courses available for people who
trade in foreign markets or who have a multi-racial workforce, acknowledge the need
to adapt to the dynamics of working and living in a culture overwhelmingly different
from one's own (Baird and Stull 1981; Crane 1986; Bush-Bacelis 1987; Armstrong et
al. 1988; and Setliff and Taft 1988). There is an expressed need to sensitize
participants to the importance of own-cultural awareness, other-culture awareness,
understanding and appreciation, as well as to the need to develop communication skills
such as listening, empathy and attendance to the non-verbal signals required for
productive cross-cultural interactions.

6.2.2 In South Africa

During the early stages of this thesis, the researcher investigated what was happening
in intercultural training in the PWV area, and found that in some major companies the
Human Resources Departments had developed their own in-house programmes. Some
smaller companies were sending employees to a large company (First National Bank)
in Johannesburg, where employees from many companies from all over the country
participated in a four-and-a half-day programme.

For these courses individuals are identified and workshops (that last from two to five
days) are run in which employees discuss differences and grievances. In most cases
the curriculum is open-ended, in other words the particular needs of the group are
addressed, the success of the workshop depending to a great extent on the skill of the
facilitator. Often a "critical incident" procedure is followed. This entails an analysis of
a specific encounter between members of different cultures. Small groups are formed
and participants discuss the critical incident, and report back to the facilitator, who
helps the groups to reach an understanding of why people of other cultures behave the
way they do. As was mentioned previously, language was not regarded as a barrier to
intercultural harmony; consequently sociolinguistic topics did not feature in discussions.
This is in contrast to what linguists recommended for the improvement of intercultural
communication, as the three examples mentioned below testify.

Reagan (1986) recommends a "language and culture exposure" course for white
supervisors in South Africa. Commenting on the very positive responses to whites who
are willing to make the effort to learn a little bit of the black language (regardless of
objective competence) Reagan (1986:107) says: "Such a potentially positive
contribution to human relations in the factory will almost certainly have positive effects
on communication in the workplace". A year later, in their study on industrial training
and the labour situation in the Republic of South Africa, Gxilishe and van der Vyver
(1987:19) recommend that industrial language training should be designed to enable
the worker to cope with face-to-face interaction, to acquire information and skills to
negotiate, and to adjust and adapt to the work situation in particular, and to the
industrial scene in general. They, too, single out the supervisor as the focal point for training. Chick (1987:249; 255ff) also calls for insights from interactional sociolinguistic research to be incorporated in interventionist programmes, with the aim of eradicating discrimination. He, however, expresses his reservations about the success of any measures unless structural changes took place, which at the time of writing seemed unlikely to happen.

Since these calls for training of the supervisor and other gatekeepers were made, the social situation has changed rapidly in South Africa. After the historic volte-face by the Nationalist government early in 1990 the racial composition of middle management in the workforce stands to change and many positions previously reserved for speakers of Afrikaans or English are gradually being taken over by speakers of one of the African languages. Many organizations have affirmative action programmes (recently the ANC called for this to become obligatory) which means that speakers of one of the African languages are being trained for positions previously denied them. These structural changes all necessitate training to raise awareness of some of the sociolinguistic rules underlying the communicative behaviour of other speech communities. It is highly likely that these actions will allow people from different speech communities to get to know each other better and long-lasting personal relationships will probably be formed. This is, according to Gumperz (1982:209) a prerequisite for informal learning about sociolinguistic rules.

In South Africa the HSRC established a Division of Organization in Context that has access to extensive expertise in the communications field. The Division specializes in the diagnosis of communication problems in an organization and the development of communication training programmes.

It is recommended that the findings of the present research be made known to the Division for dissemination.

Although it is acknowledged that communication experts may select the most appropriate model for a particular client, it is nevertheless suggested that of the four approaches identified by Bennett (1986), the cultural awareness approach be adopted. This approach is also underwritten by Wolfson (1989:33), who says:

> [It] does not require that people change their personalities or their most deeply ingrained principles concerning correct behaviour; what is needed is for the learners to come to understand what is meant by the words and expressions they hear, and to be able to respond to them appropriately so that unnecessary miscommunication can be avoided.

The awareness approach is considered to be more effective than the intellectual model
(with its emphasis on cognitive goals and traditional education "intellectual processes"),
the simulation model (which emphasizes experiential processes in which the learners
are active participants in the learning process) or the human relations model (which is
based on the assumption that the individual who understands him/herself will
understand his/her culture better and will consequently be more sensitive). Chen
(1991:5) confirms that similar approaches have been provided by Brislin (1979, 1989);
Gudykunst, Hammer and Wiseman (1977); Sikkema and Niyekawa (1987), and Triandis

6.3 Conclusion

The findings arrived at in Chapter 5 confirm the reflexive relationship between language and society.

The thesis is concluded by the observation that a contribution was made to the
description of sociolinguistic rules, the violation of which may result in misinterpretation
of speaker intent, which in turn may lead to negative stereotyping. It is believed that,
by adding to the descriptions of the rules of speaking, a contribution can also be made
to breaking down ethnocentric behaviour as far as acceptable non-verbal communication behaviour is concerned.

It is concluded that this knowledge adds to our understanding of communicative competence, and supports what Hymes recently said about the term he coined more than twenty years ago. He says of communicative competence (1992:37,38):

First, the competence of a person in a language is partly and variably a
function of other languages he or she may know and use ... Second,
when we think of persons as able to participate in social life as users of
language, we actually need to consider their ability to integrate use of
language with other modalities of communication, such as gesture, facial
expression, sniffs and snorts, etc. Analysis of politeness implicates such
aspects of deference and demeanour. Basic meaning such as affirmation
and negation must be specified in terms of movements of the head, and
of the hand, as concomitants or alternatives to words. In sum, what one
knows and what one does in regard to a language involves its place in
the larger sphere of communicative knowledge and ability.

The findings of the research are important in developing strategies for overcoming misunderstanding. It is essential that stereotypes be dispelled, and groups brought closer together, by the development of those interactional skills and mutual understanding which are necessary to help break down those kinds of segmentation which remain in South African society.
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House.


APPENDIX A

Communication Barriers

The Shannon-Weaver Model
Appendix A

Berlo Dynamic Process Model

Intersection Area

Channel-Ratio Model of High Intersection Exchange
The Campbell/Level Communication Model
APPENDIX B

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN THE WORKPLACE

(THE PILOT STUDY)

1. What is your home language?

2. What language does your supervisor (or immediate senior at work) use most when speaking to you?

3. What language would you want (or prefer) your supervisor or senior at work to use when speaking to you at work?

4. How are you usually addressed by a senior at work?

5. How do you want to be addressed by a senior at work?

6. How do you address a senior at work?

7. How do you want to address a senior at work?

8. How you feel when your supervisor uses this gesture when s/he has to call you to come to her/him because you are far away and there is too much noise for you to hear your name? (The gesture is demonstrated.)

9. How do you feel when the supervisor asks *Do you understand?* or *Hetz jy verstaan?* after giving an instruction or explaining something to you?
10. When someone hands you something, do you think it is necessary to say "thank you"?

11. Have you ever heard anyone saying *Sorry! Sorry!* If so, describe a scene that you witnessed where this was used.

12. Would you ask your foreman or supervisor to sell you an article of clothing (or anything else) that you admired?

13. In your culture, is it acceptable and polite for a younger person to look a superior in the eye? (Yes/No)

14. If you visit friends, what is the correct thing to do when you enter the house?

15. Have you ever been told that you are making a noise when talking to other operators? If so, how do you feel about this?

16. What do you feel/think when someone says to you "Haven’t you seen my .......?"

17. Derogatory ethnic labels. Give examples and ask what happens whenever any of these "forms of address" are used at work.

18. Qualifications? / age?

19. How long have you been working here?
APPENDIX C

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN THE WORKPLACE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Card</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Record number</td>
<td>2-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 1**
What is your home language?

**Question 2**
What language does your supervisor (or immediate senior at work) use most when speaking to you? **NAME ONLY ONE**

**Question 3**
What language would you want (or prefer) your supervisor or senior at work to use when speaking to you at work? **NAME ONLY ONE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndebele</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedi</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shangaan</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sotho</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swazi</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tswana</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsonga</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venda</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xhosa</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zulu</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/specify</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 4
How are you usually addressed by a senior at work?

Question 5
How do you want to be addressed by a senior at work?

Question 6
How do you address a senior at work?

Question 7
How do you want to address a senior at work?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Q</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By your first name</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Q 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By your surname</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Q 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mnumzane nkosi morena Mr mosadi</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Q 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Mrs meneer madoda</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Q 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 8
When someone has to call you to come to him/her because you are far away and there is too much noise for you to hear your name if you were called, which gesture would you find offensive? In other words, what don’t you like?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gesture Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head movement calling you.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling movement using the whole hand and arm (body movement).</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling movement using one or two fingers only.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both 1 and 3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 9
How do you feel when someone says Dankie HOOR or Thank you SEE to you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is OK, the thank you is sincere.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You feel insulted</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never heard</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 10
Do you hold your left hand with your right hand when you receive something?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not any more but did when I was younger</th>
<th>Other comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because "both hands" was used so often, this was coded as 5.
Question 11

When someone hands you something, do you think it is necessary to say "thank you" or can you indicate this by hand clapping or any other means? (Mention how else you would show that you are thankful)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Only &quot;thank you&quot;</th>
<th>Only children</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 12a

Which hand do you use when you give something to someone?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>left</th>
<th>right</th>
<th>It does not matter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 12b

Do you regard it as impolite to hand something to someone with the other hand (the one you do not use?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Acceptable if you are left handed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Acceptable if used in the factory added as 4
Question 12c
When a white person hands you something using his/her LEFT hand, how do you feel?

| Not insulted, think they probably do not know because they have different manners. | 1 |
| Feel insulted. | 2 |
| Other feelings/ views (specify) | 3 |

ADDED "can't/ won't accept" 4
I would tell/ ask them to use the other hand. 5

Question 13
When someone says "aish" or "iish" what feeling are they expressing?

Disillusion, irritation, surprise, dissatisfaction = 1
Never heard = 2

Question 14
When you are seated and working and someone talks to you while walking past (without stopping) what do you think about that person?

Acceptable = 1
Must stop, otherwise considered to be rude = 2
Acceptable at work/ allowances made for person being in a hurry. = 3

Question 15  EYE CONTACT
In your culture, is it acceptable and polite for a younger person to look a superior in the eye? (Yes/No)

| yes | 1 |
| no | 2 |
Question 16  GREETING FIRST

If your at work and are working and someone comes into the room, who must greet first?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>It does not matter</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The person who has come into the room.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 17 : SITTING DOWN AND STANDING UP

(a) If you visit friends, what is the correct thing to do when you enter the house?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You sit down immediately.</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You wait until you are offered a seat.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are no rules for this.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) When you are called to the manager's office, what would you do?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You sit down immediately.</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You wait until you are offered a seat.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are no rules for this.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 18
How old are you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-19</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 19
Are you a man or a woman?

man = 1
woman = 2

Question 20
What is your highest level of education.

Standard 2 or lower = 1
Standard 3 - 6 = 2
Standard 7 - 8 = 3
Standard 9 - 10 = 4
No schooling = 5
Question 21
Sometimes white people grin broadly when walking past you when you have greeted each other already. Sometimes they nod their heads and grin (instead of greeting)
What are your feelings about someone who grins instead of greeting?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You have never noticed this</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You think the person is being friendly, it is acceptable.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have not thought about it and have no views on the person's character.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You think the person is insincere and cannot be trusted.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 22
You have a pencil in your hand. Ask the person you are interviewing to ask

(a) In their HOME LANGUAGE whether he/she may borrow it for a while. Write down their ACTUAL words.

(b) Now ask them to ask in English (or Afrikaans) to ask whether they can borrow the pencil. Write down their ACTUAL words.

If *please* or *asseblief* has been included = 1,
If not, = 2.
If respondent could not translate = 3.
Question 23
For how long have you been working here?

0 - 5 years  1
6 - 10 years  2
11 - 14 years  3
15 - 19 years  4
20 - 24 years  5
25 - 29 years  6
30 plus       7

Question 24
What position do you hold in your current job?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION