Chapter 10

IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

The previous chapter concluded with the following formula, that defines the dissertation act:

FORCE: PREDICATION (REFERENCE1,... REFERENCEn).

It was shown there that definitions of particular dissertation acts can be derived from it, by substituting each label in capital letters by one small case element in the corresponding list (which was provided too). Thus, for example, the nucleus of a classification is defined as:

Assertion: inclusive (generic, generic).

Likewise, Chapter 8 could be summarized in a formula for illocutionary acts:

INTERVENTION: ROLES (SUBJECTS), DEONTIC CONDITIONS,

from which we can derive, *eg*, the definition of an order:

Change effected: subordinate (hearer), permitted to obligatory.

The parsimony of the two formulae has been achieved by identifying and delimiting the nature of each type of acts. This, in turn, was primarily the result of distinguishing one from the other (in the second part of the thesis). But it also required other distinctions, which were introduced and discussed in various chapters, mainly: action and act; act, act relation, and act sequence; act and rhetorical compound; cohesion, connection, coherence, and consistency.

This discussion was motivated and guided by a concern about issues in applied linguistics research and in foreign language pedagogy, besides, of course, by a need for internal cogency. The latter often had to occupy the forefront, due to the complexity of the matter and the confusions pointed to in the preface and the first part of the thesis; nevertheless, the former, which gave direction to the enquiry, was reflected in commentaries about notions which are frequently used by applied linguists and language teachers, such as those of communicative competence or context. These commentaries, which sometimes appeared as interspersed paragraphs and sometimes constituted a special section at the end of a chapter, are of diverse kinds. Some, for example, show solutions to problems of research methodology. Others take existing pedagogical proposals a step ahead or make new proposals. And many point to deficiencies or mistakes in analytic schemata.

It is the central purpose of this chapter to integrate the mentioned distinctions and the commentaries, on the basis of the formulae presented above, in order to develop clear statements of intent that can guide further work. It has three main sections. The first one is a framework for devising empirical research strategies and, perhaps more importantly, for identifying objects of research in ways which lead to valid comparisons of research results. It shows that disparities in articles reviewed in earlier chapters, *eg* those related to the size of units of analysis, can be understood as resulting from fixing (or varying) different elements in the formulae in non-explicit ways. And it, logically, concludes that the associated problems can be eliminated by controlling the elements appropriately. The second and third part present the cores of design programmes; one concentrates on the content and the other on the form of language teaching. They involve a discussion of some contradictions in the communicative approach, such as one which results from the view of learning and the prescription of classroom activity that were part of its roots. They also consider the main limitation of the approach, *viz* the impossibility of incorporating an explicit teaching of grammar in a principled fashion. And they provide explanations and solutions to both the contradictions and the limitation. The framework and the programmes would have to be elaborated and then validated externally, of course; therefore, they cannot be categorical at this stage. However, I have given them a rather definite form, following Bacon's belief that truth emerges from error rather than from confusion.

There are two additional sections. One is a speculation on the possibility and convenience of recovering and redefining the notion of teaching method. This notion came to be so important at one point that today we often use a derived term, 'methodology', to refer to teaching principles (and, sometimes, to teaching technique as well). But the conception we had of it was incompatible with the communicative approach and it had to be abandoned. However, perhaps it is time to rethink the notion and, I will argue, a more general view of method could be useful rather than constraining, in the implementation of the designs envisaged. This view could develop from a realization that the essential function of old methods was to guide the teachers' decisions and that teachers nowadays take even more decisions than they did in the past.

The final section brings together the points about content, form and method, and advocates for an increased use in the classroom of the reflexive property of human language, *ie*, the possibility of turning upon itself. Again, it draws upon and advances ideas that have been put forth elsewhere. For, this reason, it asks whether what is being depicted is teaching which promotes more communication or which promotes communication and more. It will be shown that deliberately keeping the ambiguity might be convenient. In consequence, it will be suggested that what is being depicted be called 'metacommunicative method'.

Besides the purposes that correspond to the outlined sections, this chapter has the objective of indicating ways in which a notation to exploit the potential of the formulae could be developed.

Research

If we look at the work by Ellis that was commented on in chapters 2 and 8 (Ellis 1992) in the light of the second formula presented above, we will see that what his conflating requests and orders means is to fix two elements, the subject and the deontic condition, and to leave the other labels variable:

INTERVENTION: ROLES (hearer), to obligatory.

It is because of this that the conflation is surprising (and counterintuitive). In everyday use, we tend to regard orders as involving a specific type of interven-

tion: an effected change. In other words, the deontic condition becomes obligatory because of the order. By contrast, we tend to think about requests as involving a very different intervention: a proposal. That is, the change to a condition of obligatory would only take place if, in another act, the interlocutor accepts it.

Furthermore, again in everyday speech, describing an act as an order usually implies regarding the hearer as a subordinate to the speaker, even if only within limited contexts or only metaphorically. On the other hand, referring to an utterance as a request means seeing the *speaker* as a subordinate or seeing both interlocutors as symmetrically positioned.

Perhaps the problem is only terminological, *ie* perhaps Ellis is only using a hyponym, 'request', to name a category that actually includes it and other cohyponyms of it. This would be justifiable to some extent, because there seems to be no superordinate in English to name that category. And, in this case, Ellis might have captured important problems students have with the superordinate class in general. But the problem could be more than merely terminological. It could well be that actual differences between the students' orders and requests have cancelled each other in the analysis precisely because they are taken together.

Unfortunately, although it is not possible to decide what problem there really is, it seems likely that it is of the second type, *ie*, not a merely terminological one. Let us remember that one of Ellis's main concerns was about sociolinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of speech act performance. His research questions included whether students developed a range of forms to realize an act and the sociolinguistic competence to chose from them, in other words whether they associated forms to contexts. But this question can hardly be investigated if the major context variable, roles, is not recorded properly, that is, if different roles are not distinguished.

The study should be welcomed as an improvement from the same author's 1984-88 work, in that it is more accessible to public discussion, because now he at least provides a coding of his data. But, as was hinted in Chapter 2, the lack of a systematic basis to derive the definition of his categories suspends the validity

of the claims made, and this, in turn, limits the present value of the insights offered, which are original and could be very useful.

Now, if the formulae allow us to identify validity problems in discourse analysis, they should also aid us to avoid them in the first place. If, for example, we are interested in the development of a competence to use forms of address, we can fix the element 'hearer', as a substitute for the third label (SUBJECTS), in a controlled experiment or, simply, in structured observations. To simplify our task, we could also fix another two labels and just let one, *eg*, ROLES, vary; this would allow us to see how students address their interlocutors depending on their role relationships. Of course, we might decide to subsequently proceed equally with regard to the other labels, *ie*, to vary INTERVENTION and DEONTIC CHANGES one at a time, while fixing the other two labels. And, if there are sufficient resources, complex combinations of elements (under different labels) could then be analyzed as well: we would then be able to identify and compare our data properly.

Alternatively, we might be interested in investigating specific combinations, that is, acts properly, for example, in relation to different types of tasks, or different kinds of overall goals in an interaction. Let us remember that some claims that have been made in the field of second language development are that some task types allow students more opportunities than others to practice speech acts that are considered important by the researchers or, more simply, more opportunities to practice wider varieties of speech acts. These claims can now be tested, because speech acts can be identified more reliably. Let us pause to see, in the light of the remarks made in the previous paragraph, how rigorous and comprehensive the work can be.

We may suppose that we are interested in the performance of acts that could, in every day terms, be described as 'requests for permission', and, more precisely, be defined as:

Proposal: subordinate (speaker), forbidden to permitted.

We may also suppose we have already decided to study a given corpus, *eg*, certain fragments of the PIXI project data (see Aston 1988a), which were collected to study service encounters, perhaps the most commonly simulated ac-

tivity in language classrooms. Let us, further, assume that we are beginning to analyse one of such fragments:

(1) C: I see.
A: It's a very very (?close), simplified English, it's: - it's the bible made into a story, basically.
C: + OK, so it loses.
A: It loses, it loses a lot.
C: = Yeah.
A: You can have - if you're gonna have Bible stories, you know, let's have *Bible stories*.
C: = Yeah. OK. + D'you- $(?can I)% leave them here?
A: $(??)%
A: = = Yeah. Of course you can, (?thanks very much).
(1b34)

(Merlini 1988: 194)

Here, "C:" indicates a customer turn and "A:" an assistant turn, while "(1b34)" is a reference to PIXI's tapes. The transcription follows a slightly modified version of Jefferson's (1978) norms[1].

As a preliminary step, we would segment the fragment into utterances, following the criteria suggested in Chapter 7:

(2) C: [1]/ I see. /
A: [2]/ It's a very very (?close), simplified English, /
[3]/ it's: - it's the bible made into a story, basically. /
C: [4]/ + OK, so it loses. /
A: [5]/ It loses, it loses a lot. /
C: [6]/ = Yeah. /
A: [7]/ You can have - if you're gonna have Bible stories, you know, let's have *Bible stories*. /
C: [8]/ = Yeah. OK. /
[9]/ + D'you- $(?can I)% leave them here? /
A: [10]/ $(??)%
A: = = Yeah. / [11]/ Of course you can, / [*]/ (?thanks very much). /

Of course, for the reasons discussed in the said chapter, this segmentation would be provisional. If any boundary doubts arose, for example at the point marked by "*/", we would perform an analysis of vicinity. This would confirm the boundary suggested by the change of intonation, and, thus, we would have:

(3) C: [1]/ I see. /
A: [2]/ It's a very very (?close), simplified English, /
[3]/ it's: - it's the bible made into a story, basically. /
C: [4]/ + OK, so it loses. /
A: [5]/ It loses, it loses a lot. /
C: [6]/ = Yeah. /
A: [7]/ You can have - if you're gonna have Bible stories, you know, let's have *Bible stories*. /
C: [8]/ = Yeah. OK./ [9]/ + D'you- $(?can I)% leave them here? /
A: [10]/ $(??)%
A: = = Yeah. / [11]/ Of course you can, /
[12]/ (?thanks very much). /

The next step would be to mark all the utterances where the speaker would be performing a speech act involving himself or herself, say, on the right hand side margin:

(4) C: [1]/ I see. / <(sp)>
A: [2]/ It's a very very (?close), simplified English, /
[3]/ it's: - it's the bible made into a story, basically. /
C: [4]/ + OK, so it loses. /
A: [5]/ It loses, it loses a lot. /
C: [6]/ = Yeah. /
A: [7]/ You can have - if you're gonna have Bible stories, you know, let's have *Bible stories*. /
C: [8]/ = Yeah. OK./ [9]/ + D'you- $(?can I)% <(sp)>
leave them here? /
A: [10]/ $(??)%
A: = = Yeah. / [11]/ Of course you can, /
[12]/ (?thanks very much). /

We would now concentrate only on these utterances. The next step would be to mark those which involve a change of conditions from forbidden (f) to permitted (p). Successive markings for proposal (pr) and symmetrical (sy) would yield:

(5) C: [1]/ I see. / <(sp)>
.
.
.
C: ... [9]/ + D'you- $(?can I)% leave them here? / <pr:sy(sp),f-p>

This would have ensured that we had identified all and only those acts that satisfy the definition. That is, we would have eliminated the doubts that we might

had omitted one 'request for permission' or that we might had included some other similar but not equal acts. Furthermore, we could now tabulate acts in relation to speakers and utterances with reliable precision.

This kind of screening can also be the basis for studying pairs of acts. We can first locate, say, acts which effect a given change of conditions and then the pairing acts that comply with such conditions. Following the method of successive markings illustrated above, we could, for example, identify pairs like the following one, taken, again, from the PIXI corpora, where the two acts are adjacent:

(6) A: [1]/ Can I help you? / <e:sy(h),f-p>
C: 2/ Yes, can you give me a: - a prediction on when Jacques Lacan's Ecrits (?is likely) to come back in. / <c:sy(sp),p>
(1b56b)

(Data from Aston 1988: 87.
The coding is mine.)

In utterance 1, the assistant (speaker) makes requests from the customer (hearer) permitted. In utterance 2, the customer (now speaker) makes a request, and thus complies with the deontic condition. The codings <e:sy(h),f-p> and <c:sy(sp),p> would record this in a simple and economical way. To mark the relation between the two utterances, we could add a reference to utterance 1 in the coding of utterance 2:

(7) 1. <e:sy(h),f-p>
2. <c (1):sy(sp),p>

These could be compared with other kinds of pairs, such as those in (8), which could be translated as (9) and coded as (10):

(8) Teacher: [1]/ ¿Tiene Ud. un libro rojo? /
Pupil: [2]/ No tiene... /
Teacher: [3]/ Tengo. /
Pupil: [4]/ No tengo un libro rojo. /

(Data by Grittner, in Allwright 1988: 88.
The segmentation is mine.)

(9) Teacher: ¿Do you have a red book?
Pupil: I doesn't...
Teacher: Don't.
Pupil: I don't have a red book.

(The translation is mine.)

(10) 1. <e:dm(h),f-o>
2. <ac(1):sb(sp),o>
3. <c:dm(sp),p> <e:sb(h),o>
4. <c(1,3):sb(sp),o>

At the beginning of the exchange, it was forbidden for the student, who is in a subordinate (sb) position, to provide information. The teacher's question counts as an order that makes it obligatory to provide the information. The student begins to inform; but the teacher, who is in a dominant position (dm), is allowed to interrupt and, in utterance 3, he interrupts. Therefore, utterance 2 counts as an attempt to comply with the obligation, which is recorded as "ac".

Now, utterance 3, the interruption, complies with the existing deontic conditions, but, at the same time, establishes a new obligation for the pupil: to correct the verb form. Therefore, the act performed is coded twofold; on the one hand, we register the conditions affecting the speaker, and on the other those affecting the hearer.

Finally, utterance 4 complies with the two obligations, that established in 1 and that established in 3. So, it is part of two pairs, one adjacent and the other non-adjacent: 1-4 and 3-4. This is recorded as <c(1,3):sb(sp),o>, next to number 4.

Similar approaches could be applied to the study of sequences such as the following one, where three consecutive requests are made, the first two asking for permission to make a further one:

(11) C: [1]/ Excuse me (?love) /
A: [2]/ = Mm. /
C: [3]/ Can you help me. /
[4]/ Where can I get this book./
(1b44)

1. <pr:sy(sp),f-p>
2. <e(1):sy(h),f-p>
3. <c(2):sy(sp),p> <pr:sy(sp),f-p>
4. <c(3):sy(sp),p> <pr:sy(h),p-o>

(Data in Anderson 1988: 107.
Analysis mine.)

Such an analysis would allow us to say that the final request, which makes it obligatory for the assistant to provide information, is possible because of the other two requests. In this way, we can point to the end result of a sequence without taking it as a single act, which, as was shown in Chapter 8, would make it impossible to distinguish different sequences (the problem with Blum-Kulka's approach.)

In sum, the formula for illocutionary acts provides a vision that allows us to observe acts, elements of acts or sequences of acts rigorously and efficiently, and to identify the entities observed clearly in our reports. The formula for dissertation acts has an analogous value. Given that the discussion in Chapter 9 already pointed in this direction, it is not necessary to show the analogy in detail. Therefore, rather than exemplify the various steps in a dissertation analysis, I will only comment on the possibilities that are open by reference to the coding of a small paragraph:

(12) [1]/ Fine, let's take this a little further./
[2]/ A player accepts the sacrifice of a piece (although he might quite easily have ignored it), reckoning on being able to repel the attack./ [3]/ Is he taking a risk?/
[4]/ Undoubtedly!/ [5]/ Indeed, the attack might turn out to be irresistible./ [6]/ So whose risk is 'riskier'?/

1. [h:tr(pt,pt)]
2. [a:tr(gn,pt)]
3. [s:tr(pt,pt)]
4. [a(3)] 5. [a:av(pt)]
6. [s:cp(wh,wh)]

(Mikhail Tal, quoted by Mark Dvoretsky 1992: 115-116)

Here, besides those symbols introduced in Chapter 9, the following are being used:

h hypothetical assertion

s suspended assertion

tr transitive predication

av ascriptive predication

cp comparative predication

The fact that one can identify the various acts performed in terms of their elements, again, ensures that all (and only those) acts that were of interest to a particular research would be considered. In other words, the problem of reliability is solved also in the case of dissertation acts by adopting formulae as definitions. But the fine coding in terms of elements also gives us the opportunity to see new research questions, such as:

(i) What is the effect of a sequence of assertions preceded by a hypothetical assertion?

(ii) What is the effect of the first assertion in such sequence being about a generic referent?

(iii) Is the creation of a schema (script) the combined result of the two effects?

(iv) How does an ascriptive predication on the type of event that is being scripted (*eg*, as in utterance 5) contribute to place the script in a hierarchy of bases for action?

(v) How does the chain of suspended assertion and assertion forces in utterances 3 to 6 contribute to this placing?

This focus on the devices that produce schematic knowledge complements the observations about systemic and factual knowledge in the previous chapter. A "macro" analysis of act sequences can profit from a "micro" analysis of act elements.

Of course, this suggests several questions on sentence-act relationships:

(vi) What are an author's preferred devices to make forces of assertion lexically explicit?

(vii) What are the most common devices in a field or discipline?

(viii) Do preferences vary from one language to another?

(ix) Is a hypothetical assertion a sufficient condition to interpret a singular indefinite noun phrase as a generic reference?

Once such kinds of questions are formulated, it is possible to envisage a very ambitious but feasible research programme. It seems that the establishment of systematic form-function correspondences at the element level could be a realistic goal. Although some are probably rather complex, as question (ix) suggests, they appear far less intractable than the correspondences between unanalysed sentences and unanalysed acts have been.

At least, we can begin to realize why those correspondences have been intractable. The general defining formula for dissertation acts would allow us to calculate that, even if act elements are distinguished at a low level of delicacy, the number of acts that results from combining their permutations is very high, certainly above 50. An attempt to relate a comprehensive list of whole acts to a list of whole sentence types would have involved an even greater number of comparisons, which, in turn, would have required the support of amounts of data which are unavailable. But if, instead, we aim at establishing element correspondences, the task seems more manageable.

To sum up what has been said so far, the two general act formulae we have at the beginning of this chapter allow us to change focus in different research programmes or at different moments in one programme, from acts to act relations and from these to act sequences, or from acts to act elements. They also allow us to conceive of research that attempts to relate sentence parts to act elements.

Once the illocutionary territory or the dissertation terrain are roughly sketched and we begin to trace act- sentence relations, we have a set of reference points to ask further research questions, *eg*, on the use of paralinguistic features. Consider this, for example:

(x) What is the function of the low rise intonation in the form of address used in utterance 1 of extract (11)?

Addressing the assistant by means of a lexical item – love – probably has several purposes. One of these is to reinforce the opening's main point[2]: to establish the interaction itself. It recognizes the assistant as a hearer, and, at the same time, asks for recognition of the customer as a valid speaker, as one who can use the item. Moreover, the particular item chosen contributes to define the role relationship between speaker and hearer as symmetrical; it is one that could be used by either participant to address the other. It also sets a social distance between the participants (different from the distance 'madam' or 'sir' would define). It would seem that the low rise intonation asks for acceptance of these features. To prove or falsify this could be the objective of an interesting project.

The next question also focuses on a rhetorical compound (the combination of act elements with choices at the sentence level and paralinguistic features):

(xi) Why does the author of (12) decide to use one utterance for the sole purpose of expressing a force of assertion, and why does he express it lexically and accompanies it by an exclamation mark?

The use of "Undoubtedly!" as a whole utterance obviously multiplies the emphasis on the force of assertion, which the reader is already expecting with attention, because the previous utterance is a rhetorical question (*ie*, its force is that of suspended assertion).

But it would also seem to have the effect of dividing the propositional content. To the left of the utterance we have information that constitutes the script whose creation is the purpose of the whole paragraph. To the right, we have an evaluation of the situation scripted. In other words, besides underlining importance, the lexicalization seems to work as a brief, organizing interruption of the propositional flow. The exclamation mark seems to contribute to this, by effectively closing the utterance. Again, this could be the topic of a research project.

The two formulae, then, provide the coordinates that allow us to take different stands. Perhaps a previous optical metaphor may be extended here. We can, not only picture the full body of an act, amplify an element in detail, or focus

back on a sequence of acts, but also obtain a wide angle image that includes sentential and paralinguistic features. So, the formulae, the successive coding procedure they suggest and the focusing strategy this invites can be seen as means to conceive research programmes that avoid the problems pointed to in the first chapters of this thesis.

Course content

Now, if, as we noted in the preface, a syllabus is a text that has to be realized as discourse in the classroom, we can take the previous section as a set of indications to organize the act content[3] of a general foreign language programme. Let us follow this suggestion, by first recognizing the two dimensions we have discussed:

ILLOCUTION
DISSERTATION

At a second stage, we can divide each dimension into three levels:

ILLOCUTION
Elements
Acts
Sequences

DISSERTATION
Elements
Acts
Sequences

At the next stage, we concentrate on the elements dimension, and further subdivide it:

ILLOCUTION
Elements
intervention
roles
subjects
deontic conditions

DISSERTATION
Elements
force
reference
predication

Finally, the specific elements in each label can be listed:

ILLOCUTION
Elements
intervention
complying
proposing change
effecting change
roles
symmetric
dominant
subordinate
subjects
speaker
hearer
both speaker & hearer
deontic conditions
obligatory
permitted
forbidden

DISSERTATION
Elements
force
assertion
mitigated assertion
hypothetical assertion
suspended assertion
reference
generic
particular
predication
ascriptive
existential
equative
inclusive
intransitive
transitive
locative
possessive

As was mentioned in the previous two chapters, we might consider it appropriate to further subdivide some of these categories. We might, for example, wish to distinguish 'plural' from 'singular' under 'particular', or 'telic' from 'atelic' under 'transitive'. However, for the present purposes, this level of delicacy is adequate.

The next step is to focus on the acts level. Given the enormous size a comprehensive list would have, we should provide examples that illustrate well the principle that an act is a combination of elements, and we should include every element at least once in our examples, at least until empirical research produces other kinds of lists. Without assuming that the next list satisfies these requirements best or that the act names used are the most felicious, it can demonstrate the idea:

ILLOCUTION	
Acts	
promise	e:sy(s),p-o
request for permission	p:sb(s),f-p
invitation	e:sy(h),f-p
order	e:sb(h), -o
ban	e:sb(h),p-f
plot	p:sy(s&h),p-o
execution	c: (s),o

DISSERTATION	
Acts	
simple question	s:av(pt)
logical hypothesis	h:lg(gn,gn)
observation	a:rl(pt,pt)
identification	a:in(pt,gn)
description	a:av(pt)
tentative generalization	m:av(gn)
postulation	h:ex(pt)
gloss	a:eq(pt,pt)

Here, the symbols are the letters in heavy print in the elements list above.

The next step is to concentrate on sequences, perhaps as follows:

Sequences
relations
binary
adjacent
non-adjacent
non-binary
openings
closings
results

Compounds, which would complete the frame, would come at the end of the first subdivision:

Elements
Acts
Sequences
Compounds
lexicalization of act elements
delimitation and emphasis
syntactic devices
paralinguistic features

Again, at a further level of delicacy, rather than aim to specify all possible combinations, we would seek examples that illustrate the idea and represent all the factors involved, *eg*:

ILLOCUTION
Compound: opening
Act: request for permission < pr:sy(sp),f-p >
lexicalization of act element: forms of address
delimitation and emphasis
syntactic device: imperative
paralinguistic feature: low rise intonation

DISSERTATION
Compound: definition
Act: definition core < a:eq(gn,gn) >
lexicalization of act element: verbs of naming
delimitation and emphasis
syntactic device: dissociation of theme and given information
paralinguistic feature: italics

Defining a temporal organization for these items, *ie*, turning the act content into an act syllabus, would require relating this content to other components of the programme, and the shape of these would depend on factors which have not been dealt with in this thesis. It would, at least, be necessary to consider the vocabulary and the grammar the course would aim to teach. But, although the previous discussion on act element realizations provides some directions to make the connections with the lexical and the grammatical syllabi, it would be more than advisable to take into account the available knowledge on the structures of a lexicon and on orders of morpheme acquisition. Besides, decisions about a syllabus should also link closely with decisions about forms of teaching, which have not been much discussed either. However, for the sake of illustrating how the various levels (elements, acts, sequences and compounds) could be interrelated, let us assume a common sense organization, from the simple to the complex, is possible.

Simple adjacency pairs, such as greetings, are our starting point. In order for the student to grasp the point of illocution, well formed pairs are contrasted to pairs where the second act does not really comply with the conditions established by the first, *eg*, where a greeting is followed not by another greeting but by a provision of information.

Slightly more complex, not necessarily adjacent, pairs, where, for example, there is one context expansion,are then introduced. One possibility is request for information and provision of information. This will allow the student to visualize the act as a unit in an interaction.

Once the idea of a speech act is present, although, of course, it has not necessarily been expressed overtly, pairs consisting of a speech act and an action act, such as pairs where the first member is an order to do something (*eg*, bring the chalk), are dealt with. This develops the idea further.

It is now possible to focus on one of the acts that have been introduced, say, requesting information, and consider two or three alternative realizations, which vary, for example, in degrees of politeness. The next step will be to contrast this act with another. Let us suppose it is the order. This leads us to focus on one pair of elements under one label, symmetric and subordinate roles.

We started with a basic unit, an act, in a very small construction, a pair. We moved up to locate it in slightly larger constructions. Then we moved down, to focus on the act again and, then, on one of its elements. We can now move up once more by identifying the element in various parts of larger dialogues. Going even further up, we may deal with the contribution of that element to the end result of a sequence.

We can then effect another top-down movement to the element in question and, from there, focus on another element. When we go up again, the act will start to appear as a combination of elements. With this frame, we might step sideways, to consider lexicalizations, syntactic devices and paralinguistic features that reinforce or delimit the elements and, thus, form rhetorical compounds.

We can proceed in similar zig-zag ways to cover the various items in our dissertation lists. Hence, we are talking about a spiralling syllabus in which a given speech act is considered in different perspectives at various points. We are also talking about choosing, perhaps arbitrarily, certain speech acts as prototypical and deriving others by variation from these.

This kind of syllabus would allow us to cover act elements exhaustively and act sequences and rhetorical compounds comprehensively. It would also instil two central ideas. The first one is that language acts upon its deontic and epistemic contexts of occurrence, that is, truly, that with language humans do. The second is that the ability to do with language is a capacity to combine certain elements. This kind of syllabus might, therefore, be the key to communicative competence, as opposed to performance repertoires (Widdowson 1990).

Method?

Some of the suggestions above go beyond the problem of course content and lead us into the problem of teaching form. I wish to present a brief exploration of them, to show the potential of the discourse view that emerges from this thesis. This will involve a short discussion of the notion of method, which is not much used nowadays, but which should perhaps be recovered.

Moving up and down the levels of dissertation or illocution in the proposed way involves two major kinds of activities. On the one hand, there are activities where we isolate, or at least, focus on parts of discourse. On the other hand, there are activities where we combine the parts or they are already forming an integrated whole. It could be said that we relate to discourse in an 'analytical' fashion or we take it in an 'integral' fashion.

Now, the alternation from integral to analytical involvements implies contrast, substitution and combination operations which invite reflection. This defines another way of classifying activities. Here, we have, on the one hand, activities where the student engages in communication, as a producer of discourse, a recipient or an interlocutor with alternating roles of speaker and hearer. On the other hand, we have those activities where the student observes, and perhaps analyses discourse. Let us, for the sake of the present exposition, call these 'communicative' and 'reflective' modes, respectively.

Combining mode and fashion, we have, in theory, four major types of activities: 1) communicative integral, 2) communicative analytical, 3) reflective integral and 4) reflective analytical. This classification means several sequences are possible in a class, *eg*, 1-3-4-2-1 or 2-4-1-3. The question of which sequences are best arises. And this question is an invitation to recover and recast the notion of method.

Let us recall that, before the communicative approach took force in the mid seventies, 'method' used to be thought of as a sequence of three types of activities: presentation, practice and further practice. Perhaps this was the result of discussing a particular method, within a particular approach (the situational one), in teachers' courses; it certainly provided a clear basic frame for a lesson. In any case, the conception was based on reflections by Anthony and Mackey. According to the former:

> *Method* is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon, the selected *approach*. An *approach* is axiomatic, a *method* is procedural.
>
> (Anthony 1963: 65)

He illustrates his point by contrasting two methods (mimic-memorize and pattern practice) in terms of sequences of activities like comparison, memorization and repetition.

For Mackey:

> A method determines what and how much is taught (selection), the order in which it is taught (gradation), how the meaning and form are conveyed (presentation) and what is done to make the use of the language unconscious (repetition).
>
> (Mackey 1965: xi)

The three conceptions, that of the situational approach, Anthony's and Mackey's, depend on the possibility of distinguishing activities in terms of the student's standing *vis-a-vis* language. It is, in fact, the alternation or sequencing of activities thus distinguished that defined a given method.

Now, the communicative approach took that kind of sequencing out of the scene altogether. With the aim of bringing the attitudes and intentions that impress everyday communication into the classroom, it rejected activities like presentation and repetition. It left only one type of activitiy: communication.

Not only were previous methods to be replaced. The lack of possible alternation or sequencing meant that the notion of method itself became irrelevant, or even senseless. Indeed, nowadays it is rare to hear any mention of method or methods.

As stated above, the proposed classification of activities in terms of mode and fashion opens again the possibility of method. We are again in a position to categorise the students' standing in relation to language and , therefore, to define sequences. The interesting thing is that now the alternation does not devoid language from discourse. The effect of activities like repetition was that we were left with bare sentences that were used to express no propositions and to perform no acts at all. Taking a distance to observe discourse or of focusing on different parts of discourse does not alter its nature; it only alters the student's standing — a point to which we will turn below —.

I believe the opportunity is worth taking. The benefits[4] of stipulating teaching the way methods did would be sufficient to justify an attempt to build methods again. But, even if these are disregarded, there is a good reason to develop the kind of alternation proposed. Going beyond the sentence and opening the doors of discourse should have meant that the construction of knowledge and the creation of social reality became legitimate subject matters in the language classroom, but we have not had the means to exploit this potential. Now, placing the student in a position where she not only does things with words, but is also able to see what words do would encourage course designers and teachers to tap the richness in front of them.

There might be two objections to the conclusion to which the above arguments point. One is that there was another reason for the disappearance of method, besides that already noted. Method involved a strict form of planning which is incompatible with the negotiatory and adaptive nature of authentic communication. The only reasonable answer incorporates the objection. Method can no longer be seen as a basis for detailed planning; it has to be taken as a framework for making decisions, both at the design desk and in the classroom. Therefore, it should include criteria that allow the teacher to judge when it is convenient to move up or down the illocution and dissertation lists and when it could be profitable to change mode or fashion.

The second foreseeable objection is that reflection itself has not been justified. Why do want to take time from language use and devote it to observation or discussion about language? There is, of course, an empirical side to this question: we have to find out if reflection produces good results or not. But the question also addresses a basic issue, that has to do with the conception of language that should be behind language teaching.

Here, we go beyond method and are called into the domain of approach. Before entering this domain, let us conclude that the view of content as a hierarchy of levels linked to the two general act formulae invite a recuperation of method. This would involve a recasting of the notion itself, as a frame and a set of criteria to alternate level, mode and fashion.

Approach

Reflection had always been associated with grammar, and grammar was not to be a concern within the communicative approach. The following is a late publication of a view that Allwright had held at least since a congress of the International Association of Applied Linguistics which took place in 1975:

> ...we would be well advised to focus on communicative skills, in the knowledge that this will necessarily involve developing most areas of linguistic competence as an essential part of the product rather than focus on linguistic skills and risk failing to deal with a major part of whatever constitutes communicative competence.
>
> (Allwright 1979: 168)

Therefore, although reflection was not really a favoured activity in the methods the communicative approach questioned, there was no room for it in the new era. One would just not think about it.

The anti-reflection climate was later reinforced by a famous distinction between 'learning' and 'acquisition' (Krashen 1977). The points about this are that: 1) the sole function knowledge about the grammar of a language can have is to monitor and correct what is generated by a device that contains knowledge of it; 2) knowledge of the grammar can only be acquired naturally; 3) overt teaching only produces knowledge about.

Now, as was shown in Chapter 7, the dependency of grammar on discourse unity implied in a view like Allwright's is mistaken. Therefore, its consequences (intended or not) should be revised carefully. On the other hand, Krashen's monitor model is logically impossible[5] and alternatives that account for empirical data better have been developed since the early eighties (for a brief review, see Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991: 323-4). We are only left with an attitude against explicit grammar (which is perhaps changing rapidly), and this is not a sufficiently good reason. In other words, rather than the inclusion of reflective activities, it is their exclusion that requires justification.

Moreover, even if Allwright or Krashen were right, the exclusion of reflection (about any aspect of language) would not follow from the exclusion of explicit grammar. Perhaps what has happened is that we have not had the means to observe speech acts and discuss about them, other than the unreliable lists that conform textbook content tables. One clue pointing in this direction is Allwright's "whatever constitutes communicative competence". And one possible argument in favour of the hypothesis is that certain isolated discourse problems for which there is a vocabulary, such as reference resolution, are beginning to be treated in language classes. If that is so, I hope this thesis will contribute to make discourse, on the whole, more familiar to teachers and students, although I realize it could only do so indirectly: other steps are needed to take its products to the classroom.

In any case, not discussing discourse (and grammar) in a communicative language course is a major omission and embodies a major paradox. One of the fundamental properties of human language is its reflexivity, or the possibility it has to turn upon itself (Hockett 1958, Lyons 1977). To avoid the theme of language is to limit language's communicative potential. Moreover, it is to assume that the only valid form of language learning is that which arises from experience, that we cannot really learn from what others tell us. In this way, it is to negate the very point of communication.

In other words, if we truly assume that communication should be the goal of a language programme, we should include communication about communication in our teaching (and in our students' practice). May I then say that I am advocating a meta-communicative method.

End note

In order to indicate how such a method could be implemented, let me finish with a note on technique. It will consist of some simple suggestions built on hints made in earlier chapters.

The teacher asks students to nominate candidates to represent the group in a future discussion on the school's curriculum with delegates from other groups. He then asks them how the representative could be chosen from the list of can-

didates. A further question is why that method is preferred to other possible procedures.

Now, students are asked to draw a conceptual map around the notion of representation. This will consist of the main concepts in the field, *eg*, nomination, election, duty and accountability. As a further step, students read a text on representation and discuss how its conceptual framework differs from theirs. Then, they decide whether or not they want to change their view.

To conclude these tasks, students are asked to draw a list of the rights and obligations the representative will have *viz-a-viz* her classmates and in relation to other representatives. They also discuss how the representative's duties differ from those of other students.

At the following phase, the teacher draws the students' attention to the fact that it is the appointment which will change the representative's deontic environment. Then they discuss other situations where a speech act changes a person's obligations sharply.

They can now analyse and practise typical formulaic expressions used in English to nominate, elect and appoint. To do so, they could listen to taped material from political processes in English speaking countries. The next step is, of course, to actually conduct the process. This would be followed by the representative's beginning to do some of the things to which he became committed, *eg* making a list of the students in the group or proposing a calendar to discuss various aspects of the syllabus.

On this basis, finer discussions and more subtle activities could gradually be introduced, for example, in relation to the organization of pair work or the presentation of individual homework to the rest of the group. This, in turn, could be the background to analyse and enact other sorts of interactions, such as informal conversation or service encounters.

This turning of the classroom upon itself could, then, provide the means to: 1) include action-acts in discourse, 2) work in parallel with conceptual frameworks, and 3) alternate the communicative and reflective modes and the integral and analytical fashions of activity.

Summary

This chapter has synthesized the thesis's findings about the nature of illocution and dissertation, and has shown how they could be used in applied linguistics research, educational design and classroom practice. The exposition has involved a proposal to recuperate and recast the notion of method, as well as another to develop meta-communicative teaching.

Chapter 10 Notes

1. This is PIXI's version of Jefferson's (1978) transcription conventions:

C:	customer turn
A:	assistant turn
+	short pause
+ +	longer pause
(*n*)	long pause (approximate duration n seconds)
$*text*% or	spoken in overlap with next/previous $*text*% or $$*text*%%
$$*text*%%	in transcript
=*text*	latched to previous turn in transcript
= =	latched to previous-but-one turn in transcript
text -	tone group interrupted
text-	syllable cut short
text:	syllable lengthened (number of colons indicates extent)
.	low fall intonation
,	fall-rise intonation
?	low rise intonation
!	rise-fall intonation
(?*text*)	tape unclear: tentative transcription
(??*n*syll)	tape untranscribable: n = approximate length in syllables
[*comment*]	non-verbal behaviour or context information

2. The view that an opening like that of (11) is aimed at establishing who are valid interlocutors in an interaction is only a reformulation of Firth's point: "Greeting is the recognition of an encounter with another person as socially acceptable" (1972: 1). This is in agreement with the standard interpretation of openings as contact makers (Goffman 1971). However, the perspective I have adopted emphasizes the social and deontic aspects at play, whereas the standard interpretation focuses more on attention and access.

3. Besides an act component, the syllaus would, of course, include a grammatical and a lexical components. If one were designing an ESP course, as opposed to a general English course, one might consider a propositional component as well. The organization of these is outside the scope of this thesis.

4. Recovering the idea of method would have various benefits. In the first place, the teaching profession is still concerned about issues that used to be the matter of method, such as the coherent organization of different techniques. This is reflected, for example, in the fact that one of the main subjects in any teachers' course is called 'methodology'. And those issues would be better dealt with by reference to the problem of sequencing, because, after all, what happens in the classroom happens in time.

In the second place, a form of teaching that, besides being classified under an approach, is defined by a method is more reliable than a form which only has an approach. When we just have an approach, we can have very good and very bad lessons, because there is a great margin for imporvisation. When we have a method, it is easier to guarantee a base-line quality.

In the third place, a method can be tested, because we can tell that a sequence corresponds or does not correspond to the method. An approach or a methodology cannot really be verified or falsified, because their level of generality does not allow for a systematic identification of lessons that belong in them.

In the forth place, a method can be perfected. If we can trust that what happens is a product of our method and if we can evaluate the results, then we will be able to detect what works well and what does not in the method.

Finally an approach which is accompanied by a method can be taught better than an approach alone or a mere methodology, because it can be communicated with more precision.

5. Not only is correction a form of generation, but for the learned system to be able to monitor, its categories would have to correspond to those of the acquired system. To put it crudely, the acquired and the learned system would have to speak the same language, otherwise they would not understand each other. Therefore, if two systems existed, they would not be as radically different in their functions as Krashen believes. There would, then, be no reason to postulate their sharp separation.