

THEORETICAL REVIEW ON SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS, MOOD, AND SPEECH FUNCTIONS*)

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2.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics

Systemic functional linguistics, often called systemic functional grammar or systemic grammar (the *functional* is often omitted), is a grammar model developed by Michael Halliday (1985) with his *Introduction to Functional Grammar* based on the model of language as social semiotic. According to Eggins (1994: 2) systemic functional linguistics is an approach to language which is centered on how people use language with each other in accomplishing everyday social life. In this approach there are four main theoretical claims about language: that language use is functional; that its function is to make meanings; that these meanings are influenced by the social and cultural context in which they are exchanged; and that the process of using language is a semiotic process, a process of making meanings by choosing. These four points, that language is functional, semantic, contextual, and semiotic, can be summarized by describing the systemic functional linguistics as a functional-semantic approach to language. Systemic functional linguistics is interested in the authentic speech and writing of people interacting in naturally occurring social contexts.

According to Halliday (1994: xiii) language is structured to make three kinds of meaning, or metafunctions, simultaneously: ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings. Eggins (1994: 12) defines ideational or experiential meanings as ones

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about how we represent experience in language. Whatever use we put language to, we are always talking about something or someone doing something. For example, utterance *I suggest we attack the reds* makes meaning about “bottles of wine” and what we should do with them. It makes meanings that focus on the actions we, as human agents, should carry out, and the entities our actions will effect (*the reds*).

Simultaneously, we use language to make interpersonal meanings: meanings about our role relationships with other people and our attitudes to each other. Whatever use we put language to we are always expressing an attitude and taking up a role. For example, utterance *I suggest we attack the reds* makes a meaning of friendly suggestion, non-coercive, open to negotiation; the kind of meaning we might make with friends, whose opinions we are interested in and whose behaviour we do not seek to dominate.

Finally, in any linguistic event we are always making textual meanings: meanings about how what we are saying hangs together and relates to what was said before and to the context around us. Whatever use we put language to we are always organizing our information. For example, the sentence *I suggest we attack the reds* takes as its point of departure the speaker’s intention (only to suggest, not to impose) and the interactants (*we*). It is a possible answer to *What should we do now?*

2.2 Language and Context

According to Eggins (1994: 7) systemic functional linguistics claims that language and context are interrelated and that language use is sensitive to context. In

order to understand how people use language we need to consider the contexts of language use: context of culture and context of situation.

An evidence which emphasizes the close link between language and context is that it is often simply not possible to tell how people are using language if we do not take into account the context of use. The purpose of a communicative behaviour or a text cannot be described by looking at only single sentences, because it will be difficult to state confidently just what the speaker or the writer of the text is doing. Taken out of context, its purpose is obscured, with at least part of its meaning lost or unavailable.

Eggins (1994: 8) explains the interrelation between language and context by giving the following sentence: *I suggest we attack the reds.*

Taken out of context, this sentence is ambiguous in a number of respects. Firstly, we might think about what *reds* refer to. It could mean:

- a. playing a game: time to move out the red soldiers; or
- b. choosing from a box of sweets: take the ones with red wrappers.

Without further contextual information, it is not possible to determine which meaning is being made. Technically, the sentence is experientially ambiguous: it is not clear which dimensions of reality are being referred to.

The sentence is also ambiguous in other ways, for example which meaning of the verb *suggest* has, either:

- a. like a boss *suggests* something to a subordinate which usually means *Do this!* It is not a suggestion at all because the subordinate cannot refuse it;

- b. like a subordinate *suggests* which is usually a plea; or
- c. like a friend *suggests* which may be a real suggestion. It can be refuted.

The pronoun *we* is similarly ambiguous. It can mean “we” (as it would among friends) or “you” (as it might when a superior is talking to a subordinate). Then, taken out of context, the sentence is not only experientially ambiguous, but also interpersonally ambiguous: we cannot be sure just what the relationship between the two interactants is.

Our ability to deduce context from text, to predict when and how language will vary, and the ambiguity of language removed from its context, all provide evidence that in asking functional questions about language we must focus not just on language, but on language use in context. Systemicists divide context into a number of levels, with the most frequently discussed being those of genre (context of culture) and register (context of situation). So a text always occurs in two contexts: context of culture and context of situation, one within the other. Context of culture and context of situation are at two different levels of abstraction with context of culture as more abstract, more general than context of situation. We can recognize a particular context of culture even if we are not sure exactly what the situational context is.

2.2.1 Context of Culture (Genre)

According to Eggins (1994: 9) the concept of genre is used to describe the impact of the context of culture on language, by exploring the staged, step-by-step structure cultures institutionalize as ways of achieving goals. In other words, genre

can be thought of as the general framework that gives purpose to interactions of particular types, adaptable to the many specific context of situation that they get used in. Genre lays down the way to go about achieving the aim of an interaction. Similarly, Gerot and Wignell (1995: 10) state that context of culture determines what we can mean through: *being* 'who we are', *doing* 'what we do', and *saying* 'what we say'. In addition, Butt *et al.* (2001: 3) state that context of culture is sometimes described as the sum of all the meanings it is possible to mean in a particular culture.

Context of culture should be considered in using language because this context determines whether a linguistically-achieved activity type is meaningful (i.e. appropriate) or not in a particular culture. If it is meaningful or appropriate, it means that we can use language to do the activity in the culture. For example, we are able to work out the purpose of Buying and Selling because we have (however unconsciously) an idea of what a Buying and Selling encounter should look like in our culture, the stages such an encounter involves, and the type of language used to achieve these stages.

Eggins (1994: 34) gives an example of the general stages involving in a Buying and Selling activity: there are two people talking together, beginning with one offering (*Yes please*) then the other demanding (*Can I have ...*); followed by one providing (*yes – how many would you like?*) and the other accepting (*thank you*); followed by one asking for money (*that's \$1.70 thank you*) and the other handing it over (*here we are*). This example states that in order to accomplish a transaction in our culture it is necessary to go through a number of steps or stages. So we cannot

simply barge into the post office, throw the letters at the salesperson and rush out. Nor can the sales assistant simply see us enter, grab the letters and disappear out the back into the nether regions of the post office.

Social convention has established that we go through a series of steps or stages. These stages are called the schematic structure of a genre. The term schematic structure simply refers to the staged, step-by-step organization of the genre (Eggins, 1994: 36). Martin, as cited by Eggins (1994: 36), points out that the reason that genres have stages is simply that we usually cannot make all the meanings we want to at once. Each stage in the genre contributes a part of the overall meanings that must be made for the genre to be accomplished successfully.

2.2.2 Context of Situation (Register)

Language use varies according to situations. There are some situations in which a genre is appropriate. For example, we do not talk in the same way to the President as we do to our best friends, we do not talk in the same way about linguistics as we do about cooking, and we don't write the same way we talk.

According to Eggins (1994: 50) some aspects of situations seem to have an effect on language use, while others do not. For example, although the different social statuses held by the interactants do seem to effect language use, it does not seem to matter much what the weather is like, what clothes the interactants are wearing, or what colour hair they have. Thus, some dimensions of a situation appear to have a

significant impact on the text that will be realized, while the other dimensions of situation do not.

The term context of situation was firstly used by Branislaw Malinowski (1923 and 1935), an anthropologist who studied daily life and events of Trobriand Islanders. Malinowski, as cited by Eggins (1994: 50), found that it was impossible to make sense of literal, or word-for-word translations into English without including contextual glosses, i.e. the linguistic events were only interpretable when additional contextual information about the situation and the culture were provided. He claimed that language only becomes intelligible when it is placed within its context of situation. The situation in which words are uttered can never be passed over as irrelevant to the linguistic expression and the meaning of any single word is to a very high degree dependent on its context.

Another linguist, J.R. Firth (1935, 1950, 1951), developed Malinowski's notion of context of situation into more general issue of linguistic predictability by pointing out that in a given description of a context we can predict what language will be used or in a given language use we can make predictions about what was going on at the time that it was produced (Eggins, 1994: 52). In trying to determine what were the significant variables in the context of situation that allowed us to make such predictions, he suggested the following dimensions of situations:

- a. the relevant features of participants: persons and personalities that include their verbal action and non-verbal action.
- b. the relevant objects.

c. the effect of the verbal action.

The notion of context of situation was also pursued within ethnography of communication by Dell Hymes with his SPEAKING grid in which each letter acts as an abbreviation of a different possible component of communication (Eggins, 1997: 33; Sciffrin, 1994: 141-142):

Table 2.1 Hymes's SPEAKING Grid

S	setting	temporal and physical circumstances
	scene	subjective definition of an action
P	participant	speaker/sender/addresser/hearer/receiver/ audience/addressee
E	ends	purposes and goals outcomes
A	act sequence	message form and content
K	key	tone, manner
I	instrumentalities	channel (verbal, non-verbal, physical forms of speech drawn from community repertoire)
N	norms of interaction and interpretation	specific properties attached to speaking interpretation of norms within cultural belief system
G	genre	textual categories

Following in the functional-semantic tradition pursued by Firth, Michael Halliday (1978, 1985) developed the notion of context of situation by asking what aspects of context have an impact on language use. Halliday (in Eggins, 1994: 52) suggests that there are three aspects in any situation that have linguistic consequences: field, mode, and tenor. Field refers to what the language is being used to talk about; mode refers to the role language is playing in an interaction; and tenor refers to the role relationships between the interactants. These three variables are called register variables. Halliday further claims that of all the things going on in a situation at a time of language use, only these three have a direct and significant impact on the type of language that will be produced. Each of the register variables can be elaborated as the following:

2.2.2.1 Mode

According to Gerot and Wignell (1995: 11) mode refers to how language is being used: whether the channel of communication is spoken or written and whether language is being used as a mode of action or reflection. Similarly, Eggins (1994: 9) defines mode as amount of feedback and role of language in an interaction. Martin in (Eggins, 1994: 53-58) suggests that mode of language can be seen as involving two simultaneous continua which describe two different types of distance in the relation between language and situation: spatial/interpersonal distance and experiential distance.

rehearsal and is not a casual activity. The characteristics of spoken and written language situations can be summarized through Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Characteristics of Spoken and Written Language

Mode: typical situation of language use	
Spoken discourse	Written text
<p>+ interactive 2 or more participants</p> <p>+ face-to-face in the same place at the same time</p> <p>+ language as action using language to accomplish some task</p> <p>+ spontaneous without rehearsing what is going to be said</p> <p>+ casual informal and everyday</p>	<p>non-interactive one participant</p> <p>not face-to-face on his/her own</p> <p>not language as action using language to reflect</p> <p>not spontaneous planning, drafting and rewriting</p> <p>not casual formal and special occasions</p>

Source: Eggins (1994: 55)

Besides the characteristics above, there are features of spoken and written language as indicated by Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 Characteristic Features of Spoken and Written Language

Spoken and written language linguistic implications of mode	
Spoken language	Written language
turn-taking organization context dependent dynamic structure - interactive staging - open ended spontaneity phenomena (false starts, hesitations, interruptions, overlap, incomplete clauses) everyday lexis non-standard grammar grammatical complexity lexically sparse	monologic organization context independent synoptic structure - rethoric staging - closed, finite “final draft” (polished) indications of earlier drafts removed “prestige” lexis standard grammar grammatical simplicity lexically dense

Source: Eggins (1994: 57)

2.2.2.2 Tenor

Halliday (in Martin, 1992: 499) characterizes the term *tenor* as the following:

Tenor refers to who is taking part, to the nature of participants, their statuses and roles: what kinds of role relationship obtain among the participants, including permanent and temporary relationships of one kind or another, both the types of speech role that they are taking on in the dialogue and the whole cluster of socially significant relationships in which they are involved.

Extending on the works of Poynton and Martin, Eggins (1994: 64; 1997: 52)

subclassifies tenor into four main dimensions: power, contact, affective involvement,

and orientation to affiliation. Each dimension is elaborated as the following:

a. Power

The continuum of power or status relation positions situations in terms of whether the roles we are playing are those in which we are of equal or unequal power. Examples of roles of equal power are those of friends; examples of roles of unequal power would be those of boss/employee. This continuum can be schematized as the following:



Figure 2.3 The Power Continuum

Source: Eggins (1994: 64)

b. Contact

The continuum of contact positions situations in terms of whether the roles we are playing are those that bring us into frequent or infrequent contact. Examples of frequent contact are those between spouses; examples of occasional contact are those between distant acquaintances. This continuum can be schematized as the following:



Figure 2.4 The Contact Continuum

Source: Eggins (1994: 64)

c. Affective Involvement

The continuum of affective involvement positions situations according to whether the roles we are playing in the affective involvement between us is high or

between the interactants is not equal, the contact is infrequent, and the affective involvement is low, as shown by Table 2.4.

Table 2.4 Formal vs Informal Situation

Informal	Formal
equal power frequent contact high affective involvement	unequal, hierarchic power infrequent, or one-off, contact low affective involvement

Source: Eggins (1994: 65)

2.2.2.3 Field

Halliday, as restated by Martin (1992: 499), says that the term *field* refers to what is happening, to the nature of social action that is taking place: what is it that the participants are engaged in, in which the language figures as some essential component. In a simpler way, Gerot and Wignell (1995: 11) characterize field as what is going on that includes activity focus (nature of social activity) and object focus (subject matter). In their opinion, field specifies what is going on with reference to what.

According to Eggins (1994: 67) field can be glossed as topic of the situation. In terms of the construction of an activity focus, situations may be either technical (specialized) or commonsense (everyday). In other words, field varies along a dimension of technicality, as schematized in Figure 2.6.

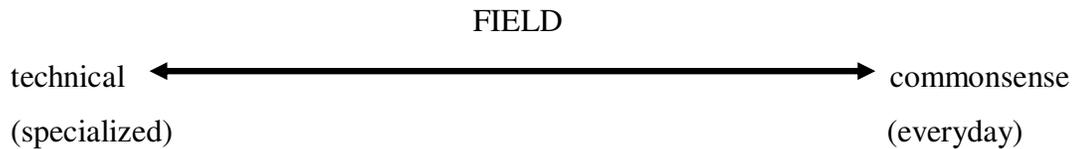


Figure 2.6 The Field Continuum

Source: Eggins (1994: 71)

Eggins (1994: 72-74) characterizes further differences of technical language and everyday language based on field as is schematized in the Table 2.5.

Table 2.5 Technical vs Everyday Language

Technical language	Everyday Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. assumed knowledge of an activity/ institution/area b. deep taxonomies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - detailed sub-classification c. technical terms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - words only “insiders” understand d. acronyms e. abbreviated syntax f. technical action process or attributive (descriptive) process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. “common knowledge” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no (or little) assumed knowledge b. shallow taxonomies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - limited sub-classification c. everyday terms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - words we all understand d. full names e. standard syntax f. identifying process or defining terms

Source: Eggins (1994: 73 – 74)

2.3 Genre/Register/Language Relationship

The relationship between genre, register and language can be represented by Eggins (1994: 76-79) as in Figure 2.5. This figure shows that context of culture (genre) and context of situation (register) are two levels of context in which language is situated. Genre is more abstract, or more general, than register with its three variables having impact on language use: field, mode, and tenor. Language, with its

three strata of discourse-semantics, lexico-grammar and phonology, is the realization of both genre and register. The link between register and language is that:

1. The field of a text is associated with the realization of experiential meanings; these experiential meanings are realized through the transitivity patterns of the grammar.
2. The mode of a text can be associated with the realization of the textual meanings; these textual meanings are realized through the patterns of the grammar.
3. The tenor of a text can be associated with the realization of interpersonal meanings; these interpersonal meanings are realized through the mood patterns of the grammar.

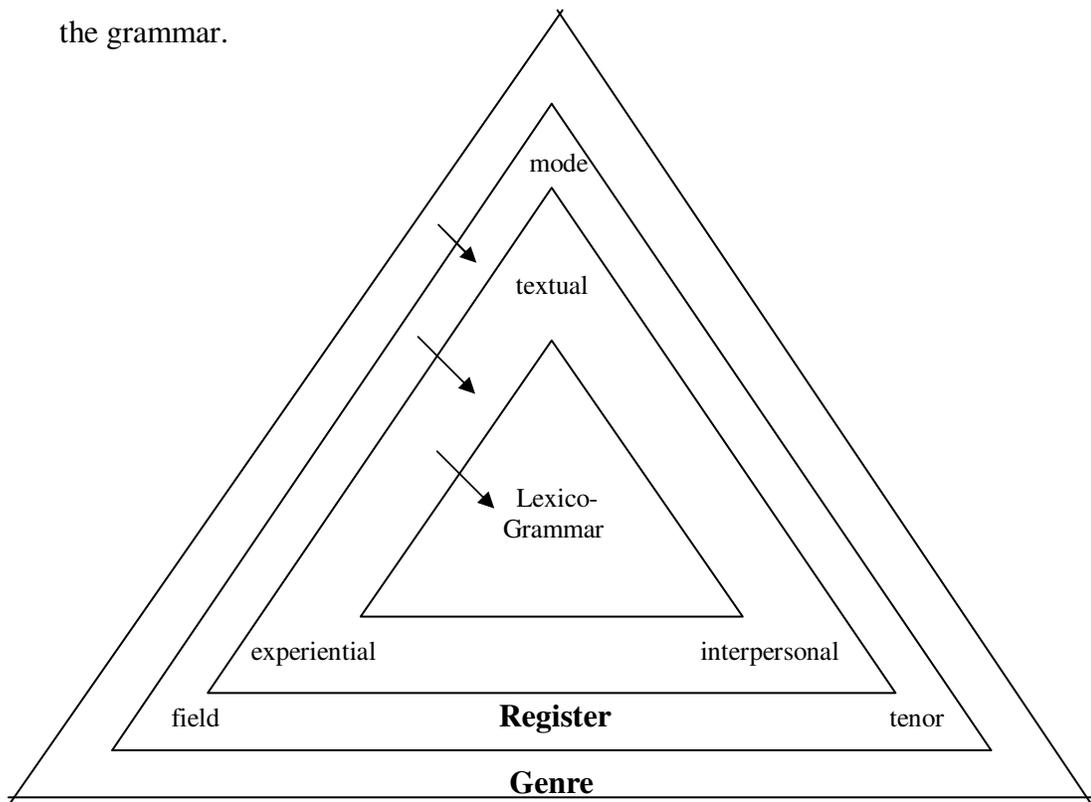


Figure 2.7 Genre and Register in Relation to Language

Source: Egging (1994: 79)

2.4 Casual Conversation

One of the ways in which people communicate and exchange information in maintaining social relations is through conversation (Gardner, 1994: 97). Conversation can take place in different occasions: formal or informal. According to Tillit and Bruder (1993: vii) in all languages the forms people use when speaking formally are different from those used informally. In English we tend to use formal speech with strangers and people of higher status, and informal speech with family, friends, and colleagues. The level of formality speakers choose depends upon their relationship, the setting, the topic being discussed, and many other factors.

A conversation which takes place in an informal occasion is generally referred to as a casual conversation. This idea is explicitly stated by Slade and Gardner (1985: 105): “By casual conversation we are referring to informal face to face encounters between two or more participants ... that take place in informal occasions where there is usually no external pressure on the participants to be self-conscious about what they are saying.”

The same idea about casual conversation is also stated by Ventola (1979: 267) in which she uses the term *casual encounter*: “Casualness may be a part of any encounter, but there are particular face-to-face encounters which are marked by this feature, namely casual encounters. These are everyday encounter situations where two or more participants meet without a specified purpose.” She further states “Since casual conversation occurs in an informal situation, it certainly has characteristics that are different from those of formal conversation.”

Halliday and Plum (1985: 19) give explanation on casual conversation by relating it to other forms of speech activity by means of a diagram such as the following:

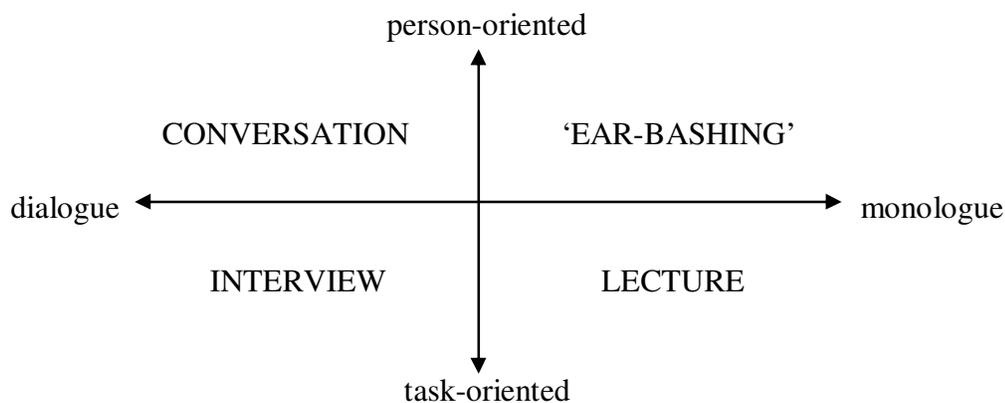


Figure 2.8 Forms of Speech Activity

By labeling the two vectors in the diagram as orientation and engagement, they define (i) **conversation** as person-oriented dialogue, (ii) **interview** as task-oriented dialogue, (iii) **lecture** as task-oriented monologue, and (iv) **'ear-bashing'** as person-oriented monologue – something that seems to have no name although we can all recognize it in practice: 'the conversationalist' talking at (as opposed to talking to) the other person in an uninterrupted flow.

Conversation always implies some reciprocal engagement: this may not necessarily be symmetrical, but casual conversation, at least, embodies the principle of reciprocity among the interactants. It is this potential for mutual engagement between speaker and addressee that most clearly marks off casual conversation in

contrast to the structured asymmetry of a formal interview. So casual conversation can be viewed as the type of person-oriented dialogue in which certain norms that are characteristic of conversation in general are suspended, or perhaps rather neutralized. These can be summarized by reference to topic, status, turn-taking, and structure: there are topics but no topic control; there are interactants but no status relations; there are turns but no turn assignment; and there is structure but it is univariate.

Eggins and Slade (1997: 20) distinguish the term pragmatic conversation from casual conversation. Pragmatic conversation refers to the types of interaction which are motivated by clear pragmatic purposes, such as buying and selling, getting or asking for information, making appointments, getting a job, etc., while casual conversation refers to interactions which are not motivated by a clear pragmatic purpose, and which displays informality and humor. Casual conversation is the kind of talk we engage in when we are talking just for the sake of talking. It is motivated by interpersonal needs to continually establish who we are, how we relate to others, and how we think of the world.

There are at least two linguistic differences between pragmatic conversations and casual conversations. The first is that pragmatic conversations tend to be short, while casual conversations tend to be lengthy. It is because pragmatic conversations usually have predetermined purposes and therefore there are pre-allocated topics that are necessary to be talked. For example, when someone is going to the post office for sending letters, as he leaves his home he has got clear ideas on what topics he will be dealing with as greeting the officer, asking the prices for stamps, buying, giving the

letters to the officer, and saying thank you. The case is different when we once meet friends during a party or on the bus home. As the talk starts, and exchanges occur, anything can emerge as topics. Both speakers have neither predetermined topics nor pre-allocated time. The talk may last for hours covering a lot of topics.

The other difference is on the level of formality. Casual conversations very often exhibit informal characteristics such as colloquial expressions (*yeah, yap!*), while pragmatic conversations are very often serious in tone and are accompanied by various expressions of politeness. Relative formality is characterized by fewer interruptions and overlapping, whereas a greater degree of familiarity is shown by spilt-second timing between utterances, or by a speaker completing another's utterances.

According to Eggins (1997: 49) in relation to the three strands of meaning in systemic functional linguistics, casual conversation can be analyzed from three approaches:

1. We can focus on the ideational meanings: this involves looking at what topics get talked about, when, by whom, and how topic transition and closure is achieved, etc.
2. We can focus on the interpersonal meanings: this involves looking at what kinds of role relations are established through talk, what attitudes interactants express to and about each other, what kinds of things they find funny, and how they negotiate to take turns, etc.

3. We can focus on the textual meanings: this involves looking at different types of cohesion used to tie chunks of the talk together, different patterns of salience and foregrounding, etc.

The analysis of casual conversation in this study focuses only on the interpersonal meanings for the main reason as stated by Eggins (1997: 50) that the primary task of casual conversation is the negotiation of social identity and social relations. Thus casual conversation is driven by interpersonal, rather than ideational or textual meanings based on the following considerations:

- a. The absence of any pragmatic motivation or outcomes to casual talk;
- b. Anything can be a topic of talk in casual conversation which suggests that casual conversation is not focused on ideational meanings;
- c. The apparent triviality of much of the ideational content of casual talk, which suggests that the important work of casual conversation is not in the exploration of ideational meanings.

2.5 Interpersonal Relationship in Conversation

Interpersonal relationship occurs when we interact with others in daily social activities. Halliday (1994: 36) simply defines interpersonal relationship as enacting social relationship. In a more elaborated way, Matthiessen (1995: 784) states that interpersonal relationship refers the relationship between the speaker and listener in realizing interpersonal meaning in an interaction. He defines

Interpersonal relationship is the relationship between speaker and listener and their potential for interacting: the cluster of socially meaningful participant relationship, both permanent attributes of the participants and role

relationships that are specific to the situation, including the speech roles, those that come into being through the change of verbal meanings.

According to Eggins (1994: 12), interpersonal relationship refers to the social roles that the interactants are playing in an interaction. When we are talking about interpersonal relationships between the interactants, we are talking about the tenor of the interaction, that is the role relationship between the people taking part in the interaction.

Eggins and Slade (1997: 53) specifies four main types of linguistic patterns which represent interpersonal relationships in casual conversation:

1. Grammatical patterns – these are patterns which operate within turns and have to do with the mood of the clauses interactants use.
2. Discourse structure patterns – these patterns operate across turns and are thus overtly interactional and sequential. They show how participants choose to act on each other through choice of speech functions.
3. Semantic patterns – these patterns are revealed by studying attitudinal and expressive meanings in talk. Semantic patterns often concern the choice of lexical, and so are revealed by examining the words used by the interactants.
4. Generic structure patterns – these patterns show the way interactants construct longer chunks of continuous talk in order to explore shared social positions.

Because this study only focuses on grammatical and discourse structure patterns, the detailed elaboration will be presented just for those two patterns.

2.6 Grammatical Patterns of Casual Conversation

As stated earlier, grammatical patterns refer to the types of clause structure chosen by interactants in casual conversation and are displayed within each speaker's turns. These patterns are part of what indicates the different social roles being displayed by the interactants, and how such roles are constructed in our culture. For example, if we produce an interrogative, we are generally agreeing to give up the speaker role for at least one turn, in order for someone to respond to our interrogative. On the other hand, if we produce a declarative this implication of surrendering a turn is not there.

Grammatical patterns operate within clauses. According to Eggins (1997: 74), at the level of clause the major patterns which enact roles and role relationships are those of **Mood**, with the associated subsystems of **polarity** and **modality**. Mood refers to patterns of clause type which have something to do with the presence and configuration of certain "negotiable" elements of clause structure. Polarity is concerned with whether clause element are asserted or negated, while modality covers the range of options open to interactants to temper or qualify their contributions. By analyzing the mood of the clause, we can find what role the speaker performs during the conversation.

2.6.1 Mood Systems

According to Martin (1992: 31) and Matthiessen (1995: 292), there two central Mood systems, which classify English clauses as three basic types of interact:

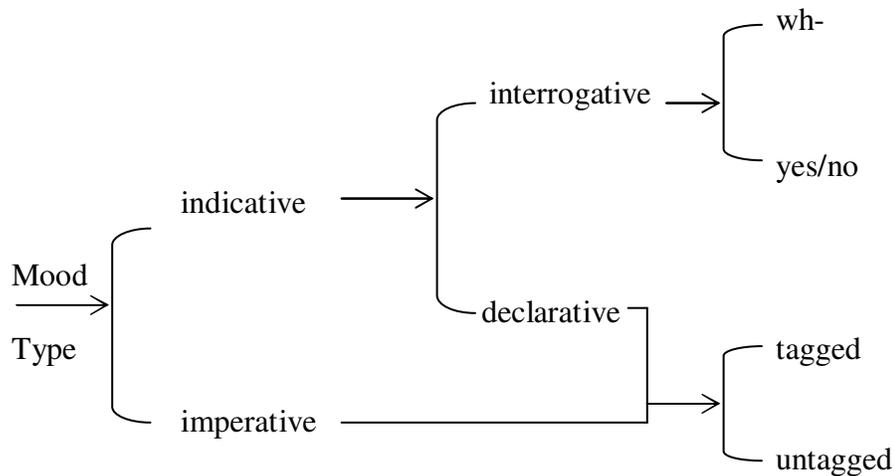


Figure 2.9 Mood Systems

Figure 2.9 shows that there are two major types of English clause: indicative clause and imperative clause. Indicative clause is concerned with the exchange of information (the negotiation of propositions), while imperative clause is concerned with the performance of an action to provide a service or to exchange goods (the negotiation of proposals). Within indicative clauses, there are interrogative clause which concerns the demanding of information and declarative clause which concerns the giving of information. Interrogative clause can be divided any further into yes-no interrogative for polar question and wh-interrogative for content question. Both declarative and imperative clauses can be tagged or untagged based on the speaker's choice whether or not to invite a verbal response from the addressee.

Mood type of a clause has to do with the presence and configuration of certain negotiable elements of clause structure. Each mood type involves a different

configuration of a set of basic clause constituents. Full English clauses, that is clauses which have not had any elements left out or ellipsed, consist of some functional elements: Subject, Finite, Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct. Of these elements, Subject and Finite constitute pivotal constituents of a clause. The combination of Subject and Finite make up the Mood of a clause, while the combination of Predicator, Complement and Adjunct is referred to as the Residue of a clause.

Eggs (1997: 75-81) and Butt *et al.* (2001: 89-92) define the functional elements of a clause as the following:

- a. Subject – it is the pivotal participant in the clause, the person or thing that the proposition is concerned with and without whose presence there could be no argument or negotiation. The Subject is generally a nominal element: i.e. a noun or pronoun.
- b. Finite – it is the part of the verbal group in the clause which encodes primary tense or the speaker's opinion that makes it possible to argue about the Subject. The Finite is always a verbal element, i.e. it is always realized through a verbal group, the sequence of words which indicate the process, action or state that the Subject is engaged in. Where the verbal group consists of more than one word, the Finite is always and only the first element in this verbal group.
- c. Predicator – it encodes the action or process involved in the clause. It gives content to the verbal element of the proposition, telling listeners what is or was happening. Part of the verbal group is expressing the Finite, and the other part is

expressing the Predicator. When there is only one constituent in the verbal group, then that constituent is functioning both as Finite and as Predicator.

- d. Complement – it is a participant which is somehow implicated in the proposition, but is not pivotal participant. Like the Subject, the Complement is expressed by a nominal group, either a single pronoun or noun or by a sequence of words dependent on a head noun.
- e. Adjunct – it is an element which is additional to the proposition. It functions to add extra information about the events expressed in the core of the proposition. Adjunct, which falls into three types: circumstantial, interpersonal, and textual, is expressed by prepositional phrase, adverb and adverbial group, or conjunction.

Those functional elements of a clause can be exemplified in the following clauses:

<i>They</i>	<i>did</i>		<i>that</i>	<i>for fun</i>
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
Mood		Residue		

<i>They</i>	<i>can't</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>that</i>	<i>these days</i>
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
Mood		Residue		

2.6.1.1 Indicative Clauses

Matthiessen (1995: 410) states that indicative clauses realize moves negotiating information. They have a Mood element (unless they are elliptical) consisting of Finite and usually Subject (unless it is presumed). The relative orderings of Subject and Finite express more delicate Mood types of declarative and

interrogative. Eggins (1997: 85-89) characterizes indicative clauses and their typical functions in casual conversation as the following.

2.6.1.1.1 Declarative

Declarative clauses can be identified as clauses in which the structural element of Subject occurs before the Finite element of the clause as exemplified in the following clause:

<i>He</i>	<i>plays</i>		<i>the double-bass</i>
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Mood		Residue	

In casual conversation, declarative clauses are typically used to initiate conversational exchange by putting forward information for negotiation. Thus they construct the speaker as taking on an active, initiatory role in the talk. Declaratives can present both factual information (e.g. *He plays the double-bass*) or attitudinal opinion (e.g. *He is a funny bastard*).

2.6.1.1.2 Polar Interrogative

Polar interrogatives, also known as yes-no interrogatives, can be identified as clauses where the Finite element occurs before the Subject as exemplified in the following clause:

<i>Does</i>	<i>he</i>	<i>play</i>	<i>the double-bass?</i>
Finite	Subject	Predicator	Complement
Mood		Residue	

In casual conversation, polar interrogatives are typically used to initiate an exchange by requesting information from others. They thus construct the speaker as dependent on the response of other interactants.

2.6.1.1.3 Wh-interrogative

Wh-interrogative clauses are recognized by the presence of a wh-question word, e.g. *who, what, which, when, why, how*, etc. The purpose of the wh-word is to probe for a missing element of clause structure. The wh-word is always conflated with another element of clause structure. It may be conflated with either the Subject, the Complement or Circumstantial Adjunct, and is shown as a constituent of the Mood or Residue according to the status of the element with which it is conflated.

The order of constituents in a wh-interrogative depends on which element of clause structure is being probed. When the element probed for is the Subject, then the wh-word occurs before the Finite. However, when the wh-word probes any other element of clause structure (e.g. Complement or Circumstantial Adjunct), then a separate Finite element must be used, with the Finite being placed before the Subject as exemplified in the following clauses.

Wh-word probing Subject: (part of Mood)

<i>Who</i>	<i>plays</i>		<i>the double-bass?</i>
Wh/Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Mood		Residue	

Wh-word probing Complement: (part of Residue)

<i>What</i>	<i>does</i>	<i>he</i>	<i>play?</i>
Wh/Complement	Finite	Subject	Predicator
Residue ...	Mood		... Residue

Wh-word probing Circumstantial Adjunct: (part of Residue)

<i>When</i>	<i>did</i>	<i>he</i>	<i>play</i>	<i>the double-bass?</i>
Wh/Adjunct: circ	Finite	Subject	Predicator	Complement
Residue ...	Mood		... Residue	

In casual conversation, wh-interrogatives are typically used to elicit additional circumstantial information.

2.6.1.1.4 Exclamative

Exclamative clauses, which are typically used to encode a judgement or evaluation of events, are a blend of interrogative and declarative patterns. Like the wh-interrogatives, they require the presence of a wh-word, conflated with either a Complement or an Adjunct. Structurally, they have the patterns of declarative, with the Subject preceding the Finite.

Wh conflated with a Complement: (part of Residue)

<i>What a great writer</i>	<i>Henry James</i>	<i>was!</i>
Wh/Complement	Subject	Finite
Residue ...	Mood	

Wh conflated with an Adjunct: (part of Residue)

<i>How fantastically</i>	<i>Henry James</i>	<i>wrote!</i>	
Wh/Adjunct: circumstantial	Subject	Finite	Predicator
Residue ...	Mood		... Residue

2.6.1.2 Imperative Clauses

Imperative clauses normally realize moves demanding goods-&-services. They typically do not contain the element of Subject or Finite but consist of only a Predicator, plus any of the non-core participants of Complement and Adjunct. The Subject is typically implicit if it is the imperative default Subject, *you*. If they are positive, there is no Finite; if they are negative, there is one; however, it may be absent. Based on the mood person – the person who is responsible for complying, imperative clauses have their own system into jussive, oblativ, and suggestive.

Jussive clauses realize commands; the subject (the addressee) is held responsible for complying. A positive jussive clause typically consists of only Residue. If the clause is negative, the Finite has to be present. Jussive clauses are exemplified in the following clauses:

Positive jussive clause

<i>Read</i>	<i>the letter</i>
Predicator	Complement
Residue	

Negative jussive clause

<i>Don't</i>	<i>read</i>	<i>the letter</i>
Finite:negative	Predicator	Complement
Mood	Residue	

In an oblique clause, the speaker assumes the responsibility for giving goods-&-services; this is thus one way of realizing an offer. Since the Subject is other than the default Subject in an imperative clause, the addressee, it has to be explicit; it is specified as *let me*, like in the following clause:

<i>Let me</i>	<i>read</i>	<i>the letter</i>
Subject	Predicator	Complement
Mood	Residue	

In a suggestive clause, the speaker assigns responsibility for the success of the proposal to both himself/herself and the addressee. In this sense, a suggestion is intermediate between an offer and a command; but the speaker leaves it to the addressee whether to accept the suggestion or not. As in an oblique clause, the Subject has to be made explicit; it is specified as *let's*, like in the following clause:

<i>Let's</i>	<i>read</i>	<i>the letter</i>
Subject	Predicator	Complement
Mood	Residue	

2.6.1.3 Elliptical Clauses

According to Matthiessen (1995: 392), clauses can also be classified based on the clausal ellipsis into full clauses and elliptical clauses. Full clauses are characterized by the presence of all the elements of structure. The clause types under

the discussion of indicative and imperative clauses above are all full clauses. Meanwhile, elliptical clauses are characterized by the absence of some elements of the structure through ellipsis. The ellipsed element(s) can be retrieved from the prior context.

Egins (1997: 89) notes that in casual conversation full clauses are produced when speakers are attempting to initiate a new exchange, i.e. when they wish to establish material to be reacted to. However, when interactants react to prior initiations, they typically do so elliptically, producing clauses which depend for their interpretation on a related full initiating clauses.

2.6.1.3.1 Elliptical Declaratives

When a speaker produces a declarative as a responding move, he/she will frequently omit all but the informationally significant components of the structure. Which elements are informationally significant will depend on the prior verbal concept, as exemplified in the following example: (The ellipsed elements are in parentheses)

A : *Who's out there?*

B : *My friend and the man of the house [are out of there].*

2.6.1.3.2 Elliptical Polar Interrogatives

When a speaker is reacting to prior talk and simply needs, for example, confirmation of something that has been said, then he/she can abbreviate in the interrogative structure. Only the elements of Finite followed by Subject are needed to

realize a polar interrogative, so other non-core elements are frequently ellipsed in the flow of interaction, provided that they can be retrieved from prior verbal context. For example:

A : *He plays the double bass.*

B : *Does he [play the double bass]?*

2.6.1.3.3 Elliptical Wh-interrogatives

Any or all elements except the key wh-question word may be ellipsed from a wh-interrogative, provided the ellipsed elements can be clearly retrieved from the context. For example:

A : *He should have played tonight.*

B : *Why [should he have played tonight]?*

2.6.1.3.4 Elliptical Imperatives

All elements in an imperative except the Predicator can be ellipsed. For example:

A : *Look.*

Ellipsis in imperatives is often due to the fact that the ellipsed constituents can be retrieved from the shared physical context. Thus, in the example above, A does not need to say *Look at that man walking up the hill*, since the addressee can see that what he is pointing to is a man walking up the hill.

2.6.1.3.5 Elliptical Exclamatives

In exclamatives where the wh-element is attached to either the Subject or the Complement, typically both Subject and all verbal elements are ellipsed. For

example, *What an idiot he was!* can become *Whan an idiot!* and *How stupid he was!* can become *How stupid!*.

2.6.1.4 Minor Clauses

Eggin (1997: 94) characterizes minor clauses as ones which have no mood structure, i.e. they do not consist of elements of Subject, Finite, etc. According to Matthiessen (1995: 433), minor clauses differ from major ones in that they are prototypically not concerned with exchanging a commodity – neither information nor goods-&-services. Rather, they are purely self-expressive (exclamations); or they facilitate interaction by opening or closing a dialogue through greetings, getting the addressee's attention by calls, or managing the continuity of exchanges.

Eggin (1997: 94) proposes two tests for minor clauses. One test is that the apparently missing elements of structure cannot be unambiguously retrieved. For example, when someone says *Right*, this is not an ellipsed version of *You're right*, or *I'm right*, or *That sounds right*. The fact that we cannot determine exactly what the Subject might be indicates that no Subject was in fact selected. *Right* in this clause simply operates as an unanalysable chunk. The other test for minor clauses is that they cannot be negated: i.e. a minor clause cannot be made to take a negative polarity.

Based on their occurrences in casual conversation, minor clauses are classified by Eggin (1997: 94-95) into three categories:

- a. Lexicalized minor clauses – these are minor clauses which are full lexical items which operate in other structures in the language: e.g. *Right*, *Exactly*, *OK*, *Fine*, *Great*.

- b. Formulaic expressions – these are typically of greeting and thanks: e.g. *Hi, Thanks, G'day, Ciao*.
- c. Non-lexical items – These function as conventionalized feedback and backchannel indicators: e.g. *Mmm, Uhuh*. Such items tend to have no standardized written form.

2.6.2 Modality

Matthiessen (1995: 497) states that the interpersonal metafunction gives a value to the clause as a proposition or a proposal that is open to negotiation. The speaker can intrude with various modal assessments, assessing the proposition or proposals itself or further specifying its speech functional value. There is a resource concerned specifically with the domain of negotiation of the proposition and proposal between the categorial extremes of unqualified positive and negative. This is the scale of modality. Meanwhile, Eggins (1997: 98) states in a simpler way that modality refers to a range of different ways in which speakers can temper or qualify their messages. There are two types of modality: modalization and modulation.

The system of modality is schematized by Matthiessen (1995: 497) as in Figure 2.10.

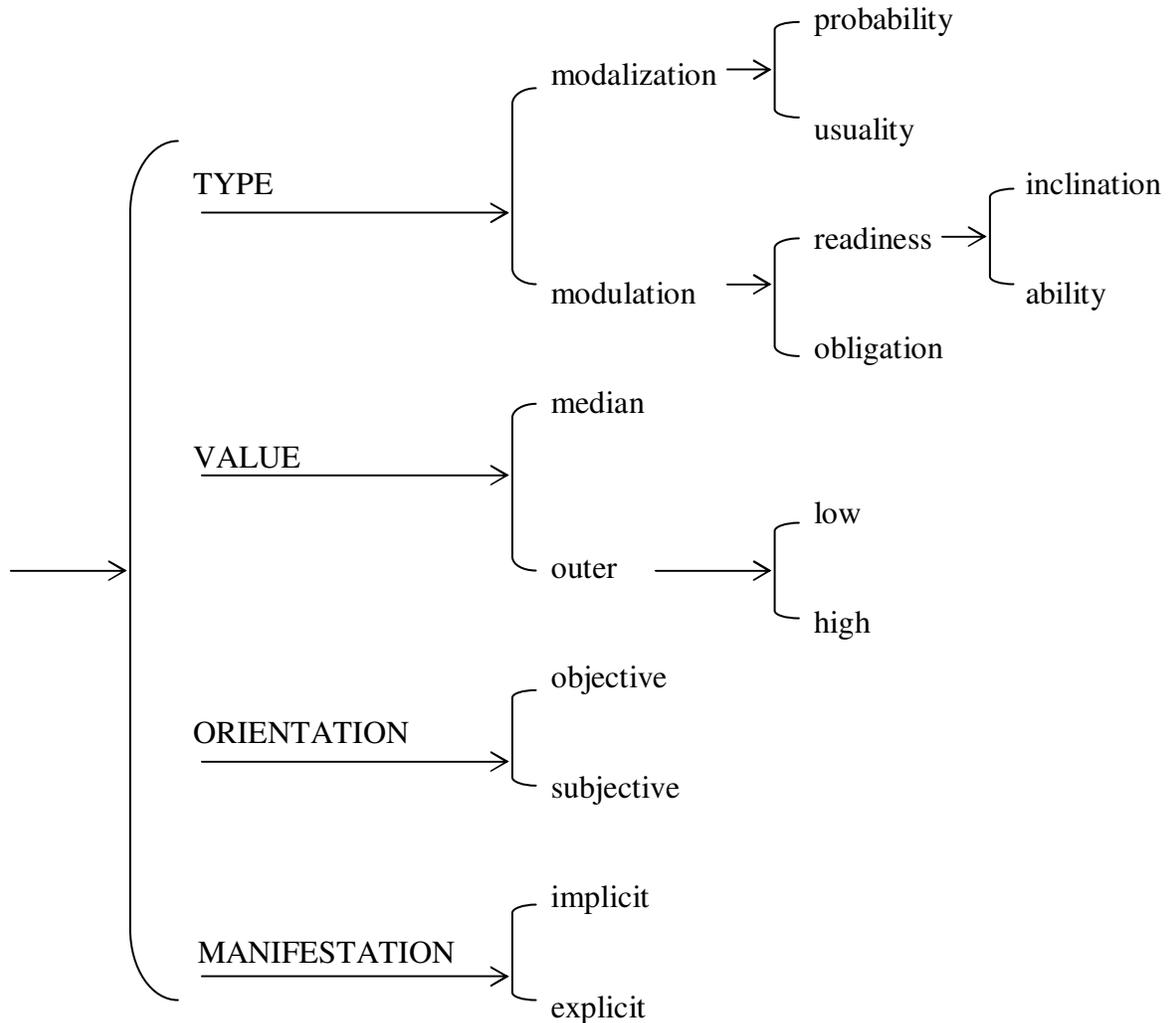


Figure 2.10 Basic Systems of Modality

2.6.2.1 Modalization

Matthiessen (1995: 504) defines modalization as a type of modality which is used to assess the probability or usuality of a proposition. When we exchange information we are arguing about whether something IS (positive polarity) or IS NOT (negative polarity). But these two poles of polarity are not the only possibilities. In

between these two extremes there are a number of choices of degree of certainty, or of usuality.

Halliday (in Eggins, 1994: 179) presents that modalization involves the expression of two kinds of meaning:

- a. probability: where the speaker expresses judgements as to the likelihood or probability of something happening or being; and
- b. usuality: where the speaker expresses judgements as to the frequency with which something happens or is.

There are two strategies for expressing modalization in a clause:

- a. through the use of modal Finites: e.g. *must, should, will, can, could, may, might*.
- b. through the use of Mood Adjuncts of either probability: e.g. *certainly, surely, probably, maybe, perhaps*, or usuality: e.g. *always, often, usually, typically, sometimes*.

Both modal Finites and Mood Adjuncts can be classified according to the value of certainty or usuality they express: i.e. high (*must, certainly, always*), median (*may, probably, usually*) or low (*might, possible, sometimes*).

Modalization can be expressed implicitly as an integral part of the clause, or explicitly by involving the use of grammatical (clause) choices to make meanings that could otherwise be made through single lexical terms. The orientation of the modalization can be stated subjectively by the speaker (e.g. *I think*) or objectively in an impersonal clause with *it* as Subject and the verb *to be* + *adjective of modality* (e.g. *It is probable*). Modalization can be exemplified in the following clauses:

- | | | |
|----|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. | <i>He is in London</i> | positive polarity |
| | <i>He must be in London</i> | modalized: high probability |
| | <i>He will be in London</i> | modalized: median probability |
| | <i>He may be in London</i> | modalized: low probability |
| 2. | <i>He is at home on Sundays</i> | positive polarity |
| | <i>He is always at home on Sundays</i> | modalized: high usuality |
| | <i>He is usually at home on Sundays</i> | modalized: median usuality |
| | <i>He is sometimes at home on Sundays</i> | modalized: low usuality |

2.6.2.2 Modulation

Matthiessen (1995: 504) defines modulation as a type of modality which is concerned with the expression of a proposal, either of obligation or readiness. Eggins (1994: 189) elaborates modulation as a way for speakers to express their judgements or attitudes about actions and events. When we are acting on or for other people, we do not only have the dogmatic choices of *DO* or *DON'T*, *I WILL GIVE YOU THIS* or *I WON'T GIVE YOU THIS*. But between these two poles of compliance and refusal we can express degrees of obligation, inclination and ability.

Modulation of obligation can be expressed in clause through:

- a. the use of modal Finites expressing obligation: e.g. *must, will, may, have to*.
- b. a *be + -ed* clause with personal Subject: e.g. *You are allowed to get a degree*.
- c. an impersonal *it + -ed* clause: e.g. *It is permitted that you get a degree*.

Modulation of inclination can be expressed in clause through:

- a. a personal Subject + attitudinal adjective structure: e.g. *I'm willing/I'm keen*.

- b. an impersonal structure with a dummy *it* as Subject and a nominalized mental process as head: e.g. *It's a commitment.*

Modulation of ability can be expressed in clause through:

- a. the modal finite *can* when used to indicate ability and not probability.
- b. a personal Subject + adjective of capability structure (*He is capable*).

Modality of modulation can be exemplified in the following:

<i>Get a degree.</i>	unmodulated; positive
<i>You must get a degree.</i>	modulated: high obligation
<i>You will get a degree.</i>	modulated: median obligation
<i>You may get a degree.</i>	modulated: low obligation
<i>Don't get a degree.</i>	unmodulated; negative

2.7 The Nature of Conversation

Following Halliday's interpretation of an interaction (1994: 68), when we have a conversation we are establishing a relationship between us: between the person speaking now and the person who will probably speak next. A conversation is a process of exchange which involves two variables:

- a. the speech roles associated with the exchange relations: either giving or demanding.
- b. the commodity to be exchanged: either information or goods and services.

The simultaneous cross-classification of these two variables define the four basic speech functions that can be used to initiate a conversation, as displayed in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6 Speech Roles and Commodities in Conversation

Speech Role	Commodity Exchanged	
	Information	Goods & Services
Giving	Statement	Offer
Demanding	Question	Command

Sources: Halliday (1994: 69); Eggins and Slade (1997: 181)

Because conversation is an interactive activity, every time a speaker takes on a role, he/she assigns to the listener a role as well. Every time a speaker initiates an interaction, the listener is put into a role of responding if he/she wants to interact. The alternative responses can be broadly differentiated as either supporting or confronting. Supporting responses enact consensus and agreement which tend to close off the exchange, while confronting responses enact disagreement or non-compliance which are often followed by further negotiation. The combination of the initiating speech functions and their possible responding ones can be displayed in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7 Speech Function Pairs

Initiating Speech Function	Responding Speech Function	
	Supporting	Confronting
Offer	Acceptance	Rejection
Command	Compliance	Refusal
Statement	Acknowledgement	Contradiction
Question	Answer	Disclaimer

Sources: Halliday (1994: 69); Eggins and Slade (1997: 183)

In relation to the Mood types that have been presented in the previous sections, speech functions in a conversation are realized by typical (congruent) Mood types. However, very frequently we encounter non-typical (incongruent) realizations of speech functions. The congruent and incongruent realizations of speech functions can be summarized in Table 2.8.

Table 2.8 Congruent and Incongruent Realizations of Speech Functions

Speech Function	Congruent Clause Mood	Incongruent Clause Mood
Command	Imperative <i>Read Henry James.</i>	Modulated interrogative <i>Would you mind reading Henry James, please?</i> declarative <i>I'm hoping you'll read some Henry James.</i>
Offer	Modulated interrogative <i>Would you like to borrow "The Bostonians"?</i>	Imperative <i>Take my copy of "The Bostonians".</i> Declarative <i>There's a copy of "The Bostonians".</i>
Statement	Declarative <i>"The Bostonians" was Henry James's last novel.</i>	Tagged declarative <i>"The Bostonians" was Henry James's last novel, was it?</i>
Question	Interrogative <i>Is "The Bostonians" by Henry James?</i>	Modulated declarative <i>I wonder whether "The Bostonians" might be by Henry James.</i>

Source: Eggins (1994: 152-153)

2.8 Speech Function Classes

Eggins and Slade (1997: 191) extend delicately the speech functions proposed by Halliday (1994) in order to capture the more subtle speech function patterns of casual conversation. They present the comprehensive speech function classes in the form of a network, where categories at the lefthand side are the least delicate (most

inclusive). Movement towards the right can be read as subclassification, indicating increasing delicacy in the description.

The major speech function classes which constitute conversational moves to begin sequences of talk, or open up new exchanges, and moves which sustain exchanges, as presented in Figure 2.11.

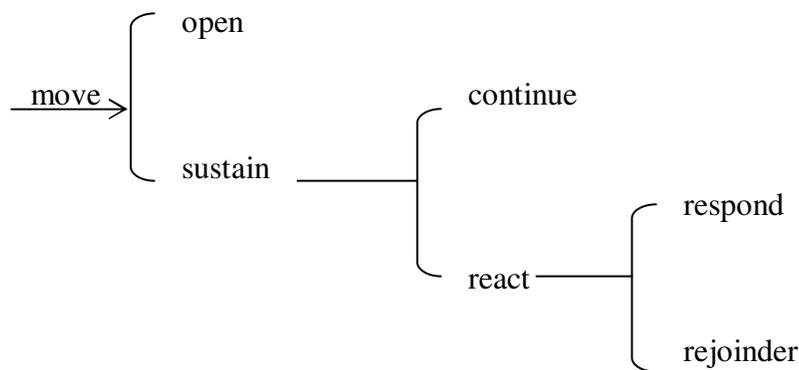


Figure 2.11 Major Speech Function Classes

Source: Eggins and Slade (1997: 192)

Opening moves function to initiate talk around a proposition, while sustaining moves keep negotiating the same proposition. Sustaining moves may be achieved either by the speaker who has just been talking (continuing speech function), or by other speakers taking a turn (reacting speech functions). Further, reacting moves can be achieved either by responding speech functions or rejoinding speech functions. Responding moves are reactions which move towards completion, while rejoinding moves are reactions which in some way prolong the exchange.

The sub-classification of opening moves is displayed in Figure 2.12.

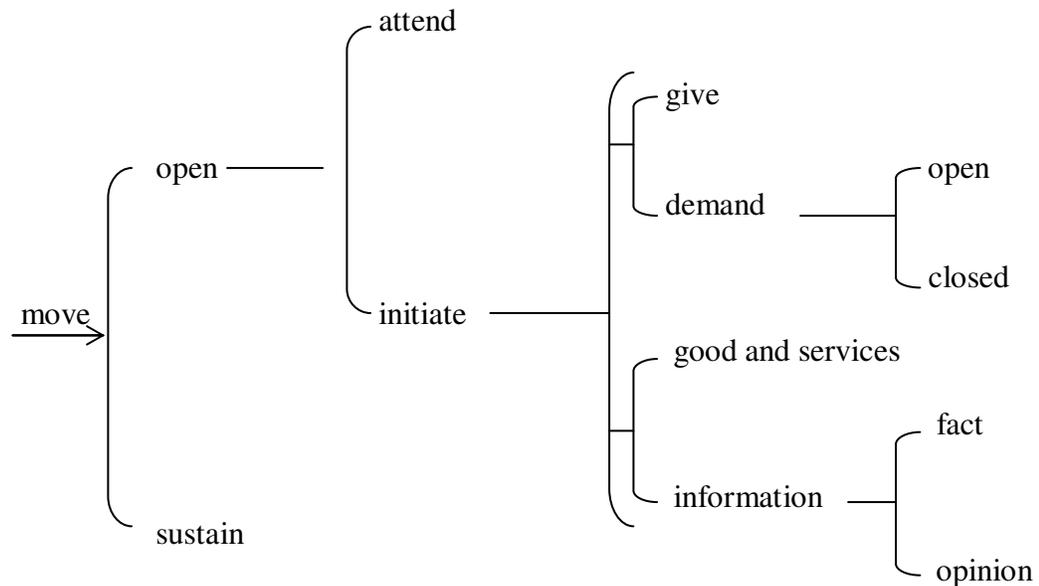


Figure 2.11 Opening Speech Functions

Source: Eggins and Slade (1997: 193)

Figure 2.11 captures two speech functions in opening moves, i.e. attending and initiating speech functions. Attending moves are those which merely set the scene for interaction, while initiating moves are those which actually get the interaction underway. Further subclassification of initiating moves is made to capture the distinction between fact and opinion information for both statements and questions which fall into open and closed questions.

Sustaining moves can be achieved either by the speaker who has just been talking (continuing speech functions) or by other speakers taking a turn (reacting speech functions). There are three options available to continue a move: by monitoring, prolonging, or appending. Monitoring moves are produced when the

speaker focus on the state of the interactive situation, for example by checking that the audience is following, or by inviting another speaker to take turn, in which case the invited response is set up as supporting response. Continuing moves can also be achieved by prolonging or appending, each of which can be either elaboration, extension, or enhancement. The subclassification of continuing moves can be displayed in Figure 2.12.

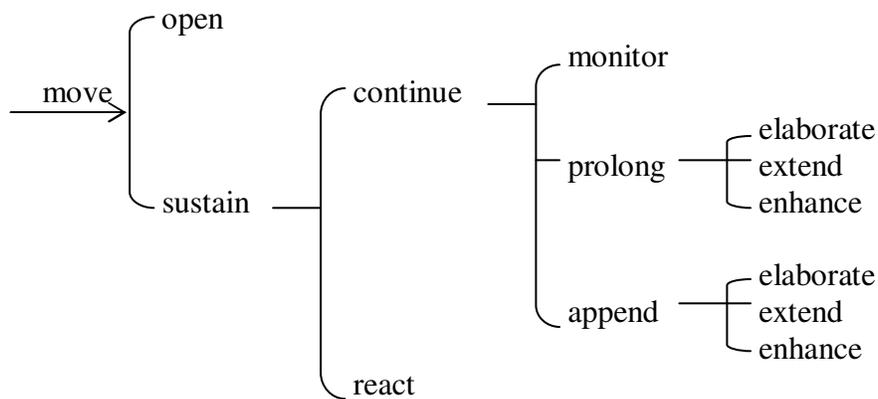


Figure 2.12 Continuing Speech Functions

Source: Eggins and Slade (1997: 195)

Reacting moves i.e. when one speaker reacts to a move produced by a different speaker, can be by responding and rejoinding speech functions. Responding speech functions are reactions which move the exchange towards completion, while rejoinding speech functions are ones which in some way prolong the exchange. Responding moves can be achieved either by supporting or confronting. Supporting moves are the preferred responses, while confronting moves are dispreferred or discretionary alternatives. Supporting moves have four categories: developing, engaging, registering, and replying. Confronting responses range from

either disengaging (refusing to participate in the exchange, for example, by responding with silence), or by offering confronting replies which can be paired with typical initiations. The subclassification of responding moves can be displayed in Figure 2.13.

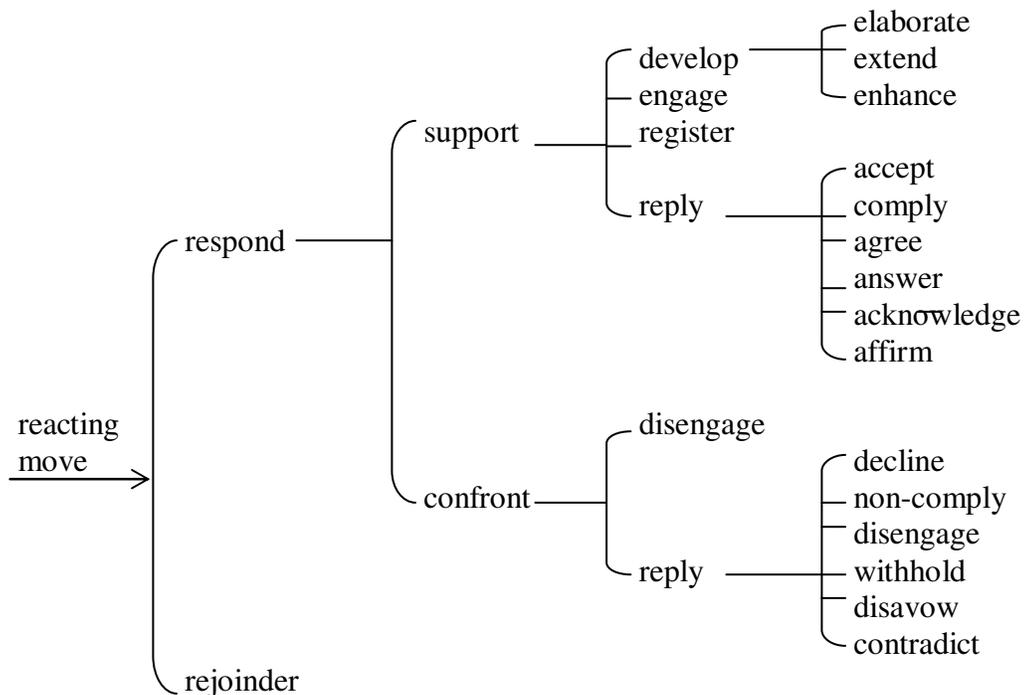


Figure 2.13 Responding Speech Functions

Source: Eggins and Slade (1997: 202)

There are two main subclasses of rejoinder moves: tracking moves and challenging moves. These subclasses correspond to the supporting and confronting alternatives available in the responding move classes, with tracking moves supporting negotiation, while challenging moves confront a prior move. Tracking moves are moves which check, confirm, clarify or probe the content of prior moves. Challenging

moves confront prior talk by detaching, rebounding, and countering moves. The subclassification of rejoinding speech functions can be displayed in Figure 2.14.

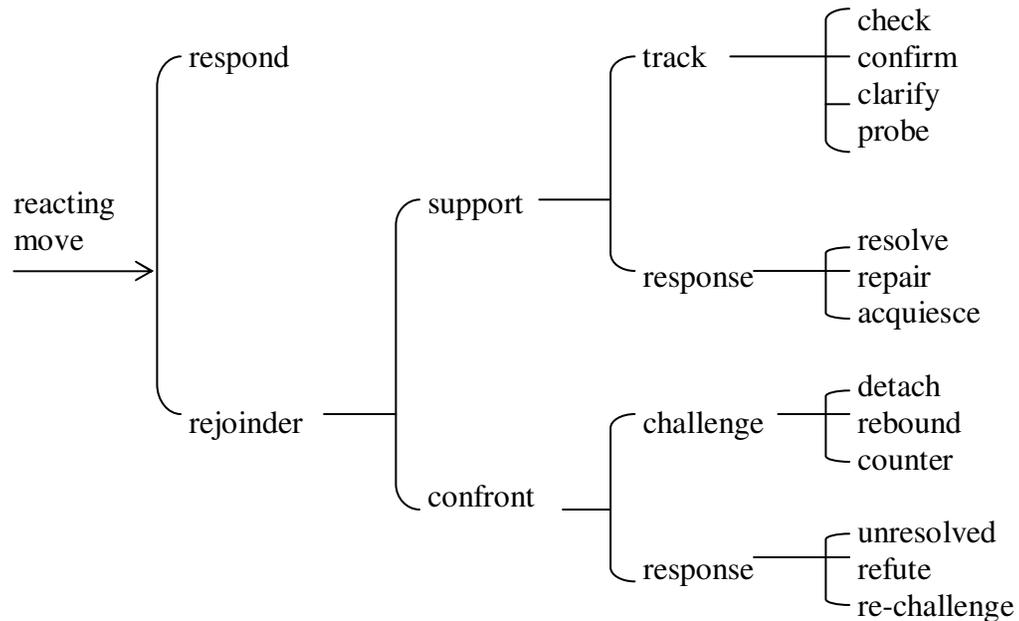


Figure 2.14 Rejoinding Speech Functions

Source: Eggins and Slade (1997: 209)

The speech function labels together with their congruent moods in each of the major subcategories of speech function classes can be summarized in the following tables.

Table 2.9 Speech Function Labels and Congruent Moods for Opening Moves

Speech Function	Discourse Purpose	Congruent Mood
attending	attention seeking	minor; formulaic
offer	give goods and services	modulated interrogative
command	demand goods and services	imperative
statement:fact	give factual information	full declarative; no modality;
statement:opinion	give attitudinal / evaluative information	full declarative; modality
question:open:fact	demand factual information	wh-interrogative; no modality
question:closed:fact	demand confirmation/agreement with factual information	polar interrogative; no modality
question:open:opinion	demand opinion information	wh-interrogative, modality
question:closed:opinion	demand agreement with opinion information	polar interrogative; modality

Table 2.10 Speech Function Labels and Congruent Moods for Continuing Moves

Speech Function	Discourse Purpose	Congruent Mood
continue:monitor	check that audience is still engaged	elliptical major clause or minor clause with interrogative intonation
prolong:elaborate	clarify; exemplify or restate	full declarative
prolong:extend	offer additional or contrasting information	full declarative
prolong:enhance	qualify previous move by giving details of time, place, cause, condition, etc.	full declarative
append:elaborate	clarify; exemplify or restate previous mover after intervention by another speaker	elaborating nominal group
append:extend	offer additional or contrasting information to previous move after intervention by another speaker	elaborating nominal group
append:enhance	qualify previous move after intervention by another speaker	enhancing prepositional/adverbial phrase

Table 2.11 Speech Function Labels and Congruent Mood for Responding Moves

Speech Function	Discourse Purpose	Congruent Mood
engage	show willingness to interact by responding to salutation, etc.	minor; typically “yea” or matched response
register	display attention to the speaker	repetition of speaker’s word(s); paralinguistic expressions
comply	to carry out demand for goods and services	non-verbal; expressions of understanding
accept	to accept proffered goods and services	non-verbal; expressions of thanking
agree	to indicate support of information given	yes; positive polarity
acknowledge	to indicate knowledge of information given	expressions of knowing
answer	to provide information demanded	complete missing structural element
affirm	to provide positive response to question	yes; positive polarity
disagree	to provide negative response to question	negation of proposition
non-comply	to indicate inability to comply with prior command	non-verbal; no expressions of undertaking; negation of verbal command
withhold	to indicate inability to provide demanded information	negative elliptical declarative
disavow	to deny acknowledgement of information	expressions of disclaiming knowledge
contradict	to negate prior information	no; switched polarity

Table 2.12 Speech Function Labels and Congruent Mood for Rejoinding Moves

Speech Function	Discourse Purpose	Congruent Mood
check	to elicit repetition of a misheard element or move	elliptical polar interrogative
confirm	to verify information heard	elliptical wh-interrogative, wh/new element (not in prior move)
clarify	to get additional information needed to understand prior move	elliptical interrogative, wh/new element (not in prior move)
probe	to volunteer further details/implications for confirmation	full clause, new subject, etc. but in logico-semantic relation with the moves it's tracking or tagged declarative
resolve	to provide clarification, acquiesce with information	elliptical declarative; mood adjunct of polarity or modality
detach	to terminate interaction	silence; expressions of termination
rebound	to question relevance, legitimacy, veracity of prior move	wh-interrogative, elliptical
counter	to dismiss addressee's right to his/her position	non-elliptical declarative; negation of understanding/rightness
refute	to contradict import of a challenge	elliptical declarative; negation
re-challenge	to offer alternative position	elliptical interrogative

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