CHAPTER TWO : LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 : Introduction

This study aims to investigate the patterns of spoken discourse employed by three SL librarians in their conduct of 3 CD-ROM familiarisation programmes to 3 small groups of SL college students. The review attempted in this chapter aims to accomplish the following:

a) establish the research gap,

b) review the contributions of past studies conducted in the discourse analysis field,

c) justify a feasible research method and model to adopt for this study and

d) highlight pertinent features to analyse which are reflective of this kind of librarian-library user discourse.

In Johns and Dudley-Evans' opinion, (1991:298) there are two important kinds of analyses to be conducted in any ESP (English for Specific Purposes) context. They are i) needs analysis and ii) discourse analysis.

This study which is related to an ESP situation, is more concerned with the analysis of discourse. As a pedagogically-driven study, it aims to investigate the discoursal patterns of 3 semi-professional SL librarians when conducting CD-ROM introductory search skills sessions to student user groups. The objective of the investigation is to make SL librarians aware of the kinds of discourse they have to engage in to
achieve their communicative goals in this context.

Many writers believe that the investigation of discourse occurring in a natural context of use is always a worthwhile exercise. The spoken data produced by participants engaged in an authentic activity is likely to enrich our present knowledge or verify what we already know about the infinitely rich patterns of natural speech.

A CD-ROM familiarisation session can in some ways be equated to the presentation of an oral manual as it involves talk to accompany actions performed by a speaker. McCarthy (1991) calls it spoken "language in action" and points out the high incidence of context-dependent demonstratives featured in this kind of talk to refer to the "here and now", e.g. "this one here", "now look at this"... etc. Since this kind of user-training exercise involves a teaching-learning engagement, there are also identifiable elements of classroom talk.

The discourse analysis approach is of practical relevance in an ESP context. It can help SL speakers communicate instrumentally and clearly in specific situations of use, without having their confidence shaken by their weaknesses in target language construction or inadequate knowledge of formal grammar rules. (Bell 1981:135; Candlin 1987; Selinker 1988; Robinson 1980 & 1991; Riley 1985)

The paradigmatic emphasis has shifted from "the sentence in isolation to the utterance in context" (Riley 1985; Robinson 1980; Edmondson 1981; Gumperz 1982) or "text and talk" em-
ployed in natural instances of use. The above-stated emphasis is essential to understand the issues of dominance and inequality, roles and status of participants, the control of participation through speakership and the significance of interactional patterns, pre-sequences, and conversational routines related to a particular discourse type. (Candlin et al 1976; Gumperz 1982)

2.2: Brief Review of Studies in Discourse Analysis

Much research and study have concentrated on the analyses of features and patterns of oral and written genres of various discourse communities. Areas of investigation have included how the procedural or menu-like interchanges are coded, tabulated, explained and organised into schematic patterns to realise meaning. The most distinctive among these remain the study of doctor-patient communication pioneered by Candlin, Leather & Bruton (1976), which is a classic attempt at genre analysis.

Other inter-disciplinary studies which follow in their trail include the analyses of classroom discourse (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975) verbal teaching patterns (Moore 1977) and teacher talk (Sinclair & Brazil 1982). These studies demonstrate that teachers usually control 2/3 (two-thirds) of talking time in class. In a three-part Elicitation-Reply-Evaluation sequence, the elicitation and evaluation moves are usually teacher initiated. Student responses to questions are then classified under the Reply move.
Studies of classroom discourse are further enriched by the CRAPEL [Centre de Recherches et d'Applications Pedagogiques en Langues] studies conducted by Gremmo, Holec and Riley (1985). Their contributions are distinctively known for the highly eclectic approaches they have adopted to investigate the pedagogical implications of interactional analysis.

In addition, Mehan (1985) demonstrates that classroom activities which are essentially teacher-student engagements reflect ritualistic patterns of interaction. These rhythmic, cooperative activities are also significant for other two-party interactions such as those of mother-infant, counselor-student and psychiatrist-patient. Furthermore, Griffin & Mehan (1981) who investigate the communicative complexities of classroom discourse claim that school children need, besides academic input, skills of social interaction. These are essential for developing their communicative competence, patterns of social behaviour and ability to understand what is expected of them in instances of classroom language use which they are not accustomed with. In my opinion, this recommendation is also very relevant to address the interactional needs of SL librarians who are little exposed to situations where they have to relate to a SL student audience.

While Kreckel (1981) focuses her detailed study on the everyday discourse of a family unit and how its members transmit and interpret messages, other researchers turn their atten-
tion to identify the discoursal patterns of unique two party transactions such as those for parent-child (Ervin-Tripp & Strage 1985), or even triadic group combinations which involve pediatrician-patient-parent (Worobey et al 1987). There are yet other well conceptualised studies which focus on the production of talk and its subsequent formulation for a third party, nonparticipating audience in the newsroom (Heritage 1985) and the courtroom (Drew 1985). In addition to analyses of therapeutic discourse (Labov & Fanshel 1977; Scheflen 1973), Cuff & Sharrock (1985) investigate the genre of meetings and the turn taking patterns of participants during these social functions.

The talk generated during the CD-ROM familiarisation session, especially during the Hands-on phase can be viewed as a triadic setup which involves the librarian, the student at the terminal and the student observers. It is interesting therefore, to discover from the data whether librarian talk addressed to the student at the terminal will differ from that addressed to the student observers. In this setup it may be possible for the librarian to assume two roles.

2.3 Establishing the Research Gap

Rich though these above-mentioned cross-disciplinary research efforts are, there still exists a dearth of deliberated research studies to unravel the features and patterns of librarian-library user talk in a library environment. Writers and professionals in the Library Science scene, like McElroy
(1984), Turner (1984) and Trezza (1990) voice the functions expected of an academic librarian; i.e. to assist the college community in their study and research efforts through the effective organisation, retrieval and dissemination of information and library materials and the provision of relevant support services and facilities. A further review of the literature on librarianship and related areas reveal encouraging views regarding the approaches library staff can employ to cope with the advent of IT(Information Technology) which has a great impact on the library scene. (Dewey 1989; McElroy 1984; Trezza 1990; Underwood 1990 and Katz 1992).

"As computer networks spread into more and more areas of our lives, our language has to struggle to keep pace. We are faced with a new and unfamiliar situation, unsure of its potentials or implications."

(De Raymond Gozzi, Jr. 1994:219)

There is certainly a research gap which exists when we consider the challenges that confront SL librarians in their efforts to verbalise the technology coherently, and at the same time demonstrate its potentials for the benefit of SL student library users. The linguistic needs of librarians for this dual purpose have as yet remained undocumented and unaddressed.

When a native speaker seriously declares that the English language "has to struggle to keep pace" with on-going developments in computer technology (Gozzi ibid), in a SL context, librarians may have to exert twice as much effort to transfer what they know about computerised information
resources to their student clients. As Hammerly asserts, (1991:87) learning to use a SL well in a tutored situation can be a difficult and lengthy process. What an uphill task it must be for SL librarians who have to manage on their own, after being thrown into the deep end by the dictates of technology and their workplace.

It has significantly changed the character of the library and has imposed higher demands on library staff. Much has been said about the endless possibilities of interactive global information generation and dissemination for education and infotainment purposes which surpass man's imagination. But before this rapidly expanding cult of information obliterates its own usefulness by degenerating into ill-managed masses of opaque, poorly understood data networks, librarians have an important role to play where user education is concerned. Harry R. Franklin, the immediate ex-president of the American Library Association firmly maintains this view and adds that librarians are the "navigators of these information highways and guardians of the users' right to know".

Professor Peter F. Drucker, speaking during a seminar on "Managing for the future success strategy in the C21st", stresses the importance for all skilled personnel to be not only computer literate but also information literate. This is because they need to keep up with information systems which have increasingly sophisticated capabilities and are rapidly gaining global prominence, acceptance and use. (Khan 1994)
Unfortunately, from a SL librarian's point of view, there is a chasm of unwritten literature to explain the available tools and strategies at his disposal to guide him how to conduct user-friendly CD-ROM (compact disc, read only memory) search literacy training sessions. Katz (1992:150-151) points out the importance of grooming librarians to run these programmes effectively. He emphasises that users should feel at ease while interfacing with these database resources, and the librarian should be available to solve users' point of use problems as they arise. Unfortunately, Katz goes no further to elaborate what SL librarians can do to win user confidence or structure their discourse to fit a variety of functions for each phase of the programme. These strategies are important to help users overcome technology phobia and be convinced of the speed and ease of information retrieval which these CD-ROMs can offer.

Librarians as instructors in this context, need to establish clear lines of communication with their audience in English as this is the undisputed language of technology. Hill, in his state of the art article (1994), is of the opinion that the crux of technology's success lies with the competence to communicate effectively in English for everyone involved at all levels of implementation. This includes the designers of systems, the vendors, right down to the librarian intermediaries and to the end users i.e. the students in this case.

Every conceivable database that is currently in the market is sold with a range of accompanying technical manuals. But
most student users who are computer non-literate, dislike the tedium of reading and understanding manuals. As Underwood (1990) opines, manuals supplied by manufacturers and vendors are not effective guides for library users because they are system-centred. Nahl-Jakobovits (1994) confirms the general problems users face with manuals because they assume readers to have prior technical knowledge. In addition, their style of presentation does not allow much room for the negotiation of meaning. As such, the instructions given in most user manuals may not be readily transparent to a layman, not to mention a college student who has very minimal or zero prerequisite knowledge.

A review of University Microfilm International's How to search Proquest and the SPIRS user's manual, SilverPlatter version 2.0, seem to confirm Nahl-Jakobovits' views. The information provided is ordered in sequences of instructions to trigger stipulated operations. These sets of instructions are usually not graded according to a continuum from the simple to the complex, but each section begins with the preliminary details and assumes users have the prerequisite knowledge provided in earlier sections to carry out the next phase of operations.

To solve user problems with manuals, Underwood (1990) recommends that library staff prepare an "in-house" manual customised to the level of their clients' purposes and background knowledge. His suggestion has been partially taken up by
these college librarians. Yet, it is observed that these piles of loose-sheet "in-house" guides are left unnoticed, untouched and unread. A highly pertinent comment, which is reflective of the local user community is:

"People prefer, in the main, to gain information about new procedures by watching and asking others."  
( Underwood 1990:167)

Only when answers fall short of expectations, then and only then, will the need arise to consult a manual. To address this trend in user preference, it is important to equip SL librarians with effective oral and demonstration skills to conduct CD-ROM workshop sessions to student user groups. Librarians should be able to verbalise the jargon of the manual in simple, direct and interesting ways to engage students' interest in using these systems just as they would consult any other library reference tool.

A CD-ROM search conducted under the term "user training" from the Proquest Dissertation Abstracts Ondisc data files for the years 1982/3 - 1994 retrieved 6 citations all of which stress the need for effective user training programmes to impart skills of search strategy formulation to library user groups. Of these six, I have chosen to highlight two below, whose authors encapsulated much of what I have in mind.

Brown (1993) in her doctoral dissertation proposes more user-friendly approaches to overcome resistance and to assist users in accessing educational information and materials.
from a database called the Retrieval Cooperative Extension Service. She recommends the provision of training to famili-
rise users with the know-how to search CD-ROM databases
efficiently as an initial step to popularise their use.

In my opinion, this is a viable proposal for implementation
provided SL librarians have the skills to conduct these
training sessions in interesting and convincing ways. It is
important for users to understand what CD-ROMs can or cannot
do and it is equally important to ensure their first encoun-
ter with the technology is an engaging and fruitful one.

Secondly, the conclusions outlined in Nahl-Jakobovits' Ph D.
thesis (1994) seem to concur with Brown's views. She affirms
that there is a paradigm shift towards user-friendliness
from the traditional system-centredness where the writing
of technical manuals is concerned. This trend is detected
from the taxonomy of affective speech acts she has extracted
from the technical manuals written by academic librarians
aimed at providing orientation, advice and reassurance to
users of the Wilson CD-ROM database.

In tandem with the current shift towards user-friendliness,
there is the need for librarians to customise their CD-ROM
search literacy training sessions in accordance with the
level, needs and expectations of their student audience. This
strategy will ensure a more engaging and rewarding experience
for both the librarian instructor and the student user,
especially in an area where students have minimal or zero
technical knowledge. Moreover, the crux of the paradox is, while students generally have a phobia of "electronic wizardry", at the same time they have high expectations from today's technology. They will be won over to use CD-ROM databases only when they are convinced of their effectiveness in terms of time and cost benefits and when they are satisfied with the search results retrieved.

2.4 Workplace English Training Programmes

A Workplace English training programme is a subset of the broader discipline of staff training and development and has its place within the ESP umbrella. (Prince 1984) Widdowson (1983) views ESP as "essentially a training operation which seeks to provide learners with a restricted competence to enable them to cope with certain clearly defined tasks". Owing to pedagogical considerations, he favours learner-oriented approaches (1981:2) and suggests that an assessment of the communicative needs of a specific learner group has to be carried out prior to the actual design of a course to answer their lacks and needs.

In this context, it seems fitting to quote the conclusion from Kenneth James' article (1984:112), which ties up very well with Widdowson's stand.

"Students need help with what they find most difficult. What they find most difficult can only be discovered by observing them at work on the job."

For the purpose of analysing the communicative needs of this group of SL librarians, James' comment indicates an initial
step in the right direction. Prince's proposal for a worker-oriented strategy (1984:109) is also in harmony with Widdowson's opinion of what benefits learners most at the workplace.

Since librarians are concerned with short cuts to competence and immediate application of usable skills, it is more viable and cost effective to provide them with short-term remediation strategies to address their "here and now" linguistic shortcomings. Wilkins (1983:69) calls programmes of this nature, "high surrender value courses", since whatever input given is tailored for the immediate purpose of communication and use.

The kinds of skills to be acquired in a training enterprise, as Holec (1985:266) reiterates consist of the communicative strategies and operations which the learner believes he will need to master for his job performance. It is no longer a matter of "common core", nor of specialised knowledge. In this case, what is relevant and needed is a hierarchy based on urgency, ease of use, and ease of mastery. Admittedly, this hierarchy of needs does not remain static but will invariably differ from one learner to another and for the same learner at different times. The focus of worker-oriented training is on the product and immediate needs at the cost of forsaking the time consuming processes of creative language construction.

The development of language competence is a very crucial
issue if librarians want to keep up with technology’s innovations. Both Prentice (1990) and Turner (1984) maintain the view that library staff generally consider themselves understaffed and underpaid. As such, it is of utmost importance for them to upgrade their awareness and competence on an ongoing basis in order to develop themselves professionally in a logical and structured way to earn the status they deserve.

A review of staff training programmes in the library field, (Underwood 1990; Turner 1984; Prentice 1990; McElroy 1984 & Trezza 1990) shows that these attach great importance to guided reading programmes, attendance at meetings, seminars and courses for the dissemination and transmission of new ideas and undertaking research projects to gain a deeper appreciation of how to respond more effectively to users’ information needs. In fact, these training strategies are specified as essentials, according to the professional standards of the British Library Association.

Relevant though these programmes are to the local library scene, the fact remains that they are not directed to answer the immediate communication needs of SL librarians. As such, the recognition for a workplace language training package is not emphasised, although it is much needed in this context.

In a SL library environment, librarians need to have effective communication skills to promote the use of newly-acquired information packages and explain changes in working or service procedures to the user community who prefer these
to be communicated to them in English. Thus, weaknesses in the SL librarians' language proficiency have to be addressed quickly and efficiently through short duration, on-going programmes. Most professional writers in the Library Science field agree that lack of training and preparation can lead to disastrous consequences and backfire the installation of the most expensive computerised library system.

As for the kind of language training exercise to adopt in this context, I agree with Ann Johns and Dudley Evans (1991) that Hutchinson and Waters' learning-centred approach to ESP (1987:28), is not sensitive to the preferences of this group of SL working adults. For one, it does not cater for the specific language needs which are dictated by their job demands.

In contrast, Birkram Das has proposed a practical solution to answer the workplace related language needs of SL learners. Like Widdowson, he asserts that since a learner's work-related language needs are highly restricted, they can be classified for certain predictable tasks. As such, all they need to learn can be equated to the amount needed to perform the job successfully. There is thus, no need for a separate language course. Das reiterates that the fastest and most efficient way to gain mastery of workplace English is to practice it repeatedly. This repetition will lead to internalisation and automatic recall as and when the need for application arises. (Das 1984)
To augment the salient views of Das, I find it pertinent to highlight at this point, the importance of providing SL librarians with the schematic organisation or guidelines for conducting the CD-ROM familiarisation session to student user groups. This will sharpen their awareness of how to structure the programme into macro phases to benefit students and achieve their intended objectives.

In this respect, I agree with Cook (1991) and Swales (1990) that schemata allow us to communicate with economy and at maximum efficiency. These informational, procedural, rhetorical and content data structures, when internalised can serve as useful memory aids to help SL librarians create discourse. However, the volume or complexity of the content to be transmitted has to be determined according to the level of shared knowledge that exists between them and their student audience.

2.5 Practical Approaches to Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis has rather tentative and uncoordinated beginnings. Henri Holec (1985) attributes this lack of direction to the ambiguities, inconsistencies and even contradictions that surround this discipline. For one, some of its fundamental concepts still lack clear definitions. In addition, the limitations of its analytical tools have taken away a great deal of its initial appeal and usefulness.

These shortcomings eventually pave the way for improvements.
The later efforts of analysts sought to clarify and extend discourse analysis to interdisciplinary and cross-cultural situations. As van Dijk (1985:10) maintains, discourse analysis in its full richness involves "all levels and methods of analysis of language, cognition, interaction, society, and culture". The discourse models of Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) and Brazil, Coulthard and Johns (1980) are acknowledged classics in this field as they are theoretically and methodologically complete.(Riley 1985:17)

Anthropologists Gumperz and Hymes (1972), Gumperz (1982) and sociologists and sociolinguists like Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) whose focus of investigation is on the speech event, encounter problems when they want to explain the complexities of language use. They find no available explanations at that time to account for the dynamics of interactional exchanges, allocation of speaking turns and the associated speakers’ roles and discourse rights. As such, they have to augment the efforts of applied linguists like Candlin et al (1976), and Greemoo et al (1977), investigators of behavioural strategies like Goffman (1959) and transactional analysts like Berne (1964) to classify and describe the performative value of utterances in sociolinguistic contexts.

The approach generally employed is "top-down" i.e. from the general categories of communicative events down to the specific types of functions which set them apart. This procedure of interpretation is the much lauded approach of conversa-
tional analysis, pioneered by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974).

2.5.1: Criticisms of Sinclair and Coulthard's Model

Sinclair and Coulthard's model focuses on the patterns of classroom discourse. Robinson (1981) in her explanation of these conversational studies, mentions how their investigations are basically limited to dyadic setups which involve two conversational partners analysed through a sequence of illocutionary acts. A feature of their approach is its hierarchy of the stages in the dialogue interchanges, starting from the "move" (i.e. the minimal contribution a speaker can make to an exchange), and culminating in the "interaction". In comparison to the rhetorical model proposed by the Trimbles, Sinclair and Coulthard's approach is more detailed and exhaustive but time consuming and tedious to apply.

Riley (1985:59) in his article entitled "When communication breaks down", criticises Sinclair and Coulthard's model as "ham-handed" and fraught with vague uncertainties as their purely illocutionary description of the "ideal speaker-hearer" situation, does not differentiate between contributions which are interactive and those which are not. As such, instances like interruptions, floor-grabbing and back-channel signals which do not contribute towards topic development are difficult to account for.

To rectify this weakness in Sinclair and Coulthard's model,
Riley and his associates at CRAPEL, choose to define interaction as "the process by which discourse as the collaborative construct of two or more participants is produced" (Riley 1985:13). Allwright (1988:171) also shares their opinion. From his investigation of turn-taking patterns of classroom talk, he concludes that whatever happens in a teaching context should be viewed as a "co-production" as it is meaningless to study classroom talk as a strictly dyadic setup without considering what students contribute individually or chorally towards the discourse.

2.5.2: Conversational Analysis

Conversational analysis is a discipline which involves the systematic and formal observation of how participants interact in natural situations of language use. The joint efforts of Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, culminated in the oft-quoted study entitled, "A simplest systematics for the organisation of turn-taking for conversation" in 1974. In it they outline explicit rules for turn-construction and turn-allocation.

However, as Houtkoop and Mazeland's study (1985) affirms, when a speaker dominates the floor to produce longer stretches of discourse or what they call "discourse units", like in story-telling, giving advice or instructions, the turn-allocation model of Sacks et al (1974) cannot be adequately applied. Houtkoop and Mazeland assert that during an extended talking turn, the opportunities for turn transfer may not be
taken by the addressees. Instead, they may indicate by back-channel signals that they opt to maintain their listenership role to allow the primary speaker to finish his speaking turn. In addition to this, they freely give him the right of floor to take as many turns as he needs to complete what he has planned to say.

I agree with their views as the spoken data during the Presentation and Demonstration phase of the CD-ROM session seem to reflect the above described pattern. During that phase, the librarian monopolises the floor to transmit information, instructions and advice to his student audience, while students contribute short verbal or nonverbal back-channel replies chorally.

Conversational analysis belongs more to the sociolinguistics field and concerns a wide range of interesting issues like the management of turn-taking, the distribution of speaker-ship and listenership, repair or self-correction strategies, the sequencing of talking turns, questioning strategies, adjacency pairs, the resolution of ambiguity, conversational routines and so forth. This area provides fertile ground for investigation, especially when it is approached from a cross-disciplinary or cross-cultural perspective. For this reason, I have formulated my 2 research questions to focus on SL discourse patterns and the organisation of talk during the librarians' conduct of CD-ROM familiarisation programmes.
2.5.3: The CRAPEL Model

The contributions to discourse analysis from the CRAPEL team of researchers, (Riley 1985) are highly eclectic in approach. They employ a combination of approaches to augment the initial studies of Sacks et al (1974) and Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) to investigate participants' roles and their associated discourse rights and privileges.

I find the CRAPEL model of analysis particularly suitable for the purposes of my study because it accommodates the investigation of discourse produced by more than 3 conversational participants in a natural occurrence of use where participants do not share the ideal distribution pattern of speakership. Using this model, it is possible to determine speakers' roles in discourse encounters and explain how these roles relate to discourse rights and privileges from speakership turns taken. When the transcribed spoken data is analysed according to their guidelines, it is possible to determine the following:

i) the turn boundaries between the macro phases,

ii) speakers' interactive roles and

iii) the pattern of conversational exchanges, returns and involvements for the entire encounter.

According to the CRAPEL model, (Riley ibid :50) interaction is achieved by a set of actions and reactions, realised by "turns" (taking the floor), which are defined as the basic elements of discourse. This is a plus point for their model
as it distinguishes between speaker, talker and listener states and the notion of address, a very important and interesting phenomenon. Interactive acts can best be understood as the pattern of the distribution of address emerges to reveal the presence or absence of the right to take or give the floor.

The table below, adapted from Riley (1985:51) illustrates how the 3 basic speech acts i.e. Opening, Reply and Closing (O,R,C) combine to form interactive structures which follow a hierarchical order, starting from the turn and culminating in the involvement which fit the purposes of this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1: Hierarchy of Interactional Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Turn Exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Turn Return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Turn Return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using a tabulated "interactional structure" which accompanies their model, an analyst can describe how turns are patterned and regulated and explain why the mechanism for turn-taking occur the way they do.

However, Riley and his associates do concede that their system lacks a reliable taxonomy of illocutionary acts and have thus resorted to adapt Sinclair and Coulthard's system of analysis to map the illocutionary moves and exchanges.
Although the units of illocutionary structure (act, move, exchange, transaction and interaction) are different from Gremmo, Holec and Riley's units of interactional structure [turn, return, exchange, involvement and encounter] (Riley 1985:41-46), Riley claims that both sets of categories are perfectly compatible. He maintains, the boundaries of the illocutionary exchange and interactive return do coincide. In my opinion, they seem to overlap. (Riley ibid:61 Table 3)

For this reason, I have opted not to follow through with the analysis of the illocutionary structure but instead adopt the approaches proposed by Bowers (1987) and Worobey et al (1987) to analyse patterns of talk during the beginnings and endings of the sessions conducted and classify student contributions by utterance length to determine whether they are reactive or proactive turns. In step with the CRAPEL studies, I have adopted an eclectic process of analysis to arrive at quantitative and qualitative conclusions to enrich my interpretation of the pattern and nature of SL librarian-library user discourse.

2.6: Research Methodology

Although some practical ideas for research methodology can be obtained from Prince (1984), Bowers (1987), Gremmo, Holec & Riley (1985) Scharer (1983) and Worobey (1987), Nunan's "Research Methods in Language Learning" remains a highly useful and comprehensive resource manual and guide in this respect. After careful consideration of his succinct accounts
of a range of research methods, their characteristics, and pros and cons, I am inclined to call the approach I have adopted a combination of action research and conversational analysis. According to Grotjahn's classification (1987:59–60), it comes under Paradigm No.1, which is a form of research with a "non-experimental design, qualitative data and interpretive analysis".

Worobey et al (1987), outline several worthwhile techniques for the analysis of taped spoken data. Their study concentrates on the triadic pediatrician-patient-parent communication setup. The methodology they propose involves a two stage process.

Firstly, it begins by examining certain aspects of the form and content of the pediatrician's spoken data. Then they proceed to explain how the length of the utterances, address, intonation and content items used are characteristic of the pediatrician's verbal interaction with child patients and their parents. Utterances are classified according to length and address while the distribution of talk is analysed to determine how the presence or absence of stress factors can affect discourse patterns and choice of lexis.

Although librarian-library user discourse in this context, is not a triadic setup for all phases, I still find the research methods employed by Worobey et al (1987) interesting and worthwhile to adopt in part. A few of their approaches can be adapted to ascertain whether there was a conscious effort on
the part of the librarians to engage student participation in the discourse.

In addition, classifying student turns according to utterance length can offer statistical evidence to determine the nature of students' contributions towards the discourse. It is thus possible to conclude whether they are contributing to the discourse reactively or proactively to maximise their own learning opportunities.

The research methodology used will be described in detail in the following chapter. At this juncture, it is sufficient to present an evaluation of the readings which in my opinion, have useful and practical suggestions to offer for implementation.

2.7: Pitfalls to Avoid

Undoubtedly, the various procedures of analysis proposed for this study will generate divergent and numerous unexpected outcomes. It is here that Nunan heightens the need for discretion and selective attention to detail. Points of significance and sample segments of data for interpretive analysis, have to be selected with care so that relevance and correlations can be established and highlighted in a cogent and coherent manner. In addition, it is not wise to read too much into the findings generated by such a small sample of informants since I made no conscious effort to control the variables.
In contrast to the experimental method which has tried and tested statistical tools and formalised procedures for collecting and analysing data, conversational or discourse analysis leaves the researcher with a lot of loose ends and options. There are no explicit guidelines to chart the ideal path. The researcher is left very much on his own to utilise what he thinks suits his purpose best. This may be considered an advantage by some but others may think otherwise.

I am aware that an undertaking in this relatively uncharted terrain of discourse analysis, will be fraught with many dangers. Among them are, losing one's way in the labyrinths of collected data, using faulty or inadequate analytical tools, failing to interpret the outcomes with sufficient reasoned logic and inability to triangulate the data convincingly.

Nevertheless, a novice researcher can derive some reassurance from Gumperz's maxims for discourse analysis quoted below.

"The aim is to eliminate redundancies and test for gaps in the data so as to derive a minimal set of relationally defined categories which, while not necessarily faithful to articulatory detail, nevertheless can, with the aid of linguistic realization rules, account for what is meaningful, in somewhat the same way that a chemical equation accounts for, but does not describe, everything that goes on in the test tube."

(Gumperz 1982 :11)

Bearing in mind the advice of Nunan and Gumperz, I have not tried to account for everything that is said but have tried rather, to identify and explain with discretion what is
meaningful (and sometimes unsaid but understood) in this particular context. The task at hand is not to document everything and give equal weightage to all features. Rather, my efforts are directed to discover the patterns of discourse in this context, offer explanations for their use and options for improvement wherever relevant. This I hope, will prove to be a manageable and fruitful exercise.

2.8 Conclusion

It is evident from this review that opinions among writers in the discourse analysis discipline seem to overlap rather than fit in total agreement. For the purpose of this study, it seems most practical to opt for an informed eclectic approach. This is feasible and practical as demonstrated by the CRAPEL studies jointly done by Gremmo, Holec and Riley (1985) and as recommended by Dudley-Evans and Henderson (1990).

After having staked a case for a high surrender value strategy to bridge the SL librarians' target language needs at the workplace and having identified a few practical solutions to address their needs, I shall proceed in the following chapter to detail the research methodology sequentially, together with the data gathering instruments and procedures for data analysis to ensure the study objectives will be adequately met.