

CHAPTER 5

ANALYZING GENRES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The executive secretaries are engaged in three main types of face-to-face interactions. They involve the relationship with the boss, the company employees, and the various external contacts. The genres arising out of these interactions are a derivative of the data on the social structure (See Chapter 4). The external conditions, therefore, influence the speech events. They form the ethnographic background and setting for the sociocognitive and sociolinguistic analysis in this chapter.

Although the data is from four different business organizations, the similarities in the features (See Chapter 4) permit a 'cluster' analysis under the area of 'relationship'. Relationship is central to the theme of the study on genres as a social process.

The speech events are explored based on the model (See 2.9). To begin with are the details of each setting which are listed so as to provide some ethnographic descriptions in which the text of the speech event is embedded. The evolved genres are exploited to ascertain insightful discoveries and to support the data in Chapter 4. The naming of genres (See 2.4) is arrived at by identifying the goal or purpose of each speech event. The analysis begins with the relationship between

the executive secretary and the boss, followed by the relationship of the executive secretary with company staff and finally the relationship with external contacts.

5.2 RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BOSS

5.2.1 Setting

Company A

- a. There is the usual piped in classical music in the background.
- b. This is a very busy afternoon in the office. The executive secretary is inundated with phone calls every few minutes. These are usually handled by the personal assistant who is away attending a meeting.
- c. She gives instructions to the office boy, the boss's driver, and attends to visitors.
- d. The maintenance man comes in to discuss the state of the air-conditioning that has to be checked.
- e. The tailor comes in to deliver the boss's suit.
- f. The boss is at a meeting with senior managers in the boss's room.
- g. Amidst all these activities, she is trying to work on the word processor.
- h. At the end of the meeting the boss walks into her office.

Speech Event (Company A)

A1 : Genre - Reinforcement

Speech Act

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Boss : Ini, I have another suit, the grey suit. I need 2. the grey suit (.) OK a :: nd er Banker's Club | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Need |
|---|---|

- | | | |
|-----|--------|--|
| 3. | uh = | |
| 4. | ES : | [
= <i>Nanti kijap</i>
(<i>Wait for a while</i>) |
| 5. | Boss : | () |
| 6. | ES : | <i>Belum, belum, belum</i> =
(<i>Not yet, not yet, not yet</i>) |
| 7. | Boss : | =oa :: ah |
| 8. | ES : | So I call him er (.) I is - I'll go through |
| 9. | | my checklist = |
| 10. | Boss : | = Ehem, OK, checklist, my – grey suit |
- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| | 2. Disappointment |
| | 3. Rectify
inefficiency |
| | 4. Reinforcement |

Setting

Company B

- a. She meets with her boss the first thing in the morning, in his office.
- b. This is a routine activity to update him on company matters, discuss problems, staff matters; brief him on appointments and deal with his personal matters; and to get him to read and sign official documents.
- c. She presents the documents, i.e. reports, letters, memos, etc. arranged systematically in a folder.
- d. She is seated opposite him at his desk while he goes through the documents.
- e. During this meeting, she takes instructions from her boss on things to do for that day. She also gives suggestions to assist him in the decisions to be made.

Speech Event (Company B)

B1 : Genre – Review

Speech Act

- | | | | |
|-----|--------|---|------------------------|
| 1. | Boss : | ° What else? <u>Then</u> (.) ours the 90 course is also | 1. Elicit information |
| 2. | | registered in () = | |
| 3. | ES : | ° should be | |
| 4. | Boss : | [Or rather we have two (.) the PKNS course | |
| 5. | | and the | |
| 6. | ES : | ° Havana course | |
| 7. | Boss : | [Havana course. Yes. | 2. Agreement |
| 8. | | I would like to – to put it there. So I put that in | 3. Intention |
| 9. | | the (.) general management file | |
| 10. | ES : | [<u>No</u> , I'll put it under | 4. Counter suggestion |
| | | :ehem the development file | |
| 11. | Boss : | OK, Can, | 5. Agreement |
| 12. | ES : | [Ya | 6. Reinforce agreement |
| 13. | Boss : | [Can – can – so, many participants whatever, | |
| 14. | | just to complete the file because <u>we are overdoing</u> | |
| 15. | | <u>everything here</u> | 7. Emphasize caution |
| 16. | ES : | ° Hm Hm OK () OK. ° Now I look for () | 8. Agreement |

Speech Event (Company B)

B2 : Genre - Investigation

Speech Act

- | | | | |
|----|------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. | ES : | But anyway, she left because she | 1. Justification |
| 2. | | was no good anyway = | |

- | | | | |
|-----|--------|---|-------------------|
| 3. | Boss : | = Ya :: But why we send her for training? | 2. Enquiry |
| 4. | | (.) Why she left? Why she left? | |
| 5. | ES : | ° Nobody knows. She has an attitude | 3. Assumption |
| 6. | | problem = | |
| 7. | Boss : | = <u>I know, I know!</u> But uh not for | 4. Suspicion |
| 8. | | competition? I'd like to know, just | |
| 9. | | for my own curiosity – to see whether | 5. Request |
| 10. | | she left for competition or not. I | |
| 11. | | don't have to know because cosmetic reasons | |
| 12. | | or what, but I want to know if | |
| 13. | | she left for competition. Because this | 6. Accountability |
| 14. | | time we spent a lot of money on her = | |
| 15. | ES : | = Training her = | |
| 16. | Boss : | Ya. I want to know and that means | 7. Decision |
| 17. | | we are going to our contract signing | |
| 18. | ES : | ° You should | 8. Support |

Setting

Company D

- The executive secretary is continuing work with word processing.
- She attends to telephone calls every 20 or 30 minutes or makes calls.
- The boss walks into her office to deal with company matters.

Speech Event (Company D)

D1 : Genre – On-The-Job Training

Speech Act

- | | | | |
|-----|--------|--|------------------|
| 1. | Boss : | Our objective would be to have his signature | 1. Training |
| 2. | | appear in every letter | |
| 3. | ES : | Huh huh. Doesn't matter whether | 2. Clarification |
| 4. | Boss : | [
But if it is | |
| 5. | | original form then he <u>must sign</u> | 3. Procedure |
| 6. | | <u>every piece.</u> | |
| 7. | ES : | Right | |
| 8. | Boss : | If you don't want (.) That's the objective | |
| 9. | ES : | Right | |
| 10. | Boss : | So, that objective can be achieved by | 4. Instruction |
| 11. | | just giving him er, er, the whole | |
| 12. | | letter typed like this | |
| 13. | ES : | Hm Hm | |
| 14. | Boss : | But then you must space it according | 5. Instruction |
| 15. | | to the :: to that letterhead | |
| 16. | ES : | Right | |

Setting

Company D

- She begins the morning by sorting out the mail and clearing the pending matters.
- She prepares the salary for the month.

- c. She telephones the accountant to discuss financial matters.
- d. She has a meeting with the boss to fix appointments and schedules for his activities which are mainly training programmes.
- e. She arranges a business lunch for the client at the club where her boss is a member.
- f. She telephones the sales manager, at an outpost, to fix an appointment for a visit.
- g. The boss discusses this visit with her.

Speech Event (Company D)

D2 : Genre – Teaming

Speech Act

- | | | | |
|-----|--------|---|------------------|
| 1. | Boss : | You want to go tomorrow? | 1. Proposal |
| 2. | ES : | To: morr:ow : er = | |
| 3. | Boss : | = Unless you want to : I think break fast | 2. Proposal |
| 4. | | there = | |
| 5. | ES : | = ° Uh. Tomorrow I cannot | |
| 6. | Boss : | Cannot OK (.) hm. Monday hm | 3. Acceptance |
| 7. | | Singapore I got something Tuesday. | |
| 8. | | Monday is a holiday. So you won't | |
| 9. | | be here anyway. | |
| 10. | ES : | Hm. This Saturday? | 4. Clarification |
| 11. | Boss : | Er :: ya (.) evening? | |
| 12. | ES : | Hm er (.) something er : afternoon | |
| 13. | | I am not sure when will we finish | 5. Doubt |

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------------------------|
| 14. | this. | |
| 15. | Boss : Oh! OK then, maybe noon or so – go and | 6. Alternative suggestion |
| 16. | have er : er breaking fast – you can | |
| 17. | break fast there, right | |
| 18. | ES : Can | 7. Agreement |
| 19. | Boss : ° OK, so what time shall we leave | 8. Seeking compliance |
| 20. | about (.) 3.00 (.) or 4.00 | |
| 21. | ES : 4.00 | 9. Decision |
| 22. | Boss : 4.00 better huh. Er that means we'll | 10. Agreement |
| 23. | get there about 5.00 something | |
| 24. | ES : Hm | |
| 25. | Boss : OK | |

5.2.2 Features of Setting

1. All the speech events occur either in the boss's or in the secretary's office.
2. One of the routine activities is to meet with the boss first thing in the morning.
3. In the bigger companies as in A and B, the executive secretaries need the support of the personal assistants owing to the wide range of routine duties.
4. In the small company as in D, the interaction with the boss is more frequent, because she has to handle all matters routine or otherwise, since there is no personal assistant.

5. They represent a class of communicative events where the formal business environment supports talk interactions between the participants, namely the boss and his executive secretary (See 2.4).
6. The talk in all speech events appear casual and informal but in each case, they reflect a formal business matter to meet a corporate need or to meet the personal needs of the boss.
7. Interactions B1, B2, D1, D2 suggest role specific activity. They reflect the institutional property of talk to get things done and is therefore transactional. Interaction A is a combination of interactional and transactional talk (See 2.9.3.6.2).

5.2.3 Situated Cognition – Shared Goal

(Table 1)

Company	Genre	Shared Goal	Textual Evidence	Speech Act	Line
A	A1 Reinforcement	Reinforce the importance of a checklist	ES: I'll go through my checklist	Rectify inefficiency	ll 8
			Boss: Ehem, OK, checklist, my-grey suit	Reinforcement	ll 10
B	B1 Review	Review the company policy of investment in training courses for staff	Boss: ... we are overdoing everything here	Emphasize caution	ll 14
			ES: Hm Hm OK ()	Agreement	ll 16
B	B2 Investigation	Investigate why a staff leaves after being sent for training	Boss: Why she left? Why she left?	Enquiry	ll 4
			ES: °Nobody knows. She has an attitude problem	Assumption	ll 5
			Boss: ... I'd like to know ...	Request	ll 8
D	D1 Training	Develop skills in correspondence through training	Boss: Our objective would be to have his signature appear in every letter	Training	ll 1
			ES: Huh, huh	Clarification	ll 3
D	D2 Teaming	Recognize the significance of working as a team	Boss: You want to go tomorrow	Proposal	ll 1
			ES: To:tomorrow : er =		ll 2
			Boss: = Unless you want to ...	Proposal	ll 3
			ES: =°Uh . Tomorrow I cannot		ll 5
			Boss: Cannot OK	Acceptance	ll 6

5.2.4 Textual Evidence

Speech Event (Company A)

A1 : Genre - Reinforcement

Although the talk is literally about 'the grey suit' as indicated in the speech act (Il 1), the implied meaning is an inefficiency of the executive secretary. Both the executive secretary and the boss recognize this inefficiency and seek to rectify it by reinforcing the need for a checklist (Il 8; 10)

The revealing factor is the shared goal which resides in an evolving text of a talk interaction and is not explicit (Il 7, 8, 9, 10). It is less overt and even subtle (Il 4, 6, 7). The reason seems to be that both participants recognize the need to rectify the shortfall in expectations and hence there is no need for any emphasis (See 4.1.1.2.2).

Speech Event (Company B)

B1 : Genre - Review

It is explicit in this genre that the shared goal is to review the courses for the company employees in terms of the frequency and the number of participants (Il 4, 5, 6, 13). The comment by the boss (Il 14, 15) on "overdoing everything here" implies his concern about a cost on the company which is wasteful or extravagant.

It is a shared goal in the sense that the executive secretary acknowledges the problem and acts on the boss's concern (Il 3, 6, 16).

It is revealing in this context that the shared goal is not explicit and literal nor implicit and inferential. It is a relational function. The shared goal indicates company concerns accountable for by the boss and his executive secretary. She therefore demonstrates a support function reflecting the relationship between the boss and the executive secretary. (See 4.1.1.2.2).

Speech Event (Company B)

B2 : Genre - Investigation

The shared goal is evident at the outset in the initial speech acts (Il 1, 2, 3, 4). Why a staff leaves after training is clearly a problem to be investigated. It is a matter of concern for both participants.

The revealing factor in the shared goal is the difference in emphasis on the need to investigate. He feels it is crucial and she implies it is a past event and the staff "... was no good anyway =" subtly questioning the worth of the investigation. But he insists and she has to do as he says (Il 7, 8) (See 4.1.1.2.3).

Speech Event (Company D)

D1 : Genre - On-the-job Training

The shared goal is to acknowledge the need and relevance of skills training. Both participants support the incidental process of on-the-job training (Il 1, 2, 3). In this case, it is the process of obtaining the signature of the chairman of the client company for the invitation letters on the "Management Training Programme" prepared by the executive secretary.

The revealing factor is the notable degree of cooperation between the boss and the executive secretary. Being a comparatively young firm with a young executive secretary, the shared goal is to upgrade the duties and responsibilities of the executive secretary to enable her to function independently.

Speech Event (Company D)

D2 : Genre - Teaming

The shared goal in this genre is significant for it demonstrates a close consultative relationship between the participants. Each one tries to accommodate the other's needs (ll 12 – 19) to arrive at what seems a suitable time to visit the sales manager of a client company.

The revealing factor is the close cooperation between the participants to meet the needs of a particular activity. There is a clear attempt to accommodate each other's decisions to arrive at a compromise.

5.2.5 Features of Shared Goal

There are several features in these genres that have a bearing on what is meant by a shared goal. First is the assumption that the shared goal is the basis of a communicative event. While this is true, the evidence shows that the sense of 'shared' corresponds to the 'unequal' role relationship (See 2.5) between the participants. This inequality displays who controls or creates the genres (See 2.3). The notion of a 'shared goal' seems to be the direct outcome of role definitions. The position of the executive secretary dictates her response to the sense

'shared'. She has to support and assist her boss to meet the goals of a genre pertaining to a business matter because that is her job function (See 2.3, 2.5, 2.6, 2.9.1). In a sense the context of 'shared' reflects the power differential between the boss and the executive secretary.

Her unquestioning loyalty and commitment to her boss, and therefore, to the organization, is significant in the context of a 'shared goal'. In each case, she supports and assists her boss in his decisions (See 4.1.1.2.2).

Arising out of this 'bond' between the participants, the shared goal is embedded in the genre. Goals in these situations are understood and are, therefore, not stated. They are implied reflecting the expectations of the participants. Both do not need explanations. Based on the level of genre knowledge, there is an understanding which prevails between them. A unique feature that exists between the boss and secretary is the high degree of understanding that pervades all the interactions (See 4.1.1.2.2). No time is wasted in having to give reasons on what next to do. The speaker's purpose and the listener's interpretation concerning the shared goal represent more a match between what is intended, what is said and what is understood (See 2.9.2.2). This unique feature to a large extent, is the result of genre knowledge or situated cognition. In particular, it is her long years of service with one boss or in one organization (See 4.1.3).

While the shared goal in these genres reflect the property of genre status, it is evident that both role and position have a fundamental influence on the goal of the

speech event. Furthermore, it is evident that shared goal is the rationale to distinguish one genre from the next with each acquiring its name based on the details of the text (See 2.4).

In these speech events, the text evolves from one speech act or sub-genre or move to another. They represent a flow of thought, ideas, or intentions, arising out of the situated cognition or genre knowledge of the participants. The long years of service of the executive secretaries with one company or with one boss has given the executive secretaries a sound understanding of the nature of their position in the organization in relation to their bosses (See 4.1.1). For the same reasons, the bosses also have high expectations of their executive secretaries (See 4.1.1.2.2). The evidence in the speech events reveal the way in which situated cognition has a bearing on purpose thus giving validity to the dynamism of 'intersubjective' phenomena. (See 2.9.2.1).

The social construction of the speech events presumes a prior knowledge of the subject matter. This is reflected in the opening turns of the speech events which does not require formal introductions to the subject. In fact, it is assumed that each one knows what the talk is about.

In each of the speech events, the shared goal that emerges has to do with matters affecting business practices.

The shared goal generates the name of the speech event to earn the status of a genre. The genres are recognized based on the text as it evolves. In this study, the text made of 'sub-genres' or moves are considered as speech acts. They reflect the social process on the way things are done (See 2.9.1.3). The interpretation of speech acts is undertaken on the basis of its illocutionary force noting that the genre which evolves, represent the structures of social action. These are recurrent or particular configurations specific to particular episodes which will be explored in this section. The significance of the shared goal or the individual purpose emerges as the text evolves.

5.2.6 Situated Cognition – Individual Purpose

(Table 2)

Company	Genre	Individual Purpose	Textual Evidence	Speech Act	Line
A	A1 Reinforcement	The boss wants to ensure he has his grey suit and banker's club	Boss: ... the grey suit I need the grey suit. ... er Banker's Club	Need	1
		ES wants to redeem her failure to meet the expectations of the boss	ES: <i>Nanti kijap (Wait for a while)</i> ES: <i>Belum, belum, belum (Not yet, not yet, not yet)</i> ES: So I call him er ... ES: ... checklist	Rectify inefficiency	4 6 8 9
B	B1 Review	Boss wants to ensure that the business practices are carried out properly	Boss: So I put that in the general management file Boss: Can-can-so, many participants whatever, just to complete the file... Boss: ...we are overdoing everything here	Intention Reinforce agreement Emphasize caution	8 13 14
		ES reaffirms her support for her boss in decision making	ES: °Havana course ES: No, I'll put it under : ehem the development file	Information Counter suggestion	6 10

Company	Genre	Individual Purpose	Textual Evidence	Speech Act	Line
B	B2 Investigation	<p>Boss insists on knowing what is going on. There is a dual purpose. First to satisfy his personal curiosity and second to affect company policy</p> <p>ES attempts to play down the issue first but later she reaffirms her support for her boss by sharing the concern</p>	<p>Boss: I'd like to know, just for my own curiosity</p> <p>Boss: I want to know and that means we are going to our contract signing</p> <p>ES: But anyway, she left because she was no good anyway</p> <p>ES: = Training her =</p> <p>ES: * You should</p>	<p>Request</p> <p>Decision</p> <p>Justification</p> <p>Support</p>	<p> 8</p> <p> 16</p> <p> 1</p> <p> 15</p> <p> 18</p>
D	D1 Training	<p>Boss wants to train his executive secretary by correcting probably a past practice</p> <p>ES wants to let her boss know that she is a willing learner</p>	<p>Boss: But if it is original form, then he <u>must sign every piece</u></p> <p>Boss: If you don't want (.) That's the objective</p> <p>ES: Huh huh. Doesn't matter whether</p>	<p>Procedure</p> <p>Clarification</p>	<p> 4</p> <p> 8</p> <p> 3</p>
D	D2 Teaming	<p>Boss demonstrates that this executive secretary shows the responsibility of some decision making processes</p> <p>He also wants to demonstrate that he respects her needs</p> <p>Therefore there is a dual purpose</p> <p>Executive secretary demonstrates her commitment to her work first</p> <p>She also wants to cooperate with her boss and does not wish to say no without a reason</p>	<p>Boss: = Unless you want to</p> <p>ES: *Uh. Tomorrow I cannot</p> <p>Boss: Cannot OK (.) hm</p> <p>Boss: *OK, so what time shall we leave</p> <p>ES: 4.00</p> <p>Boss: 4.00 better huh. Er that means we'll get there about 5.00 something</p> <p>ES: ... afternoon I am not sure when will we finish this</p> <p>ES: To: morrow : er =</p> <p>ES: *Uh. Tomorrow I cannot</p> <p>ES: Hm. This Saturday?</p> <p>ES: Can</p> <p>ES: 4.00</p>	<p>Proposal</p> <p>Apology</p> <p>Acceptance</p> <p>Seeking compliance</p> <p>Decision</p> <p>Agreement</p> <p>Doubt</p> <p>Uncertainty</p> <p>Apology</p> <p>Clarification</p> <p>Agreement</p> <p>Decision</p>	<p> 3</p> <p> 5</p> <p> 6</p> <p> 19</p> <p> 21</p> <p> 22</p> <p> 12</p> <p> 2</p> <p> 5</p> <p> 10</p> <p> 18</p> <p> 21</p>

5.2.7 Textual Evidence

The analysis of individual purpose may or may not be identical with the shared goal as each one's prior knowledge, experience and the expectations influence the purpose.

Speech Event (Company A)

A1 : Genre - Reinforcement

The genre demonstrates the combination of the role specific activity of transactional talk and interactional talk (See 2.9.3.7.2). The transactional aspect reinforces the need for efficiency in secretarial functions. The interactional talk demonstrates a subtle friendly sense of disappointment by the boss registered by the response, "=oa:: ah" (ll 7) (See 2.9.3.2).

In the case of the boss, the individual purpose is to ensure he has his 'grey suit' and 'banker's club' (ll 1, 2, 3). This is based on the assumption that the executive secretary should have known about his personal needs in relation to his role as the CEO.

The individual purpose of the executive secretary is to redeem her situation. She has fallen short of his expectations of the need to be 'meticulous' and to be 'in the know of everything' (See 4.1.1.2.2). There is an apologetic response as she scurries around to look into these matters.

Speech Event (Company B)

B1 : Genre – Review

This genre is a discussion of routine matters. It concerns the courses run by the organization for its employees. The genre represents transactional talk as the topic has to do with procedures.

The purpose for the boss is to review the following, namely, the course run by the organization, the duration and the number of participants. He also wants to ensure that all this information is correctly documented and filed in the appropriate files (ll 1, 4, 8). He very emphatically but indirectly, registers another concern as in ll 14 "... we are overdoing everything here". The reference is to the organizational cost of having "... so many participants ..." implying to the executive secretary that the matter needs to be looked into without, in fact, saying so. The unsaid but the understood illustrates the nature of the relationship between the boss and executive secretary and the common knowledge that exists between them (See 2.9.2.2).

The purpose for the executive secretary is evidently different. Each of her responses as in ll 3, 6, 10, 12, is to indicate support, assistance, acknowledgement and confidence. In ll 10, 11, she reflects confidence in her counter suggestion when she says, "No," to which the boss gives approval as in ll 11, "OK – can".

Speech Event (Company B)

B2 : Genre - Investigation

In this genre, the blend of transactional and interactional talk is evident. Although the talk interaction is informal they are discussing an important formal matter on company policy concerning training programmes for staff.

For the boss, the purpose is to investigate the reasons why a staff who is sent for training later leaves the job. As the CEO of the organization, he is concerned with

the deeper issues as in Il 11, "... I don't have to know because of cosmetic reasons or what ...". His purpose is, first, to find out if the employee left for competitive terms elsewhere and, second, to consider reinstating the need for signing a contract to benefit from the companies' investment on training. So it is really more than satisfying his curiosity.

In the case of the executive secretary, her purpose seems to imply that it is not a problem that the staff left as in Il 1, "... she left because she was no good anyway ...", and Il 5, "... she has an attitude problem ' She seems to suggest that it is just as well she left and, therefore, there seems to be no need to really explore why. Her hidden agenda seems to be to defuse the boss's emphatic need to investigate as in Il 1.

While both participants are driven by company interests, the definition of purpose seems to emerge from their roles and prior knowledge. As the CEO, the boss is more concerned with the fundamental issues. As the executive secretary, she is concerned with moving on and getting things done. However, the superior-subordinate relationship is evident when the boss asserts his position by insisting on the investigation. This affects her initial response from trying to influence her boss to assuming her role in her support function as in Il 18, "you should".

Speech Event (Company D)

D1: Genre - On-the-job Training

The genre appears more interactional although there is a transactional aspect.

The general interest between participants is to learn new skills.

Being a new company with a young secretary, the purpose as far as the boss is concerned, is to train her on the job whenever the opportunity arises.

The executive secretary, knowing her role and position in the company, is a willing and keen learner as is evident in her acknowledgement of everything the boss says.

A feature that surfaces in the purpose of the genre is the willingness between the participants to teach and to learn. This stems from the common organizational interest each has for the company. The interaction also illustrates the relational function of an exchange which goes beyond the superior-subordinate to one of sharing, cooperation and understanding that exists between the boss and secretary.

Speech Event (Company D)

D2 : Genre - Teaming

This is a genre which clearly points out the common concern that exists in the relationship which does not reflect a superior-subordinate interaction but rather one of caring and a sense of responsibility in operating as a team (See 4.1.1.2.2).

The individual purpose of the boss is to depict his regard and concern for the secretary before a decision is made, and to indicate that she is his team-mate in some decisions he makes as in ll 1, 6, 15, 19.

Her purpose is to let him know she wants to accommodate his suggestion while at the same time being honest she cannot, given the circumstances as in II 5, 12.

The shared understanding reveals the situated cognition and the prior knowledge of the relationship and the circumstances. They form the basis for the high confidence levels which permeate the relationship at the levels of business and at the personal level (See 4.1.1.1.4)

5.2.8 Features of Individual Purpose

The individual purpose, which is essentially a dictate of conventions, situated cognition and expectations, differs between participants. In each genre the individual purpose represents what each participant wants from the interactions. This seems to depend on the positions held and on genre knowledge. As a result, the individual purpose between the boss and the secretary seems to be at variance owing to the superior-subordinate relation except in the case of D2.

The situation of D2 of each participant accommodating the other at the level of an informal friendly interaction, in spite of the power differential, is a particular feature of this relationship. However, case D2 does suggest that individual purpose need not be different. Instead, they could reveal a sharing that does not reflect power differentials but a partnership.

Individual purpose in most of the cases is only implicit or implied. The exception is in the case of B2 when the boss insists on the investigation. In the remaining

cases, the purpose may be inferred by what each one says based on the social structure or the context of the situation.

A feature in general, as in the case of shared goal, seems to be that the purpose of genre corresponds directly to the role-relationship between the boss and secretary. The relationship differs depending on the 'situated meaning' of the genre constructed in the specific context. This explains the variations of purpose between participants while the superior-subordinate relationship remains consistent.

All the genres illustrate the blend of the role specific activity of transactional talk and interactional talk. Therefore, it is not possible to isolate the business matter of transactional talk from what only seems casual.

Exploring the shared goals and individual purpose show the significance of prior knowledge, genre knowledge or situated cognition on the role and role-relationship of the executive secretary (See 2.9.2.1).

The next section will highlight the way in which sociolinguistic features of genre account for the role-giving definitions.

5.2.9 Sociolinguistic Components

In this section, the researcher attempts to analyse the sociolinguistic factors in relation to the social structure (See Chapter 4) and the sociocognitive factors as

shown in the model for analysis (See Chapter 2). The researcher will first deal with the area of language and then with interaction management.

Language as mentioned earlier, is studied in the context within which language operates. The linguistic interchange arising out of the social structure and vice versa explains the status of individuals and shapes them as persons (See 2.6.3). Language as a communicative vehicle within a particular environment of its production and reception (See 2.3) contributes to genres (as shown in the previous section) to illustrate 'how things get done'.

5.2.9.1 Language Choice and Variety

From the previous analysis, it is already evident that the social structure (the setting) and the situated cognition (shared goal; purpose) have a fundamental influence in the way the text evolves in the genre (See 2.6). There is clearly an indisputable connection between sociological understanding and the linguistic tokens in the production of genre. It is in that context that the researcher attempts to analyse language choice and variety in the interaction between the boss and the executive secretary.

The first aspect that emerges is the unique interface between the linguistic features of informal talk and the formal business organization. This seems to be the consequence of a social system, such as a business organization, which is essentially interactive and moving in the direction of a paradigm shift towards flatter, less hierarchical companies (See 4.1.3).

Another aspect is the office layout of the boss and secretary which is recognized as a unit. There is, therefore, no formality in the accessibility of both participants. In fact, it renders an atmosphere of domesticity and almost a 'familial' relationship. This is unique unlike all other interactions that the secretary is engaged in (See 4.1.3).

In the analysis to draw the relationship between linguistic forms and sociological features, the researcher employs speech acts as they go beyond single utterances and adjacency pairs. Speech acts are made up of turns to create a move. Several units of sentences or syntactic chunks made up of speaker turns and listener responses constitute a single speech act or a move.

The informal language the participants use indexes this social situation. The evidence is noted, for example, in the following speech acts within the genres.

Speech Acts

(Table 3)

Company	Genre	Speech Act	Textual Evidence
A	A1 : Reinforcement	1 Need	ll 1 – 6
B	B1 : Review	1 Elicit information	ll 1 – 7
B	B2 : Investigation	1 Justification 2 Enquiry	ll 1 – 2 ll 3 – 6
D	D1 : On-the-job Training	1 Training	ll 1 – 7
D	D2 : Teaming	1 Proposal	ll 1 - 5

The social situation presents a casualness in the language choice and variety.

" <i>Ini</i> , I have another suit"	(A, ll 1)
" <i>Nanti kijap</i> " (<i>Wait for a while</i>)	(A, ll 4)
"What else"	(B1, ll 1)
"But anyway"	(B2, ll 1)
"Nobody knows"	(B2, ll 5)
"Our objective would be"	(D1, ll 1)
"You want to go tomorrow"?	(D2, ll 1)

These interactive exchanges signal the familial attitude about the relationship where there are no pleasantries of polite requests like, "Would you mind ..." or "Could you please ...". Instead, they are more formulaic phrases and code markers as in "*Ini*" (*This*), or "*Nanti kijap*" (*Wait for a while*), "What else", "But anyway", establishing favourable conditions of a personal contact. There are no levels of formality or prestige. Instead, the executive secretary and the boss rely on expectations which are rooted in the familial nature of the relationship (See 4.1.3). For instance, "You want to go tomorrow?" is not a direct request. But it reflects a social cohesion where the boss anticipates a genuine response from his secretary and gives her the option to decide.

In addition, the choice of the interrogation as a statement suggests a hypothetical possibility. The intonational question evokes a response from the executive secretary, "To: morr:ow: er ..." (ll 2) indicating a hesitation before the next sequence when she says, "... tomorrow I cannot" (ll 5).

The social structure, the social context and the overall shared goals reveal a linguistic choice and variety that is natural. They support informality and social cohesion between the boss and the executive secretary. This is also reflected in the replies and responses.

However, beyond this cohesion there are also degrees of differentiation emanating from the superior-subordinate role and position. These affect the linguistic responses of the executive secretary and her ability to sustain the interaction. The language choice and variety in the responses of the executive secretaries are brief utterances.

"Should be"	(B1 II 3)
"Havana course"	(B1 II 6)
"Ya"	(B1 II 12)
"Training her"	(B2 II 15)
"You should"	(B2 II 18)
"Right"	(D1 II 7)
"Right"	(D1 II 9)
"Hm Hm"	(D1 II 13)
"To: morr:ow:er"	(D2 II 2)
"Hm. This Saturday?"	(D2 II 10)
"Can"	(D2 II 18)

Most of the utterances are code markers and back channel cues where the executive secretary demonstrates continued listenership while the boss holds the

floor. The responses suggest that in spite of the familial social cohesion, there is an inherent power differential. This power differential is consistent at all levels of linguistic interchange between the boss and the executive secretary. The communicative significance of this differential reveals that the informality, the trusting rapport and the naturalness of talk between the boss and the executive secretary does not obscure the power differential.

The bilingual aspect of language is not uncommon in business organizations. But in the data collected, this is apparent only in Company A. In this situation, there is evidently a cultural preference as both participants belong to the same ethnic group. In a sense, it is a form of social conditioning. There is a tendency to use the Malay language quite unconsciously. This is less prevalent where the boss and secretary are not of the same ethnic background. But bilingual communication is very much a part of the business system and there is social support for it (See 2.9.3).

In the speech act on the 'statement of need' (A, II 1 – 6), the choice to respond in Malay on the part of the executive secretary seems to have been triggered by the boss's opening "*Ini*" Using Malay, however, suggests an unconscious sentiment of cultural identity in the business practice. In this instance, it is more than that. It is almost as if the executive secretary is eliciting cooperation from the boss with a view to minimizing the likelihood of a reprimand for her inefficiency as she gets into a flutter trying to meet her boss's needs. This is an afternoon of a very busy task environment with frequent telephone calls, dealing with the office

boy, the boss's driver, the maintenance man, the tailor, visitors and, finally, the boss himself who walks in, and thereby sets off an anxiety attack which she hopes he would understand. He does, and this is evident in, "a:: ah" (ll 7) and "Ehem. OK ..." (ll 10), suggesting a high level of understanding and solidarity in their relationship. Yet, he still does make a subtle suggestion about efficiency as in, "... checklist, my - grey suit" (ll 10).

5.2.9.2 Style Shifting

Style is evident in the choice of language and the variety discussed in the previous section. Style, in general, is the outcome of the overall social structure (See Chapter 4), which accounts for the production of a genre. Although it is influenced by culture, values or the job status, it is specific to one's attainment of goals.

Style may be formal, polite or colloquial. In the case of the relationship between the boss and secretary these distinctions are blurred for reasons already mentioned. Genres in this business environment seem informal and colloquial as evident in the incomplete structures, abbreviations and contractions. Yet, there is a sense of politeness and cooperation which regulate the talk and ensure a purpose in the interaction as the following speech acts illustrate :

A	Speech Act	3	Rectifying the lapse in inefficiency	ll 8 – 10
B1	Speech Act	3	Polite suggestion	ll 8 – 10
B2	Speech Act	2	Clarification	ll 3 – 4
D1	Speech Act	4	Acceptance	ll 4 – 8
	Speech Act	5	Counter suggestion	ll 15 – 18

The style in these speech acts suggests the participants' interest in maintaining the social equilibrium through an intrinsic culture of cooperation. The social distance that is apparent in politeness and cooperation does not apply in the interaction between the boss and secretary. As discussed earlier, this is a consequence of the unique understanding which evolves over a period of time in job related interactions.

This characteristic of the relationship also explains the style shifting between the directness and indirectness in the speech acts. The downward style shift indicates directness as in :

A	Speech Act	1	Need expressed	II 1 – 3
B1	Speech Act	5	Agreement	II 13 – 16
D2	Speech Act	2	Proposal	II 3 – 5

The upward style shift is rare and is usually evoked when there is an erosion in the boss's expectation of his executive secretary or when the boss is emphatic in his objective as in :

B2	Speech Act	3	Suspicion	II 7 – 14
D1	Speech Act	4	Training	II 10 – 13

A particularity of this style shifting is the way in which symmetry is reflected in the downward style and asymmetry in the upward style. The symmetry is an outcome of the privileged position held by the executive secretary as the key person who knows everything that is going on in the organization (See 4.1.1.2.2).

The asymmetry arises out of the superior-subordinate relationship between the boss and the secretary. Generally, asymmetry arises from a lack of knowledge and restricted access to organizational practices on the part of the subordinate partner in the relationship. But this is not the case with the executive secretary who is all knowing and has freedom of access to any organizational matter. (See 4.1.1.2.3). In this situation, the asymmetry and the upward style shift is entirely role related.

5.2.9.3 Code Switching

As in style and style shifting, code switching is also a reflection of language choice and variety. Code switching phenomena is not uncommon where both the boss and the secretary are from the same ethnic background. This also happens between ethnic groups where speakers are fluent in both languages and they use both Malay and English in the interactions unconsciously. Generally, they depict a comfort zone in the relationship because of the long years of service for the same boss or in the same organization as in A, ll 1 –6. Within the context of genre A, "*Ini*" (*This*) by the boss in ll 1, and the response of "*Nanti kijap*" (*Wait for a while*) ll 4, "*Belum, belum, belum*" (*Not yet, not yet, not yet*) ll 6, reflects a legitimate use of informal speech. This is apparent in a relational function arising out of cohesiveness or solidarity.

In the genres B1, B2, D1 and D2, the code switching is hardly evident in the interaction between the boss and secretary. It seems to correspond to the multinational characteristic of the organization which anticipates some levels of

formality and status. The formality is demonstrated in the use of the English language between the boss and secretary (See 2.9.3.1).

5.2.9.4 Lexical Choice

Lexical choice is an outcome of variety and style. In general, they evoke and orient to the institutional context of the genre. In the boss and executive secretary relationship of power differentials, lexical choice is a very clear illustration of roles. Although it has been shown that the secretary has power through her knowledge and experience, it is the power of the boss in the interaction that prevails. That power of knowledge and experience of the executive secretary has no effect on her position because of her subordinate role (See 4.1.1.2.3).

For instance, the drift in the interaction as in B2 II 5 – 8, when the boss says in an emphatic and swift tone, "I know, I know I'd like to know, just for my own curiosity", shows that his position cannot be challenged even with an all knowing efficient executive secretary. The response supports the opinion (See 4.1.1.2.3) that while she is the only person who is knowledgeable she is not a 'kingmaker'. She is free to suggest, recommend, or have an opinion but only when the bosses choose to accept it. The lexical repetition on "I know" three times implies an emphatic insistence to let his secretary know that he is not interested in her explanations and wants his job done. These strong overlapping utterances indicate the power of lexical colouring to reveal his rights to information as dictated by his superior position as the CEO of the company (See 2.9.3.4).

The use of modals in genres signal several social meanings which shed light on the social processes. These include for instance, such functions as request, offers, suggestions or the expression of wishes and intentions. The communicative effect of such expressions reveals behaviour as in the following :

Genre – Review

“Should be” (B1 II 3)

“ I would like to” (B1 II 8)

“Can, can” (B1 II 13)

Genre – Investigation

“You should” (B2 II 16)

The modals in each of these responses between the boss and the secretary reveal meanings which are context-sensitive. “Should be” (B1 II 3) is more a status of supposition rather than a fact. In terms of the boss’s expectation, this seems to be more a tentative response of the courses registered. There is no certainty in the reply to the boss’s inquiry, “What else? ... ” (B1 II 1). Yet, there seems to be an implicit confidence in what she says as he does not insist on the need for definite information (See 4.1.1.1.4).

The expression, “I would like to” (B1 II 8) communicates an intention while simultaneously eliciting an inferential opinion from the executive secretary which is “What do you think? ...” The inference evokes the expected response from the executive secretary. She is firm and confident in her counter-suggestion as in, “No, I’ll put it under : ehem the development file”. (B1 II 10). At this point, the

boss-executive secretary relationship reflects an apparent "breach" in the superior-subordinate relationship but signals team spirit (See 4.1.1.2.2). In this speech act of intention and counter suggestion, both the boss and secretary signal a partnership in the discussion. In spite of the sense of partnership and the confidence the boss has in his secretary, she still subtly seeks reassurance and approval as in, "Ya?" (B1 II 12) implying, "Is that OK?". The boss has no doubt and unhesitantly says, "Can, can" (B1 II 13), reassuring her of his confidence in the decision. The shift from her certainty to seeking reassurance reveals that the knowledge is not power in relation to her interactions with her boss.

The speech acts in the genre on 'investigation' shows a clear dominance of the boss unlike in the previous genre. There are no modals which indicates the absence of the modality functions. That leaves no scope for the executive secretary to suggest or request except at the last turn, "You should" (B2 II 18). The intention is to encourage her boss to get on with the contract signing policy to ensure a minimum period of service to the organization. Unlike the previous genre which portrays a partnership, in this genre, 'should' reflects a distance in the relationship in that she only recommends. It depicts an element of caution considering the dominance of the boss in this speech event.

The genre on 'on-the-job training' is similar to the genre on 'investigation'. There is a dominance of the boss which seems to correspond to the low frequency of modals. The modals that appear are in the following speech acts :

Speech Act

Training	"Our objective would be ..."	D1 II 1
Instruction	".... then he must sign"	D1 II 5
Training	"So that objective can be achieved ..."	D1 II 10
Instruction	"But then you <u>must</u> space it ..."	D1 II 14

"... Would be" in the context of the speech act suggests a factual status where the executive secretary is expected to learn new procedures. The factual status is further reinforced in, "... he must sign ..." and, "you must space it" which reinforces the modal force of indicating importance. The modal 'must' in both instances is not to show personal authority but rather to imply that the 'sign' and the 'space' is a requirement in a particular kind of correspondence. The importance of following the procedures hinges on realizing the ultimate objective.

The dominance of the boss in this speech event does not represent a power relationship. It is more a reflection of his certainty in the skills and the importance of having to learn them. The choice of 'can' is more to declare the ability to achieve the objective having learnt the procedures. The boss-secretary interaction reflects an inherent interest in achieving their shared goal.

The spirit of sharing surfaces once again in the genre on 'teaming' as evident in the choice of modals in the following speech acts.

Speech Act

Inability	"Tomorrow I cannot"	(D2 II 5)
Acceptance	"Cannot OK"	(D2 II 6)

Doubt	"... so you won't be here"	(D2 II 8)
	"... when will we finish ..."	(D2 II 13)
Counter suggestion	"OK, then maybe noon"	(D2 II 15)
	".... you can"	(D2 II 16)
Seeking compliance	".... shall we"	(D2 II 19)

The executive secretary is able to say, "Tomorrow I cannot" on the strength of the understanding between the boss and the secretary. "Cannot" in this context is therefore not a strong unwillingness but rather "not being able to comply" and for a particular reason. The doubt expressed in, "... when will we finish ..." registers a semblance of caution in the face of the superior role of her boss. She is concerned about finishing her work. The acceptance by the boss, "Cannot OK, so you won't be here ..." are attempts by the boss to reassure her in the face of her caution, concerns and doubts.

The shared responsibility in the decision process is evident in II 14, 16 as in, "... then maybe noon ..." and, "... shall we ...". The use of 'maybe' is a deliberate attempt by the boss to move away from the authority role. Instead, it is an indication that his proposal is tentative and draws in the opinion of his secretary. The implication is "whatever we decide regarding the visit, we will do so by resolving the concerns together".

While there is clearly a spirit of teaming and partnership, there is yet a distance in that each does not take the other for granted. The mode of distancing lies in the social meaning evident in the modals of uncertainty as in "maybe" or "shall we".

The boss, in this speech is seeking support for some of his suggestions not by asserting his power but by being mindful of her needs. These situations reveal teaming in the context of the speech acts but a distance in the interactions.

The use of the wide range of pronouns in the linguistic interchange has a significant bearing on the relationship. In the genre on 'review' for example, the deictic pronoun, "I" and "we" point out the context sensitive elements of the speech act. The reference to "we" (B1 II 4) invokes an institutional identity indicating that the boss and secretary are interacting as representatives of the company. What matters to the company, therefore, matters to them. The same is evident in "we" in the genre 'investigation' (B2 II 3, 14, 7). But "we" in the genre 'teaming' (D2 II 13, 19, 22) indicates a different stance of dispersing responsibility as within a partnership or team. So "I" (B1 II 8) by the boss alters the shared belief when the context changes to the way in which he wants things done. The executive secretary's use of "I'll" (B1 II 10) offers the same situated meaning. Each one is asserting a right. The boss, however, uses his authority role in a subtle fashion. The authority role surfaces again in B2 II 7, 8, 10, 12, 16. In this context, the boss as the more powerful participant, is glaring (See 2.9.3.4).

5.2.9.5 Interaction Management

The main feature of interaction management is to maintain, establish, reinforce or depict different stances. The interaction is governed by the communicative purpose of the interaction. The mechanisms that serve interaction management, such as turn taking, back channel cues and markers project the goal-directed

social processes revealed in the interaction. The strategies used by the participants design the utterances, speech acts or sub-genres and moves to attain the communicative goals.

5.2.9.5.1 Turn Taking

The common characteristic in each of the genres is the closed nature of the speaker-listener coordination. In most instances, the executive secretary is more the listener. This is evident in the brief turn-endings in her responses as in :

B1	"oHavana course"	(II 6)
	"Ya"	(II 12)
B2	"Training her"	(II 15)
D1	"Right"	(II 7, 9)
D2	"Can"	(II 18)
D2	"4.00"	(II 21)

Each of these speaker-turn cues represent affirmatives which hold over and preserve in the subsequent turn, a continuity, to achieve the shared communicative purpose. The intention here is to be both receptive to what the boss is saying and to provide optimistic conclusions. This is an enabling sequential mechanism to work through a topic-in-progress before initiating closings either by the boss or his secretary, as in

Boss :	"Hm Hm OK () OK. Now I look for ()"	(B1 II14)
ES :	"You should"	(B2 II 17)
ES :	"Right"	(D1 II 15)

Boss : "OK"

(D2 II 25)

These closing turns suggest orientations to the institutional characteristic of talk in a business environment between the boss and the secretary. The topic-in-progress may have maneuvered agreements or disagreements in the course of discussion. "OK" in B1 by the boss, signals the closing of the topic as there is nothing more to say and since he is in control of the genre. B2 and D1, reflect differences in the closing. "You should" closes the topic on a note of encouragement to the boss knowing that her opinion would matter in this case. In D1, "Right" is the repetitive response of passive acceptance. The earlier responses suggest conditionally relevant listenership, while the last turn II 16 represents closure as the boss does not continue any further. The closings in each case of the cases mark the strength of a shared purpose.

In each of the genres, the signalling of turns reflect or influence the social structure and the sociocognitive features of the interaction (See 2.9.3.5.4). As such, the institutional roles, the culture, the values, the power and the purpose are portrayed in the language and structure of turns. The genre that evolves represents social action implemented through turn taking by the boss and the executive secretary. They reflect the institutional modes of conduct as evident in the speech acts.

In each of the genres, the flow of the speech acts culminating in the desired goal is evident.

	<u>Genre</u>	<u>Speech Acts</u>
A	Reinforcement	a. Need b. Request c. Disappointment d. Self-correction e. Reinforcement

But there are deviations from the anticipated response. The opening turn of a need expressed by the boss is not met by the executive secretary. Instead, the response is transformed by initiating a new turn through a request to repair beforehand the disappointment of the boss. The disappointment triggers a turn by the executive secretary to acknowledge self-correction. The turn size and content of what she says are determined by the relational function and her institutional role.

In the genre on 'review', the turns are tightly focused and that is manifested in the allocation of turns. The speech acts integrate into the broader task of reviewing company courses.

	<u>Genre</u>	<u>Speech Acts</u>
B1	Review	1. Elicit information 2. Intention 3. Counter suggestion 4. Agreement 5. Caution 6. Close

The pattern of turn shifts from the control of the agenda by the boss to a discussion featured in speech acts 2, 3 and 4. In the course of the discussion, the boss asserts caution before they each initiate closing turns. Unlike the earlier episode where the turns shifted from expectation to apologetic request or disappointment, this episode deals with the single business of reviewing the status of courses. Each of the speech acts indicate an order in the sequential organization of turns.

The genre on 'investigation' is also tightly focused. But the turn taking sequence varies significantly between the first half of the speech event and the second. The variation is strikingly evident both in turn size and content.

<u>Genre</u>	<u>Speech Act</u>
Investigation	1. Justification
	2. Inquiry
	3. Opinion
	4. Integrity
	5. Decision
	6. Support

Between speech acts 1 – 3, the control of turn allocations is shared both by the boss and the secretary as visible in the turn size and content. This pattern, however, is not consistent. The multi-unit turn size and content between 4 – 5 severely restricts any response from the secretary. Her response in the closing turn is finally to support the decision of the boss to resort to the signing of

contracts. There is no direct response to the enquiry but it is assumed that the illocutionary force of the inquiry would mean an investigation by the executive secretary.

The genre referred to 'on-the-job training' is straightforward. Here, the turns relate to a specific task function of training. The speaker change mechanism is consistent depicting mutual understanding. The speech acts are entirely controlled by the boss to the extent that the turns of the executive secretary are either to clarify or register understanding.

<u>Genre</u>	<u>Speech Acts</u>
On-the-job Training	1. Objective
	2. Clarification
	3. Procedure

The turn taking responses by the executive secretary are signals revealing her obligation to accept and acknowledge what her boss has to say. There is therefore, no noticeable interruptions except in a futile attempt to seek clarification as in II 3. But this is stopped before a full turn indicating that the boss is in control of the genre. The control in this instance is not to depict power but to accomplish the interactional goal. Being aware of his intention, the executive secretary demonstrates continued listenership by the back channel cues as in, "Right", "Hm", "OK", signalling to the boss to continue as she is not about to take a speaking turn.

The genre on 'teaming' reflects a different turn taking exchange. The speech acts show details of participation between the boss and secretary. The resources of mutual understanding lie in the sequential organization of the talk evident in the speech acts.

<u>Genre</u>	<u>Speech Acts</u>
Teaming	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proposal 2. Regretful decline 3. Acceptance 4. Doubt 5. Alternative proposal 6. Agreement 7. Eliciting opinion 8. Agreement

The range of speech acts indicate the sequential mechanism allowing for more flexibility and equal opportunity for speaker turns between the boss and the secretary. However, the turn size of the executive secretary remains restrictive as single turn units compared to those of her boss. These response tokens seem to be the consequence of the interactional routines between the boss and the secretary where talk is sharply defined by the dominance of the boss. Turn taking by the boss demonstrates his initiative in ensuring participation by connecting with the turns of his secretary.

The signalling mechanisms of turn taking, account for the speaker-turn cues. These are evident, for example, in the back channel cues, markers or the transition relevant place of unit endings.

5.2.9.5.2 Back Channel Cues

The back channel cues reflect interactional behaviours and the structural organization of talk in the genres. The conventions that exist in the business environment highlight the subordinate role of the executive secretary in relation to her boss regardless of whether she supports, assists or advises him (See 4.1.1.2.3). This is evident in the length and kind of utterances she makes. They are mostly back channel cues as in 'Hm, huh huh', 'OK', or markers as in 'Right', 'Can' or any such word or phrase. In the interactions, she initiates turns while her boss holds the floor.

A.	Boss :	°a :: ah	(II 7)
	Boss :	Ehem, OK	(II 10)
B1	Boss :	OK, can	(II 11)
	ES :	Ya	(II 12)
	ES :	Hm Hm OK	(II 16)
B2	Boss :	Ya	(II 3)
	Boss :	Ya	(II 16)
D1	ES :	Huh Huh	(II 3)
	ES :	Right	(II 7, 9)
	ES :	Hm Hm	(II 13)
D2	ES :	°Uh	(II 5)

- Boss : Cannot OK (.) hm (Il 6)
- ES : Hm (Il 10)
- Boss : Er :: Ya (.) (Il 11)
- ES : Hm er (.) (Il 12)
- Boss : Oh! OK (Il 15, 19)

In A the boss's turn in Il 5 is not to develop the text by agreement but rather to indicate something is wrong and prompting her next move. She indicates her course of action in Il 8 – 9 to which the boss responds with an acknowledgement in Il 7.

In B1, the boss's response in Il 11 conforms to the flow of turns revealing conversational cooperation. The continuing response of the executive secretary in Il 12 is to indicate her comfort and confidence in obtaining the cooperation of the boss. In Il 16, the executive secretary records an acceptance and understanding of the problem and supports the boss in having to do something about it. In Il 17, the back-channel cues are a closing turn. It is the end of the discussion and the boss feels relieved after having told his secretary what to do before proceeding to get on with his work.

In B2 Il 3, the turn with the stretch, records a topic shift. The boss displays his annoyance evident in the conversational asynchrony as in "Ya ::" He wants to have more information regardless of the staff leaving the company. The repetition of "Ya" in Il 16 in an emphatic tone endorses the intent of the previous turn.

In D1, all the back channel cues by the executive secretary show that she does not take a turn but continues to participate in what the boss has to say. Her responses express understanding while the boss is given the right to hold the floor. There is an element of submission to acknowledge that the boss knows more and it is for her to take an interest.

In D2, "oUh" in ll 5, a low tone signifies hesitation. It reflects her inability to comply with the boss's proposal and does not represent a rejection. This is evident in the subsequent turn where the boss signals understanding, and the pause followed by "Hm" suggests he is thinking on the spot of a possible alternative. But in ll 10, "Hm" is a speaker turn conforming to the regular flow of the interaction. The insertion sequence, "This Saturday" (ll 10) is to suggest the alternative. But the back channel cue of the boss as in, "Er :: ya" (ll 11), with the pause and the insertion sequence, indicates he is considering the secretary's alternative suggestion and clarifies if it is in the "evening?". The next turn with a pause in ll 13 again suggests potential inability. The boss's response as in "Oh! OK" (ll 15) indicates receipt of new information which needs to be considered. He makes a fresh proposal which is agreeable to the secretary and that is settled as in "OK" (ll 9).

The density of back channel cues varies according to the task at hand and the role relationship pertaining to the kind of genre. In B1 and D2, there is evidence of a partnership between the boss and the secretary. There is an equal and higher degree of back channel cues between the boss and secretary. In A and B2, the

relational function of a superior-subordinate is striking and the back channel cues in each case reflects the dominance of the boss. In D2, the boss is in control of the genre but in a student-teacher relationship. The executive secretary does not take a speaker turn but listens attentively to what the boss has to say. The back channel cues depict the interactional synchrony allowing maximum opportunity for the boss to speak.

5.2.9.5.3 Markers

Markers provide for coherence and continuity in the interactions. These are fragments or lexical choices at the beginning or end of a sentence, as in :

A	ES :	So	(ll 8)
B1	ES : Now, I look for	(ll 16)
B2	ES :	But anyway	(ll 1)
	Boss :	But why ...	(ll 3)
D1	Boss :	So ...	(ll 10)
	Boss :	But then	(ll 14)
D2	Boss :	So you won't be here, anyway	(ll 8)
	Boss :	So what time shall we leave	(ll 19)

In A "So" establishes continuity having deviated in the context of meeting the boss's needs. The executive secretary now proceeds to do what she has to do by suggesting closure.

In B1, the marker suggests a closing speech act and informs the boss of her next action as in A. In B2, the executive secretary's turn of, "But anyway ..." is an intention to deviate from the topic at hand and that does not explicitly depict a total negation. This is evident in the entry of the next turn by the boss when he claims the floor in, "But why". At the next turn, "But why" by the boss, maintains the focus on the topic of a trained staff leaving the company and signals a contradiction to the previous turn.

In D1, "So" in ll 10 indicates the desired result of the task undertaken. In D1, "But then ..." (ll 14) is not a contradiction, but rather an additional point on spacing in the type of letter being discussed. "So" in D2 is not a desired result. It illustrates the inevitable outcome where the executive secretary would not be in the office because of the holiday. "So" is used in recognition of the fact. But "so" in ll 19 maintains continuity of the speech act on the alternative suggestion.

In the context of the genres in the interaction between the boss and secretary, the function of markers reveals textual coherence. That includes continuity or deviations from the topic eventually to realize the ultimate purpose of the speech event.

The markers depict varying aspects of the relationship between the boss and the secretary. In A and B1, they signal the secretary's next course of action. In B2, the contradiction illustrates the superior role of the boss. In D1 and D2, the

relationship is clearly task related although in each, the boss is the more dominant participant.

5.2.9.5.4 Violation

In the genres of speech events between the boss and the executive secretary, the turn type and turn size of the executive secretary reveal the overall asymmetry in the interaction. Her turns of brief utterances consist mainly of markers and back channel cues. They signal continued listenership while the boss holds the floor. The rights and obligations of the executive secretary are evident in the similarity of patterns in the turns in all the speech events.

As a result, the frequency of violations in the speech exchange are very few. The boss sets the topic and legitimizes the floor holding to continue uninterrupted. The responses at the completion of units or TRP's in the speech events suggest minimal overlapping utterances. The exceptions, however, are in A and B2.

In A, the boss's mannerism as in, "er.." Il 2, signals a delay as in thinking about what he needs. The executive secretary interrupts a normative turn before its completion point. She claims the floor in "*Nanti kijap*" (*Wait for a while*) Il 4 which means 'wait a minute'. The unusual feature of interruption to claim the floor is that it is not to do with power but rather to show continued respect for her boss to get herself organized to meet his needs.

In B1, there are six overlapping utterances. In II 4, "or rather ..." and II 6 "Havana course" are intervening turns by the boss and the executive secretary to signal a partnership in the discussion. They are not interruptions as these are not at variance with the overall topic. But, "No" in II 10 shows a firm decision by the secretary. Her interruption displayed is not to wield power in the interaction but power in her knowledge and in the context of the discussion. In this situation, the boss readily acknowledges her suggestion in the repeated overlapping utterance of, "can" in II 11 and 12.

In general, the boss and the executive secretary in each of the speech events accept the asymmetrical control allocation of turns. However, the details of the participants' conduct in the interaction show the constraining features on the replies and responses of the less powerful executive secretaries in relation to the bosses.

5.3 RELATIONSHIP WITH COMPANY STAFF

The following speech events are drawn from companies A, B and C. There are no samples from Company D since its operations are through networking and the business is run by the boss and the executive secretary. There are no other permanent staff members.

5.3.1 Setting

Company A

- a. The setting of this speech event is within the office of the executive secretary in Company A.

- b. This morning, as usual, she has been attending to several telephone calls mostly with regard to fixing meetings and appointments for the boss.
- c. The boss's driver has come to see her to get her to sign his overtime claim forms. She handles the overtime claims and the leave forms of her assistant, the office boy, and the driver.
- d. Her boss is in the office and so he gives her instructions. Sometimes he talks to her between rooms and sometimes he comes to her office to give instructions. This morning she has been instructed to settle some of his bills.
- e. The office boy comes in to deliver the mail and the outline of the text of a speech from another department. She has to develop the speech for her boss; so she is also busy with word-processing. While she is working, her boss sits out in the lobby where he has a discussion with company managers regarding their upcoming conference.
- f. In the midst of word-processing, there is staff wanting to meet her; there are telephone calls; and she also gives instructions to the assistant.
- g. One notable feature of the staff of this company is their company blazer. Most of them wear the official company blazer including the CEO himself. This seems to be a way of achieving a common identity culture regardless of the position one holds in the company.
- h. At 10.55, the assistant manager of the public relations department comes by to discuss their annual report. The public relations department is concerned with all matters regarding publicity such as official speeches,

media and press releases, annual reports, brochures, and company functions.

Speech Event (Company A)

E1 : Genre – Scheduling

Speech Acts

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|---|-------------------------|
| 1. | PR: | How is his - how is his schedule (.) tight? | 1. Enquiry |
| 2. | ES: | Today very tight | |
| 3. | PR: | <i>Fasal apa you ta beritahu a:wal?</i>
(Why didn't you tell me earlier?) | 2. Complaint |
| 4. | ES: | <i>Ini, you na buat apa?</i>
(This, what do you want to do?) | 3. Seeking information |
| 5. | PR: | [
Annual report | |
| 6. | ES: | Annual report OK:: I give you one hour | 4. Approval |
| 7. | PR: | Ah, OK, OK, huh = | |
| 8. | ES: | = Ah, <i>you kata discussion apa?</i> =
(= Ah, what discussion did you say? =) | 5. Seeking confirmation |
| 9. | PR: | = Inilah - discussion lah
(This is) | |
| 10. | ES: | Aah:: annual report OK! | 6. Approval |
| 11. | PR: | Aah ::
[| |
| 12. | ES: | It is in order::! | |
| 13. | PR: | Hm | |
| 14. | ES: | I've given you 11.00 to 12.00 | 7. Control |
| 15. | PR: | Hm: OK, OK
[| |
| 16. | ES: | 1 hour | |
| 17. | PR: | Hm. So, does he want to have it (.) in the | 8. Enquiry |

18. board room?=
 19. ES: = You give me the numbers. If more than six then 9. Decision
 20. we have in the board room (.)
 21. PR: Five =
 22. ES: = Five can have it in his room
 23. PR: OK. Fine 10. Acceptance

Setting

Company A

- a. In this interaction the executive secretary is dealing with one of the senior general managers (SGM) of Company A. This is a comparatively long meeting lasting about half an hour to discuss the boss's travel itinerary to Sabah.
- b. Besides several telephone calls, sending faxes overseas, working on the word processor, attending to delivery boys and giving instructions to her assistant, she has to also see to the board room arrangements where the boss is going to have a meeting with members of the subsidiary services this morning.
- c. She then makes time to have a meeting with the senior general manager who wants to check on dates and appointments before he finalizes the programme for the CEO's visit to Sabah.
- d. Although as senior general manager, he heads his business unit and is a decision maker in his own right, he is not in a position to make any decision that involves the CEO without the approval of the executive secretary.

Speech Event (Company A)

E2 : Genre - Scheduling

Speech Acts

- | | | | |
|-----|------|--|---------------------|
| 1. | SGM: | °If you can, arrange the evening. Then | 1. Seeking approval |
| 2. | | the :: might be he can have dinner. | |
| 3. | ES: | = <u>Cannot</u> , because now post cabinet – | 2. Denial |
| 4. | SGM: | Huh, Huh | |
| 5. | ES: | He will finish about 4.00. Then by the time | 3. Explanation |
| 6. | | he goes back home will be 5.00 | |
| 7. | SGM: | °OK | |
| 8. | ES: | By the time he get ready all that! | |
| 9. | SGM: | °So leaves only night lah () | |
| 10. | ES: | [
He cannot go for dinner | 4. Control |
| 11. | SGM: | September (.) so 27th of September | |
| 12. | ES: | [
Because dinner | |
| 13. | | he got to leave 4.00 o'clock flight = | |
| 14. | SGM: | = Ya | |
| 15. | ES: | (inaudible) so, he is having his dinner | |
| 16. | SGM: | That means the latest will be night flight only lah | 5. Acceptance |
| 17. | ES: | = <u>Night flight 8.15</u> . The last flight 8.15 to Sabah (.) | 6. Decision |
| 18. | SGM: | °8.15 huh (.) OK. Then you want us to send | 7. Compliance |
| 19. | | him back? I can give the (inaudible) | |

Setting

Company A

- a. Similar routine as in E1 and E2.
- b. The executive secretary meets the senior manager from a different unit to discuss the boss's visit to Sabah.

Speech Event (Company A)

E3 : Genre – Scheduling

Speech Act

- | | | | |
|-----|------|--|---------------|
| 1. | SGM: | So : on the October twenty :: seventh | 1. Suggestion |
| 2. | | you said he has got the er - maybe you | |
| 3. | | can cancel the meeting or something | |
| 4. | | <i>Kursus</i> or –
(Course) | |
| 5. | ES: | No, this one (.) that's why I | |
| 6. | | have to check. He has few dates with | 2. Evaluation |
| 7. | | him. 27 September, October. So now | |
| 8. | | I want to tell him he make his | |
| 9. | | function on 27 October (.) now you see : | |
| 10. | | (.) | |
| 11. | SGM: | If you can release him for us on the | 3. Suggestion |
| 12. | | 27th that'll be good lah (-) because | |
| 13. | | () he wants to have it in the | |
| 14. | | morning | |
| 15. | ES: | Hm I'll try to get him (.) because he | 4. Control |
| 16. | | has booked the dates with me, you see | |

17. SGM: Hm, OK.

Setting

Company B

- a. The setting is in the office of the executive secretary. The boss is having a meeting in the conference room and the assistant is at work in the adjacent room.
- b. The executive secretary has been occupied with a variety of tasks similar to those handled by the executive secretary in Company A.
- c. This afternoon she has had to fix appointments for a business lunch and for a dental treatment for her boss, attend to several telephone calls, arrange meetings with the in-house editorial team, with the advertising agency, continue with word-processing as well as give instructions to her assistant.
- d. There has been an editorial meeting scheduled for this afternoon. So several members of staff are expected to meet with her at the office. However, since the meeting in the conference room held by the boss has not ended, the editorial meeting gets rescheduled.
- e. In this speech event, the executive secretary decides to reschedule the meeting. She speaks to secretaries who work for the directors in the company.

Speech Event (Company B)

F1 : Genre – Scheduling

Speech Act

1. ES: Er, Lisa

2. SEC: Ya
3. ES: Sorry. The room is still being used (.) 1. Apology
4. SEC: So? =
5. ES: = My apologies. We have it moved to 2. Decision
6. tomorrow (.) 2.00 o'clock (.) I just called Anah only
7. SEC: Ehem. 2.00 o'clock 3. Acceptance
8. ES: [Sorry
9. SEC: ()
10. ES: Huh? OK tomorrow I'll make sure you have (.) 4. Tact
11. cheese cakes here
12. SEC: Cheese cakes! Good-lah
13. ES: (She talks to her assistant) Jin, can you 5. Instruction
14. please order cheese cake, one recipe.
15. SEC: So, I'll leave a message in the department. 6. Compliance
16. ES: OK

Setting

Company B

- a. This is the usual busy afternoon for the executive secretary in Company B. She fixes an appointment with another multinational company to visit them the following day with the human resource manager. They want to look at their auditorium and other facilities to be equipped with some ideas to have a similar one in Company B.
- b. She organizes a business lunch for the boss at a familiar restaurant and

this includes the menu.

- c. She prepares coffee for the boss and the visitors in the conference room; keys in letters and memos; contacts the advertising agency; the architect for the auditorium; makes arrangements for the editorial meeting; sends a fax to the media regarding a new product to be launched; contacts the personal assistant to the King regarding a company project; alters the boss's dental appointment; gives instructions to the assistant; gives instructions to the business unit managers regarding the lunch with the boss.
- d. Later in the evening the purchasing manager visits her to discuss the production of the corporate brochure.
- e. In this speech event the executive secretary confirms that the information for the corporate brochure has been given. She indicates the sense of shared belief to instill in the purchasing manager the need to uphold the mission of the company.

Speech Event (Company B)

F2 : Genre – Policy

Speech Act

- | | | | |
|----|-----|--|-----------------|
| 1. | ES: | We have given Yeo everything you know! (.) | 1. Confirmation |
| 2. | AA: | You have huh | |
| 3. | ES: | He has <u>everything</u> | |
| 4. | AA: | The :: supplier everything | 2. Confirmation |
| 5. | ES: | All the - the () everything | |
| 6. | | He has it. Yeo has it. Yeo e::everything | |

- | | | |
|-----|--|---------------|
| 7. | But be careful it is not wrong because | 3. Caution |
| 8. | this is the first branch we are going to use | |
| 9. | as a sample. After this brochure we | 4. Plan |
| 10. | are doing the same thing in Penang | |
| 11. | and the same thing in Johore Bharu = | |
| 12. | AA: = ° Yes | 5. Acceptance |
| 13. | ES: If you are not sure, come back to us again | 6. Support |
| 14. | But you have everything | |
| 15. | AA: OK Thanks | |
| 16. | ES: Ya | |

Setting

Company C

- a. The speech event is situated in the office of the executive secretary in Company C. Her boss is in his room and she is on the word-processor, keying in a document to be faxed to the United Kingdom. She has also prepared some materials which she hands over to her boss who is expected to be leaving for a meeting.
- b. In the meantime she has been receiving and making telephone calls to fix appointments and to get information regarding her boss's travel arrangements to go overseas.
- c. She retrieves faxes on an hourly basis by using the confidential code. She receives about 20 faxes a day and hands them to the boss. The boss

indicates to whom the faxes should be distributed. It is then her task to get them to the respective officers in the company.

- d. Based on the observations there is very limited face-to-face interaction. She works very much on her own. Being a medium sized company and more a subsidiary she handles all the routine tasks of photocopying, receiving all the telephone calls, scanning newspapers for articles of interest to the company, and sorting out the mail and the faxes.
- e. In this speech event, the product manager wants to know if a meeting can be arranged with the boss.

Speech Event (Company C)

G1 : Genre – Scheduling

Speech Act

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|--|-------------|
| 1. | PM: | Today he won't be in huh? () | 1. Enquiry |
| 2. | | So the | |
| 3. | ES: | [You didn't talk to him isn't it? | 2. Enquiry |
| 4. | PM: | [Ya (.) | |
| 5. | ES: | You didn't mention to him this guy is | 3. Enquiry |
| 6. | | coming? = | |
| 7. | PM: | = Ya, ya, he knows it | 4. Response |
| 8. | ES: | He knows the guy want to talk to him about () | 5. Enquiry |
| 9. | PM: | No, just now | 6. Response |
| 10. | ES: | <u>Just now</u> you talked to him? = | 7. Enquiry |
| 11. | PM: | = Huh, nice chap = | |
| 12. | ES: | [<u>Do you think he's going to see him?</u> | 8. Enquiry |

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|--|----------------|
| 13. | PM: | I don't know ()= | 9. Response |
| 14. | ES: | = Afternoon lah - he can have a (.) short chat | 10. Permission |
| 15. | | with him | |
| 16. | PM: | OK | |

Setting

Company C

- The executive secretary in Company C is preparing a questionnaire for a regional conference to be held in China.
 - Her boss is in the office and she has to also prepare some documents for him to see.
 - Every half an hour she retrieves incoming faxes for distribution.
 - She has to prepare for the quality convention to be held the following week in one of the leading hotels.
 - She scans the newspapers for press cuttings for the central filing system.
 - She attends to a few telephone calls.
 - Some of the clerks come to consult her regarding company procedures.
- The speech event between the executive secretary and one of the clerks is one such consultation. It is to clarify company procedures on leave taking.

Speech Event (Company C)

G2 : Genre – Policy

Speech Act

- | | | | |
|----|----|--|------------|
| 1. | C: | <i>Aku pun (in Chinese). Aku pun</i> | 1. Enquiry |
| 2. | | <i>ingat mahu tanya boleh carry forward huh?</i>
(I also (Chinese). I also thought of wanting
to ask can carry forward huh?) | |

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|---|-------------------|
| 3. | ES: | Is it? You have to carry forward | 2. Policy |
| 4. | | your leave from last year | |
| 5. | C: | Last year (in Chinese). She applied | 3. Regret |
| 6. | | for me wan! I was not around ma! | |
| 7. | | Pity O! So I cannot finish mine | |
| 8. | | So you cannot carry forward wan= | |
| 9. | ES: | = ya, you can, but carry forward to first quarter | 4. Procedure |
| 10. | C: | So cannot ah, carry forward wan ah | 5. Disappointment |
| 11. | ES: | Huh | |
| 12. | C: | OK, then I finish it off!! I still got | 6. Decision |
| 13. | | three weeks (.) OK lah! | |
| 14. | ES: | Hm Hm | |

5.3.2 Features of Setting

1. All the speech events take place in the office of the executive secretary. The company staff can walk in at any time to the office to meet with the executive secretary on any matter involving the boss or the company procedures and policies.
2. All the secretaries handle a range of duties and are always extremely busy. There is no moment when they are relaxed to have coffee breaks or tea breaks.
3. In all cases, they have a packed lunch in the office. In all the companies, the daily tasks include word-processing, making and receiving telephone

calls, sending and receiving faxes, fixing several kinds of appointments, dealing with company staff for schedules and appointments.

4. All the speech events are casual, and friendly but they each deal with formal business matters. There is no frivolous chit chat. Decision making lies entirely in the hands of the executive secretary when it comes to matters involving the boss (See 4.1.1.2.3).
5. All company staff at all levels have to abide by the decisions she makes concerning meetings, appointments and travel of the boss. In that sense, she has “the freedom to decide” (See 4.1.1.2.3)

5.3.3 Situated Cognition – Shared Goal

(Table 4)

Company	Genre	Shared Goal	Textual Evidence	Speech Act	Line
A	E1 Scheduling	Scheduling meeting for annual report with boss	ES : <i>Ini you na buat apa?</i> (<i>This, what do you want to do?</i>)	Seeking information	4
			PR : Annual Report	Approval	5
			ES : Annual report OK :: I give you one hour		6
			PR : Ah. OK, OK, huh =		7
A	E2 Scheduling	Scheduling travel on company matters for boss	SGM : That means the latest will be night flight only lah	Acceptance	16
			ES : = Night flight 8.15 ...	Decision	17
			SGM : ° 8.15 huh (.) OK...	Compliance	18
A	E3 Scheduling	Scheduling meeting for boss	SGM : If you can release him ...	Suggestion Control	11
			ES : Hm I'll try to get him (.) ...		15
			SGM : Hm, OK		17
B	F1 Policy	Rescheduling meeting of editorial committee	ES : = My apologies. We have it moved to tomorrow (.) 2.00 o'clock (.)	Decision	5
			SEC: Ehem. 2.00 o'clock	Acceptance Apology	7
			ES : Sorry		8
B	F2 Policy	Policy on company brochure	ES : But be careful it is not wrong ...	Caution Acceptance	7
			AA : = ° Yes		12
C	G1 Scheduling	Schedule meeting with boss	ES : =Afternoon lah – he can have a (.) short chat with him	Permission	14
			PM : OK		15
C	G2 Policy	Policy on leave	C : So you cannot carry forward wan =	Regret Procedure	8
			ES : = ya, you can, but carry forward to first quarter		9
			C : OK, then I finish it off !!	Decision	12

5.3.4 Textual Evidence

The textual evidence reveals common patterns in the social processes of the shared goal. First is the significance of situated talk. What the participants say is governed by their role, position, expectations, and responsibilities. This is evident in the speech acts indicating the implicit shared goal as in :

- ES : "Annual report OK :: I give you one hour" (E1 II 6)
- ES : "= Night flight 8.15 ..." (E2 II 17)
- ES : "Hm, I'll try to get him (.) ..." (E3 II 15)
- ES : "= My apologies. We have moved it to tomorrow
(.) 2.00 o'clock (.) ..." (F1 II 5)
- ES : "...But be careful it is not wrong ..." (F2 II 7)
- ES : "= Afternoon lah – he can have a (.) short
chat with him" (G1 II 14)
- ES : "= Ya, you can but carry forward to first quarter" (G2 II 9)

While the shared goal is understood by all the participants, the unique pattern that seems to emerge is the final say that the executive secretary has in every case. In the given context, the social rules shape the action of the individual employees irrespective of their position as senior managers or clerks. In each of these speech events, it is the executive secretary who controls the genre as she is the one who makes the decisions.

Second, the shared goal in the sense of "the priority" is not an outcome of their position in the company but an outcome of the prevailing organizational culture

and shared rules of interpretation (See 4.1.1.3.1). The values and beliefs of the employees determine what they say and do to preserve the shared cognition of meeting the organizational goals. To meet the overall company goals means, managing the various functions and activities of the organization. One such function is being compliant with the suggestions and decisions of the executive secretary (See 4.1.1.2.3) as in :

PR : "Ah, OK, OK huh =" (E1 II 7)

SGM : "° 8.15 huh (.) OK ..." (E2 II 18)

SGM : "Hm OK" (E3 II 17)

SEC : "Ehem. 2.00 o'clock ..." (F1 II 7)

AA : "= ° Yes" (F2 II 12)

PM : "OK" (G1 II 16)

C : "OK, then I finish it off ..." (G2 II 12)

Although she does not fall in the chain of command in the organizational structure of the company, she wields power and control as evident in the compliant responses of the employees.

A third aspect is the inevitability of the shared goal of a particular speech event which lies in the perception of the executive secretary in each company. These have been highlighted in the several comments of the bosses and the executive secretaries in Chapter 4. Being the 'knowledge worker' (See 4.1.1.2.1), working closely with the boss in the domain of the office unit of the CEO, the executive secretary is empowered to decide on all procedural matters deserving his attention.

The shared goal in the interactions between the executive secretary and the company employees are dictated by the situated cognition and the shared rules of interpretation which hinge on 'accountability'. Each employee is accountable for the realization of the shared goal of the interaction. This is evident in the speech acts where the executive secretary and the company employee illustrate interpersonal cooperation in the pursuit of the shared goal. Such behavioural routines and conventions represent the patterns of institutional talk in these business settings.

5.3.5 Features of Shared Goal

The shared goal in the interactions between the executive secretary and company employees highlights two features. They are the common concern for the boss's diary of appointments to suit his convenience and the common interest in upholding company policy and image.

The shared goal reflects the relationship between the social structure and the rule governed activity of the interactions. They are an outcome of intersubjectivity and accountability (See 2.8.1; 2.9.2.1). The shared goal and the textual evidence of speech events E1 to E3 and G1 imply a common focus arising from the dynamic relationship between situated cognition and the constitutive social structure of the business environment. The focus is the priority given to schedules and appointments concerning the boss. The priority for the boss illustrates a typical institutional convention that is mutually understood by employees. So too in the

case of speech events in F1, F2 and G2 where the common concern is managing company policy and company matters.

The name recognition of the speech events that emerge from the common focus is 'scheduling' and 'policy'. Hence the speech events E1 to E3 and G1 are genres labelled as 'scheduling'. They involve the social processes of an evolving text to determine a particular schedule such as a meeting or travel. The speech events F1, F2 and G2 are related to company 'policy' in producing newsletters, brochure, and on leave taking. The variations in the genres on 'scheduling' and 'policy' reflect the 'staged goal-oriented purposeful activity' (See 2.4) of each speech event as in a 'meeting', 'travel' or leave procedures.

The name recognition of speech events as genre is determined by the whole system of the business environment which link sociological understanding with linguistic factors (See 2.3). Each of the speech events reflect the institutional identities of the participants. In E1, the public relations officer; E2 and E3, the senior general manager; F1, the secretary to a head of department; F2, personal from the advertising department; G1, the product manager and G2, the clerk. They each reflect their roles, expectations, and the shared rules of interpretation in the relationship with the executive secretary (See 2.9.1.2)

5.3.6 Situated Cognition – Individual Purpose

Individual purpose in these genres is unique. They are context-shaped and are therefore identical to the shared goal. The problem of a mismatch with the shared

goal or hidden agendas does not surface. This is because the mutually understood expectations govern the interactions. The executive secretary and the individual company staff cooperate to fulfil the corporate needs at all levels. Hence, the individual purpose is task related to meet the occupational role expectations and does not represent a personal interest.

5.3.7 Textual Evidence

In each of the speech events where the company staff meets the executive secretary, the individual purpose of the company staff is tentative as is evident in the following utterances.

Situated Cognition – Individual Purpose

(Table 5)

Company	Genre	Individual Purpose	Textual Evidence	Speech Act	Line
A	E1 Scheduling	The public relations officer wants to schedule a meeting with the boss	PRO : How is his – how is his schedule (.) tight?	Enquiry	ll 1
A	E2 Scheduling	The senior general manager wants to host a dinner for the boss on arrival in Sabah	SGM : ° If you can, arrange the evening. Then the :: might be he can have dinner	Seeking approval	ll 1
A	E3 Scheduling	The senior general manager hopes the 27 October meeting be cancelled to suit his purpose	SGM : maybe you can cancel the meeting or something	Suggestion	ll 2
C	G1 Scheduling	The product manager wants the boss to meet a visitor	PM : Today he won't be in huh? ()	Enquiry	ll 1

All these speech events are genres labelled as 'scheduling'. The purpose of the encounter has to do with dates of meetings, appointments or travel involving the boss. The 'tentative' aspect of the purpose is apparent in the textual evidence. In

each case the staff is seeking approval from the executive secretary. As such she is in control in all these speech events. She makes the decisions to meet the shared goal.

In the speech events which are genres labelled 'policy' the individual purpose reflects the power in her position as executive secretary. In these situations F1, F2 and G2, the executive secretary transacts her business and ensures they are implemented by the staff as shown in Table 6.

Situated Cognition – Individual Purpose

(Table 6)

Company	Genre	Individual Purpose	Textual Evidence	Speech Act	Line
B	F1 Scheduling	The executive secretary has moved the editorial meeting to the next day	ES : = My apologies. We have moved it to tomorrow (.)	Decision	ll 5
B	F2 Policy	As she is responsible for the company image she cautions the purchasing manager regarding the brochure	ES : But be careful it is not wrong because this is the first branch we are going to use as a sample	Caution	ll 7
C	G2 Policy	She reminds the clerk on what to do with unfinished leave in a year	ES : ... You have to carry forward your leave from last year	Policy	ll 3

In each of these speech events, the executive secretary enacts her role on maintaining company image and company policy. In the case of F1, however, the rescheduling of the editorial board meeting for the in-house magazine is prompted by a more important event. The boss is using the conference room and his meeting has not ended as expected. Since matters concerning the boss are top priority as reflected in the comment, "to her customer number one, is the boss", (See 4.1.1.2.2) she adjusts her activities accordingly. This is a mutually

understood phenomenon and there is no dispute over changes at short notice by other staff members.

The participants in these speech events are all company employees. There is, therefore, an expected sense of 'accountability' in terms of ensuring that any decisions made by the executive secretary is of common interest. All company staff work towards attaining organizational goals. In that sense, being the executive secretary, she has the additional responsibility in the decision making process. There are significant reasons. First she is the knowledge-worker. She is the only person who has access to all company information and is therefore the only person who can make an informed decision. Secondly, she is the only person in the company who interacts closely with the boss (See 4.1.1.2.3).

Given these context-shaped, context sensitive roles of company staff, the notion of an individual purpose signals an organizational interest and not a personal one. Individual purpose represents a coherent set of shared purposes to achieve procedural goals.

As in the case of the relationship between the boss and the executive secretary, these genres on 'scheduling' and 'policy' reveal recurring similarities or typification in the underlying logic and rationale that facilitate the reception and production of genre. The logic and rationale arising out of situated cognition reflects the social process of genre knowledge. Genre knowledge of company procedures, organizational goals and occupational roles and positions influence expectations

and accountability. These are embedded in the shared goals and in the relationship between company staff and the executive secretary to achieve the goals as in the following speech acts.

E1	Speech Act 5	Approval	II 10 – 12
E2	Speech Act 3	Explanation	II 5 – 10
E3	Speech Act 3	Suggestion	II 11 – 14
	Speech Act 4	Control	II 15 – 16
F1	Speech Act 2	Decision	II 5 – 6
	Speech Act 3	Acceptance	II 7
F2	Speech Act 3	Caution	II 7 – 9
	Speech Act 5	Acceptance	II 12
G1	Speech Act 6	Enquiry	II 5 – 7
	Speech Act 7	Permission	II 8 – 16
G2	Speech Act 3	Regret	II 5 – 8
	Speech Act 4	Procedure	II 9

5.3.8 Features of Individual Purpose

In these speech acts, it is evident that the mutual understanding and role expectations provide clarity of purpose. The problem, therefore, of hidden agendas or mismatch between what is intended and what is said does not seem to apply in these genres. Instead, these speech acts exhibit the direct relationship between their roles and status and each one's rights and obligations.

5.3.9 Sociolinguistic Components

5.3.9.1 Language Choice and Variety

The genre involving interactions between the executive secretary and company staff depict a relationship unlike that of a superior-subordinate. Instead, the executive secretary is seen to be in tune with the company staff to contribute to a successful frame of interpretation and to help create a shared outcome according to the situation at hand as in the following speech acts.

Speech Acts

(Table 7)

Genre	Speech Act	Textual Evidence
E1 - Scheduling	7 Control	II 14
	8 Enquiry	II 17
	9 Decision	II 19
E2 - Scheduling	3 Explanation	II 5 – 15
	4 Control	II 10
	5 Acceptance	II 16
E3 - Scheduling	3 Suggestion	II 11 – 14
	4 Control	II 15 – 16
F1 - Scheduling	1 Apology	II 5 – 6
	3 Acceptance	II 7
	4 Tact	II 10 – 11
F2 – Policy	2 Confirmation	II 4 – 6
	3 Caution	II 7 – 8
	4 Plan	II 9 – 11
	5 Acceptance	II 12
	6 Support	II 13 – 14
G1 - Scheduling	8 Enquiry	II 12
	9 Response	II 13
	10 Permission	II 14
G2 - Policy	3 Regret	II 5 – 8
	4 Procedure	II 9

Since these interactions are between company employees, the language choice portrays friendship at the personal level. The designations or the positions held as public relations manager, senior general manager, product manager or clerk has no bearing on how the executive secretary interacts with them. The relational function is informal, friendly and natural in all cases.

PR : "... does he want to have it (.) in the board room?" (E1 II 17)

ES : "= you give me the numbers. If more than six
then we have in the board room" (E1 II 19)

ES : "By the time he get ready all that!" (E2 II 8)

SGM: "° So leaves only night lah ()" (E2 II 9)

ES : "Hm. I'll try to get him (.) ..." (E3 II 15)

ES : "..... But be careful it is not wrong" (F2 II 7)

AA : "= ° Yes" (F2 II 12)

ES : "= Do you think he's going to see him" (G1 II 12)

PM : "I don't know () =" (G1 II 13)

ES : "= Afternoon lah – he can have a (.) short chat
with him" (G1 II 14)

C : "... So you cannot carry forward wan =" (G2 II 8)

ES : "= ya, you can but carry forward to first quarter" (G2 II 9)

In these samples the institutional talk reveals social cohesion to accomplish tasks of room arrangements, travel, appointments or meetings. The culture that is preserved is evident in the informal verbal conventions of a friendship to elicit cooperation. There are no formal terms of address, or levels of deference.

Instead, the language supports directness favourable to negotiate shared interpretations.

However, in spite of the peer friendship with acceptable norms and conventions in language choice and variety, the executive secretary maintains boundaries of power as a consequence of her role and her professional responsibilities. That is to say, no matter who the participant is in terms of the organizational hierarchy, including the boss, she enacts control in such decisions on appointments, meetings or programmes involving the boss. She is the only person in the organization who does not fall in the chain of command. (See Fig 1, 2, 3) but has significant power as in

ES : "I've given you 11.00 to 12.00" (E1 II 14)

ES : "You give me the numbers. If more than six then
we have in the board room." (E1 II 19)

ES : "= Cannot, because now post cabinet " (E2 II 3)

ES : "No, this one (.) that's why I have to check ..." (E3 II 5)

SGM: "If you can release him for us ..." (E3 II 11)

ES : "Sorry. The room is still being used" (F1 II 3)

"My apologies. We have moved it to tomorrow
(.) 2.00 o'clock (.)" (F1 II 5 – 6)

ES : "... But be careful it is not wrong ..." (F2 II 7)

"If you are not sure, come back to us again" (F2 II 13)

ES : "= Do you think he's going to see him?" (G1 II 12)

ES : "Afternoon lah – he can have a (.) short chat" (G1 II 14)

with him"

ES : "... you have to carry forward your leave from (G2 II 3)
last year".

In each of these utterances, it is solely her job function that gives the executive secretary the endogenous power and influence on decision making. There is little room for negotiation as the configurations of speech deployed are decisive as in, "I've given you 11.00 to 12.00"; "Cannot"; "No"; "Sorry ..."; "...he can have a short chat". These are all expressions which reveal that company staff comply with the decisions taken by the executive secretary. The functional tenor evident in the language borders on instructions or directions given by the executive secretary. The company staff have no choice but to accept as in

PR : "Hm : OK, OK" (E1 II 15)

PR : "OK. Fine" (E1 II 23)

SGM : "° OK" (E2 II 7)

SGM : "= Ya" (E2 II 14)

SGM : "° 8.15 huh (.) OK" (E2 II 18)

SEC : "So, I'll leave a message in the department" (F1 II 15)

AA : "= ° Yes" (F2 II 12)

AA : "OK Thanks" (F2 II 15)

PM : "OK" (G1 II 16)

C : "OK, then I finish it off!!" (G2 II 12)

The culture to conform in these situated variety of linguistic interactions exhibits the shared cognition approach to the reality of the prevailing beliefs and perceptions of the role of the executive secretary. She has the recognized position of authority not owing to a hierarchy but owing to a high degree of accountability. The total compliance or agreement to her decisions implies an intuitively observable sense of awareness as to the demands on the accountability. She cannot afford to make a mistake. This is common sense knowledge to all company staff. As such, they understand the need to accept her decisions without question (See 4.1.1.2.2).

Another feature is the way in which a friendly, informal relationship is juxtaposed with respect and social distance. This is evident in the comfortable use of Malay and English as in

- | | | |
|------|---|-----------|
| PR : | <i>"Fasal apa you ta beritahu a:wal?"</i>
(Why did you not let me know earlier?) | (E1 II 3) |
| ES : | <i>"Ini you na buat apa?"</i>
(This, what is it you want to do?) | (E1 II 4) |
| PR : | "Annual report" | (E1 II 5) |
| ES : | "Annual report OK :: I give you one hour" | (E1 II 6) |

In these speech acts bilingualism implies informality and friendship while simultaneously noting a social distance. When she says, "I give you one hour" (II 6), or "I've given you 11.00 to 12.00" (II 14), "If more than six then we have in the board room (.)" (II 19).

There is a similar pattern in G2 as in

C : "Aku pun (in Chinese). *Aku pun ingat mahu* (G2 II 1 – 2)

tanya boleh carry forward (my leave)"

(I also (Chinese). I also thought of wanting to ask can carry forward huh?)

ES : Is it? You have to carry forward your leave (G2 II 3)

from last year"

In this speech act of inquiry and response, there are three languages in use, Malay, Chinese and English (See 2.9.3.1). Here again, the variability implies informality and naturalness in the talk. But the respect for the executive secretary, being the person to decide and to inform, is maintained. The implication is in spite of the informality at the level of interaction the executive secretary is respected for her decision-making role.

The patterns of social distance in spite of friendliness are common even where there is no bilingualism as in

SGM : "° If you can, arrange the evening. Then (E2 II 1)

the :: might be he can have dinner"

ES : "= Cannot, because now post cabinet –" (E2 II 3)

SGM : "Huh, huh" (E2 II 4)

The soft tone approach of a request evident in "°If you can," (II 1) receives a firm refusal, "Cannot ..." (II 3) which is not construed as a haughty arrogant response. Instead, there is respect for her decision as he replies with back channel cues, "Huh, huh" (II 4). In all the encounters the social distance is the result of the occupational role. Company staff seek permission, approval,

confirmation, provide suggestions, and make inquiries evident in several speech acts as shown in Table 8.

Speech Acts

(Table 8)

Genre	Speech Act	Textual Evidence
E1- Scheduling	1 Enquiry	ll 1
	8 Enquiry	ll 17
E2 - Scheduling	1 Seeking Approval	ll 1
	7 Compliance	ll 18
E3 - Scheduling	1 Suggestion	ll 1 – 4
	2 Suggestion	ll 11 – 14
G1 - Scheduling	1 Enquiry	ll 1
G2 - Policy	1 Enquiry	ll 1

Each of these speech acts are task related. In addition, the fact that as an executive secretary, she knows everything that is going on and is loyal and committed to her boss (See 4.1.1.2.3), there is a discernible caution in all dealings with her. It is almost as if no company staff can afford to cross swords with her.

The language choice and variety evidently reveal the social process of cooperation, and compliance as well as respect and support for the executive secretary.

5.3.9.2 Style Shifting

A striking feature of style in the genres between the company staff and the executive secretary is the discernible sense of caution in all dealings with the

executive secretary. This seems to be the consequence of the high degree of confidentiality she upholds, her loyalty and commitment to her boss, and being perceived as the 'know all' in the company. Company staff are therefore friendly but there is never a situation of intimacy with the executive secretary.

- E1 PR : "How is his – how is his schedule (.) (II 1)
tight?"
- PR : "Hm. So, does he want to have it (.) in (II 17)
the board room? ="
- E2 SGM : "... the latest will be night flight only lah" (II 16)
SGM : "... Then you want us to send him back?" (II 18)
- E3 SGM : "... maybe you can cancel the meeting or (II 2 – 3)
something"
- SGM : "If you can release him for us on the (II 11 – 12)
27th that'll be good lah (-)
- G1 PM : Today he won't be in huh? () (II 1)

The caution is evident in the polite leading questions hoping to evoke a response in their favour. This question-answer style illustrates the distributional asymmetries in the exchange because of the differential access to information.

The asymmetry explains the social distance which is also evident in the evaluative responses of the executive secretary, her interpretations and opinions, as shown in Table 9.

Speech Act

(Table 9)

Genre	Speech Act		Textual Evidence
E1 - Scheduling	6	Approval	II 10 - 12
	9	Decision	II 19 - 22
E2 - Scheduling	3	Explanation	II 5 - 13
	4	Control	II 10
	6	Decision	II 17
E3 - Scheduling	2	Evaluation	II 6 - 10
	4	Control	II 15 - 16
F1 - Scheduling	1	Apology	II 3
	2	Decision	II 5
F2 - Scheduling	3	Caution	II 7 - 9
	4	Plan	II 9 - 11

The speech acts depict the control the executive secretary has over the topic, and the participants. The control is reinforced in the style of questions which portray a direction in the goal oriented behaviour as in

ES : "You didn't talk to him isn't it?" (G1 II 3)

ES : "You didn't mention to him this guy is coming? =" (G1 II 5)

ES : "Just now you talked to him? =" (G1 II 10)

Although the executive secretary is more dominant than the participants, the latter adopts a polite, casual style to maintain the social equilibrium. The frequency of 'lah', which is a common filler in the colloquial use of the English language in Malaysia, marks this casual style in these interactions. In addition, there is no formal use of language to indicate an upward style because of the social structure

involving company staff. The style represents familiarity with acceptable norms and conventions in language choice and variety. Hence, there is a perceptible downward style to elicit support, information or signal tentative inquiry.

Furthermore, speech exchange is always in the private setting of the office of the executive secretary. This explains the stylistic variations, approximating the flow of an ordinary conversation. Yet in all encounters, the recognition of the role and position of the executive secretary is always maintained.

5.3.9.3 Code Switching

Code switching is significant as it is rooted in the culture where interactants are fluent in both languages namely Malay and English. Where they belong to the same ethnic group, they may speak in their mother-tongue which is Chinese or Tamil. The alternating intrasentential or intersentential code switching is natural as participants are not self conscious about the code being used. The primary concern is the communicative effect to negotiate meaning as in

- | | | | |
|----|------|--|---------|
| E1 | PR : | <i>"Fasal apa you ta beritahu a:wal?"</i>
<i>(Why didn't you tell me earlier?)</i> | (II 3) |
| | ES : | <i>"Ini, you na buat apa?"</i>
<i>(This, what do you want to do?)</i> | (II 4) |
| | ES : | <i>"= Ah, you kata discussion apa? ="</i>
<i>(= Ah, what discussion did you say? =)</i> | (II 8) |
| | ES : | <i>"= Inilah – discussion lah"</i> | (II 9) |
| | ES : | <i>"Aah :: annual report OK!"</i> | (II 10) |

The language used to negotiate meaning in these interactions (ll 3 – 4) are both English and Malay. In this instance, code switching as an interactional rule is culture bound and is socially acceptable. Being a national organization providing public utility services, code switching is routinely prevalent in interactional encounters. Code switching in this particular episode is context-specific illuminating the social organization of talk in Company A. It does not have a bearing on speech behaviour in terms of depicting status, role or avoidance or repair strategy. Instead code switching in this episode shows how the executive secretary and the public relations manager express a shared sense of a standing relationship as might be observed in a casual friendship (ll 8 – 10).

The same is true in the encounter where code switching involves English, Malay and Chinese as in

G2 C : “*Aku pun* (in Chinese). *Aku pun ingat* (ll 1 – 2)

mahu tanya boleh carry forward huh?”

(I also (Chinese). I also thought of wanting to ask can carry forward huh?)

ES : “Is it? You have to carry forward your leave (ll 3 – 4)

from last year”

C : “Last year (in Chinese). She applied for (ll 5 – 8)

me wan! I was not around ma! Pity O!

so I cannot finish mine. So you cannot

carry forward wan =”

ES : “= ya, you can but carry forward to first (ll 9)

quarter”

C : “ So cannot ah, carry forward wan ah” (Il 10)

In this interaction, code switching is in three languages – English, Malay and Chinese. Much of the exchange is in colloquial style as in “*Aku pun*” (Il 1), “I was not around ma!”, “Pity O!”, “So cannot ah carried forward wan ah”. Interjections like “ma”, “wan” or “ah” are fillers with no specific semantic implications except to mark a degree of emphasis in an informal communicative style within the office setting.

The code switching instances between the company staff and executive secretary present the juxtaposition of cultures. Code switching is more a pattern representing informal talk for a formal institutional purpose as in the case of an annual report or company procedure on leave taking. The culture of code switching in these settings shows that language with distinct grammatical systems do convey semantically significant information.

Code switching in these genres indicates informality with minimal social distances. However, since information and decision making functions lie with the executive secretary, the subtle respect for her role is always maintained. In a sense, they portray an integrated pattern of behaviour amongst company staff, marking social cohesion and accountability in all organizational matters.

5.3.9.4 Lexical Choice

The lexical choice in the genres between the executive secretary and company staff orient to the institutional context of talk. They fit the roles in the institutional setting. Although perceived as equal encounters, there is a functional authority assigned to the role of the executive secretary. Hence, lexical choice reveals a unique connection between the task related formality and the social relations of informality with power differentials as in

- | | | | |
|----|------|--|---------|
| E1 | ES : | "Annual report OK :: I give you one hour" | (II 6) |
| | ES : | "It is in order ::!" | (II 12) |
| | ES : | "= You give me the numbers" | (II 19) |
| E2 | ES : | "= <u>Cannot</u> , because now post cabinet" | (II 3) |
| | ES : | " <u>He cannot go for dinner</u> ... " | (II 10) |
| | ES : | " ... he got to leave 4.00 o'clock flight =" | (II 13) |
| E3 | ES : | "No, this one (.) that's why I have to check" | (II 5) |
| F1 | ES : | "= <u>My apologies. We have it moved to tomorrow</u> " | (II 5) |
| | ES : | "Jin, can you please order cheese cake, one recipe" | (II 13) |
| F2 | ES : | "If you are not sure come back to us again" | (II 13) |
| G1 | ES : | " <u>Just now</u> you talked to him?" | (II 10) |
| | ES : | " <u>Do you think he is going to see him?</u> " | (II 12) |
| G2 | ES : | "Is it? You have to carry forward your leave from last year" | (II 3) |

In each of these utterances, lexical choices for example, "I give you ...", "He cannot go for dinner"; "No"; "... come back to us again"; or "Do you think ... ?" indicate the distribution of power in managing company affairs and making decisions. Although the surface level indicates an informal exchange, it is evident in the genre that the executive secretary assumes a differential role. The linguistic forms, including question-answer sequences have directing functions. While the managers may be heads of department with a chain of command in their own business unit, their differentiated role, however, does not prevail in the interaction with the executive secretary.

Whether it is increasing or decreasing, power differentials depends on the task at hand. This is evident in the frequency and type of modals in the genres. In the genre on "scheduling" as in

- | | | | |
|----|-------|---|---------|
| E1 | ES : | "= Five can have it in his room" | (II 22) |
| E2 | SGM : | " ^o If you can ... might be | (II 1) |
| | ES : | "= <u>Cannot</u> , because" | (II 3) |
| | ES : | " <u>He cannot go for dinner</u> " | (II 10) |
| | ES : | "...he got to leave 4.00 o'clock flight" | (II 13) |
| E3 | SGM : | "... maybe you can cancel the meeting... " | (II 2) |
| | SGM : | "If you can release him" | (II 11) |
| F1 | ES : | ".... <u>We have it moved to tomorrow</u> " | (II 5) |
| | ES : | "... <u>tomorrow I'll make sure</u> " | (II 10) |
| G1 | ES : | "... he can have a (.) short chat" | (II 14) |

The speech act in E1 "Five can have it in his room" refers to the meeting with the boss on the annual report. It is a matter of the venue when the executive secretary decides on the boss's room. In E2 and E3, the senior general manager treads carefully when he says, "If you can ..." or "maybe ..." indicating only a tentative inquiry. The executive secretary's response is firm and decisive as evident in the modal "can" or "cannot". The nature of the task as the boss's travel and his related appointments demands detail, accuracy and precision. She makes it clear that in these instances, there is no room for negotiation. The modal choices in general illustrate situated cognition and provide situated meaning. They convey the personal repertoire based on the premise of being a knowledge worker.

The same is true in F1 and G1 where the executive secretary in each case shows the power difference between the participants. Their utterances reveal that they are pivotal persons. By virtue of the assigned roles, they each reflect status and social identity with prescribed expectations.

The frequency of the pronouns "I" and "you" reinforces the institutional authority of the executive secretary as in

- | | | | |
|----|-------|---|---------|
| E1 | ES : | "... <u>I</u> give you ..." | (ll 6) |
| | ES : | " <u>You</u> give me the numbers ..." | (ll 19) |
| E2 | SGM : | "... Then <u>you</u> want us to send him back?" | (ll 18) |
| E3 | ES : | "... that's why <u>I</u> have to check" | (ll 5) |
| | ES : | " <u>I</u> want to tell him he makes his function | (ll 8) |

on 27 October"

- F1 ES : "... I'll make sure you have cheese cakes" (ll 10)
- G1 ES : "You didn't talk to him ...?" (ll 3)
- ES : "You didn't mention to him?" (ll 5)
- ES : "Do you think he's going to see him?" (ll 12)
- G2 ES : "... you have to carry forward your leave" (ll 3)

In all these instances, the relational function of "I" and "you" depicts the role related authority of the executive secretary. They are instructive in the linguistic functions indicating a relationally significant feature in the text. They suggest a power chain that is oriented to her position as executive secretary.

The use of "we" or "us" is infrequent except to show institutional solidarity. The comparatively low density of these pronouns shows that in the main, the executive secretary controls the genre.

- F1 ES : "... we have it moved to tomorrow" (ll 5)
- F2 ES : "We have given Yeo everything" (ll 1)
- ES : "... After this brochure we are doing the (ll 9)
- same thing in Penang"
- ES : "If you are not sure, come back to us (ll 13)
- again"

The use of "we" or "us" in these genres is a distancing device. They portray the institutional role of the executive secretary and her boss as a single unit of power

and knowledge within the organization. What seems to emerge is the exclusiveness of the unit marking the relational distance between them and the company staff when dealing with company matters (See 2.9.3.4).

The evidence in all these instances points to the fact that the executive secretary's wielding of power and knowledge is a social process determined entirely by her role and her role relations with the boss. Without the connection with her boss, she has no position, and no power.

5.3.9.5 Interaction Management

In the relationship between the executive secretary and company staff, the speech exchange system responds to the contingencies posed by the job functions. The text of the genres that evolve corresponds to the social structure namely the role, culture or expectations.

5.3.9.5.1 Turn Taking

In the genres on 'scheduling' and 'policy', the language used to accomplish a turn manifests the participants institutional conduct. The executive secretary and the company staff, in general, share membership in the organization as employees. In other words, there is a common understanding of social practices, the values, culture, and the demands which have a bearing on what they say. The genres reveal how "things are done around here" (See 2.9.1.3), recognizing each other's expectations and maintaining their conduct as in the sample turns of the following speech acts.

Turn Taking

(Table 10)

Genre	Speech Act	Turns	Textual Evidence
E1 Scheduling	8 Enquiry	PR : Hm. So, does he want to have it (.) in the board room? =	II 17
	9 Decision	ES : = You give me the numbers. If more than six then we have in the board room (.)	II 19
E2 Scheduling	3 Explanation	ES : He will finish about 4.00. Then by the time he goes back home will be 5.00	II 5
		SGM: ° OK	II 7
	6 Decision	ES : = <u>Night flight 8.15</u> . The last flight 8.15 to Sabah (.)	II 17
	7 Compliance	SGM : ° 8.15 huh (.) OK. Then you want us to send him back?	II 18
E3 Scheduling	1 Suggestion	SGM : So: on the October twenty :: seventh you said he has got the er – maybe you can cancel the meeting or something <i>Kursus</i> or- (Course)	II 1
	2 Evaluation	ES : No, this one (.) that's why I have to check. He has few dates with him. 27 September, October. So now I want to tell him he make his function on 27October (.) now you see : (.)	II 5
F1 Scheduling	4 Tact	ES : Huh? OK I'll make sure you have (.) cheese cakes here	II 10
		SEC : Cheese cakes! Good-lah	II 12
F2 Policy	1 Confirmation	ES : We have given Yeo everything you know! (.)	II 1
		AA : You have huh	II 2
		ES : He has <u>everything</u>	II 3
G1 Scheduling	3 Enquiry	ES : You didn't mention to him this guy is coming? =	II 5
	4 Response	PM : = Ya, ya, he knows it	II 7
G2 Policy	5 Disappointment	C : So cannot ah, carry forward wan ah	II 10
		ES : Huh	II 11

These samples in turn taking exhibit considerable variations in turn size and turn contents. They highlight the blurred boundaries of institutional talk and ordinary conversation between company staff in a business environment (See 2.9.3.7.2). All the speech acts illustrate the job routines and functions of every company staff. As such, each one has an equal responsibility to respond to the speaker-turn cues. However, because of the blurred formal-informal boundaries (See 2.8.3), there is a relative mix of 'closeness' and 'openness' in the responses which is reflected in the turn size and the language choice and variety.

The sequential organization of turns in the speech acts making up the genres, illustrate the intersubjective phenomena and the principle of accountability. They are therefore not mechanical but display purpose and intention relevant to the tasks.

In a speech exchange involving power differentials verbal routines would generally curtail participation while one interactant is dominant as in the case of the boss and executive secretary. However, this is not the pattern between the executive secretary and company staff. It is not a question of who is dominant in the turns but it is a question of company staff having to consult, negotiate or discuss to arrive at what is best in the interest of his boss and the company. The turns, therefore, reflect orderliness and a general coherence in the overall theme of the genre (See 2.8.3).

These seem to be a common pattern in the turn design of genres between the executive secretary and the company staff. Firstly, the turns are task-related. There is no frivolous chit chat or 'empty talk' as in ordinary conversations. This is evident in the following speech acts (See 2.9.3.6.2).

Speech Acts

(Table11)

Genre		Speech Act		Turns
1	Scheduling	E1	1. Enquiry 2. Complaint 3. Seeking information	II 1 - 5
1	Scheduling	E1	7. Enquiry 8. Decision 9. Acceptance	II 18 - 21
2	Scheduling	E2	1. Seeking approval 2. Denial 3. Explanation 4. Control	II 1 - 10
3	Scheduling	E3	1. Suggestion 2. Evaluation 3. Suggestion 4. Control	II 1 - 16
4	Scheduling	F1	1. Apology 2. Decision 3. Acceptance	II 3 - 7
5	Policy	F2	2. Confirmation 3. Caution 4. Plan 5. Acceptance	II 5 - 12
6	Scheduling	G1	8. Enquiry 9. Response 10. Permission	II 12 - 14
7	Policy	G2	1. Enquiry	II 1 - 10

Secondly, although there is a shared responsibility in accomplishing a task, the turns display the role-related linguistic exchange. The company staff in general seek 'information' and make 'decisions'. The exchange reflects the relevance of intersubjectivity which influences the institutional interaction and the emanating social relations.

The paradox in the linguistic exchange and the role relations is evident at the contextual and the interactional level where the turns indicate informality and equality at the interactional level but formality and inequality at the context level. This is a crucial feature which explains the variability and the irregularity in the turn size and the turn context.

5.3.9.5.2 Back Channel Cues

The back channel cues in the interactional genres between the executive secretary and the company staff are visibly role-related as in

- | | | | |
|----|-------|-------------------|---------|
| E1 | PR : | Ah, OK, OK, huh = | (II 7) |
| | PR : | Aah :: | (II 11) |
| | PR : | Hm | (II 13) |
| | PR : | Hm : OK, OK | (II 15) |
| | PR : | OK. Fine | (II 23) |
| E2 | SGM : | Huh, Huh | (II 4) |
| | SGM : | ° OK | (II 7) |
| | SGM : | = Ya | (II 14) |
| | SGM : | ° 8.15 huh (.) OK | (II 18) |

- E3 SGM : Hm, OK (ll 17)
- F1 SEC : Ya (ll 2)
- ES : OK (ll 16)
- G1 PM : Ya (.) (ll 4)
- PM : = Ya, ya, he knows it (ll 7)
- PM : OK (ll 16)
- G2 ES : Huh (ll 11)
- ES : Hm Hm (ll 14)

In all cases, the back channel cues exhibit speaker-listener coordination. The difference is that they are all to do with expressing agreement indicating the speaker-turn cue for the executive secretary to continue to inform or explain or decide.

This textual strategy displays understanding whereby the company staff orient to their role expectations of acceptance and compliance. The density of back channel cues by the company staff highlights the conversational synchrony revealing their cooperation with the executive secretary.

There are only scant instances of back channel cues by the executive secretary. Where they do occur as in, "OK" (F1, ll 16) and "Huh" (G2 ll 11), and "Hm, Hm" (G2 ll 14), they signal passive acknowledgement with no bearing on the differentiated roles.

The imbalance in the density of back channel cues between the executive secretary and the company staff confirms the phenomenon of asymmetry. This is grounded in the executive secretary's orientation to the interaction stemming from her base of knowledge and information.

5.3.9.5.3 Markers

The relatively few markers in these speech events seems significant. They indicate an overall coherence and directness which seems characteristic of interactions with the executive secretary. The office setting and her range of duties and responsibilities illustrate an extremely busy working day. This is commonly understood by all staff members. As such, the flow of turns and speech acts are precise and direct to accomplish the task at hand and move on to the next. The constant rigour and speed in the interaction is evident in the genres on 'scheduling' and 'policy'.

The only marker that seems to surface in all the genres is 'so'. In each case, the lexical choice of 'so' is made by the company staff and only on rare instances by the executive secretary as in

- | | | | |
|----|-------|--|---------|
| E1 | PR : | "Hm. <u>So</u> , does he want to have it (.) in
the board room?=" | (II 17) |
| E2 | SGM : | "o <u>So</u> leaves only night lah ()" | (II 9) |
| | SGM : | "September (.) <u>so</u> 27 th of September" | (II 11) |
| | ES : | "() <u>so</u> , he is having his dinner" | (II 15) |
| E3 | SGM : | " <u>So</u> : on the October twenty :: seventh | (II 1) |

you said he has got the er - ...”

ES : “.... So now I want to tell him he make his (Il 7)
function on 27 October”

F1 SEC : “ So? = “ (Il 4)

G1 PM : “.... So the ... (Il 2)

G2 C : “.... So you cannot carry forward wan =” (Il 8)

“So” in most of this utterances are turn beginnings which reflect the constraining feature of limiting the content in the turns to a specific cause of anticipated action. The marker also provides for semantic cohesion in the overall theme of the genre. However, the exception is in F1 Il 4, where ‘so’ is a turn response to a change of plan indicating a probe into “what is next?” since the conference room for the editorial meeting is still in use.

In the genre on ‘scheduling’ E3 the markers as in

ES : “.... now you see : (.)” (Il 9)

ES : “ ... you see” (Il 16)

are turn endings of transition relevance place, assigning the turn to the senior general manager. Implicit in the marker is a subtle attempt by the executive secretary to convey to the senior general manager that his suggestions may not be practical.

- b. It is a busy afternoon. She receives a phone call from the car phone. This is her boss with whom she discusses his programme.
- c. She receives several other phone calls, for appointments with the boss, from the media, the travel agent and also from the boss's son.
- d. She retrieves a message from the internet to fax to her boss who is due to be travelling.
- e. She attends to the boss's son who comes by to get some documents prepared.
- f. There is a visitor who is a consultant from the International Consortium of Power Producers.
- g. At the same time, Encik Suman comes in with some documents. He is an officer from another organization and has come with a proposal for Company A which has to be formally signed by the executive secretary on behalf of the boss who is not available.
- h. In the interaction, the executive secretary is informed of the proposal and she probes to ascertain the details before taking any decision and checks what really is going on.

Speech Event (Company A)

H : Genre – Collaboration

		<u>Speech Act</u>
1.	IS: There is a letter from AA. It is an invitation	1 Invitation
2.	ES: Hm	
3.	IS: It is supposed to be a trip on environment	2 Explanation
4.	you have to make formal. That's all -	

5. The person in charge is Mr Haq
6. ES: Mr ?
7. IS: Aah : Encik Haji :: Din
8. ES: Oh!
9. IS: Actually appointed for 4 people to go
10. ES: So the er
11. IS: But it is postponed =
12. ES: = But these people (.) will be going (.) 3 Enquiry
13. on your - on your invitation?
14. IS: Huh. Because we were just talking but now it is 4 Explanation
official
15. ES: So this thing (.) 5 Clarification
16. IS: Hm
17. ES: Is Company A taking up (.) the proposal?
18. IS: Aah : should be taking up the proposal
19. ES: That's why =
20. IS: Huh
21. ES: =You are extending the invitation 6 Seeking Confirmation
22. IS: That's right
- (Interruption - Telephone call (3) mins;
continuous ringing of the second phone); another
visitor is waiting in her office)
23. ES: Yes! Jay I must take care of you 8 Hospitality
24. Jay: No, No, No, you go ahead

25. ES: OK Mr : Encik Suman
26. IS: Just chop and sign (.) for the file 9 Confirmation
(Interruption - Telephone Call (1) min.)
27. IS: So this one is the existing project that is = 10 Clarification
28. ES: OK aah, uh huh
29. IS: = So what we need just make official
(Interruption - continues with phone conversation (2) mins.)
30. IS: So it is already everything arranged 11 Assurance
31. ES: Ah =
32. IS: = Except for made official that's all = 12 Solicit support
33. ES : = Huh, huh 13 Acceptance

Setting

Company B

- a. The speech event delineates a discussion between the executive secretary and two members of the advertising agency at the office in Company B.
- b. The event scheduled at 9.00 a.m. takes place after her routine meeting with her boss at 8.00 a.m. She has organized for refreshment for the visitors.
- c. The boss meets the visitors at the executive secretary's office, gives her an instruction and goes into the conference room for a quality meeting.
- d. In this episode the executive secretary chairs the meeting and is totally "in charge of" the project which is to advertise the company. Her ability to do so emanates from the confidence her boss has in her. "90% of the time I agree with her" (See 4.1.1.2.2).

- e. The executive secretary enters a process of negotiation with the advertising agency to reach an agreement which is of mutual gain. Whilst the company interests prevail, the international advertising agency has an image, credibility, and reputation to uphold as well. These goals and expectations are revealed in the speech event.
- f. The topic centres on several story boards that have been produced by the agency advertising the company products. From the range available they have to mutually agree on what might be the best one.

Speech Event (Company B)

I : Genre – Management

		<u>Speech Act</u>
1.	ES: If you ask me, this one, I'll er	1 Doubt
2.	Institution is what I'll - er	
3.	JAN: I knew you'll ask	2 Flattery
4.	ES: Ha, ha, ha. <u>I know. Don't you think so?</u> (.)	3 Tact
5.	You don't want the the institution	
6.	JAN: ° I don't mind at all	4 Cooperation
7.	ES: I like this one, this one, and the	5 Opinion
8.	other one I like is this one =	
9.	BO: But ideally there should be one (.)	6 Opinion
10.	that shows a group of children =	
11.	ES: Yap. Not just one	7 Agreement
12.	BO: The headline is very	
13.	ES: Because, considering	8 Explanation

14. it is the environment of their - you know
 15. their-their kampung place, playing
 16. with the oldest game, you know they
 17. marvel at the computer games, you know.
 18. Those sorts of primitive games maybe.

19. BO: It's either that or just a group of 9 Cooperation
 20. children. Basically it is just (.) to
 21. show a group of children

22. ES: Maybe showing our latest products 10 Suggestion
 23. with a group of children - Instead of one child

24. JAN: ° We can consider that 11 Consideration

Setting

Company D

- a. In this speech event the executive secretary of Company D is negotiating the deal offered by the hotel as the seminar package.
- b. She travelled to the hotel having fixed an appointment to meet with the marketing officer.
- c. The setting is the lounge of the hotel.
- d. This is a Sunday evening. As observed during field work her duties and responsibilities are dictated by the programmes and activities run by the company and these include weekends.
- e. The executive secretary refers to the terms of the seminar package offered by the marketing officer.

- f. The topic of the speech event influences the time and the length of the negotiation. It is an example of the time taken for the information exchange to achieve an acceptable level of agreement.

Speech Event (Company D)

J : Genre – Management

Speech Act

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|---|--------|
| 1. | ES: | When I went through this - | 1 Tact |
| 2. | MO: | Hm hm | |
| 3. | ES: | It's all in seminar package | |
| 4. | MO: | Hm hm | |
| 5. | ES: | So seminar package is inclusive of - ? | 2 Tact |
| 6. | MO: | Ya, whatever I quote to you lah, right | 3 Tact |
| 7. | ES: | Hm I mean usage of the facilities, the | 4 Tact |
| 8. | | conference facilities and then (.) er lunch = | |
| 9. | MO: | =Hm hm | |
| 10. | ES: | Hm, breakfast | |
| 11. | MO: | Hm hm | |
| 12. | ES: | Two tea breaks | |
| 13. | MO: | Two tea breaks = | |
| 14. | ES: | = Dinner = | |
| 15. | MO: | = Dinner also: but because I put you | |
| 16. | | throughout the whole () duration | |
| 17. | ES: | Huh everything lah. But this seminar | |
| 18. | | package will change ah accordingly | |

19. to the pax, is it? - Number of persons
20. MO: = ° change accordingly huh (.) No (.) not 5 Tactful denial
21. really lah because what is the normal
22. what we are practising here is that
23. you know, let's say my conversation 6 Explanation
24. with you we have problems with pax
25. ES: Hm
26. MO: So aah () so if let's say 28 people
27. turn up we are still charging for 30
28. people you see
29. ES: Oh ::: 7 Acceptance

Setting

Company D

- a. In this speech event the interaction takes place away from the office setting of Company D.
- b. The executive secretary's responsibilities for the day are to ensure meal arrangements, seminar rooms and facilities, documentation, and handouts.
- c. She is completely empowered to make all the necessary decisions with regards to these tasks.
- d. The setting is in a hotel. She has to have several interactional encounters to see to the overall organization of the seminar.
- e. This is the second day of the seminar.

- f. The first task this morning was to check out the venue for breakfast and coffee break for the participants.
- g. Documents for the session were distributed.
- h. She then telephones the banquet officer to arrange for the dinner.
- i. She meets with the restaurant manager to discuss the menu for the dinner for the participants.
- j. The setting of the following speech event is at the Chinese restaurant in the hotel.

Speech Event (Company D)

K : Genre – Management

Speech Act

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------------|
| 1. | RM: 20, 20 persons (.) 7.00 o'clock huh | 1 Tact |
| 2. | ES: Hm | |
| 3. | RM: So tonight lah | |
| 4. | ES: Huh, tonight uh. So we, we want it to be :: 'set' you | |
| 5. | know. We are not having it (.) 'course by course' = | 2 Request |
| 6. | RM: = Yes, 'course by course', 'course by course'. | 3 Cooperation |
| 7. | ES: = <u>No I know. I want</u> everything (.) when it comes | 4 Request |
| 8. | to be 'set' | |
| 9. | RM: ° Oh: | |
| 10. | ES: Huh: If we come and give it one by one – | 5 Tact |
| 11. | so we - we will be spending so much time (.) | |
| 12. | RM: Oh, So you want table setting | 6 Cooperation |
| 13. | ES: Because we -10 -10 | |

14. RM: Ah 10-10 ya
15. ES: So (.) we come at 7.00 o'clock. Will it be ready?=7 Enquiry
16. RM: 7.00 o'clock?
17. ES: Huh
18. RM: 7.00 o'clock (.) OK. Sure. It'll be no problem.8 Cooperation
19. I can start – sure

5.4.2 Features of Setting

- a. The speech events take place either in the office of the executive secretary, in the executive conference room or outside of the company premises.
- b. In encounters at the office, she usually has to attend to several tasks simultaneously, such as answering phone calls, making appointments, sending or receiving faxes and e-mail, signing documents or giving instructions to her secretary.
- c. Meeting with the executive secretary means having to accommodate these situations or interruptions even if one has made a prior appointment for the meeting. This is unlike the situation when she is dealing with her boss. In that case the matters with her boss take priority and no interruption is entertained.
- d. The size of the company affects the nature of her tasks. In the large companies, the interactions are usually in her office premises because there are several other departments or divisions that handle specific responsibilities. In the medium size or small companies with a smaller task force, the executive secretary has to have encounters outside of her office

settings. This may involve travel to hold meetings, discussions or negotiations in different settings. In these situations the executive secretary is empowered to handle a broader range of company responsibilities and to make on-the-spot decisions.

5.4.3 Situated Cognition – Shared Goal

(Table 12)

Company	Genre	Shared Goal	Textual Evidence	Speech Act	Line
A	H Collaboration	To collaborate with companies in activities beneficial to the company	ES: Is Company A taking up (.) the proposal?	Enquiry	17
			IS: Aah : should be taking up the proposal	Hope	18 19
			ES: That's why '		
			IS: Huh	Seeking confirmation	20 21
			ES: = You are extending the invitation?		22
			IS: That's right		
B	I Management	To manage company advertisements	BO: It's either that or just (.) a group of children.	Cooperation	19
			Basically it is just (.) to show a group of children		
			ES: Maybe showing our latest products with a group of children – Instead of one child	Suggestion	22
			JAN: We can consider that	Consideration	23
D	J Management	To manage the seminar	ES: So seminar package is inclusive of –	Tact	5
			MO: Ya, whatever I quote to you lah, right	Tact	6
			ES: Hm I mean usage of the facilities and then (.) er lunch =	Tact	7
D	K Management	To manage the seminar	ES: No, I know. I want everything (.) when it comes to be 'set'	Request	7
			RM: ° Oh:		9
			ES: Huh: If we come and give it one by one so we - will be spending so much - time (.)	Tact	10
			RM: Oh, so you want table setting	Cooperation	12

5.4.4 Textual Evidence

Speech Event (Company A)

H : Genre - Collaboration

Although it is expected that the executive secretary is aware of everything that is going on, here is a situation which depicts the contrary. It is an invitation by another company concerning a trip on environment which assumes the participation of Company A. The clarification sought shows the tact of the executive secretary (H II12,17,21) to get more details of an arrangement of which she knows nothing about. The sense of a shared goal therefore resides in the text. The shared goal lies in the common interest of companies on environmental matters. This probably explains the need for her to collaborate and formalize the project although she has had no prior knowledge of it.

The revealing factor is the need for the executive secretary to accommodate a shared goal which is dictated by the event itself. It resides in the text and does not evolve with it. The concept of a shared goal reflects the need for compliance in the event where a prior decision has been made (H II30).

Speech Event (Company B)

I : Genre - Management

The executive secretary is empowered to make decisions that go beyond her routine tasks. She represents the company as a client of the advertising agency. The shared goal is evident at the outset of the speech event. Both parties

cooperate to develop a story board that provides the best advertisement for the products of the company as in (II 19, 22, 23).

The revealing factor is the scope for the discussion that prevails as evident in the suggestions, opinions and explanations between the executive secretary and the advertising agency. There is a display of conversational inferences which are subtle. The listener is expected to reconcile between what is said and what is understood as in (I II 1-4; 12-21). There is evidently a polite management of transactional and interactional talk to arrive at the overall purpose of agreeing on a sound advertisement (I II 6-8; 22-24).

Speech Event (Company D)

J : Genre - Management

This speech event takes place in the hotel. The transactional talk between the executive secretary and the marketing officer of the hotel represents the shared goal of a satisfactory seminar package, both for the client and for the business. The interaction which is casual and informal explores the shared goal of getting the best business arrangement as in (J II 17-25).

The revealing factor is the recurrence of conversational inferences and subtleties which suggests a sense of caution. Both the executive secretary and the marketing officer field a polite negotiation to ensure the shared goal is achieved in the bargain.

Speech Event (Company D)

K : Genre - Management

This speech event takes place at the venue where the company is already conducting a seminar. This shared goal is to meet the convenience of the participants at the seminar as in (K II 10). In this situation the executive secretary is more assertive and the restaurant manager readily complies as in (K II 7; II 18-19).

This speech event reveals the demands that the executive secretary is able to make in her role as the client when the business arrangement has been finalized. The restaurant manager has to offer the kind of service expected to maintain his business credibility.

5.4.5 Features of Shared Goal

The relationship with the external contacts in each of the speech events illustrates the diversity of the roles and responsibility of the executive secretary. The shared goal in each case reflects the situated cognition arising from her background knowledge and experience. This has a bearing on how the goals are realized in each speech event. The textual evidence indicates acceptance as in, "You are extending the invitation" (H II 21). They also demonstrate levels of negotiation as in I II 22 – 23, J II 5 – 6, K II 7 – 11, where the executive secretary and the external contacts discuss the services.

The external contacts in the situations H, I, J, K are all work-related. They include a staff from another company and agents from an advertising company who are at the office of the executive secretary at Companies A and B. In the case of D, the executive secretary goes to the different hotels. In the speech event (J), the executive secretary and the marketing officer discuss the arrangements for a seminar to be held in one hotel. The speech event (K) is to discuss dining arrangements with the restaurant manager for participants attending a workshop in another hotel.

The sense of a shared goal is unlike the shared organizational responsibilities as in the case of the relationship with the boss or the company staff. In the relationship with external contacts, the shared goal emanates from 'collaboration' in activities or 'management' of business transactions for the company. With the exception of the visitor in H, the rest of the interactants comply with the overt or subtle demands of the executive secretary. In these instances the executive secretary represents the company as the client for the advertising and hotel business. The shared goal is therefore contributing to what the client wants but on the basis of meeting the business objectives of profitability. Complying with the executive secretary is not because of her role as executive secretary but rather as a client providing business.

The text that evolves exhibits the way in which the executive secretary and the business representatives 'manage' to accomplish the shared goals although they are motivated to do so for different reasons. The genre is recognized by the

rationale which resides in the text of the speech event. Therefore, H is labelled 'collaboration' where Company A is invited to send staff to work on a trip on environment proposed by another company. The text in speech events I, J, K reflect the way in which the client and the business representatives, with different agendas, manage to accomplish the shared goal. The text lends itself to the genre labelled 'management' since the participants with separate motivations of 'buying and selling' a service eventually accomplish the goal of advertising for the company (I), or hosting seminars and workshops for company clients (J, K).

5.4.6 Situated Cognition - Individual Purpose

(Table 13)

Company	Genre	Individual Purpose	Textual Evidence	Speech Act	Line
A	H Collaboration	The executive secretary aims to verify the invitation. The visitor seems keen on Company A's participation	ES: = But these people (.) will be going (.) on your - on your invitation? IS: Huh. Because we were just talking but now it is official	Enquiry Explanation	ll 12 ll 14
B	I Management	The executive secretary wants to tactfully modify the billboard. The agency wants the business	ES: ... Don't you think so? You don't want the institution JAN: ° I don't mind at all	Tact Cooperation	ll 4 ll 6
D	J Management	Both the executive secretary and the marketing officer want the best in their individual's interest	ES: Huh everything lah. But this seminar package will change ah accordingly to the pax, is it? - Number of persons MO: = ° change accordingly huh (.) No (.) not really lah ..."	Tactful denial	ll 17 ll 20
D	K Management	The executive secretary expects to get what she asked for. The restaurant manager wants the business and therefore accommodates	ES: ... So we, we want it to be :: 'set' you know. We are not have it (.) 'course by course' = RM: Oh, so you want table setting	Request Cooperation	ll 4 ll 12

5.4.7 Textual Evidence

The genre knowledge and situated cognition of the executive secretary and the external contacts suggests a particular feature. There is the sense of caution exercised by both interactants in each encounter as evident (H II 12-14, I II 4, 6, J II 17, 20, K II 11, 12). Each one's purpose is implied in the subtleties as in "Don't you think so", (I II 4), "I don't mind at all" (I II 6), "... not really lah ..." (J II 20).

In the case of the executive secretary the caution and tact is consistent with her role as the 'frontliner'. Her role dictates the need to uphold the company image in all situations concerning external contacts. In the case of the company and the business contacts, their role is basically to seek approval as in H, or to offer the best proposals in the business as in I, J, K. The situated cognition in all these encounters account for the variance in individual purpose.

In the genre on 'collaboration', the individual purpose of the executive secretary is to have the facts while that of other company staff is to obtain a formal approval. In the genres on 'management', the individual purpose of the executive secretary, in all cases, is to obtain the best product or services. Likewise, those in business want to satisfy their client while simultaneously ensuring profits.

Although 'individual' purpose in general is at variance, the connotation of 'individual' does not stem from personal or private intentions. Instead, all the interactants represent their organizations and are therefore accountable to their bosses. Any decisions made means a decision on behalf of the company. The

high degree of accountability is reflected in the type of speech acts as in being tactful, seeking cooperation, suggesting, giving opinions or explanations so that organizational interests in general are not compromised. Neither do the parties lose on their deals. The individual purpose is, therefore, to arrive at a 'win win' situation evident in the speech acts as in

A	H	Speech Act 2	Explanation	II 3 – 5
		Speech Act 3	Enquiry	II 12 – 13
		Speech Act 5	Clarification	II 15 – 17
		Speech Act 11	Assurance	II 30
		Speech Act 13	Acceptance	II 33
B	I	Speech Act 3	Tact	II 4 – 5
		Speech Act 5 –6	Opinion	II 7 – 10
		Speech Act 10	Suggestion	II 22 – 23
		Speech Act 11	Consideration	II 24
D	J	Speech Act 2	Tact	II 5
		Speech Act 5	Tactful denial	II 20 – 22
		Speech Act 6	Explanation	II 23 – 24
		Speech Act 7	Acceptance	II 29
D	K	Speech Act 1	Tact	II 1
		Speech Act 6	Cooperation	II 12
		Speech Act 7	Enquiry	II 15
		Speech Act 8	Cooperation	II 18

5.4.8 Features of Individual Purpose

The relationship with external contacts demonstrates an intrinsic difference between the shared goal and the individual purpose. In the genre H, the shared goal is to collaborate in joint company activities. Likewise, in genres I, J, K, the shared goal is the overall outcome of a billboard, a seminar package or a set dinner.

The individual motivations, however, stem from the situated cognition and prior knowledge of the participants which influence expectations and individual purpose. They evoke hidden agendas. For example, the visitor in H seems to want the participation of Company A in the trip on environment. This is evident in the lexical cohesion apparent in the reiterations to make it official as in, "... you have to make formal", (II 4), "... but now it is official" (II 14), "so what we need just make official" (II 29), "- Except for made official that's all =", (II 32). It could be assumed that involving a big public utility company like A in a joint project could stimulate publicity on the company's interest in environmental matters. The role of the executive secretary, however, exhibits caution. Her purpose is explicitly wanting the details more than feeling privileged to participate in the project.

The individual purpose of the genres on management is determined by the business transaction. The Companies B and D are the clients. The textual evidence reveals their interest in obtaining the best service for the company as there is a cost involved. The business representatives try to comply as in I, II 6 and K II 11 but without shortchanging their profit margin as in K II 20. Being a

business transaction, it is understood that each participant would aspire for what is best in each one's interest.

What seems to emerge is that expectations which reside in the text reflect the cognitive aspect of individual purpose realized in the creation and production of the genres. In these situations, the individual motivations of the encounter evolve from the situated identity of their occupational roles and the professional relationship. As a result, the shared goal and the individual purpose are not identical. There is also no evidence of distribution of power. Instead, the focus is to accomplish the purpose of the interaction as agreeable to the executive secretary and the business representatives or external contacts.

5.4.9 Sociolinguistic Components

5.4.9.1 Language Choice and Variety

The language choice and variety indexes the social situation within which the text evolves. In the genre on 'collaboration' and 'management' the social situation encodes tact and courtesy in the role relations between the executive secretary and the others. Two reasons account for such a code of conduct. Firstly, the interaction involves external contacts which means the executive secretary as a 'frontliner' has to uphold the image of the company. (See 4.1.3). Secondly, the participants representing another company or a business are keen to involve the company in the transaction. It is to their advantage to elicit the cooperation or support of the respective companies as evident in the following speech acts:

Speech Acts

(Table 14)

Genre	Speech Act	Textual Evidence
H - Collaboration	1 Invitation	ll 1
	2 Explanation	ll 3 – 5
I - Management	1 Doubt	ll 1 – 2
	2 Flattery	ll 3
	3 Tact	ll 4 – 5
	4 Cooperation	ll 6
J - Management	1 Tact	ll 1 – 5
	2 Tact	ll 6 – 8
K - Management	1 Tact	ll 1 – 3
	2 Request	ll 4 – 5
	3 Tact	ll 10 – 11
	4 Cooperation	ll 12

The language choice and variety in these speech acts do not reflect the expected levels of formality or deference found in a tactful or courteous linguistic exchange like, "Thank you, please", or "Would you mind". Instead, the communicative repertoire is informal and natural as in ordinary conversation. Such informality suggests an intuitively observed cohesiveness stemming from a common interest in developing or establishing social relations. For the executive secretary, it would be meaningful to develop a business relationship to make future transactions with the same contacts easier and quicker. The same applies to the business representations where the intentions are always to develop and hold their clients for stable business.

Although the language use is informal and natural, the context and purpose of the interaction is a formal matter. There is a goal to accomplish but not by asserting power or dominance. The executive secretaries' use of formulaic phrases and insertion sequence signal a subtlety befitting a public relations officer as in

ES : "So this thing (.) (H II 15 – 17)

Is Company A taking up (.) the proposal?"

ES : "If you ask me, this one" (I II 1 – 2)

"I know, Don't you think so?" (I II 4 – 5)

"Maybe showing our latest products ..." (I II 22)

ES : "So seminar package is inclusive of – " (J II 5)

Each of these utterances demonstrate indirectness as a conversational strategy. The executive secretaries are polite and tactful to get what they want. They exhibit a positive role in signaling information and they maintain their subtle boundaries of power as the client. The variety of responses of the interactants correspond to this attitude about the relationship by the verbal conventions of 'explanation', 'cooperation' and an instance of indirect 'flattery' evident in the speech acts.

The genres imply a degree of formality in the interactions since there are no instances of bilingualism. All the participants use only the English language in the linguistic exchange (See 2.9.3.1). It seems to suggest a social distance and status in spite of informal and casual interaction. One reason could be that familiarity may

- K ES: "Huh, if we come and give it one by one - (II 10 – 11)
 So we – we will be spending so much time (.)
- RM: "Oh, so you want table setting (II 12)
- ES : "So (.) we come at 7.00 o'clock (II 15)
 Will it be ready?="
- RM: "7.00 o'clock (.) OK. Sure. It'll be no problem (II 18 – 19)
 I can start – sure"

These samples of exchange reveal a downward polite and colloquial style with the aim of achieving their goals. The social system, the culture and the norms and expectations depict a sense of casualness and informality. This is motivated by the desire to maintain a social equilibrium and friendliness to ensure that the relationship and the credibility of the relationship is maintained.

The differential power asymmetry is less apparent as each interactant relies on the other to arrive at decisions by applying the co-operative principle. However, when businesses want to secure clients they have to relent to compromising situations, otherwise they run the risk of losing their business. In that sense, perhaps, the executive secretary does have the last say.

The intonational or tag questions as in (H II 13, I II 5, J II 5, K II 15) confirms the professional cautiousness and politeness to evoke a response based on equal participation. These features regulate the intention of the talk and ensure that a conversation which is underway has a purpose. As such the style recognizes the

significance of ordinary informal talk as determined by the social structure in the genres between executive secretaries and external contacts.

5.4.9.3 Code Switching

There is no evidence of code switching in all the interactions with the external contacts. They illustrate a phenomena where the use of English indices formality in the business environment at the top level (See 2.9.3.1). Code switching generally signals a casualness. As a result, the seriousness of business talk may run the risk of being diluted. In addition, code switching reflects a familiarity which may interfere or affect the goal of the genre.

5.4.9.4 Lexical Choice

The lexical choice in the genres between executive secretaries and external contacts distinctively orient to the verbal conventions which display mutual understanding and friendly support between the participants to achieve their goals. Their individual roles as executive secretary or as other company or business representatives do not exhibit any specific authority. Instead, the interaction reveals tentative enquiries or hypothetical possibilities to elicit cooperation. The intention is not to impose views but rather to reinforce politeness and cordiality to sustain the relationship. These are evident in the modals as in

- | | | | |
|---|-----|---|------------|
| H | IS: | “It is supposed to be a trip on environment you
Have to make formal ...” | (II 3 – 4) |
| | ES: | “Aah : should be” | (II 18) |
| I | BO: | “... there should be one” | (II 9) |

ES : "... primitive games maybe ..." (II 18)

ES: "maybe showing our latest products" (II 22)

JAN: "... can consider that" (II 24)

K RM "... I can start – sure" (II 19)

The choice of "... you have to ..." (H II 4) is a departure from the common understanding of authority or obligation. Instead, the expression borders on an apologetic request as evident in the closing "That's all –". It renders the social meaning of seeking support which suggests that the executive secretary is not further burdened by any other responsibility. This sentiment is reinforced by the company visitor three times as in

H IS: "... but now it is official" (II 14)

IS : "Just chop and sign ..." (II 26)

IS: "... just make official" (II 29)

The lexical coloring "... but now ...", "... just chop ...", "... just make official" exhibit the company officer's conduct of diplomatic interaction. This is matched by the executive secretary's diplomacy with tag question enquiry as prescribed by her institutional role to uphold the company image.

ES : "Mr?" (II 6)

ES: "... on your invitation?" (II 13)

ES: "... taking up (.) the proposal?" (II 17)

ES: "... extending the invitation?" (II 21)

Similar intuitively observable structure of diplomatic interpersonal relationship surface in the use of pronouns between the executive secretary and the external contacts. They display informal talk while recognizing their institutional identity as the executive secretary, a company officer, or a client.

- H ES: "... on your invitation" (II 13)
- IS: "Huh. Because we were just talking" (II 14)
- ES: "You are extending the invitation" (II 21)
- H ES: "I must take care of you" (II 23)
- IS: "So what we need just make official" (II 29)
- I ES: "If you ask me, this one, I'll er institution" (II 1 – 2)
- JAN: "I knew you'll ask" (II 3)
- ES: "I know. Don't you think so? You don't want the institution" (II 5)
- JAN: "I don't mind at all" (II 6)
- J ES: "When I went through this" (II 1)
- MO: "Ya, whatever I quote to you lah. Right." (II 6)
- ES: "I mean usage of the facilities" (II 7)
- MO: "... What we are practising here ..." (II 22)
- K ES: "... so we, we want it to be" (II 4)
- ES: "No I know. I want everything ..." (II 7)
- ES: "... If we come and give it one by one – so We – we will be spending too much time" (II 10 – 11)

RM: "Oh, so you want table setting" (II 12)

RM: "I can start – sure" (II 19)

With the external contacts there is a high density of personal pronouns of "I" and "you". The relational function does not represent a personalized response as commonly understood. Instead, they imply a role defined institutional responsibility where the onus of decision making lies with them. H II 23, I II 3, II 7, J II 1, II 6, K II 7, II 19. Such responsibility is confirmed when the interactants shift from "I" to "we" in the same genre as in J II 22, K II 4, II 10 – 11. In the case of the genre on 'collaboration' the use of 'we' by the company visitor clearly evokes institutional identity in speaking on behalf of his organization (See 2.9.3.4). His aim is to disperse responsibility for the company proposal suggesting that he is only the conveyor of the proposal as in "Because we were just talking but now it is official", H II 14.

The lexical choice in the linguistic interchange orient to context dependent rules and do not depict any play of power. The emerging evidence shows that the participants are both respectful and diplomatic. They suggest equality in the encounters as representatives of other organizations.

5.4.9.5 Interaction Management

In the relationship between the executive secretary and the external contacts, the genres reflect equal status constrained by the institutional identities. Consequently, interactants contribute equally to the speech acts which integrate to arrive at the shared goal of the genre.

5.4.9.5.1 Turn Taking

The genres on 'collaboration' and 'management' depict turn taking sequences which are role related and defined by the task at hand. The flow of speech acts are linked to that purpose. Intersubjectivity and accountability influence the sequential organization of turns as evident in the following sample of turns.

Turn Taking

(Table 15)

	Genre	Speech Act	Turns	Textual Evidence
H	Collaboration	2 Explanation	IS: It is supposed to be a trip on environment you have to make formal. That's all. The person in charge is Mr Haq.	Il 3-5
		6 Seeking Confirmation	ES: You are extending the invitation	Il 21
I	Management	5 Opinion	ES: I like this one, this one and the other one I like i::s this one =	Il 7
		6 Opinion	BO: But ideally there should be one (.) that shows a group of children	Il 9
J	Management	1 Tact	ES: It is all in seminar package	Il 3
		4 Tactful denial	MO: =° Change accordingly huh (.) No (.) not really lah because what is the normal what we are practising here....	Il 20 – 24
K	Management	3 Request	ES: No, I know. I want everything (.) when it comes to be 'set'	Il 7
		5 Cooperation	MO: Oh, so you want table setting	Il 12

The turns also reveal a pattern which adhere to the culture and values emanating from the role and their position in their organization. The intention is to evoke a shared understanding rather than wield power in the interaction. The irregularities in turn size and content are not related to who is in control of the genre. Instead, they reflect an interactional environment aimed at preserving the shared communicative purpose and role relations. The linguistic configuration of the turns are aimed at accomplishing each one's purpose while not compromising on the shared goal. The turns generally depict explanation, opinion, tact and cooperation to preserve the polite and respectful management of the genres.

The context-bound speech event affects the speaker-listener coordination. In the genre on 'collaboration', the turn size and content of the executive secretary suggest listenership and topical continuity through brief turn endings as in

ES:	Hm	II 2
ES:	Mr?	II 6
ES:	Oh	II 8
ES:	So the er	II 10
ES:	So this thing (.)	II 15

The insertion sequence of interrogations as in

H	ES:	= But these people (.) will be	II 12 – 13
		going (.) on your - on your invitation?	
	ES:	Is Company A taking up (.) the proposal?	II 17

The turns highlight the constraining features of institutional talk in the business environment. The social structure (See 2.6.3) determines what is said and how it is said. In all the turns, the interactants display conversational synchrony with a clear focus on the content or subject matter. But the role and role relationship is independent of the content and function of what is said. Instead, they illustrate the situational conduct as between individuals representing organizations as in I II 4 – 5, II 6, J II 179 – 21, K II 15 – 16.

The speech acts shaped by the turns manifest the inherent formality and caution which reside in the textual configuration.

Speech Act

(Table 16)

Genre	Speech Act	Turns
Collaboration	H 2 Explanation 3 Enquiry 10 Clarification 13 Acceptance	II 3 – 4 II 12 – 13 II 27 II 33
Management	I 6 Opinion 7 Agreement 8 Explanation 9 Cooperation J 2 Tact 3 Tact 4 Tact 6 Explanation K 2 Request 3 Cooperation 5 Tact 6 Cooperation	II 9 – 10 II 11 II 13 – 18 II 19 – 21 II 5 II 6 II 7 II 23 – 24 II 4 – 5 II 6 II 10 – 11 II 12

The speech acts shed light on the sequential organization which shapes the conduct of the interactants. It is for the interactants in their turns to initiate talk or respond to it to orient to the culture in the business environment as well as maintain accountability. The kind of speech acts predominant in these genres such as tact, explanation, cooperation, and opinion indicate that the negotiation of turns are linked to the purpose of the interaction and the expectations of the interactants.

5.4.9.5.2 Back Channel Cues

The back channel cues in these genres establish a semantic relationship between utterances. They signal vocal responses between the executive secretary and the external contacts which are marked by mutual understanding or the need to make a point. There is an assumed equality in the relationship because the individuals in the encounters represent organizational interests. The textual content therefore seems more significant than the role definitions.

H	Collaboration	ES:	Hm	II 2
		ES:	Oh	II 8
		IS:	Huh	II 14
		IS:	Hm	II 16
		IS:	Aah	II 18
		IS:	Huh	II 20
		ES:	OK	II 25
		ES:	Ok aah, uh huh	II 28
		ES :	Ah	II 31
		ES:	Huh huh	II 33

In II 2 and 8, the back channel cues point to a speaker-listener coordination where the executive secretary signals continuation by the speaker to know the details of the proposal. Her preliminary understanding is indicated by 'Oh!' II 8. However, in her attempt to obtain more details there is an implied dominance by the way in which she ignores the back channel cues of IS. IS hesitations reflected in 'Hm' II 16, 'Huh' II 20 seems to be an attempt to clarify a point. But that is interrupted by the executive secretary asserting her role to know more before he can finish giving further details. She recognizes the invitation II 21 and that recognition is perceived in her understanding and acknowledgement as in 'OK, aah, uh, huh', II 28, 'Ah =' II 31 and 'huh, huh' II 33 of the rest of the information.

In the genre on 'management' there are no back channel cues in I. The absence of back channel cues is pertinent in revealing the conversational synchrony visible in an equal encounter. The executive secretary and the members of the advertising agency illustrate the phenomena of intersubjectivity and accountability by conforming to a rhythm and flow between speaker moves and listener response to achieve the goal of the communicative event.

However, in J and K there is a high density of back channel cues suggesting that responses are task-related. In these genres the transaction of business centres on buying and selling a service. The service is by the hospitality industry. Therefore, there is a need to provide what is asked for while establishing credibility and managing profitability.

J	Management	MO: Hm	II 2
		MO: Hm Hm	II 4
		MO: Ya, ...	II 6
		MO: Hm Hm	II 9
		MO: Hm Hm	II 11
		ES: Hm	II 25
		ES: OH ...	II 29
K	Management	ES: Hm	II 2
		ES: Huh ...	II 4
		RM: ° Oh:	II 9
		ES: Huh ...	II 10
		RM: Oh ...	II 12
		ES: Huh	II 17
		RM ... OK. Sure	II 18

The back channel cues 'Hm' II 2, 4, 9, 11 suggest continued listenership not wanting to take a turn except when prompted by the speaker turn cue in the tag question in II 5. The response 'Ya ...' in II 6 signals co-ordinating the turn. 'Hm' in II 25 and 'Oh ...' with the vocal stretch in II 17 indicates understanding the practicality of the seminar package.

In k, the back channel cues all reflect cooperation and understanding to meet the requests of the client represented by the executive secretary. Being a small size company the executive secretary is empowered to make on-the-spot decisions

evident in “.... I want everything (.) when it comes to be ‘set’ ll 7. The back channel cue “°Oh” ll 9 in a silent tone implies a change in the understanding of what the executive secretary seemed to have said earlier. The restaurant manager accepts the new information with a willingness to cooperate as in “Oh, so you want table setting” ll 12. Being a service industry that survives on profit, there exists the subtleties of wanting to offer the best for the client. The statement question “7.00 o'clock” ll 17, is reiterated by the restaurant manager to display his interest in satisfying the customer. The back channel cue “Huh” ll 17 by the executive secretary bears the connotation “That’s right”. For the third time, “7.00 o'clock ...” is emphasized ll 18 suggesting a firm commitment and the restaurant manager’s confirmation to the information as in “... OK, sure ...” ll 7.

5.4.9.5.3 Markers

Text configuration rely on markers to maintain overall coherence even where turns appear fragmented or seem incoherent. The genre topic also contributes to text coherence and provides social meaning without which the purpose of the communicative event may not be achieved.

H	IS	“ That’s all – “	ll 4
	IS:	“But it is postponed =”	ll 11
	ES:	“= But these people (.) ... “	ll 12
	ES:	“So this thing (.)”	ll 15
	ES:	“That’s why =”	ll 19
	IS:	“That’s right”	ll 22
	ES:	“Yes : Jay ...”	ll 23

	IS:	"So, this one"	II 27
	IS:	"So what we need"	II 29
	IS:	"So it is already"	II 30
	IS:	".... that's all ="	II 32
I	ES:	"If you ask me"	II 1
	ES:	".... Don't you think so?"	II 4
	BO:	"But ideally"	II 9
	ES:	"Because, considering"	II 13
	BO:	"It's either that or"	II 19
		"Basically it is just"	II 20
J	ES:	"So seminar package is inclusive of -?"	II 5
	HO:	"..... I quote to you lah, right"	II 6
	HO:	"= Dinner also: but because"	II 15
	ES:	"....But this seminar package will change ..."	II 17
	MO:	"..... let's say"	II 23
	MO:	"So aah () so if let's say"	II 26
K	RM:	"So tonight lah"	II 3
	ES:	"..... so we, we want it to be set"	II 4 – 5
	ES:	"..... so we – we will be spending"	II 11
	RM:	"..... so you want"	II 12
	ES:	"So (.) we come at"	II 15

There are relatively more markers in the linguistic exchange between the executive secretary and the external contacts than with bosses and company staff.

	IS:	"So, this one"	II 27
	IS:	"So what we need"	II 29
	IS:	"So it is already"	II 30
	IS:	".... that's all ="	II 32
I	ES:	"If you ask me"	II 1
	ES:	".... Don't you think so?"	II 4
	BO:	"But ideally"	II 9
	ES:	"Because, considering"	II 13
	BO:	"It's either that or"	II 19
		"Basically it is just"	II 20
J	ES:	"So seminar package is inclusive of -?"	II 5
	HO:	"..... I quote to you lah, right"	II 6
	HO:	"= Dinner also: but because"	II 15
	ES:	"....But this seminar package will change ..."	II 17
	MO:	"..... let's say"	II 23
	MO:	"So aah () so if let's say"	II 26
K	RM:	"So tonight lah"	II 3
	ES:	".... so we, we want it to be set"	II 4 – 5
	ES:	"..... so we – we will be spending"	II 11
	RM:	"..... so you want"	II 12
	ES:	"So (.) we come at"	II 15

There are relatively more markers in the linguistic exchange between the executive secretary and the external contacts than with bosses and company staff.

The higher density suggest the significance of the social roles and obligations between the interactants. In the encounters the markers signal entry's or exits at the beginning or end of a turn. The intersential markers are comparatively few as evident in K II 4, I II 20, J II 17, 23, K II 4, 11.

The frequency of 'So' in H, J and K draw on the need for topical continuity although the factors for continuity differ. In the case of H, "So' in II 10, 15, implies the need for the secretary to obtain the relevant information while the company officer deviates from that purpose. He seems to want to make a case as to why the executive secretary may not have had prior knowledge. This is evident in 'But ...' II 11 and "... Because we ..." II 14 where he indicates a topic shift from seeking approval for the proposal to the details of its formulation. However, the executive secretary implies disinterest in those details as she claims the floor with "But these people ..." n II 12, "So this thing (.)" II 15, "That's why =" II 19, emphasizes her need to know more before collaborating with the proposal.

Once the invitation is affirmed by the marker "That's right" II 22, the executive secretary shifts her attention with an apologetic entry "Yes. Jay" II 23 recognizing that Jay had been waiting for a while. Jay's willingness to continue to wait suggests she finishes her prior business with the company officer. The prevalence of "So" in II 27, 29, 30 is significant as a marker. They are not linguistic devices to satisfy the constraints of beginning a turn but rather to maintain the topical focus. The company officer in his turn uses "so" to persist in obtaining the

executive secretary's interest so that she gives the official approval. His closing turn ".... that's all" in Il 32 implies he is only abiding by the simple act of a formality.

In J "So" is sparingly used to obtain clarity while maintaining topical continuity. The need for clarity is also implied in the intersential use of "but" which is to suggest that the seminar package is not as it is assumed to be and explanations are sought in a cordial manner. This is evident in the formulaic phase ".... let's say" Il 23, 26 by the marketing officer.

In K the higher frequency of "So" is the result of prior discussions as in Il 3, 4 and 11. But Il 12 "So" implies accepting the new understanding that the dinner is by "table setting". In the encounter H, J, K, the role definitions are illustrated in the language use where the encounters reflect negotiations and explanations to arrive at a common understanding.

The same is true of speech I. However, the choice of markers highlight the social distance evident in all the formulaic expressions used as in Il 1, 4, 9, 13, 19, 20.

The executive secretary and the representatives from the advertising agency hold a discussion reflecting a clear case of intersubjectivity and accountability. The situated talk is directed by prior knowledge giving the interactants equal opportunity to state their opinions on the product. Since they each know their subject, there is less reference to markers like "so" or "but" as linking devices.

5.4.9.5.4 Violations

A striking feature is the absence of interruptions between turns. The only interruption that does occur is the entry of the visitor in H which affects the attention on the talk interaction that is already underway. This is more a response to who is who in terms of positions held in these companies. She demonstrates more concern for the consultant Mr Jay than the company officer by virtue of their designations. The executive secretary's statement "Yes, Jay, I must take care of you", Il 23, is more an apology for making him wait and chooses to interrupt the talk exchange with the company officer. This switch reveals the recognition given to those higher in the occupational hierarchy. The status and prestige that comes with the job duties and responsibilities exhibits the prevalence of a hierarchical culture in the world of work be it the private or public sectors.

The genres on 'collaboration' and 'management' sustain the normative organization of the transition of turns. The uninterrupted interactive exchange generally illustrate the social equilibrium that is maintained. The question of who controls the genre between the executive secretary and the external contacts does not arise. The focus is more on cordiality and respect in the interaction which explains the absence of violations of the sequential organizations of turns.

The next chapter deals with the summary and conclusion drawn from the analysis in this chapter.