CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background

The wide-ranging complexity of this changing world brings about the increasing demand for a greater variety of human 'survival needs'. That demand is more often than not beyond the human capacity to meet. However, there is a positive side of this undesirable situation, and it is this positive aspect that this study is interested in. It seems to me that the need to survive in our changing world complexity is one of the factors which naturally activates the behaviour potential that every human has. It is with this behaviour potential (i.e. one's potential to do things: what one can do) and its actual realisation in everyday life that one is able to face natural and material reality – to say the least. The question is how the behaviour potential is turned into a meaning potential (i.e. one's potential to mean things: what one can mean) so that what one really does has value or meaning, not simply in the natural-material sense of the term *value*. This is a crucial question, especially in the context of human societal development.

The human societal development carrying values or meanings is made possible through social processes, in which human discourses manifest themselves in various forms and modes of human interaction and activity. In this, it is through

human discourse that human society develops in the way it does. The social processes in which human discourse takes place may or may not be interactive in nature. A question arises, "In what sense are social processes interactive and how are they measured"? An inquiry into the nature of such phenomenon is one of the motivating factors of this study.

Discourse comes into being through social processes in social settings, in which human participants as social beings can do and mean things. This leads to the next question, that is, the question of how the behaviour potential of what one can do which is turned into the meaning potential of what one can mean is then turned into the verbal potential (i.e. one's potential to say things: what one can say). Fully formulated in global terms, the question then is how the human behaviour (doing) potential is turned into the meaning potential, then turned into the verbal (saying) potential — in the overall sociosemiotic space of human societal activity. But these potentials are potentials that need to be actualised. The whole question then is how — all along the line - what one can do (behaviour potential) turns itself into what one actually does, interrelated with what one can mean (meaning potential) which turns itself into what one actually means, interrelated with what one can say (verbal potential) which turns itself into what one actually says. One of the motifs underlying the present study relates to this issue.

The social processes in the social settings carrying values or meanings through which discourse which enables human society to develop may or may not be

institutional or institutionalised. Institutional social processes are social processes within institutions, be they government or non-government institutions. They carry institutional values or meanings with them whereby human society develops institutionally. Institutional values of an institution are values shared by community members of the given institution. They may or may not necessarily be institutionalised. Institutionalised institutional values are values shared by community members of the given institution and they are particularly linguistically realised in institutionally recognised written texts which are generally referred as the Constitution, the Act, the Law, the By-Law, the Rules, the Regulation and the like. Uninstitutionalised institutional values are values shared by community members of the given institution as they are imagined, with no reference to any institutionally recognised written texts.

Discourse which enables human society to develop through school education activities in the classroom is institutional, for the classroom is part of the designed school education system as an institution. To set this in a relevant context of the present study, it is assumed that the institutional values of the University of Malaya are shared by all members of the university society. It is those values which expand as well as constrain the sociosemiotic behaviours of the university community members, whereby the university society as a whole develops. But how can one understand the influence of the values on the individual members, and how is the influence reflected sociosemiotically in forms and modes of sociosemiotic interaction and activity in the institution in which the members are involved? This is something to investigate.

3

Classroom discourse in its formal sense is one kind of education(al) and institution(al) discourse whereby the institutional human society of education(al) institutions develops in a context of school education process which takes place in the classroom setting. This being the case, classroom discourse is one of the determining discourses in the education(al) and institution(al) development process which realises the national development process of a state such as Malaysia. The question of classroom discourse then is part of the question of education(al) and institution(al) discourse which forms part of the question of nation(al) and state discourse.[1] In other words, classroom discourse intrinsically realises education(al) and institution(al) discourse which in turn realises nation(al)/state discourse in the overall semiotic space of discourse. This trans-discoursal perspective in some sense relates to the question of stratification, which needs to be taken into account in a relevant context of investigation.

As it has been indicated above, classroom discourse as a particular kind of discourse may be seen as a general concept to refer to any discourse which takes place in the classroom setting in general. The increasing advancement and complexity of human culture bring with them novel forms and modes of discourse. Classroom discourse which was viewed and treated in the past as a specific concept is now regarded as a general concept. Consequently, any inquiry into the nature of classroom discourse will have to specify the kind of classroom

---

[1] For the concepts of nation and state, see Anderson (1991).

discourse being investigated. This is the view that is taken as the background of this study.

An investigation into lecture discourse is an investigation of classroom discourse, which developed by members of university society. The success or failure of university development needs to be measured against the background of the success or failure of human resource development of the given university institution. One critical process of human resource development of a university institution relates to the teaching-learning process that actually takes place in the classroom or, to be exact, in the lecture room. Lecture activities in the lecture room, which form and represent the intrinsic notion of lecture discourse, are the forefront of the teaching-learning process representing a critical part of the process of student resource development in the university life. The question of how lecture activities in the lecture room has motivated the researcher to carry out this research.

1.2   Identification of the Problem

This study is concerned with lecture discourse. If one looks at discourse phenomena as multilevel phenomena and applies the bottom-up perspective, it is obvious that lecture discourse is one kind of classroom discourse, classroom discourse being one kind of education(al) and institution(al) discourse, the latter being one kind of nation(al)/state discourse. This being the case, any comprehensive investigation into the phenomenon of lecture discourse will need to be contextualised into this trans-discoursal perspective. The perspective taken

5

for contextualising the multilevel discourse phenomenon is trans-discoursal, not inter-discoursal, since the discourses involved may not always maintain all their own values but they influence and complement each other.

In the trans-discoursal perspective, the need to investigate and understand lecture discourse phenomena needs to be seen as part of the need to investigate and understand classroom discourse phenomenon, education(al)/institution(al) discourse phenomena and the wider nation(al)/state discourse phenomena within the overall semiotic space of discourse. Thus, in practical terms any comprehensive identification, description and explanation of lecture discourse phenomena will need to be contextualised into this perspective.

Following the above statements, any inquiry into lecture discourse phenomenon needs to be seen as part of an inquiry into classroom discourse phenomenon embedded within education(al)/institution(al) discourse phenomena and the wider nation(al)/state discourse phenomena in the overall semiotic space of discourse phenomena. In this, the general statement that can be made at this stage is that all meaning of discourse is made by contextualisation. The extent to which contextualisation has to be made will particularly depend on the goal-oriented need of the designed investigation.

Lecture discourse in the lecture room setting represents a kind of institutional culture. As a kind of institutional discourse, lecture discourse has features characteristic of its own, and this discourse may be different from culture to culture in certain respects. In other words, there may be features of lecture

discourse characteristic of its own institutional culture. In this, globally, lecture discourse of a particular tertiary education institution may be culturally different from that of another tertiary education institution. Hence, to understand all phenomena of lecture discourse across cultures one may have to adopt the trans-cultural perspective, which is complementary in nature. (There are aspects and dimensions within the conceptual framework of the present study that may be related in one way or another to the aspects and dimensions reflected in the figures below though the interpretation and valuing of the data in the present study are not oriented to the aspects and dimensions that are confined or framed in this way. In other words, this trans-cultural perspective is not applied in this study in that it is beyond its scope of investigation. The framework applied here is oriented to achieving the formulated objectives irrespective of whether or not the phenomenon understudy would be categorised as phenomenon that derived from and belong to the phenomena referred to Figures 1 and 2

The question of institutional culture is a question of institutional values or meanings that are perceived, shared and practised by members of a given institution typical of that institution. That there are institutional cultural meanings characteristic of each particular institution as such needs to be investigated in an academically responsible manner. Those meanings in question do not exist; they happen, and they happen because members of the institutional culture make them happen, that is, they create them. A related question arises, "how are those meanings created and in what way can they be identified, described and explained"? This is a question to respond to in the first place.

That there are institutional cultural meanings as such raises a more specific question relevant to the present study, "what are then the meanings typical of lecture discourse at the University of Malaya as an institution, how are they created and in what way can they be identified, described and explained"? The question of what the meanings are, how they are created and in what way they can be identified, described and explained is a threefold question that seeks answers to three different and yet interrelated matters. (The scope of this study is delimited to answer this in part).

To understand the lecture discourse reality in the institution as regards what the institutional cultural meanings are, how they are created and in what way they can be identified, described and explained, a framework of analysis needs to be constructed as such that it allows us to move flexibly from any possible direction: vertically from the top (highest and most abstract) down to the bottom (lowest and concrete or least abstract) to see the height of phenomena or the other way round, horizontally from the left to the right to see the width or vice versa, or diagonally from the outer to the inner to see the depth or vice versa. This is the motivating global context behind the statements that follow.

In view of this study, lecture discourse in general is an abstract phenomenon that belongs to and derives from the social domain, the realisation of which is found in lecture text that belongs to and derives from the linguistic domain. To set this in a relevant context of the present study, the social domain in which the lecture discourse under investigation lives is the institutional social domain of the

University of Malaya. Following this, for one thing we know that there lives this abstract phenomenon because members of the institutional society create them.

In this context, this study takes the view that the relationship between lecture discourse phenomena and lecture text phenomena is one of realisation: lecture text is the realiser and lecture discourse is the realised. It should be noted though that lecture text itself is also still an abstract concept. What one actually sees or hears in a lecture room activity producing a so-called lecture text is not the lecture text itself but the actual realisation of the lecture text. The critical issue here relates to the nature of the relationship between the two phenomena. To sum up the points addressed, see Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2 below.

Figure1.1: Multilevel Institutional and Non-institutional Cultural Dimensions as Potentials for Human Discourse To Make Meanings
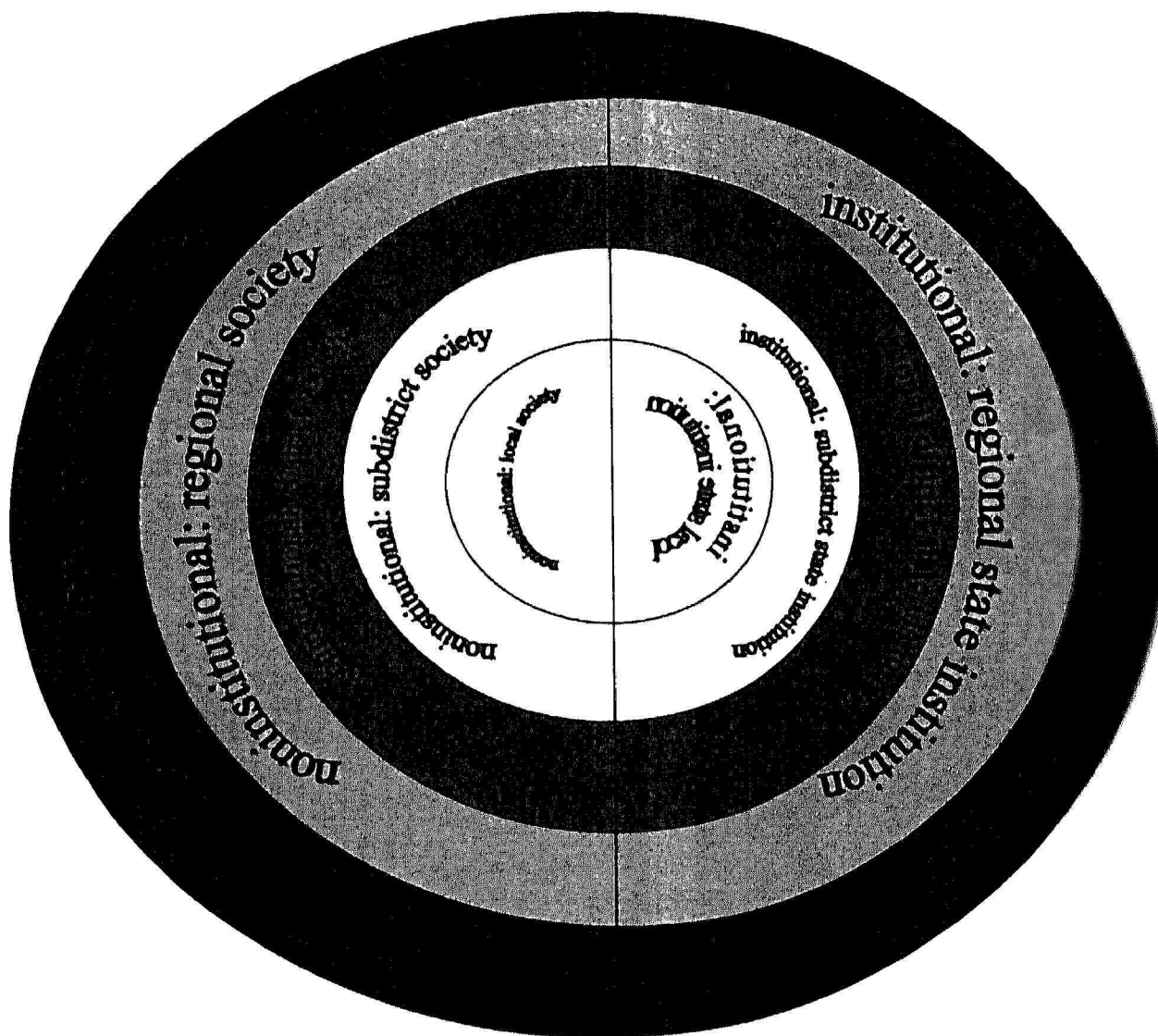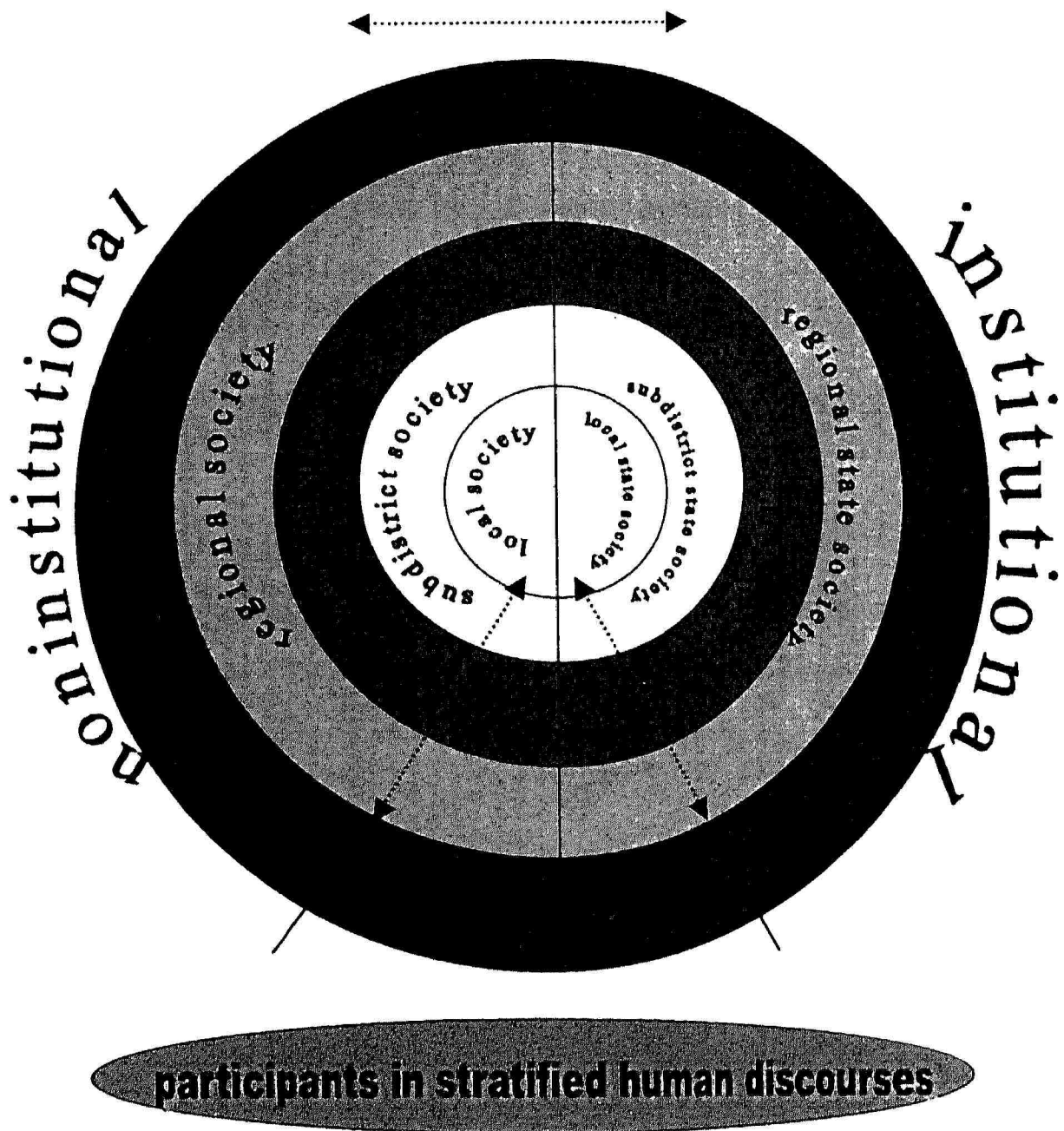
Figure: 1.2: Multilevel Institutional and Non-institutional Human societies as Participants in stratified Human Discourse

To proceed, the defined realisation relationship between lecture discourse and lecture text in this study is indicated by the wording *lecture discourse-in-text*. It is evident that, as far as this study is concerned, the lecture discourse-in-text under investigation is institutional and educational. It is institutional in the sense that it resides in an institution, and it is educational in the sense that this institutional discourse-in-text resides in an education(al) institution. Stated in simple terms, this study is concerned with institutional and educational lecture discourse-in-text. This being the case, the relevant areas of investigation relate to the assumption that the meaning-making activities of this lecture discourse-in-text are motivated by the underlying institutional and educational values or meanings of the given institution. The relevant question here is how the meanings are realised lecture texts.

Lecture discourse-in-text is generally understood to mean one kind of classroom discourse-in-text at the tertiary level of education. It should be noted that there are human meaning-making activities as activities of lecture discourse-in-text but they spatially do not take place in a classroom – in the general sense of the term 'classroom' – nor do they have any relation with a tertiary education institution. If this is accepted, such activities do not represent a kind of the defined classroom discourse-in-text.

This study defines lecture text (general) in its broadest sense to refer to all instances of functional denotative semiotic realising lecture discourse. In this view, instances of functional denotative semiotic realising lecture discourse are

instances of denotative semiotic interaction in lecture discourse in which people actually engage. Instances of functional denotative semiotic in question may be linguistic and or non-linguistic. Thus, at the denotative semiotic level of investigation, there are two possible broad areas of inquiry, one being linguistic the other non-linguistic.

Following the above statement, the lecture texts that realise the lecture discourse in this study represent instances of functional denotative semiotic which are constitutively *linguistic*. In view of this study, the created lecture texts representing instances of functional linguistic semiotic (language) of the lecture discourse are motivated by their contexts. The question here is how the instances of functional language (i.e. the linguistic texts) reflect the motivating contexts in which they are embedded.

Consequently, then, the lecture texts under study are to be viewed, treated and investigated in terms of their meaning as contextually motivated texts. Globally, in this respect all aspects of the lecture *texts-in-contexts* are in principle relevant and critical for investigation. Which aspects of texts-in-contexts are actually taken for investigation depends on the goal-oriented need that this study is designed for, and this will be clear as this dissertation text develops.

Being contextually motivated, the lecture text creation under study is meaning creation in *language-in-context*. The critical point here centres around the notion of language-in-context. For clarity, first, there is language; second, there is the context in which the language is put. This study takes the view that language and

13

context are interrelated, since no language users use language *per se* but they use it to talk to each other as social beings in social interaction, and this is where context comes in. The inter-relatedness of language and context needs to be conceptualised as such that it will enable us to really understand the phenomena. In this respect, an attempt will be made to conceptualise an overall semiotic space of language-in-context where relevant semiotic dimensions of organisation are presented.

In the overall semiotic space of language-in-context, the first global semiotic dimension of organisation relevant for investigation relates to the concept of semiotic stratification, which is concerned with orders of symbolic abstraction related by realisation. In this, language-in-context is interpreted as a system of systems ordered in symbolic abstraction. That is, while each system has its own internal organisation it is related to other systems in an inter-stratal realisational chain: one system realises a higher system (unless it is the highest) and it is realised by a lower one (unless it is the lowest). The relevance of semiotic stratification relates to meanings in the first place, to which this study is oriented. Meanings find their expression in text embedded in context, and text in this study is functional language. Since one of the features of meanings is that they are characterised by *height*, to understand meanings means to stratify them, from the highest to the lowest. Since the stratified meanings live in language-in-context, consequently language-in-context is stratified. In this, semiotic stratification provides *height* to the semiotic space of language-in-context and it is critical that one understands it.

14

What is critical as regards the semiotic stratification dimension relates to the conceptualisation of semiotic stratification itself. At the level of context (i.e. systems of higher-level meaning), in view of this study there are stratally four broad contextual (connotative) semiotic systems: religious, ideological, cultural and situational. Any aspects of higher-level meaning and systems of higher-level meaning within the contextual stratification dimension under discussion are in principle relevant and potentially critical for investigation.

At the level of language (i.e. systems of lower-level meaning), this study follows the SFLT (Systemic - Functional Linguistic Theory) framework that defines language (i.e. adult language) as a tristratal semiotic system: semantic, lexicogrammatical and phonological/graphological. Any aspects of lower-level meaning and systems of lower-level meaning within the linguistic stratification dimension under discussion are in principle relevant and potentially critical for investigation.

The second global semiotic dimension of organisation relates to the concept of metafunctional diversification, which is concerned with different modes of meaning. The relevance of metafunctional diversification to this study again relates meanings, one feature of which being that they have *breadth*. This implies that meanings are diverse, from the broadest to the narrowest. In this, to understand meanings is to diversify them. Since the diversified meanings live in language-in-context, consequently language-in-context is diversified. In this,

metafunctional diversification provides *breadth* to the semiotic space of language-in-context and it is critical that one understands it.

Extrinsically and functionally, at the level of context, the different modes of meaning can be diversified into four broad contextual modes of meaning: religious, ideological, cultural and situational. Following the SFLT framework, the situational mode of meaning can be diversified into two major dimensions: the dialectal and the diatypic, aspects of the latter being identifiable through the situational (discoursal) variables of field, tenor and mode. Moving downwards, these variables lead to the phasal mode of meaning. Any aspects of diversified contextual modes of meaning and systems of diversified contextual modes of meaning within the contextual diversification dimension under discussion are in principle relevant and potentially critical for investigation.

Intrinsically and functionally, at the level of language, the different modes of meaning can be diversified into three major linguistic modes of meaning: ideational, interpersonal and textual. Following the SFLT framework, the ideational mode of meaning can be diversified into two dimensions: the experiential and the logical. Any aspects of diversified linguistic modes of meaning and systems of diversified linguistic modes of meaning within the linguistic diversification dimension under discussion are in principle relevant and potentially critical for investigation.

The third global semiotic dimension of organisation relates to the concept of semiotic potentiality, which is concerned with a semiotic space-time. In

16

reference to what has been described so far, the language-in-context complex is a temporal resource: a specification of information that can be processed in different ways. It is concerned with the contextual and linguistic potential – what can be meant – and it is neutral with respect to generation, understanding or any other process using the resources (Matthiessen 1993:229). Note that there are two major types of instantiation: generation (language-in-context, text, viewed as a process) and understanding (analysis: language-in-context, text, viewed as a product). This third dimension is a potentiality dimension, that is, a temporal semiotic dimension from the potential to the instantial through instantiation – from system to text through instantiation. The question here relates to the semiotic movement in the semiotic space-time involving three phases of potentiality as they are all part of the language-in-context: the potential – what can be meant (system), the instantiation (processes of instantiating the probabilities in the potential), and the instance – what is actually meant (text). All aspects of each phase in this semiotic potentiality dimension are in principal relevant and potentially critical for investigation.

Globally focussing on the contextual semiotic dimension, all aspects of the contexts that activate, motivate, expand and constrain the linguistic behaviours of the lecture discourse-in-texts under study are in principle relevant and critical for investigation. In this, the contextual meanings of the lecture texts under study need to be understood critically as meanings that are located in the stratified and diversified contextual (connotative) semiotic systems: religious, ideological, cultural and situational.

Globally focussing on the linguistic semiotic dimension, all aspects of the lecture discourse-in-texts under study are in principle relevant and critical for investigation. In this, the lecture texts are semantic in nature, which realise meanings in the semantic system of the language. Following the SFLT framework, the linguistic meanings of the lecture texts under study need to be understood as meanings that are internally located in the semantic system of the language. hey are intrinsically and functionally diversified into three major kinds of linguistic modes of meaning: ideational (experiential and logical), interpersonal and textual. Globally, all aspects of the three linguistic modes of meaning are in principle relevant and potentially critical for investigation.

Conceptually, the three kinds of meaning in the semantic system of the language are realised into wordings in the lexicogrammatical system of the language. Following the SFLT framework, the wordings in the lexicogrammatical system of the language under study are represented in three major kinds of representation: the ideational lexicogrammatical representation (the experiential and logical lexicogrammatical representations), the interpersonal lexicogrammatical representation and the textual lexicogrammatical representation. Globally, all aspects of the three kinds of meaning in the three lexicogrammatical representations are in principle relevant and critical for investigation. Some of the relevant aspects of each kind of meaning and representation are briefly presented below.

The experiential lexicogrammatical representation is construed in the transitivity system of the language. In this, the relevant aspects of investigation are shown in the following:

The experiential lexicogrammatical representation:

A. The transitivity system representation:

    1. The nuclear transitivity types:

        a. The process types;

        b. The agency types; and

        c. The inherent participant types;

    2. The circumstantial transitivity types:

        a. The projecting circumstances; and

        b. The expanding circumstances;

B. The congruent and incongruent realisation.

The logical lexicogrammatical representation is construed in the clause complexity system of the language. In this, the relevant aspects of investigation are shown in the following:

The logical lexicogrammatical representation:

The clause complexity system representation: the logico-semantic & interdependency relations:

        a. The degree of interdependency; and

        b. The types of interdependency.

The interpersonal lexicogrammatical representation is construed in the mood system of the language. In this, the relevant aspects of investigation are shown in the following:

The interpersonal lexicogrammatical representation:

A. The mood system representation: The mood types:

    a. The indicative:

        i. The declarative; and

        ii. The interrogative;

    b. The imperative;

    c. The indicative mood person; and

    d. The imperative mood person;

B. The attitude representation;

C. The modality representation:

    1. The modality types; and

    2. The modality values;

D. The speech functions:

    1. Giving or demanding: Goods-&-services or information; and

    2. Initiating or responding.

The textual lexicogrammatical representation is construed in the thematic system of the language. In this, the relevant aspects of investigation are shown in the following:

The textual lexicogrammatical representation:

A. The thematic system representation:

1. The theme selection (thematisation):

    a. The textual theme;

    b. The interpersonal theme;

    c. The ideational (topical) theme; and

    d. The theme substitution;

2. The stratified theme representation:

    a. The mega-Theme;

    b. The ultra-Theme;

    c. The super-Theme;

    d. The macro-Theme;

    e. The hyper-Theme; and

    f. The simple-Theme.

The researcher has tried to show globally the various aspects and dimensions of the overall semiotic space of language-in-context in an attempt to set the lecture discourse-in-texts under study in a context of theoretical underpinning. A comprehensive account of discourse phenomena in contextually motivated linguistic texts in general is one that takes into account all the contextual and linguistic aspects and dimensions of the overall language-in-context complex such as those globally described above.

1.3   Delimitation of the Problem

A truly comprehensive account of contextual and linguistic semiotic phenomena is not only very time-consuming but also energy-consuming, particularly if the corpus is large. But there is more to this. I see research activities such as the one being undertaken as a kind of meaning-making activity in text which is goal-oriented. In this research activity as a *goal-oriented* meaning-making activity I need to be able to make principled selections that enable me to achieve the goal in question in the first place, and it will also enable any interested researcher to use such a selection as a way into a comprehensive account in the future. Now one of the most pressing tasks in the goal-oriented activity of investigating the lecture discourse-in-texts phenomena is identifying, describing and interpreting the data and finally drawing conclusions on the basis of the principled selections that are made to arrive at the expected goal.

Having globally identified the various aspects and dimensions of the lecture discourse-in-texts phenomena and being goal-oriented in nature and employing a 'slicing' technique to make the principled selections, this study determines the limits of its coverage as they are presented below.

Situating the global scope of inquiry in reference to the contextual semiotic space of language-in-context, the stratal contextual aspects are sliced as such that the focus is on the *situational (discoursal)* aspects. In other words, at the level of context the main concern relates to the aspects of the immediate situational

(discoursal) context which is one level above language. The globally sliced contextual aspects in focus are shown in the following:

The globally sliced contextual aspects in focus:

   The *situational (discoursal)* aspects.

Situating the global scope of inquiry in reference to the linguistic semiotic space of language-in-context, the stratal linguistic aspects are sliced as such that the focus is on the *semantic and lexicogrammatical* aspects. In other words, at the level of language the main concern relates to the aspects of the semantics and lexicogrammar of the language. Note that while the semantic aspects are internally organised in the semantic domain and the lexicogrammatical aspects are internally organised in the lexicogrammatical domain, these aspects are interrelated within the tristratal linguistic system of the language. The globally sliced linguistic aspects in focus are shown in the following:

The globally sliced linguistic aspects in focus:

   The *semantic* and *lexicogrammatical* aspects.

Situating the local scope of inquiry in reference to the situational (discoursal) aspects, they are sliced as such that the focus is on the *diatypic* aspects. Specifying the *registerial* aspects that constitute the diatype, the focus is on the aspects of field, tenor and mode that constitute the register of the lecture discourse-in-texts under study. Following Young's framework of analysis (1990:70), these aspects lead downwards to the *phasal* aspects of the lecture

discourse-in-texts involving the phases and phase types. The locally sliced situational (discoursal) aspects in focus are shown in the following:

The locally sliced situational (discoursal) aspects in focus:

The *diatypic* aspects:

1. The macro-level aspects:

   a. The phase types; and

   b. The phase patterns.

2. The micro-level aspects:

   a. The sub-phase types; and

   b. The sub-phase patterns.

Situating the local scope of inquiry in reference to the semantic aspects, they are sliced as such that the focus is on the aspects of the *ideational* semantics with specific reference to the aspects of the *experiential* semantics. Briefly, the locally sliced semantic aspects in focus are shown in the following:

The locally sliced semantic aspects in focus:

The *ideational* semantic aspects: the semantic representation:

   i. The sensing;

   ii. The saying;

   iii. The doing & happening;

   iv. The being & having;

   v. The behaving; and

   vi. The existing.

Situating the local scope of inquiry in reference to the lexicogrammatical aspects, they are sliced as such that the focus is on the aspects of the *ideational* lexicogrammar with specific reference to the aspects of the *experiential* lexicogrammar. Briefly, the locally sliced lexicogrammatical aspects in focus are shown in the following:

The locally sliced lexicogrammatical aspects in focus:

    The *ideational* lexicogrammatical aspects:

        The *experiential* lexicogrammatical aspects:

            The transitivity system representation:

            i. The nuclear transitivity types:

                (1). The process types:

                    (a). The mental;

                    (b). The verbal;

                    (c). The material;

                    (d). The relational;

                    (e). The behavioural; and

                    (f). The existential;

                (2). The inherent participant functions:

                    (a). In the mental;

                    (b). In the verbal;

                    (c). In the material;

                    (d). In the relational;

                    (e). In the behavioural; and

            (f). In the existential;

        (3). The inherent participant types:

            (a). The human; and

            (b). The nonhuman;

    ii. The circumstantial transitivity types:

        (1). The projecting circumstances:

            (a). The angle; and

            (b). The matter;

        (2). The expanding circumstances:

            (a). The enhancing:

                1) The location;

                2) The extent;

                3) The manner; and

                4) The cause;

            (b). The extending:

                1) The accompaniment;

            (c). The elaborating:

                1) The role.

Having situated and specified the scope of inquiry clearly in terms of the aspects and dimensions of language-in-context to be investigated in this study of lecture discourse-in-texts, I have no other comments to make as far as the delimitation of the problem is concerned.

1.4   Formulation of the problem

Having identified the aspects and dimensions of the overall semiotic space of language-in-context and having specified the scope of inquiry for the study of the lecture discourse-in-texts, the whole problem is formulated in the form of research questions as follows:

A. What are the phasal realisations characteristic of the

    lecture discourse-in-texts with respect to:

    1. the macro-level aspects:

        a. the phase types; and

        b. the phase patterns?

    2. the micro-level aspects:

        a. the sub-phase types; and

        b. the sub-phase patterns?

B. What are the experiential semantic realisations

    characteristic of the lecture discourse-in-texts with

    respect to:

    1. the semantic representation?

C. What are the experiential lexicogrammatical realisations

    characteristic of the lecture discourse-in-texts with

    respect to:

    1. the transitivity system representation:

        a. the nuclear transitivity types:

i.   the process types; and

  ii. the inherent participant types?

 b. the circumstantial transitivity types:

  i.   the projecting circumstances; and

  ii. the expanding circumstances?

The descriptive analysis of the research corpus in Chapter 5 provides answers to the first three sets of questions above whereas Chapter 6 gives answers to the last set of questions.

1.5   Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study is to investigate Malaysian lecture discourse at the phasal and experiential levels in the overall semiotic space of language-in-context.

Following the questions formulated above, this study is designed to achieve the sixfold objective as follows:

A. To describe the phasal realisations characteristic of the lecture discourse-in-texts with respect to:

 1. the macro-level aspects:

  a. the phase types; and

  b. the phase patterns;

 2. the micro-level aspects:

  a. the sub-phase types; and

E. To provide valuable, relevant and academically responsible information on lecture discourse-in-text phenomena, processes and products to the lecturers of the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics of the University of Malaya in particular, whose daily academic activities are concerned with lectures that have goals to achieve.

F. To provide valuable information on lecture discourse-in-text phenomena to the students of the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics of the University of Malaya in particular, who are expected not only to be passive but also active participants in daily lecture activities in the institution.

1.6   Significance of the study

The significance of this study can be seen in a number of contexts. First, the object of this study is in general terms concerned with discourse phenomena and therefore whatever this study has achieved may contribute to the enrichment of discourse studies in general.

Second, this study is a study that investigates lecture discourse phenomena as — in one interpretation — one kind of classroom discourse phenomena. This being the case, whatever this study has achieved may contribute to the enrichment of classroom discourse studies in general.

Third, on account of the fact that the object of this study is concerned with lecture discourse phenomena, it is clear that whatever this study has achieved may contribute to the enrichment of lecture discourse studies in particular, more

particularly to the enrichment of lecture discourse studies in specific situation types such as that of the University of Malaya.

Fourth, the lecture discourse phenomena under study belong to and derive from the institutional sociocultural domain, that of the University of Malaya as a tertiary education institution. In this respect the findings of this study may be seen as valuable information or input for the university, for they reveal certain values or meanings and they are reflections of the university as an institution that bears its own institutional sociocultural values or meanings.

Fifth, the lecture discourse phenomena under study find their expression in lecture texts and the texts belong to and derive from the institutional linguistic domain, that of the University of Malaya as a tertiary education institution in which English as a second language is used. In this respect the findings of this study may contribute to the enrichment of textual (i.e. linguistic) studies of English as a second language used in tertiary education institutions such as that of the University of Malaya.

Sixth, adopting SFLT as its theoretical foundation on which the analysis and description are based, whatever this study has achieved may contribute to the enrichment of SFLT-based studies of classroom discourse in general of lecture discourse in particular, in a setting in which linguistic texts that realise the discourse are in English as a second language.

31

And seventh, the value of the present study also relates to the principled selections that this study has made as regards the relevant aspects and dimensions of investigation: the selections pave the way for any interested researcher in the same field to do further research that will ultimately provide a comprehensive account of the phenomena. In this, the selections include aspects and dimensions of language as well as context to which the language is put, which can be used as a way into a comprehensive account of lecture discourse phenomena in the overall semiotic space of language-in-context.