

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introductory Remarks

As it has been pointed out in the previous chapter, the present study is in most general terms concerned with 'something' that would be referred to by many as discourse phenomena. Related literature tells us that theoretical and practical works having to do with the phenomena have been around in academic circles for years. Discourse in the sense of human discourse, we are told, is an umbrella term that covers a large spectrum of phenomena, in which there reside various kinds of discourse that are commonly pointed to in expressions such as 'legal discourse' (Danet 1985), 'historical discourse' (Struever 1985), 'political discourse' (Seidel 1985), 'Islamic discourse' (Puteh 2000), 'academic discourse' (Stokoe 1998), 'parent-child discourse' (Ervin-Tripp & Strage 1985), 'classroom discourse' (Sinclair & Couthard 1975), and a lot more. However, one may still wonder what the term 'discourse' itself really means in the first place. This is one of the questions that may come to one's mind when we talk about discourse phenomena. The answer to that depends on one's theoretical standpoint, and theoretical foundations or constructs of discourse phenomena, like everything else in literature, emerge, evolve and change through time. In what follows, an attempt will be made to briefly review the literature on the subject, setting the issue in a

context of theory and practice that in some way or another have relevance to the present study.

2.2 On Discourse/Language and Related Works

If we accept the view that 'a specific way or mode of meaning and talking between two or more people about a certain area of social life that is of particular significance characteristic of a given society' represents a general meaning of discourse (cf. Foucault 1970, 1971, 1980, Kress & Hodge 1978, Muecke 1983, and Kress 1985), then the history of discourse existence is as remote as the history of human social life itself. But, taking this for granted, the remote history of the existence of human discourse does not seem to indicate that the concept of 'discourse' itself has been well-established or clearly defined and inter-subjectively agreed upon by experts. Consequently, questions such as how discourse is realised and structured and how it can be identified, described and explained are questions that are open to different answers, depending particularly on a standpoint or perspective that one is taking.

Returning to the statement on the meaning of discourse, conceptual views such as that stated above is still too general and can easily be misunderstood. It could be understood to refer to concepts such as 'register' or 'register type', 'text' or 'text type', 'coherence' or 'coherence type', 'situational context' or 'situation type', 'cultural context' or 'culture type', or any other concepts that are located somewhere in an intra-organisational dimension of denotative semiotic (i.e. language or nonlanguage), somewhere in an intra-organisational communication dimension of

social context (i.e. a dimension beyond or above denotative semiotic), or perhaps somewhere along the border line between the organisational dimension of denotative semiotic and that of social context.

Throughout much of the theoretical discussion on discourse, there seems to have been a general tendency among experts to avoid making explicit or distinctive statements on the notion of discourse, leaving it to the audience to have their own interpretations. Some possible reasons lie behind this: they may see no good reason to make a clear definition, they may be uninterested to indicate its clarity, they may simply be unaware of the need to illuminate its meaning, or they just do not want to put themselves into a trap of a troublesome or disruptive concept by attempting to declare its precise meaning. What lies behind the tendency no one knows exactly except the experts themselves.

Apart from those reasons, the lack of explicitness as it were might have some relation with the historical background and development of discourse studies. The history of discourse existence may be distant, but the history of systematic studies of discourse phenomena is not that remote, particularly if it is associated with the emergence and development of so-called 'discourse analysis', a term which was first employed by Harris in 1952 as the name for "a method for the analysis of connected speech (or writing)", i.e. for "continuing descriptive linguistics beyond the limits of a single sentence at a time", and for "correlating "culture" and language" (Harris 1952:1-2).

The development of discourse studies under the common label of discourse analysis "began to take shape in the early 1970s, after some scattered attempts to the late 1960s, in such disciplines as anthropology, linguistics, semiotics, poetics, psychology, sociology, and mass communication research" (van Dijk 1985:xi). In some respects its orientation is still interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary rather than transdisciplinary, implying that the various disciplines involved are still retained as the locus of intellectual activity, while bridges between them are built, or they are assembled into a collection. (For the notion of 'transdisciplinary' perspective, see for example Halliday 1993:2 and Martin 1986:11).

So with that historical background and development in mind, it is not too surprising to find that in discussions of the phenomena of 'specific ways or modes of meaning and talking between two or more people about certain areas of social life that are of particular significance characteristic of a given society', the term 'discourse' remains vague in its use and meaning. In particular, the term 'discourse' is often associated with the term 'text'; they often intermingle, used interchangeably by speakers or writers, without a clear cut boundary between the two. In general, however, the term 'discourse' tends to be used in discussions that are more sociology-based/oriented (see Corsaro 1981), while the term 'text' tends to be used in discussions that are more language-based/oriented (see van Dijk 1978). This observation is explainable in reference to the following statement:

"Where the materiality, form, and structure of language are at issue, the emphasis tends to be textual; where the content, function, and social significance of language are at issue, the study tends to be of discourse" (Kress 1985:27).

In addition, there have also been other proposals to establish a distinction between the terms 'discourse' and 'text', such as that of van Dijk (1978, 1981). But there is one proposal that may draw one's attention that I would like to refer to here, that of Kress, in which he advances a firm distinction between the two terms.

"Discourse is a category that belongs to and derives from the social domain, and text is a category that belongs to and derives from the linguistic domain. The relation between the two is one of realization: Discourse finds its expression in text. However, this is never a straightforward relation; any one text may be the expression or realization of a number of sometimes competing and contradictory discourses" (emphases added) (Kress 1985:27).

Clearly then, in Kress's view, discourse and text are two different things; they are not the same thing. That is, strictly, discourse is a social phenomenon, whereas text is a *linguistic* phenomenon. (In this study, text is defined in its broadest sense: it is a denotative semiotic phenomenon, which may be linguistic and or nonlinguistic). If this is the case, one of the critical issues relates to the nature of the realisation relationship between discourse as a social phenomenon on the one hand and text as a linguistic phenomenon on the other; how a discourse is realised, structured and characterised by or in a text, and how one can identify, describe and explain a text being the realisation of a single discourse, not two, three or more.

More globally, the critical issue relates to the nature of the mutual relation between language and its social environment or context. Now if one looks back to the earlier time in history, from the early 1920s through 1951, one will also discover important foundational works that investigate language and its inter-relatedness with the social environment or context in which language is used, notably those by the anthropologist, Bronislaw Malinowski (1923, 1935). This study sees his notion

of 'social environment or context' as a general term that refers to the 'contextual communication dimension beyond or above denotative semiotic (i.e. language)', within which denotative semiotic (i.e. language) is embedded. If one takes Kress's proposal above and relate it to this, one will say that 'discourse' resides somewhere beyond or above denotative semiotic (i.e. language) within the intra-organisational communication dimension of the social environment or context. If this is the case, the next critical question will relate to the specification of its location, "where exactly is it located in the contextual dimension"? This will particularly depend on one's theoretical standpoint implemented in one's theoretical model of social context.

In Malinowski's foundational work as regards context modelling, he coined the term 'context of situation' and argued that the situation in which words are uttered "can never be passed over as irrelevant to the linguistic expression", and that "the meaning of any single word is to a very high degree dependent on its context" (Malinowski 1923:307). He stated further:

"... utterance and situation are bound up inextricably with each other and the context of situation is indispensable for the understanding of the words ... a word without linguistic context is a mere figment and stands for nothing by itself, so in reality of a spoken living tongue, the utterance has no meaning except in the context of situation" (Malinowski 1923:307).

Another important foundational idea that Malinowski introduced was the term 'context of culture', motivated by his experience in transcribing the daily life and events of the Trobriand Islands in which he found that it was impossible to make sense of literal translations, indicating the need to understand the cultural context in which the language was being used:

"... the study of any language, spoken by a people who live under conditions different from our own and possess a different culture, must be carried out in conjunction with the study of their culture and their environment" (Malinowski 1923:306).

Malinowski's initial concepts of 'context of situation' and 'context of culture' were then abstracted and developed by the linguist, J.R. Firth (1935, 1950, 1951). Firth's works were subsequently developed by Halliday and his associates (Gregory, Fawcett, Hasan, Martin, Matthiessen and others), whose overall theory of language-in-context is generally known as systemic functional linguistics (SFL). For an account of SFLT, see for example Butler (1985a).

One of the most conspicuous and interesting developments in SFLT since Malinowski and Firth's time has undoubtedly been the widespread attention paid to the study of the inter-relatedness of language and context in theory and practice. Modelling language-in-context theoretically, describing, explaining and applying the model in question in various areas of human activity have been the 'trademark' of SFLT. At the same time, the flexibility in ways of meaning and saying that characterises SFLT (Halliday 1985:1-2) has given birth to different models of language-in-context within SFLT. In particular, a lot of time and energy have been devoted to modelling Malinowski's 'context of situation' and 'context of culture', the systems of higher-level meaning so to speak. (For discussions of context modelling, see for example Halliday 1991:1-26, Martin 1992:493-590, 1993a:141-172, 1993b:116-136, Matthiessen 1993:221-292 and Hasan 1995:183-283). There seems to be this 'credo': the higher the system, the more powerful it is - activating, motivating, expanding as well constraining the 'behaviours' of the lower-level systems of meaning. But, and this is the problem, the higher the system, the more

abstract it is, and therefore the more difficult to understand. For two prominent approaches to modelling 'register' in SFLT, see for example Matthiessen (1993: 231-240).

SFLT works on 'language-in-context' are available in a great variety of forms (books, congress/conference proceedings, journals, computerised and internet programs, etc.). To explore different ways of interpreting things theoretically such as text, texture, cohesion, coherence, discourse, register, genre, context, situation, culture, ideology and other relevant phenomena and to specify the theoretical significance they derive from the location in the overall SFLT, references on the notions of such terms are traceable through those sources, which are circulated worldwide. For 'registers' explored in descriptions, see for example the references in Matthiessen 1993:274.

Adopting the SFLT framework as a theoretical basis of study, Saragih (1995) carried out a research investigating Indonesian discourse-in-text as realised linguistically in news story texts of Indonesian newspapers. Specifically, the study investigated reality, action and reaction as aspects of the Indonesian newspaper texts, interpreted in SFLT terms. The three aspects were examined in the light of three types of context of situation: the saying, doing and being fields. Based on data from thirty seven Indonesian newspaper publications, the study shows that Indonesian news story text (INT) has its own functional variety of language where reality, action and reaction vary in their linguistic realisations among the three fields of INT. As language use forms a stratified semiotic system, different realisations of reality, action and reaction among the three fields of saying, doing

and being are found across the strata of language and its context. Variations of their realisations are contextually motivated. In particular, the study indicates that in global terms the Indonesian national development 'trilogy' (ideology), which comprises political stability, security stability and economic stability, which are manifested through the government's developmental policies, is the major contextual semiotic power that has activated, motivated, expanded as well as constrained the functional textual semiotic behaviours of the Indonesian press.

Azirah Hashim (1996) carried out a research that investigated academic discourse realised linguistically in medical research texts (articles). Her analysis of a corpus of twenty four selected medical texts was conducted using a model of analysis that complementarily combined Halliday's functional grammar model of analysis (Halliday 1994) with Swales's model of genre analysis (Swales 1990). The result of her analysis of the twenty four research articles taken from *the British Journal of Surgery* and *The Annual of Surgery* reveals that the research articles as texts have the following organisational pattern: abstract, introduction, method, findings and discussion. Her study describes the relation of text and context; the analysis of texts was done by analysing the mood, transitivity and theme representations of the texts under investigation, whereas the analysis of contexts was done by analysing the generic or schematic structures of the medical research genre-in-texts.

Adopting GSFLT as a point of departure, Ventola (1995:3-28) makes an attempt to measure the role of semiotic systems as genre and register operating in a culture, and how these semiotic systems are realised by linguistic structures in text instances. It is suggested that a multi-layered approach be applied in search of

understanding in what way the semiotic communication planes code meanings in text instances. A multi-layered analysis of authentic discourse demonstrates that meanings are created and interrelated in each plane (p.28). In her view the unfolding of a generic structure as a sequence of functional elements is best illustrated by discussing the semiotic generic organisation in an authentic example of social interaction. It is argued that literary studies lack rigorous analysis that can convincingly demonstrate structural similarities. In view of her study, generic class membership appears to require semiotic similarities in the unfolding of social activity. In this respect interactional activities in texts are staged in a similar way if the texts are generically the same. Thus, participants who are involved in text creation would choose the same features from the genre systems when the text generated is of the same kind. It is also concluded that genre controls register in text by organising the relevant field, mode and tenor choice combinations in each generic element.

An interesting and fruitful study in the field of discourse analysis was conducted by Martin (1999), in which he investigated a two-page autobiographical recount which appeared at the end of Nelson Mandela's book *Long Walk to Freedom* as a summary of his life and what he had learned from it. The aim of the study was to illustrate the role of a detailed analysis of single texts in the field of discourse analysis, as opposed to studies of selected variables across a corpus of texts. The analysis was conducted within the general SFL theoretical framework, with special attention to transitivity, mood, theme, grammatical metaphor, lexical relations, conjunction, tense, phase, process type, hierarchy of periodicity, polarity,

continuity, elaboration, extension and the analysis of images in multimodal text. Through these procedures the investigator showed how Mandela reconciled the linear unfolding of his life history with the deepening understanding of freedom that gave meaning to his life - by means of a spiral texture which returned again and again to the meaning of freedom at different levels of abstraction. The approach exemplifies a positive style of discourse analysis that focuses on hope and change, by way of complementing the deconstructive expose associated with critical discourse analysis.

Some theoretical and descriptive works on discourse/language phenomena in general have been reviewed. There is not much attention paid to the concept of 'discourse society/community', for it is not the focus. (For discussions of 'discourse/speech community', compare for example Labov 1966, Hymes 1974, Hudson 1980, Saville-Troike 1982, Braithwaite 1984, Herzberg 1986, Freed & Broadhead 1987 and Swales 1990). Despite its brevity, the review is believed to have achieved what is expected to achieve.

2.3 On Classroom Discourse/Language and Related Works

Now let me turn to the particular kind of discourse, that is, classroom discourse. Throughout much of studies on classroom discourse, the focus has been on classroom discourse realised in *linguistic* texts. I think this is why the term 'classroom *discourse*' often intermingles with the term 'classroom *language*'. The problem here is that the latter term is also used by many to refer to a kind of register, not to a kind of discourse, that is, 'classroom language' as an equivalent

term for 'classroom register'. (For the notion of 'register' as being at the *linguistic* level, specifically at the semantic level, see for example Halliday 1987:610).

Putting the intermingling terms aside, studies of language phenomena in general have been carried out for centuries, but it is only fairly recently that linguistics has been accepted as an 'independent discipline' (Richards, Platt and Weber 1985:167). A lot of research activities having to do with language have been conducted. There has now been abundant literature on language, language learning/teaching, language role in personal development and learning, and so on. All this has in one way or another served to heighten people's awareness of language and its important role in various areas of human life.

In its development, for decades the prevailing trend in linguistics had been linguistics that viewed language as a kind of a self-contained regulating system; language phenomena were seen as intra-organism phenomena that had to be studied as such that anything 'external' to language as an intra-organism (self-contained) system was irrelevant and therefore had to be out of a language study arena. (For relevant discussions of language, see for example Parret 1974). One impact that this intra-organism perspective had on language learning/teaching in the classroom, as we all know, had been the long time tradition for decades in which learners were taught to label things related to phonemes/graphemes, morphemes, words, groups/phrases, and finally clauses/sentences as the 'highest' level of language, to perform the 'subject-*verb*-object' fashions of sentence analysis (mixed categories in analysis), and lots of other things that were believed to

represent what language is all about; but all those things do not go beyond the sentence level, i.e. they represent language more in the sense of language *in vacua* - away from what people actually do with language in real life social interactions. In other words, this theoretical view on language that influences language learning/teaching, particularly in terms of 'what to learn/teach', provides a huge gap between what language learners do in the classroom and what actually happens when people use the language in everyday life. In various areas of the globe this intra-organism perspective of language that influences language learning/teaching, particularly in relation to language descriptions and language learning/teaching materials in the classroom, is still maintained.

The intra-organism linguistics was gradually left behind. Studies of language phenomena have now been moving to another direction, following the growing and widespread attention paid to the question of 'what actually happens when people use language to talk to each other'. The pendulum has swung from the intra-organism perspectives of traditionalists, formalists and mentalists to the inter-organism perspectives of functionalists. To mention but a few, linguists such as Firth, Harris, Halliday and his associates, van Dijk and his associates, and Gumperz and his associates belong to the inter-organism group of linguists, who view language phenomena as inter-organism phenomena. In an inter-organism perspective, language is taken to mean language use or in use. In this perspective, language is seen and treated as a social phenomenon. Consequently, to learn language means not to learn language *per se* but to learn language *and beyond*. And this is where social aspects and dimensions come in and become part of its

overall study of language. Language learning/teaching in the classroom is then oriented to learning/teaching various aspects and dimensions of discourse, text and context characteristic of language use.

Some would identify the inter-organism proponents as 'functional linguists' or 'functionalists'. Some others would call them 'sociolinguists'. And still others might call them discourse analysts, ethnolinguists, anthropolinguists, social semiotician, sociological linguists, and so on. Works by some of them are reviewed below.

Labov carried out a study of classroom language employing a classroom ethnographic framework (Labov 1969, 1972). The study investigated Non-Standard English of Black and Puerto Rican children in New York who displayed grammatical and logical forms of the speech communities. According to the findings, the Black children produced vivid and complex language in unstructured situations with friends. Labov rejected the view that the Black children's speech was less logical than the standard dialects and their speech lacked certain concepts. The Non-Standard dialects in question had a connection with the attitudes and prejudices of most teachers who said that the dialect problems affected the children's academic success. Labov's theory on the quantitative paradigm had inspired other linguists. Many of his original ideas were later modified by himself and other sociolinguists.

Applying an ethnographic framework, Bernstein, who wrote *Class, Codes and Control* (Bernstein 1971, 1973, 1975), examined classroom as a specific subcultural speech situation. According to Christie (1989: 22), Bernstein

distinguished between a 'public language' associated with working class children and a 'formal language' (Bernstein 1973:76-117) associated with middle class children, and he then developed these into two terms, that is, 'restricted code' and 'elaborated code'. The 'restricted code' was a code characterised by grammatical simplicity and incompleteness and much use of brief imperatives and interrogatives. The 'elaborated code' was a code characterised by grammatical complexity and completeness.

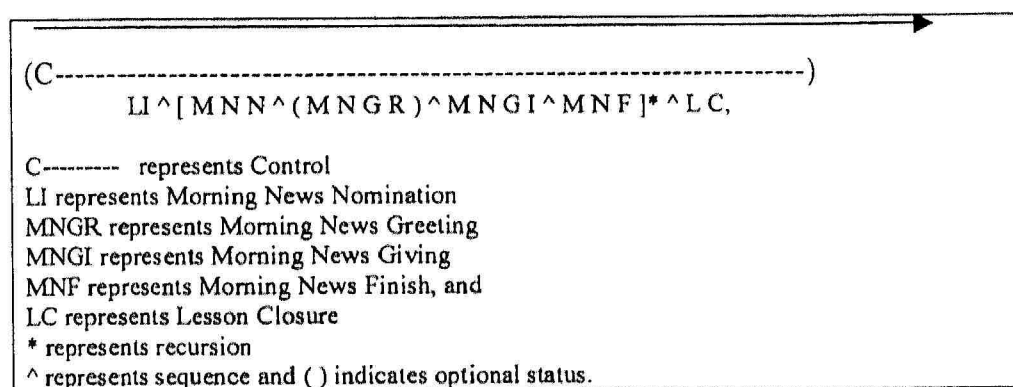
Christie (1989: 26-28) further stated that Bernstein's work on codes had a link with one of his views on the transmission of knowledge. He proposed and applied two concepts of knowledge transmission, that is, 'classification' and 'framing' (Bernstein 1971:49-50). The concept of 'classification' related to the manner in which a school curriculum was organised. In this, any educational institution had to make decisions as regards the principles by which knowledge taught was to be selected and organised. Education that operated with a strong classification divided a curriculum up in ways that separated subjects, and subject specialists involved in teaching them had little to do with each other. Whereas education that operated with strong framing, then teachers had relatively few options in what they did. If the framing was weak, teachers had freedom and scope in the options they took up in teaching and learning (Bernstein 1971:58).

Bernstein's work has been specific in demonstrating its general relevance to the view of language as a social institution (cf. Turner 1985). Halliday confirms this in his statement:

"Bernstein's work allows us to extend beyond these limited instances in two significant ways. First, it provides an insight into how the relations within the social system may come to shape and modify other meanings that language expresses, which may be meanings of any kind; sociosemantic variation and change is not confined to the semantics of interpersonal communication. Second, in the light of a functional account of the semantic system, Bernstein's work suggests how the changes in speech patterns that are brought about in this way become incorporated into the system, as a result of the innumerable minutiae of social interaction, and so have an effect on other options, not disturbing the whole system (whatever that would mean), but reacting specifically on those options that are functionally related to them" (Halliday 1978: 89-90).

Christie's study on learning activities in the classroom also adopted a SFLT framework as a theoretical basis. Her research data were collected at Normanbury school in Australia. For the contextual analysis at the 'situational' level, the study basically applied Martin's model of genre analysis whereas the analysis at the linguistic level the study adopted Halliday's model of linguistic analysis. The genre under investigation was "morning news activity *show and tell*", in which children talked about objects they brought and showed in class. In the analysis the aspects, features and dimensions of 'genre', 'register' and language were related semiotically based on Martin's schematic structure and Halliday's semantic-functional model of clause analysis. The schematic structure potential for the morning news genre is exemplified in the observable figure below.

Figure 2.1: Control in Morning News Genre (Christie, 1989: 124)



Studies of classroom discourse have been talked about by members of classroom discourse societies. One example is work by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) who produced an important foundational work for research and analysis of classroom discourse. Their classroom discourse analysis was based on their research of classroom interaction. The model they introduced has formed the basis of more recent analyses of classroom discourse and has provided insights into lecture room discourse analysis. The major theoretical position was to set up 'discourse' as a separate level of analysis of classroom discourse, distinct from grammar. They argued that:

"... grammatical structure is not sufficient to determine which discourse act a particular grammatical unit realizes-one needs to take account of both relevant situational information and position in the discourse" (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975: 23).

Sinclair and Coulthard's model of analysis (1975) organises overall classroom interaction (discourse) into levels and ranks. In this model there are three major levels of overall classroom interaction (discourse), namely (1) non-linguistic (pedagogic) organisation, (2) discourse, and (3) grammar. Each of these levels has ranks. The non-linguistic (pedagogic) organisation level of classroom interaction (discourse) has three ranks, namely (a) course, i.e. the top of the rank scale, (b) period, and (c) topic, i.e. the bottom of the rank scale. The discourse level has five ranks, namely (a) lesson, i.e. the top of the rank scale, (b) transaction, (c) exchange, (d) move, and (e) act, i.e. the bottom of the rank scale. The grammar level also has five ranks, namely (a) sentence, i.e. the top of the rank scale, (b) clause, (c) group, (d) word, and (e) morpheme, i.e. the bottom of the rank scale. For further details of these, see Sinclair & Coulthard (1975:24-60).

As the researchers themselves acknowledged (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975:6-7), their model of analysis was in particular designed to investigate teacher-pupil interaction in the classroom, not pupil-pupil interaction in project work, discussion groups, or the playground. On the whole, being developmental in nature to some extent, the model can be characterised roughly as macro-level model of analysis. The title of the book itself already implies this: *Towards an Analysis of Discourse*. There is no slightest intention to belittle their work here, which has greatly contributed to the development of discourse studies in general, of classroom discourse studies in particular.

To be a comprehensive theoretical and descriptive model of analysis, Sinclair and Coulthard's working model needs to be expanded in such a way that it can include all things that may be regarded as aspects and dimensions of classroom discourse, which fit together into a coherent and intelligible schema that allows one to make any necessary descriptions and interpretations of the various aspects and dimensions of the phenomena. But phenomena of discourse - to be acknowledged, even if already localised into 'phenomena of classroom discourse', are obviously diverse in their aspects and dimensions, the resources of denotative semiotic involved are extraordinarily rich, and the ways in which things can be related to each other intrinsically and extrinsically are of intricacy to be conceived of at one go. The point is that while the work is of obvious importance for discourse analysts and researchers and a fruitful contribution to the study of classroom discourse in particular, it still needs to be enhanced, elaborated and extended with respect to the theoretical and descriptive apparatus, aspects, dimensions, and

realisations and interpretations of the overall classroom discourse phenomena in question.

The review that has been made aims at surveying some theoretical and descriptive works on classroom discourse/language. The works reviewed are associated with discourse whose spatial setting is in the classroom; this is one sense of classroom discourse under review. But it implies not only that the discourse under discussion occurs in the classroom as its spatial setting but also that it involves a particular group of individuals or participants as members of a discourse society, who have their specific ways or modes of meaning and talking, i.e. they have their own discourse. And the works reviewed are concerned with classroom discourse denotatively realised in linguistic semiotic texts. However brief the review might have been, it is believed that the review has achieved its objective.

2.4 On Lecture Discourse/Language and Related Works

The theoretical and descriptive works that have been reviewed so far are concerned with the phenomena of discourse/language and those of classroom discourse/language in general within the field of general discourse study/analysis. Theoretical and descriptive works on the more specific kind of discourse such as that of lecture discourse are still small in number. And, like any other works on discourse generally, they are mostly, if not all, works that are concerned with lecture discourse realised in *linguistic* texts, not in nonlinguistic texts. In other words, they are works on lecture discourse in language. (I have not been able to find any systematically conceptualised theoretical or descriptive works on lecture

discourse realised in *nonlinguistic* texts). So the directions to take here will coincide with the reality of works in existence.

Strodt-Lopez (1991) carried out a general research project in the area of 'lecture discourse/language'. The research spatial setting was at an American university, its temporal setting was in 1985. Her total sample of data consisted of nine undergraduate lectures in the humanities and social sciences. The research article (report) was part of the general research project; it discussed 'asides in university lectures' that came from three lectures. In her study, an aside was analytically defined as "an episode of discourse with a distinct topic framework which occurs between discourse episodes having the same topic framework" (Strodt-Lopez 1991:121, cf. Sinclair & Couthard 1975:44). It is stated that the study shows how lecturers (professors) at an American university use asides, local breaks in topicality, to increase what she calls 'global semantic coherence and pragmatic consistency', and to evoke in students a variety of 'interpretive frames'. Her findings indicate a need for analysis re-evaluating basic concepts of discourse unity and the use of interpretive frames, and suggest further research in the areas of the structure of multiple-strand discourse, where one component of the discourse provides a running commentary on another, and the devices for creating simultaneous clear demarcation of and strong cohesion between discourse episodes.

In contrast to Sinclair and Courthard's work that investigated teacher-pupil interaction in the classroom, Foster (1998) studied student-student classroom interaction. Secondly, Foster's study was very limited in terms of quantitative data,

scope and objective; and it did not provide any solid conceptual design for classroom discourse studies. Thirdly, she specifically focussed on a classroom observation of the language produced by intermediate EFL students engaged in required and optional information exchange tasks in both dyads and small groups. Thus, the study was related to language, language learning and language learning methodology in the classroom involving foreign students as participants. The main goal was to find out whether or not student task type or grouping such as these could really prompt 'negotiations for meaning' (checking and clarifying problem utterances) which ensured that task participants received comprehensible input and generate comprehensible output, both of which had been claimed as crucial to second language acquisition (SLA). It applied micro-level analysis, focusing on a very specific aspect and dimension of classroom discourse, or of lecture discourse if one sees the activity is discursively located within the overall notion of a lecture activity.

It is stated that the results show no clear overall effect for task type or grouping, though there was a discernible trend for dyads doing a two-way task to produce more negotiated interaction. However, it was noticeable that many students in the small groups did not speak at all, many more in both dyads and small groups did not initiate any negotiated interaction, and very few students in either setting produced any modified utterances. It is also suggested that 'negotiating for meaning' is not a strategy that language learners are predisposed to employ when they encounter gaps in their understanding. One may wonder why the students did not produce negotiated interaction as assumed or expected. Was it really related to

the task type or grouping itself, or was it not possibly due to some other things, say the students' cultural background teaching them to be moderate in any social interaction (to be 'good listeners', but not good speakers unless one is 'forced' to)? What was 'observable' in the classroom might not necessarily represent what actually happened.

Works of classroom discourse that may roughly be categorised as or associated with works of lecture discourse are generally confined to a very specific aspect or dimension of lecture discourse, and are very limited in scope and objective, such as that by Strodt-Lopez (1991). Another example was a study by Stokoe (1998) that explored the nature of academic discourse with particular attention paid to the construction of gender categories within students' conversations. A discursive conversation analytic approach was taken to explore the ways in which participants themselves talked about gender. For data collecting, small groups of three to four undergraduate and postgraduate students were video-recorded during seminar/tutorial sessions. The data were then transcribed and analysed. Again the study was very specific and limited with respect to the aspect and dimension of discourse involved. It was not designed to investigate all relevant phenomena of classroom discourse, academic discourse or lecture discourse.

Applying a Pragmatic framework, Jamaliah Mohd. Ali (1995) in her research examined pragmatic features of verbal interactions occurring in a student seminar setting. The data was primarily drawn from video recordings of student seminar discussions at an affiliated faculty of Malaysian university. The research data were measured by applying a quantitative-qualitative descriptive method of analysis.

One finding revealed that student seminar discussions were co-operative in character. There was strong evidence to suggest that "overlaps" and "interruptions" might not be violations and errors but features of "interactional co-operation". "Duetting" and "philharmony" were seen as behavioural manifestations of such a tandem, giving rise to various permutations of co-operative interaction. Although the interactants came from different ethnic groups, they exhibited striking similarity especially in turn taking and their use of feedback and strategies, and in this respect the "duetting" and "philharmony" were in support of interactional co-operation in student seminar discussions in particular.

Another study was done by Ragan (1987), in which he adopted a SFL framework and applied a SFL model to communicative language teaching. The contribution of his study was to pedagogic understanding of the exchange of meaning in a task-based language learning activity and of the effects of mode of presentation and levels of language proficiency on the communication of a set of instructions. The level of analysis included features of situation type, register and lexico-grammar at clause rank. The finding proved that language form was related to language use and insights were generated into the effects of mode of presentation and level of proficiency on the communication of meaning.

In her work Asmah Haji Omar (1996:1) views that all language interactions involve discussion that arises with the existence of conflict between the interactants or participants in the discussion. Discussion and conflict are seen as language events in which both sides are not of one view about an issue, which may lead to either a real conflict or a negotiation. Discussion and dispute both portray

conflict. There is planning prior to discussion. The planning is raised by both parties. Sophistication in discussion can be seen from speech, argumentation and behaviour. Sophistication in the use of language is observable from the refinement, the system and the structure of language. These include the use of sentences, choice of words, pronunciation, language refinement, presentation and behaviour of a particular kind. Information in the discussion in question consists of shared information, core information and added information.

One major research work in the area of lecture discourse was undertaken by Young (1990). She adopted the Communication Linguistics framework for the study, adapted from Gregory's Planal and Stratal Assignment in Communication Linguistics (1985), a framework of analysis within the general SFL theoretical framework. Her data corpus consisted of lectures and written texts drawn from textbooks that constituted required reading for students from three disciplines: Engineering, Sociology, and Economics. At the discoursal plane, the descriptive analysis of the data corpus was focused on the phasal aspects and dimensions, the analysis then moved downward by way of encoding and decoding channels, through to the semological and morphosyntactic strata. For the details of the framework in a diagram, see Young (1990:70-71).

To represent Young's overall study of lecture discourse, it seems appropriate to refer to it as a study of 'lecture/lecture-related discourse'. The expression is indicative of the fact that the corpus consisted of 'lectures' (lecture texts, in my view) and 'textbook selections' (lecture-related texts, in my view). Both lecture and

lecture-related texts were linguistic. One difference between what Young did and what this study does is that Young used language to talk about other things (engineering, sociology, economics). That is, it was concerned with 'language on other things'. This study, on the other hand, uses language to talk mostly about language or language-related things (morphology and morphophonemics, techniques in teaching grammar, methodology of language and linguistic research, comparing and contrasting second language acquisition and first language acquisition, preparing test items, practical aspects of writing a test paper, and the functional and notional concepts of language description). That is, it is mostly concerned with 'language on language' (cf. Matthiessen 1991:69-111). Second, as regards the spatial setting, Young's work was at the Catholic University of Leuven, this study is at the University of Malaya. As regards the temporal setting, Young did her study in 1988, this study is in 2000 with the data collected in 1995. (See also Chapters 3 and 4).

Some studies of discourse, classroom discourse and lecture discourse associated with language have been reviewed, more in descriptive rather than critical or evaluative terms. It is not easy to show the distinct boundaries among the various kinds of discourse phenomena, though discourse analysts and researchers have conceptualized them. The phenomena are not only diverse in kind and vast in number but also abstract in nature - at least according to one interpretation. And one discourse phenomenon can also at the same time be looked at from a number of angles or perspectives, consequently leading to different interpretations. This holds true with so-called 'register', a concept that is formulated by experts to

describe and interpret yet another kind of phenomena. However difficult it might be, the concept of register needs to be discussed here, for it has relevance to the present study. And, being confined to the theme of this chapter, some studies of register in theory and practice are surveyed under the heading below.

2.5 'Register'/Language and Related Works

Throughout the semiotic history of linguistic theory and method, the concept of 'register' has lived in a somewhat paradoxical atmosphere: praised for its important role for understanding a particular kind of 'imagined' phenomena and at the same time reviled for its indecisive and controversial behaviour. However, with its attribute deleted, one can neutralise oneself from being suspicious of 'register', and by so doing one can do 'justice' to the concept of register. And this is the underlying spirit of the following literature review on register as phenomena, register as a concept and studies of register phenomena.

It is appropriate to begin with the existence of register phenomena as imagined because it is not only relatively easy to make statements about it but it is also believed that register as phenomena must have come into being first, from which concepts of register were then constructed and theoretical and descriptive studies of register phenomena emerged and developed.

If the generally defined sense of register is accepted, i.e. a register is 'a language variety that is determined by what people as social beings are doing at the time' (cf. e.g. Halliday 1978:35), then the age of register existence is as old as the age of language spoken by humans as social beings. Briefly then, human register is as old

as human language. And no one knows exactly when human language was born, as well no one knows exactly when the first humans themselves came into being, though there are references about the history of human language and humankind. (Halliday 1992 stated that geneticists and palaeontologists were arguing about the time frame: "the former measure the length of *human history* as some 200,000 years, while the latter prefer a figure closer to two million").

The researcher's interest here is in the emergence and development of register as a concept originating from studies of register in theory and practice. We would expect to find the term 'register' or some roughly equivalent term in works (1) where the interest in discourse was quite pronounced, (2) where the interest was in language use/in use or in actual speech/language events, not in language per se or insulated from its context of use, and (3) where the interest was in meaning and its dependence on context.

So discussions of register or some other term or concept roughly having a sense of the term register can be found in works such as that of Pike's (1967), in which he talked about "the universe of discourse" having the ability to condition the meaning (1967:599), and units having a central meaning with greater frequency among the community than marginal meanings but special universes of discourse could alter this proportion (1967:601). Pike's theory of language, called 'tagmemics', assumes that language cannot be viewed as a self-contained system and that linguistics, therefore, cannot be self-contained either, but must draw on insights from other things such as sociology, anthropology, and so on (Jones

1980:78). This is where the theory goes beyond language in its conceptual assumptions, moving to discourse domains or universe living in the society.

Tagmemics is interested in looking beyond the sentence to the total structure of a text, and Longacre's work is particularly well known in this area. Longacre claims that all monologue discourse can be classified according to four parameters (1983:3-6): (1) contingent temporal succession, (2) agent orientation, (3) projection, and (4) tension. The first two parameters provide a four-way classification of 'discourse types' (e.g. narrative discourse) with the third parameter providing a two-way subclassification within each. The fourth is not used to distinguish discourse types, because most discourse types can realise tension; it refers to the reflection in a discourse of a struggle or polarization of some sort. (Compare Kress 1985:27 on a text potentially realising a number of competing and contradictory discourses). Despite the differences in terminology, Longacre's 'discourse types' roughly correspond to Martin's 'genre types' and the general understanding of Halliday's 'register types'. (See further discussion of these below).

The 'root' of register is traceable back to the time of Firth. Firth talked about "restricted language", defining it as "serving a circumscribed field of experience or action" and having "its own grammar and dictionary" (1957:124, 87, 98, 105 ff., 112). Firth's notion of restricted languages is a natural consequence of his taking over Malinowski's 'context of situation' and combining it with his polysystemic perspective of language-*in*-context, as opposed to a monosystemic perspective of language-*out*-of-context. In this, Matthiessen points out that when Malinowski's 'context of situation' is developed and combined with Firth's 'polysystemicness',

then "it is theoretically reasonable to assume some sense of different systems of languages for systemically different contexts" (1993:222).

'Register theory', people sometimes call it 'register analysis', is generally associated with a particular theory within the general SFLT. To put this in its historical context, this theory can be said to originate with Halliday, McIntosh and Stevens (1964:77, 87). When they discussed 'varieties in language', they talked about 'register' along with 'dialect':

"... [dialects are] varieties according to users (that is, varieties in the sense that each speaker uses one variety and uses it all the time) ... [registers are] varieties according to use (that is, in the sense that each speaker has a range of varieties and chooses between them at different times)" (words in square brackets added) (Halliday, McIntosh and Stevens 1964:77).

The two concepts were described further in the following:

"A dialect is a variety of a language distinguished according to the user: different groups of people within the language community speak different dialects. It is possible also to recognize varieties of a language along another dimension, distinguished according to use. Language varies as its function varies; it differs in different situations. The name given to a variety of a language distinguished according to use is 'register'" (Halliday, McIntosh and Stevens 1964:87).

One might ask, "Why did they need the conceptual category of 'register' in the general theory of language-in-context? They argued that:

"The category of 'register' is needed when we want to account for what people do with their language. When we observe language activity in the various contexts in which it takes place, we find differences in the type of language selected as appropriate to different types of situation" (Halliday, McIntosh and Stevens 1964:87).

In his explanation of the term 'register', Halliday stated that:

"The term 'register' was first used in this sense, that of text variety, by Reid (1956); the concept was taken up and developed by Jean Ure (Ure and Ellis 1972), and interpreted within Hill's (1958) 'institutional linguistic' framework by Halliday et al. (1964). The *register* is the *semantic variety* of which a text may be regarded as an instance" (italics added) (Halliday 1978:110).

A general reading of the statements above suggests that there are key words or expressions related to register that need clarification. First, what part or dimension of 'language' characterises a register? Is it the whole language in the sense of all internal linguistic components consisting of semantics, lexicogrammar and phonology/graphology, or is it just one of the components? Second, what 'differences' indicate a particular language variety distinct from other varieties? Third, when is a situation considered one 'type of situation' different from other situations? As far as the above statements go, there seems to have been a development of the concept, a shift in focus or orientation from 'language variety' to 'text variety', then to 'semantic variety' of which a text is an instance.

As Halliday indicated, the general distinction was initially characterised largely by the 'lexicogrammatical' properties of language, but then he suggested it was to be defined more in 'semantic' terms (1978:110-111). So, the term 'language' that characterised 'a register' or 'a language variety according to use' was initially associated with 'lexicogrammar'. In this, 'a language variety according to use' or 'a register' could be said to be roughly synonymous with 'a lexicogrammatical variety'. Then, there was a shift in focus or orientation from 'lexicogrammar' to 'semantics'. Consequently, 'a register' was then roughly equivalent to 'a semantic variety'; and, as Halliday specified, 'a text' is 'an instance' of semantic variety.

To give a clearer picture of the concept of 'register' as 'diatypic variety' or 'variety according to the use' (Halliday 1978:35), Halliday's description of it runs as follows:

"A register is: what you are speaking (at the time) determined by what you are doing (nature of social activity being engaged in), and expressing diversity of social process (social division of labour). So in principle registers are: ways of saying different things and tend to differ in: semantics (and hence in lexicogrammar, and sometimes phonology, as realization of this). Extreme cases: restricted languages, languages for special purposes. Typical instances: occupational varieties (technical, semi-technical). Principal controlling variables: field (type of social action); tenor (role relationships); mode (symbolic organization). Characterized by: major distinctions of spoken/written; language in action/language in reflection (Halliday 1978:35).

The development of SFLT has brought about the development of register theory within it. There are currently two prominent models of SFLT worthy of mention here: the 'register' model, which is associated with Halliday and developed by Matthiessen and other proponents, and the 'genre' model, which is associated with Martin and his proponents. The models emerged from the evolutionary process of SFL theory of 'language-in-context', and they have been developing ever since. Unfortunately, there is no space to explain in details the theoretical position of each model. For further explanation of both models, see for example Martin 1992:493-590 and Matthiessen 1993: 221-292.

Very briefly, one of the critical issues that has led to the emergence and development of the two models centres around the concept of register, the nature of its relation firstly to language and secondly to context, particularly to context of situation under the controlling variables of field, tenor and mode. Specifically, in Halliday's register model, register is interpreted as being located within the

linguistic system, not within the contextual system above language. That is, my understanding of Halliday's position is that he views register as something linguistic, specifically semantic, not contextual. That is, speaking in stratal terms, he sees the notion of register as being at the linguistic level, i.e. at the semantic level, not above it, in which it is seen as a set of settings in the semantics (Halliday 1987:610).

"I would see the notion of register as being at the semantic level, not above it. Shifting in register means re-ordering the probabilities at the semantic level ... whereas the categories of field, mode and tenor belong one level up. These are the features of the context of situation; and this is an interface. But the register itself I would see as being linguistic; it is a setting of probabilities in the semantics" (Halliday 1987:610).

The term 'register' has been used differently by the two models. Martin uses the term "register" to refer to his first context plane above language, which is roughly equivalent to Halliday's more general term "context of situation". Halliday, on the other hand, uses the same term "register" to refer to functional variation of language as an aspect of a separate dimension of organisation *within* language (cf. Martin 1992:502 and Matthiessen 1993:233). Martin's comparative statement runs as follows:

"Halliday uses the term [register] simply to refer to language as context's expression plan¹ - the linguistic meanings (entailing their expressions) at risk in a given situation type. *English Text* extends the notion to cover in addition part of context's content plane; register is used in other words to refer to the semiotic system constituted by the contextual variables field, tenor and mode ... register is the name of the metafunctionally organised connotative semiotic between language and genre. This means that instead of characterising context of situation as potential and register as (context's) actual, *English Texts* treats register as a semiotic system in its own right, involving notions both of system and process" (emphasis and italics as original) (Martin 1992:501-502).

¹ Martin views 'language' as a denotative semiotic, a plane that realises or expresses connotative semiotics, one of which being 'register', a first connotative or contextual plane.

Leaving the 'controversy' of register to systemic-functionalists, let me briefly review one SFLT-based descriptive-applied work here. The work is concerned with 'register' of technical language. In her study Harvey (1996) investigated degrees of equivalence constructed in English technical definitions looked at from an ergative perspective. Based on this perspective, it was shown that the degree of equivalence depended upon clause effectiveness, in which it was measured in terms of effective vs. middle opposition. It was revealed that in technical definitions ideational meaning represented in relational clauses is dominant over the other meta-functions and it is 'de-automised' lexico-grammatically, while interpersonal meaning (expressed in mood and modality) was less dominant and 'automatised'. It was discovered that in technical definitions the source of knowledge was either absent but probeable or absent and non-probeable. It was argued that a residue of interpersonality was critical to the degree of equivalence constructed in clauses.

A SFLT framework was also adopted by Eric Wong (1994) for his applied study of language phenomena, this time at the lower semiotic level of investigation. In this, Wong carried out a research that studied the phonology of Penampang Kadazan (PK) language in East Malaysia with the focus on the sound systems and phonological processes of the language in question. The aspects examined were the consonants and vowels at the phonemic rank, specifically the phonemes of the roots and affixes of PK language. System networks were developed to capture phonemic features that were displayed at the onset and rhyme elements of syllable structures. The syllable structures provided a holistic concept in describing the

phonemes with their prosodic features in a specific phonological environment. The paradigmatic-syntagmatic relations in the developed system networks enabled the analysis to describe the phonemes within the syllable structures in a multi-linear way.

Kathpalia (1992) carried out a SFLT-based genre study firstly in search of theoretically clarifying the concept of genre as a framework for data analysis. In this, three semiotic planes are interrelated: genre, register (in Martin's sense) and language. In the study three promotional genres were compared in terms of their contextual and linguistic aspects, features and dimensions. In this, the question to answer was concerned with the role played by the contextual configurations in the realisations of the texts under study, the rhetorical or genre structures of the texts and finally the creativity and generative power of genres. It was suggested that the genre-based framework be applied and extended to studies in the areas of acquisition, education and computer in particular.

Another applied work was by Sinar. Using Martin's genre model, Sinar (1992) studied 500 texts written by students from seven primary school students in Medan. The students were given eight topics representing eight genres to choose from. Of the eight topics and genres, she found six discourse genres produced by the students, that is, narrative, recount, procedure, report, description and exposition. Discussion and explanation genres were not selected or taken by the students. Of the six genres, they were selected in the following order of preference: recount as the most dominant subsequently followed by narrative, procedure, description, report and exposition. (Note that before the research was carried out

these six genres were already in the school syllabus. The recount genre was produced most recounting the students' extra classroom activities and the reports was produced because the students were required by their teachers to make reports every time they returned to school from visiting places such as museums, hospitals, health clinic centres or any other important objects). The first research was subsequently followed by the second research activity in the same spatial setting, which involved the primary school students as subjects, was carried out six years later (Sinar 1998) with the focus of investigation on the schematic structures of genres-in-texts and their transitivity representations that the students produced. The research findings revealed that the schematic structures of the genres-in-texts indicated their commonality characteristic of each particular genre-in-text. (For this, see for example the research findings in MEDSP 1989). In terms of frequency distribution of occurrence of the genres and their schematic structures, the revealing figures and patterns indicate the following order: (1) recount: orientation ^ event ^ reorientation, (2) narrative: introduction ^ complication ^ resolution ^ coda, (3) procedure: goal ^ step, (4) description: statement ^ sequence ^ statement ^ sequence, (5) report: general classification ^ description, and (6) exposition: statement ^ argument ^ elaboration ^ conclusion. Furthermore, in terms of frequency distribution of occurrence of the transitivity process types, the revealing figures indicate the following order: (1) the material, (2) the relational, (3) the mental, (4) behavioural, (5) existential, and (6) the verbal.

2.6 Concluding Remarks

SFLT-related and theoretical and practical or applied works in particular have been reviewed descriptively and to some extent critically. In general terms, the theoretical works that have been reviewed centre round the conceptual issues or notions of language, discourse, classroom discourse, lecture discourse, 'register' and other contextual variables and the practical or applied works associated with them have also been reviewed. There remains the threefold question: how will the theoretical-conceptual views on the issues be developing, to what direction will the views be heading, and what theoretical and practical or applied implications will there be in academic activities in years to come? The researcher leaves this question to experts and academia to deal with. As far as this study is concerned, the necessary reviews of relevant works have been done to the extent that is believed to have fulfilled the academic requirements of the thesis. Furthermore, my own theoretical position applied in the present study in particular will be clear in the subsequent chapters.