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CHAPTER I: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK I: CONVERSATION

1.1 Preliminaries

Language is primarily a means of communication. Communication happens through conversation. Conversation is one of the several types of communicative acts. Most of the human linguistic communication takes place in the form of conversations. Face-to-face interaction is perhaps the most fundamental and pervasive means of conducting human affairs. People interact linguistically in a wide range of social situations on a wide variety of topics and with an unpredictable set of participants. Conversation may be said to be the primitive, and even the canonical form of human communication. As Levinson (1983: 43) observes, it may be said to be the single most important dynamic context of language use. D. Alan Cruse (2000: 8) observes that ‘the prototypical scenario for linguistic communication is two people engaged in face-to-face conversation’. Face to face interaction is not only the context for language acquisition, it is also the only significant kind of language use in many of the world’s communities.

Conversation Analysis is one of the most active and fastest developing areas in the study of language and communication. Major impetus for the study of conversation has, however, come from outside linguistics. Our understanding of conversation rests not only on the scholarship from linguistics but also from anthropology, sociology, philosophy and psychology. Accordingly, conversation can be studied from any of these perspectives. These disciplines, different as they are from one another, have given rise to a variety of different approaches to language and generated different models for understanding and methods for analysing conversations. These various perspectives shed light on different aspects and issues concerning the study of language. Conversation Analysis is thus an interdisciplinary concern. Keeping in view the constraints of the scope of this study, however, only a few major and currently popular among these approaches are examined here with respect to their significant contribution.
relevant to the pragmatic paradigm of utterance interpretation. The centrally relevant approaches to our paradigm are the Ethnomethodological Conversation Analysis, the Speech Act Approach, the Face Theory expounded by Brown and Levinson, and The Gricean Approach.

The present chapter deals with the nature and significance of conversational activity in spoken and written discourse (conversations in fiction, in particular) and with the various approaches to the study of conversation.

1.2 Centrality of Conversation

Conversational interaction plays major role in oral discourse. As H. I. Clark (1996: 318) says, ‘Conversation, a spontaneous dialogue among two or more people is the fundamental site for language use’. In fact the centrality of this functional matrix for language use hardly needs arguing. Just as it dominates day-to-day communication, conversation occupies important position in literary communication as well. We have conversations not only in drama, but also in virtually every literary genre. Since this study is concerned with fiction, the concentration here will be on the role of conversation in fiction. Fiction, a type of narrative discourse, usually contains abundant conversational interaction. As Leech and Short (1981: 31) show, a novel consists of a series of discourse situations, one embedded inside another, where addressers produce messages for addressees. The conversation at character-character level is an important feature of a novel. However, ‘centrality’ here refers to the central significance of conversations in fiction in terms of (i) effective presentation of communicational content through conversations, and (ii) the placement and significance of conversations in the aesthetic design. On the plane of communicational content, the device of conversation is a handy and effective resource available to the author for expressing the intricacies of psychological motivations of characters. It is through conversational interactions at the character-character level, rather than through authorial description or comments, that the novelist generally expresses the subtle penetrating reality he is trying to present in his work. Conversations are also used as supportive mechanism to reinforce, supplement, or confirm authorial commentary from intrinsic perspective. A conversation
gives an insider’s view of the concerned matter. To speak metaphorically, conversation is a word from the horse’s mouth, as it were, that judges and justifies or turns down the authorial or reader’s perspective.

A novelist makes and manipulates conversations for (i) the immediate purpose of character delineation as well as for (ii) the ulterior purpose of the reader’s understanding of the characters and of the work of art as a whole. From the point of view of (i), conversations unfold the psychological moorings of the ongoing action; and from the second perspective (ii), conversations yield insight into the personality of the characters involved. For the action taking place at the psychological level is effectively revealed through conversational interaction. A study of conversations in a novel facilitates the reader’s perception of the novelistic action substantially by making him visualise the pattern of this ongoing psychological drama. A novelist exploits conversations for the purpose of making desired psychological impact on the reader. The interaction between the writer and the reader takes place at the psychological level. The action taking place on the psychological plane in response to a work of fiction is the replica of the action taking place on the physical plane in the work. The novelist exploits the latter as a means to achieve the first. By means of close observation and analysis of conversations, the reader can understand the intricate pattern of action at the psychological level in the novel.

Conversations reveal not only the nature of a character but also the character’s role and significance in the novel. They reveal, for example, whether the character is central or marginal in relation to the action of the novel, and they reveal the interpersonal relations among characters, or whether and how far a character is good, morally upright, active, social or otherwise. In short, a study of conversational interactions helps to unveil the very core of the novel - the life and culture depicted therein. Such an analysis is more scientific by virtue of the authenticity and certainty of concrete evidence.

1.3 Actual and Fictional Conversation

There is a vast difference between the actual and the fictional conversations. This is so because actual conversations are created on-the-spot opportunistically,
whereas the fictional conversations are predetermined, neatly planned and carefully edited by the author. As it is, conversation is a purposeful and well-directed activity. In actual conversations this direction is not fixed from the beginning. Rather it emerges from the ongoing project. In day-to-day life the interlocutors in many instances, are not certain of where the conversation is going to lead them or where and how it will conclude. They contribute to it in a creative way on the basis of their awareness of the shared knowledge and understanding of the interaction. Each new contribution adds to the domain of their shared knowledge. They are thus orienting themselves to what Garfinkel (cf. Heritage, 1984: 59-60) calls the principles of intersubjectivity and reflexive accountability’.

In fiction, however, the novelist knows what he is going to write or what his characters are going to do. There is thus a certain amount of definiteness about the conversations in fiction. Actual conversations are opportunistic in the sense that interlocutors do not know in advance what will be the co-locutor’s response. There is often some anticipation, but it is generally a play of guesswork. The conversations in fiction, on the other hand, are deterministic in the sense that the author knows what he is going to make his characters say and where the interaction is going to lead them. In fiction, there is scope for planning, organisation and editing of conversations. The choice of words, organisation of the topic, arranging the time and place of the interaction, etc are thus consciously and carefully manoeuvred in fiction. However, the supra-segmental features, such as tone, pitch, rhythm, speed, features of tone including prosodic and paralinguistic cues, and other surface features of speech which are crucial to the planning and understanding of day-to-day interaction are missing in fictional conversations.

Conversations in fiction are embedded in the narrative design. Like the narrative, conversations also are part of the writer’s aesthetic project. A writer uses his resources consciously and carefully. He plans and organises the conversations placing them at the junctures where they occur so as to achieve maximum aesthetic effect. Fictional conversations are thus purposive and they serve to
enhance artistic effect. Conversations in fiction are like gems studded in the narrative design. A study of these conversations can yield insight into the artistic design of the novel and enhance our understanding and appreciation of it.

1.4 Nature of Conversation

1.4.1 Conversation: purposeful activity

People talk in order to get things done. However, they cannot get anything done without the others joining them. People enter into conversation with certain purposes. Conversation is thus a purposeful activity. Grice (1989: 26) began his account of language use with the general everyday intuition that our talk exchanges are characteristically ‘cooperative efforts’; and that each participant recognises in them, to some extent, ‘a common purpose or a set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction’. This purpose or direction, he says, maybe fixed from the start, or it may evolve during the exchange; it may be fairly definite or it may be so indefinite as to leave considerable latitude to the participants. This direction develops or evolves in the course of the interaction in which the goal-oriented participants make their contributions to the unfolding conversation. Conversation is thus the end product reflecting, in its totality, the direction of the conversation. This direction plays an important role in the structure and organization of the conversation. Since it is tacitly understood that conversation is a purposeful activity, it is rational for the participants to cooperate. Following the Co-operative Principle and orienting to the purpose of the talk is, for each participant, a natural rational way of behaviour.

1.4.2 Conversation: goal directed activity

Conversation is a goal directed activity. It thrives on the basic communicative presumption that whenever someone says something to someone else, he does so with some purpose or goal. This tacit awareness among the interlocutors enables h to presume that s has some intention in saying U. h accordingly arrives at an understanding of s’s goal. Now in order for s’s goal to be fulfilled, it is necessary that h adheres to the social goal of being co-operative and orients himself to s’s
goal. In fact, s expects this kind of cooperation of h, and h knows that s expects him to co-operate. Moreover, h also knows that s knows that h knows that s expects him to co-operate. This is why participants in a conversation orient themselves to their mutual goals. Conversational cooperation is thus rooted in mutual knowledge and tacit awareness of the rationality based co-operative collaborative approach.

Conversation may be said to be motivated in terms of conversational goals. The goals that are central to conversation - such as giving and receiving information, influencing and being influenced by others, etc., if they are to be fulfilled, require that the participants in the talk exchange behave in general accordance with certain accepted norms, conventions or principles of standard interactional behaviour. Grice (1975: 30) argued that the Co-operative Principle and its maxims are undeniable such that ‘the talk exchange will be profitable only when it is conducted in general accordance with the Co-operative Principle and its maxims’. It is, therefore, reasonable and rational for interactants to follow them. Conversational goals may be classified into two major categories - social goals and personal goals. Social goals refer to the goals of observing the norms or principles of standard conversational behaviour. Adopting social goal, therefore, means orienting one’s behaviour to Cooperative Principle, Politeness Principle, etc. Personal goals refer to the individual goals of the interlocutors, such as their intentions or the effects they want to achieve by means of their utterances.

In a socially motivated cooperative talk exchange it is normal for a participant to adopt the other person’s goal. That the initiator has a purpose is intuitively understood by the hearer. In the first place h adopts the social goal of being co-operative. And then h further adopts s’s personal goal. Orienting himself to s’s goal, h makes relevant conversational contribution leading towards the fulfilment of that goal. h’s willingness or unwillingness to adopt s’s goal manifests in his choice of whether or not to pay attention and to respond relevantly. Participants thus adopt the social goal of being cooperative and make conversations a goal-oriented fruitful problem-solving activity.
1.4.3 Conversation : problem-solving activity

Conversation may be said to be a problem-solving activity in which speakers and hearers orient to their respective problems of planning and interpreting utterances. Every utterance in a conversation, whether conscious and intentional or not, serves some purpose, and thus contributes to the problem solving activity. As Leech (1983) observes, the problem before speaker concerns planning his utterance in the best possible way suitable in the context as would produce a desired result, i.e. producing an effective utterance in a given context at a particular point in the conversation. The problem before the hearer is an interpretative one - 'given that s said U, what did s mean me to understand by U?' The problem before the speaker is that of the choice of appropriate expressions, whereas the hearer is faced with the problem of interpreting the utterances. Since the problem hearer has to solve is 'what was the communicative problem s was trying to solve when he said U?' the problem of interpretation is a 'meta-problem-solving activity' (Leech, 1983: 36).

1.4.4 Conversation : joint endeavour

Conversation is a 'sustained production of chains of the mutually dependent acts constructed by two or more agents, each monitoring and building on the actions of the other' (Levinson, 1983: 44). It is created opportunistically piece-by-piece by participants joining in the joint project and negotiating and carrying out their goals. As in the game of chess, the participants in a conversation make their moves and often seem to follow certain rules as the dialogue proceeds. Conversation is thus a joint project. Since conversation is a joint production, its characteristic structured sequences are also produced jointly. People achieve most of what they do by means of joint projects in which they establish and carry out their joint purpose. Participants in a conversation have to work at the level of minimal joint projects, for it is with these that they negotiate broader purposes and complete extended joint projects. Thus opening a conversation, exchanging information, and closing the conversation can be said to be the joint
projects, which together constitute the broader joint project, namely conversation.

1.4.5 Conversation: organised structure

Utterances are the basic units of conversation. Conversations consist of utterances. A conversation, however, is not a random succession of unrelated utterances produced alternately by participants. In conversation the interactants seem to operate with a set of basic conventions. In fact, the interactants seem to be tacitly aware of these conventions and the expectations they generate. There also seems to be an implicit agreement among the interactants that they shall be rational and cooperative and that they shall orient their behaviour to the generally agreeable norms and conventions of rational co-operative behaviour. These norms may not be overtly and explicitly stated, but their existence as a matter of generally accepted conventions is simply taken for granted. This implicit agreement to abide by these norms enables the interactants to ensure the possibility of a meaningful and fruitful conversation.

Conversation is a systematic and rule governed behaviour. It has the semblance of a systematically organised structure. Passing message or exchanging information is one of the tasks performed in conversations. This is achieved in a stepwise fashion. This is done through a series of smaller sections - opening conversation, exchanging information, and closing the conversation. In the performance of each of these sections, the conversational partners make use of certain conversational mechanisms such as adjacency pairs and turn taking. Conversation, according to Herbert H. Clark (1996: 319), for example, consists of a hierarchy of parts: conversation, sections, adjacency pairs and turns. This hierarchical structure, he says, is an emergent property. For conversations look planned and goal oriented only in retrospect. Participants devise plans for each conversation, section, adjacency pair, and turn, where each plan is designed to achieve a specific goal. People enter into conversation with certain purposes but without specific plans about how they would achieve them. Conversations are thus purposive but unplanned.
Each of these mechanisms is in itself systematically organised, and it coordinates the rest of the talk. An adjacency pair, for example, can be further analysed into individual speech acts. These acts combine with other acts, which collocate with them, in a systematic and rule-governed way. Conversation thus has the semblance of a highly structured action. Interactants seem to have tacit knowledge of the general patterns of interactional behaviour as a part of their cultural repertoire. The central question before any approach to conversation is how to account for this organized and regular nature of conversation in terms of descriptive formulae which capture or reproduce such regularities. The primary task before the analyst, therefore, is to catalogue the surface regularities and to identify the principles underlying them. This is why almost all versions of conversation analysis are more or less preoccupied with the problems of ‘segmentation and classification’ and of ‘behavioural regularity and predictability’. Different approaches, depending upon their origins and focus, use different labels for the units of conversation and come up with different taxonomies and typologies. Each approach has its own terminology, its own methods and procedures.

1.5 Approaches to Conversation

1.5.1 Ethnographic approach

Ethnographic approach is based in Anthropology and Linguistics. It was developed by Dell Hymes during the 1960s. Hymes’ papers during the 1960s and 1970s provide the general theoretical framework for this approach. Most of these papers are reprinted in Hymes’ (1974) *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach*. Both anthropology and linguistics are quite centrally concerned with communication. Understanding communication is an important goal for both linguists and anthropologists. It is important for linguists because language is a means of communication. It is also important for the anthropologists because ‘the way we communicate is a part of our cultural repertoire for making sense of - and interacting with - the world’ (Debora Schiffrin. 1994: 138).
It is generally agreed that there is close connection between language and culture. Language is a type of social behaviour. It is essentially a cultural behaviour and knowledge. It is ‘a system of use’ whose rules and norms are an integral part of culture. Language use in speech situations, speech events, speech acts plays important role in the realisation of cultural norms of human behaviour. The way we communicate with each other is constrained by culture. However, the norms that guide communication also reflect, and help constitute, social institutions. Language thus reveals as well as creates and sustains culture.

Debora Schiffrin (1994: 139) argues (cf. Geertz 1973; Malinowski 1978; Ochs 1988) that ‘culture is continually created, negotiated, and redefined in concrete acts between persons who are participating in some kind of interactive situation’. The ethnographic approach thus tries to build an integrated framework for analysis and interpretation of conversations.

Anthropologists do not seem to agree on the point of what comprises ‘culture’ or the locus of ‘culture’. Hymes seems to view ‘culture’ as ‘a system of ideas that underlies and gives meaning to systems in society’ (cf. Debora Schiffrin, 1994: 138). ‘Culture’, in this sense, consists in a set of assumptions and beliefs that orient and organise the way people think, feel, and act. Metaphorically speaking, it is a kind of ‘blueprint’ of the cognitive set up of a society. This, however, doesn’t mean that every aspect of culture needs to be shared by all its members. In fact, neither knowledge nor behaviour has to be necessarily available to, or realised by, every member. Besides, members of a culture may have different modes of thought and behaviour available to them, and, consequently, they may choose to have a different perspective of a cultural event from the available repertoire. This envisages infinite variation in cultural events and allows for diversity of interpretation within a single culture.

Ethnographers believe that instances of communication behaviour are never free from the cultural beliefs and the action systems in which they occur, and they cannot be analysed and interpreted except in relation to the specific ‘speech events’ in which they occur. Dell Hymes challenged Chomsky’s insistence on the centrality of ‘competence’ in linguistic theory on this ground. Chomsky
focused on the native speaker’s tacit knowledge of the abstract rules of language as the guiding principle for linguistic performance; whereas Hymes proposed what he called ‘communicative competence’ as a prerequisite for communication. Communicative competence, for Hymes, involves the tacit social, psychological, cultural and linguistic knowledge governing appropriate use of language, including, but not limited to, grammar. As Debora Schiffrin (1994: 140) observes. Hymes’ notion of ‘communicative competence’ includes the knowledge of abstract linguistic rules as well as the ability to use language in concrete situations of everyday life - the ability to engage in conversation, to shop in a store, to interview (or be interviewed) for a job, to pray, joke, argue, tease, warn, and even to know when to be silent. It also includes knowledge of how to engage in the culturally constructed speech events (e.g. prayer, public oratory, etc).

Ethnographic approach proposes to study human linguistic behaviour in relation to its social and cultural context. It focuses on the societal conventions for the use of certain types of expression or for the performance of particular speech acts. The ethnographic analyses seek to locate each particularity within a set of universally available possibilities, but at the same time, to build generalisations from a representative collection of particular instances. It is therefore preoccupied with the description of typical features of varied speech events - i.e. cataloguing features of speaker, addressee, setting, topic, channel, and the like. Such analyses depend upon extensive familiarity with speakers and with their culture. They also depend upon the analysis of what is particular about each act of communication - particular to a people, to a setting, and so on. This requires extensive fieldwork within a community, and comparisons between communities for discovering the status and significance of speech acts. For cultural events constrain the use of language. Ethnographers assign functions to utterances partly on the basis of the social situation in which the talk is conducted. This amounts to saying that functions are culture-specific. Ethnographic approach is thus concerned with the holistic explanations of meaning and behaviour.
The notion of ‘speech event’ is crucial to ethnographic analysis. ‘Speech event’, here, stands for a culturally recognized social activity in which language plays a specific, and often rather specialized role (e.g. classroom behaviour, or participating in a church service, etc). Any one specific event or activity from the set is known as ‘speech event’. The events and activities within the purview of one such culture are peculiar to that culture. A ‘speech event’ is essentially a part of a culture. ‘Culture’ here stands for a set of specific events or activities governed by certain conventional assumptions peculiar to a culture or a society. Classroom behaviour is, in this context, a speech event realising an independent culture having its own rules, conventions and similar constraints guiding the production and interpretation of utterances.

Levinson (1983: 179) cites the following speech events to illustrate the phenomenon of culture-specificity of meaning:

(i) Teacher : What are you laughing at?
Child : Nothing.

(ii) Interviewer : Would you like to tell us, Mr. Khan, why you have applied to Middleton College in particular?

In the first speech event the teacher’s utterance is interpreted as command to stop laughing, and that of the child as the acceptance of that command. In the second speech event the utterance is understood as ‘fishes for compliments on the institution’s behalf’. In instance (i) the interpretation could be attributed to the assumption that laughing (unless invoked by the teacher) is a restricted activity in the classroom (cf. Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975: 30). In the case of (ii) it can be attributed to the knowledge of interview conventions (Gumperz, Jupp & Roberts, 1979). One comes across numerous such situations in everyday life. It is clear that utterances (i) and (ii) above get their meanings primarily from the framework of expectations peculiar to the speech events of which they are a part. This framework may be seen as a body of knowledge essential for the production and interpretation of what Wittgenstein (1958: 11) called ‘language-games’. Since there is no limit to the language-games that a human being can
invent. Ethnographers believe that the number of speech acts or speech events also could be said to be similarly infinite.

This shows how the cultural norms governing specific speech events constrain communication. Users of a language seem to have a tacit knowledge of the societal conventions peculiar to the speech events falling within the domain of each sub-culture. Culture is an amalgamation of the sub-strands representing social institutions of different sorts like family, school, religion, ethics, etc known to the members of the society. In fact, the knowledge or awareness of the societal conventions guiding particular speech events enables the participants to produce and interpret the speech acts in a given speech event appropriately. Ignorance of these conventions poses serious problems of intelligibility and appropriacy of language usages. Ethnographic approach thus contributes substantially to Pragmatic approach propounded by Grice. Grice’s co-operative principle - ‘make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged’ makes sense only when one recognises the role and value of the appropriacy constraints peculiar to the speech event one is engaging in.

1.5.2 Social psychological approach

The social psychological approach focuses on conversational organization. It aims at identifying conversational units and rules. The central hypothesis of this approach is that conversation can best be analysed as a series of sequentially organized discreet acts. It aims at producing descriptive generalization of human behaviour. Social psychological analysis is based upon empirical observations. The analyst collects his data from a collection and close observation of face-to-face conversational interaction in a controlled setting. Using the inductive methods of social psychology, the analyst tries first to isolate a set of acts that one may reliably identify in conversation. He then tries to discover or formulate the rules regulating the deployment of these acts in conversational interaction. The rules so formulated enable the analyst to account for the performance of particular types of acts on the part of the social actors involved in conversational
interaction. In other words, the analyst can predict the occurrence of particular acts in a given situation; or, conversely, he can predict what conversational consequences a particular act will produce. The observed regularities may have featured in the conversation unconsciously, or they may have been consciously and strategically deployed.

The social psychological approach concentrates on the observation of what observable features a certain type of behaviour shows (and, conversely, what is characteristic of a particular behaviour). The major thrust of the analysis seems to be observation of the interactants’ behaviour (i.e. what they do while speaking/listening) and identifying which physical act is specifically and significantly linked with what type of verbal activity on the part of the speaker or hearer. Taylor and Cameron (1987: 16) state the following as typical social psychological concerns:

1. How does one person dominate others by producing consistently longer turns?
2. What makes the speaker gaze at the hearer while speaking?
3. What is the result of his not doing so?
4. What role does gaze play in assigning turns, holding floor, or gaining or leaving it?
5. What are the norms of sociability/solitariness?
6. How sociability/solitariness manifests in conversations?

The social psychological study of conversations closely examines the use or deployment of the various non-linguistic and paralinguistic devices such as body language, gestures, pitch and tone variations, etc in conversation by subjecting these features to close scrutiny and analysis. This kind of study is particularly useful for examining the role of these devices in conversational interaction, and for providing systematic generalizations about the use or deployment of these devices. Moreover, it has a more authentic and scientific base of observation and analysis. In fact, almost every aspect of verbal and non-verbal behaviour in conversational interaction seems to have been the subject of experiments, research projects and long-term studies. Representative studies are:

(i) Starkley Duncan and Donald Fiske’s ‘External Variables Study’
(ii) David Clark: ‘Test Frame Studies’
(i) **External Variable Study**
In their experiment called the ‘External Variables Study’ (reported in their book ‘Face-to-Face Interaction’ (1977)), Duncan and Fiske discuss at length two quite different studies they conducted on conversational interaction. Acting on the central hypothesis that verbal behaviour consists of discrete acts, they examined recorded actual conversations in order to identify observable regularities in actual conversational interactions. The aim was to analyse the statistical correlations between the frequencies of various types of acts performed in a conversation and to arrive at a generalisation concerning the role of these acts in the members’ management of conversational organization.

The central concerns of the study were identification of a set of acts and the discovery of rules regulating the deployment of these acts in actual conversational interaction. The underlying hypothesis guiding the study was that such an analysis should provide an explanatory foundation for answers to questions like:

(i) During a five-minute interaction, why did one speaker succeed in producing consistently longer turns than the other?
(ii) What was the consequence of the tendency of some speakers not to gaze at their hearer while speaking?
(iii) Why are some interactants characterised (or adjudged) by their co-conversationalists as social, while the others as solitary?
(iv) How are those characterisations linked with personal behaviour?

Duncan and Fiske’s data consisted of recorded actual conversations. The data was obtained by videotaping eighty eight subjects - conversing in pairs - in a controlled setting in visible presence of the recording apparatus. Trained transcriptionists (raters) scrutinised the conversations carefully and noted the occurrence of every type of observable feature under observation in each conversation. This is called ‘coding’ or ‘rating’. The experiment relies on the assumption that verbal behaviour consists of discreet acts. Acts chosen for coding in the ‘external variables study’ were primarily physical acts, such as laughing, smiling, pausing, turn length, nodding, gesturing, foot movement, self-grooming, etc. Acts which need to be defined in terms of unobservables, i.e. acts like approving looks, disparaging gestures, nervous laughs, etc were avoided because such acts would require interpretation by coders, and acts like
offending, flattering, explaining, etc were avoided because identification of instances of such acts would require on the part of the coders speculation about speaker’s intentions, the hearer’s private reaction and such unobservable states of events. The scores obtained in the external variable study indicated some general disposition of the participant for displaying the act, under favourable circumstances for eliciting it.

The external variable study specifically observed the observable physical acts like frequency of gazing, nodding, smiling, laughing, etc. And tried to find out which physical act is specifically and significantly linked with what type of verbal activity on the part of the speaker or the hearer. There was, for instance, found to be a predictable relationship between the amount of time a speaker held the floor and the frequency with which their hearer brought their gaze to the speaker. However, turn time was found not to have positive correlations with the frequency with which the speaker brought their gaze to the hearer.

Duncan and Fisk, however, rejected the ‘external variables approach’ as a means for discovering the structure of conversational interaction. The study revealed that generality and context dependence couldn’t be regarded as positive qualities in conversation analysis. The farther away the analyst goes from the specific and situated acts, the more distorted becomes the understanding of the original function of those acts.

(ii) David Clark’s ‘Test Frame Studies’

In ‘Test Frame Studies’, reported in Language and Action: A Structural Model of Behaviour (1983), David Clarke proved by experiment that conversation has a sequential structure. Clark’s ‘Stochastic Study’ (1983: 162–63) aimed at identifying statistically regular sequences of the speech acts by means of ‘test-frame analysis’. Clarke’s ‘test-frame analysis’ relies on the possibility of clearly distinguishing well-formed strings (or dialogues) from ill-formed ones. The substitutability of an element is determined by applying the test-frame criterion. In this experiment Clarke tried to determine whether knowledge which allowed subjects to retrieve the original sequences was based on semantic or pragmatic factors. He found that it was the event types rather than the syntactic or semantic
factors. He found that it was the event types rather than the syntactic or semantic units which served as basic units in the sequential organization of conversational interaction. He came to the conclusion that the ability to recognize sequential structure in dialogue does not seem to depend on syntactic information alone; that conversational participants know which sequences are probable and which are not; and that the units so structured are neither syntactic nor semantic in nature, but rather are pragmatic events, similar to speech acts.

This inductively based attempt to identify categories of speech acts failed to produce any clear taxonomy of speech act categories. So, in subsequent experiments, Clark employed an apriori list of categories, drawn in large part from the English vocabulary of speech act terms such as threat, promise, offend, blame, boast, etc.

The social psychological approach thus takes ‘speech act’ as the basic unit of conversation and concentrates on the sequential structure, and on speech act typology and categories. In the social psychological analysis, the conversation analyst is interested primarily in finding out how social actors, i.e. members of a speech community manage to communicate - what mechanisms they use and how in general these mechanisms reflect, or are associated with, their mental states; how the conscious or unconscious use of these mechanisms enables the co-conversationalists to understand and interpret the speaker’s verbal and non-verbal behaviour and thus systematically adjust their positions and mutually coordinate and produce a meaningful, goal-fulfilling interaction.

1.5.3 Socio-linguistic approach

The Socio-Linguistic Approach, also known as Interactional Socio-Linguistics, has diverse origins. It stems from Anthropology, Sociology and Linguistics and shares the concerns of all three fields with culture, society and language. Socio-linguistic research (Garfinkel’s studies, for example) aims at discovering the informing, constitutive rules of everyday life. These rules are expected to generate and account for human social behaviour of a given kind. The sociologist looks for rules which, when followed, allow us to generate a world of
a given kind. Goffman (1974: 5), however, seems rather sceptical of such a possibility. ‘To uncover such informing, constitutive rules of everyday life would be to perform the sociologist’s alchemy’ he says.

The major proponents of this approach are John Gumperz and Erving Goffman. The data consists of actual conversational exchanges. The central concern or focus is on how social and linguistic meanings are created during (actual) interaction. Some interactional approaches (those influenced by Gumperz) focus on how people from different cultures may share grammatical knowledge of a language, but differently conceptualise what is said such that very different messages are produced. The others (those that are influenced by Erving Goffman) focus on how language is situated in particular circumstances of social life, and on how it adds (or reflects) different types of meaning (i.e. expressive, instrumental) and structure (e.g. interactional, institutional) to those circumstances.

The point of the study is inferencing. Hearers draw inferences about the speaker’s intent (as in speech act theory and pragmatics). This inferencing is based on a wide array of verbal and non-verbal cues, which are part of cultural repertoires, for signalling meaning. These could be discovered only through a collection of actual utterances. Consequently, these inferences are much broader and more varied.

1.5.4 Exchange structure approach

The exchange structure approach, also known as conversational structure approach, is a kind of quasi-grammatical approach to conversation analysis. Its motto is ‘Towards a Grammar of Talk’. This approach was propounded by Michael Stubbs and his colleagues in the Birmingham School. The Birmingham School was a product of the English Language Research Group of Birmingham University in the 1970s. Proponents of this approach include Malcolm Coulthard, Mcll Sinclair, Martin Montgomery, Michael Stubbs and Michael McTear. They were linguists rather than psychologists or philosophers.
that conversation is neither aimless nor random; that it exhibits regularity and pattern. It dwells upon the notion developed by Michael Stubbs that it is possible to talk about ‘discourse well-formedness’. Michael Stubbs (1981: 107) observed that ‘conversational structure’ is ‘the surface distribution of forms’. Stubbs (1981) and Labov and Fanshel (1977) draw explicit parallels between syntactic structure and organization of discourse. Stubbs (1981: 101) argued, for example, that ‘one would expect at least some of the same kind of patterning in discourse as elsewhere in language’. The extreme form of this kind of analysis is found in Edmondson’s (1981) A Grammar of Conversation.

The foundations of the Birmingham model were laid in two research projects of the early 1970s: ‘the English used by teachers and pupils’, which dealt with classroom interaction and ‘the structure of verbal interaction in selected situations’, which dealt mainly with doctor-patient interviews. A later project, ‘The structure of lectures’, attempted to solve the problem of monologue, which had suggested itself in the earlier work. The starting point for the Birmingham research was a belief that the powerful tools of linguistic theory (that is, syntax) could bring insights not available from existing approaches. Their model was adapted from grammatical description. Specifically, it started out as a discourse version of Hallidayan Scale and Category Grammar. The grammatical orientation and predilections of the Birmingham school are evident from their own work as well as from their criticism of other approaches. Reviewing a collection of ethnomethodological articles on conversation, Coulthard (1984) points out the informal, ad-hoc character of much conversation analysis in the ethnomethodological paradigm, implying that this is not the kind of structural model he regards as helpful (though it is interesting, he concedes).

A grammar of talk, according to Coulthard, would consist of ‘a very small number of categories which are used to generate a very large number of structures’. There can be no ad-hoc proliferation of categories to meet the varying demands of the real data, if a model is to meet the rigorous standards by which a linguist would judge grammar. The same point is emphasized in the model developed to describe classroom interaction (Sinclair and Coulthard,
The Birmingham discourse model differs from Edmondson's model in that it proposes a different conception of a speech act. Edmondson's discourse model has the basis in speech act theory. Sinclair and Coulthard distinguish utterances in discourse from acts performed by the utterances. The term 'speech act' in Birmingham model is used in a different way to signify units of discourse. Their conception of a speech act owes little to Searle or Austin. Instead of being defined by unvarying shared felicity conditions and by the intentions of the speaker, the acts which constitute conversation in the discourse analysis of Sinclair and Coulthard are defined by their function in the discourse. Speech acts, in Birmingham model, combine in predictable structures to form higher units. This takes us back into the domain of syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations, with hierarchically ordered units and combinatory rules. Though the Birmingham model appears to be a form of structuralism and distributionalism, in the manner of Harris or Pike, it is essentially a form of functionalism. It is greatly influenced by the work of M. A. K. Halliday.

Exchange structure approach emphasises conversational structure. It seeks to describe conversation as a highly organized level of language. For example, like the ethnomethodologists it points out that many commonplace features of talk display precision timing and orderliness where one might in principle expect chaos (the classic example being turn-exchange). It holds that interlocutors standardly know what to expect in various sorts of talk and manage to meet, on indefinitely many occasions, acceptable standards of relevance and politeness (for example, they answer questions, recognize greetings, inform each other of things, and so on). The result is co-operative and non-bizarre talk, quite often involving the repetition of extremely predictable sequences.

1.5.5 Variationist approach

The Variationist approach stems from the concerns of the Birmingham School of Linguistics with linguistic variation and change. Both the initial methodology
and the theory underlying such studies are those of William Labov. Fundamental assumptions of variationist studies are that linguistic variation (i.e. heterogeneity) is patterned both socially and linguistically and that such patterns can be discovered only through systematic investigation of a speech community. Traditional variationist studies have been limited to semantically equivalent variants (i.e. alternative ways of saying the same thing (Labov. 1972). However, such studies have also been extended to texts. An important contribution of the variationist approach to discourse is the discovery of formal patterns in texts (often narratives) and the analysis of how such patterns are constrained by the text. The focus is on structural categories within texts, and the way syntactic structure (and variation) helps to define and to realize those structures. This approach uses some of the basic tools of linguistic analysis. It segments text into sections, labels those sections as parts of a structure, and assigns functions to those sections. It allows more context independence (i.e. a greater degree of autonomy for ‘text’ in relation to context) than would be allowed, for example, in interactional socio-linguistics, ethnography of communication, or conversation analysis. In the following example (1), Labov discusses the evaluating clause as separate from the rest of the story - to treat it as an example of a structural unit and a functional type that can be extracted from its story for comparison with the other evaluative devices. The variationist approach also integrates traditional linguistic categories into a framework of textual analysis. Labov’s (1972 b: 387) use of ‘One the most dramatic danger-of-death stories told by a retired postman ...’ as part of his data for the exploration of the basic structure of narrative is revealing of the prototypical variationist concerns. The utterance being presented is a type of evaluation: the means by which narrators highlight different aspects of a reported experience as a way of revealing the point of the story.

Although evaluations are sometimes separate sections of stories, they are also distributed throughout narrative and embedded within narrative clauses themselves. Narrative clauses are typically the event clauses that report ‘what happened’. Embedded evaluations rely upon deviations from the simple
syntactic structure typical of a narrative clause. The evaluation in Labov’s example above, for example, illustrates an evaluative device called a comparator, a functional classification that includes ‘the negatives, futures, modals, quasi-models, questions, imperatives, or - clauses, superlatives and comparatives’.

1.5.6 Face theory

Face theory originates in sociology, especially in the work of Erving Goffman (1967). Traditionally the idea of ‘Face’ is associated with the emotional state or aspect of a personality. For example, if a person feels uncomfortable, embarrassed or humiliated as a consequence of someone saying or doing something, one is said to ‘lose Face’. If, on the other hand, the act is pleasant and makes one feel satisfied, happy or elated, the act is said to maintain or enhance one’s Face. Face is thus something that is emotionally invested and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced. Brown and Levinson (1978) claim that Face is constantly attended to in interaction.

Face here means the ‘public self-image’ that every competent adult member of a society wishes to have for himself. Brown and Levinson explain the idea of Face by proposing the notion of the ‘Model Person’. The ‘Model Person’ (abbreviated hereafter as MP) is a very general and idealised image of a rational human being. The MP is ‘a competent adult member of a society, i.e. a wilful fluent speaker of a natural language’ (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 63). Brown and Levinson use this notion of MP for the purpose of explaining and accounting for human behaviour in general and linguistic interaction in particular.

The notion of MP can be diagrammatically represented as follows:

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MP
Endowed with two special properties

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<tr>
<td>Rationality</td>
<td>Face</td>
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MP has a precisely predictable mode of reasoning from ends to means that will achieve those ends

The want to be unimpeded

MP is endowed with two particular wants

The want to be approved of in certain respects
In their scheme the MPs are assumed to be endowed with two properties—Face and Rationality (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 67). By virtue of ‘Face’ the MP is endowed with two particular wants - roughly

(i) The want to be unimpeded, and
(ii) The want to be approved of in certain respects.

And by virtue of rationality, the MP has certain rational capacities, in particular consistent with a precisely definable mode of reasoning from ends to the means that will achieve those ends.

**Rationality**

Brown and Levinson define rationality as the application of a specific mode of reasoning which guarantees inferences from ends or goals to means that will satisfy those ends (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 69). Just as standard logics have a consequence relation that will take us from one proposition to other while preserving truth, this system of reasoning allows one to pass from ends to means and further means while preserving the satisfactoriness of those means. A further aspect of rational behaviour is its ability to weigh up different means to an end, and choose the one that most satisfies the desired goals. The notion of rationality proposed here thus involves the notion of ‘maximization’ or ‘minimum cost assessment’ in the choice of means to an end. For example, if an MP wants a drink of water, and if he could use the tap in his room or the tap in the bathroom, or the tap in the garden, it would surely be irrational to go out into the garden unnecessarily, provided that the MP has no secret want to be in the garden, etc.

This aspect of rationality may be described as ‘a perennial desire on the part of MPs, in general, not to waste effort to no avail’ (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 70).

**Face**

Face, thus, consists in two related aspects - ‘negative Face’ and ‘positive Face’. Negative Face refers to the MP’s basic claim to territories, personal preserves, the right to non-distraction – i.e. the right to freedom of action and freedom from imposition; whereas positive Face consists of the positive consistent self-image
or personality claimed by the MP. There are thus two types of basic Face-wants: (i) the MP’s want that his actions be unimpeded by others. Such wants are known as ‘Negative Face Wants’, and (ii) the MP’s want that his wants be desirable to at least some others. These are known as ‘Positive Face Wants’. The Positive Face Wants crucially include the MP’s desire that his self-image be appreciated and approved of by certain other members. MPs, however, want their goals, possessions, and achievements to be thought desirable not just by anyone, but by some particular others especially relevant to the particular goals, etc. These particular others constitute what may be called a collection of (extensionally or intensionally defined) sets, each linked to a set of goals. For example, an MP may want his literary style to be admired by writers, his roses by gardeners, his clothes by friends, his hair by a beloved, etc (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 66). These particular Face Wants are, however, highly culture specific, group specific, and ultimately idiosyncratic. There are, however, some well-defined areas of common ground between any two persons of a society. If they are strangers, this area may be reduced to an assumption of common interest in good weather or other such safe topics. If they are close friends, it may extend to a close identity of interests and desires. However, it would be extremely vulnerable to assume that one is in the set of persons who will please the other MP by commenting on his. Such an assumption may cause affront. This is the reason why attention to positive Face in any society is often highly restricted. Negative Face, with its derivative politeness of non-imposition is familiar as the formal politeness that the notion of ‘politeness’ immediately conjures up. But positive Face, and its derivative forms of positive politeness are less obvious.

Brown and Levinson (1978: 65-66) attribute the cooperative behaviour of interactants to the desirability of these basic Face wants. According to them,
every MP knows that every other MP desires that his Face wants be satisfied, and that it is in the general interests of every MP to partially satisfy them. They claim that the mutual knowledge of the MP’s public self-image or Face, and the social necessity to orient oneself to it in interaction are universal. They argue that, in general, people cooperate, and assume each other’s cooperation, in maintaining Face in interaction due to the mutual vulnerability of Face. Normally everyone’s Face depends on everyone else’s being maintained, and since people can be expected to defend their Faces if threatened, and in defending their own to threaten others’ Faces, it is in general in every participant’s best interest to maintain the other’s Face, i.e. to act in ways that assure the other participants that the MP is heedful of the assumptions concerning Face. The content of Face, however, differs in different cultures. Face respect, however, is not an unequivocal right. Moreover, it is not in general required that an MP fully satisfy another’s Face wants. In particular, a mere curtsy showing awareness of h’s Face wants acts like a diplomatic declaration of s’s good intentions. This explains the use and function of hedged expressions as a negative politeness strategy. Besides, it is common knowledge that Face can be, and routinely is, ignored - not just in cases of social breakdown (affrontery) but also in cases of urgent cooperation, or in the interests of efficiency. It is common knowledge that certain kinds of acts intrinsically threaten Face. ‘Act’ here means what is intended to be done by a verbal or non-verbal communication, just as one or more speech acts can be assigned to an utterance. Assuming that Face and Rationality are universal features of MP, it is demonstrable that the acts which by their nature run contrary to the Face wants of h and/or s are intuitively taken by the MPs as Face Threatening Acts: and that it is in general in the best interest of every MP to avoid the use of such acts wherever possible, or at least redress them so as to minimise the offence they are likely to cause.

In the scheme proposed by Brown and Levinson s and h are MPs. Among MPs it is mutual knowledge that:
(i) All MPs have positive Face and negative Face, and all MPs are rational agents, i.e. they choose rational means that will satisfy their ends.

(ii) Given that Face consists in a set of wants satisfiable only by actions (including expressions of wants) of others, it will in general be in the mutual interest of two MPs to maintain each other’s Face. So s will want to maintain h’s Face, unless he can get h to maintain s’s without recompense, by coercion, trickery, etc.

(iii) Some acts intrinsically threaten Face; these ‘Face-threatening acts’ will be referred to as FTAs.

(iv) Unless a speaker’s want to do an FTA with maximum efficiency (defined as bald on record) is greater than the speaker’s want to preserve h’s (or s’s) Face to any degree, then s will want to minimize the Face threat of the FTA.

(v) Given the following set of strategies, the more an act threatens s’s or h’s Face, the more s will want to choose a higher numbered strategy; this by virtue of the fact that these strategies afford the payoffs of increasingly minimized risk.

There are five possible strategic choices for dealing with FTAs:

1. Do the FTA on record without redressive action (i.e. doing it baldly)
2. Do the FTA on record with redressive action involving positive politeness
3. Do the FTA on record with redressive action involving negative politeness
4. Do the FTA off record
5. Not to do the FTA

Since (i)-(v) are mutually known to all MPs, no MP will choose a strategy less risky than necessary, as this may be seen as an indication that the FTA is more threatening than it actually is (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 65).

An MP thus makes a convenient choice from a set of possible conventional expressions suitable in the context, which, he thinks, would best yield the desired result (a choice that would meet the requirements of h’s Face (satisfy h’s Face wants) as well as would produce desired results with the least danger of Face-loss (due to the defensive mechanism of h as a counter measure in response to the speaker’s choice).
Brown and Levinson model assumes that in view of the mutual vulnerability of Face, an MP will seek to avoid the FTAs, or will employ certain strategies to minimise the threat. While choosing their strategies the MPs will take into consideration the relative weighting of at least three wants: (a) the want to communicate the content of the FTA, (b) the want to be efficient or urgent, and (c) the want to maintain h’s Face to any degree. Unless (b) is greater than (c), s will want to minimise the threat of his FTA. It also postulates that MPs will uniformly choose the same types of strategies under the same conditions. In other words, any MP will make the same moves as any other MP would make under the circumstances. This is so because each strategy intrinsically affords certain payoffs or advantages, and the relevant circumstances are those in which one of these payoffs would be more advantageous than any other.

In this model, acts are viewed along two dimensions- (i) on record / off-record acts and (ii) bald / redressed acts. An MP could be said to go ‘on record’ in doing an act A if his communicative intention in doing A is clear to participants. (i.e. when witnesses would agree that there is just one unambiguously attributable intention). For instance, if an MP says, ‘I hereby promise to come tomorrow’ and if participants would agree that, in saying that, he did unambiguously express the intention of committing myself to the future act, then it could be said that he went ‘on record’ as promising to do so. If, on the other hand, there is more than one unambiguously attributable intention so that the MP cannot be held to have committed himself to one particular intent, he could be said to go ‘off-record’ in doing the act. The ‘off-record’ acts leave scope for negotiability of meaning. Linguistic realisations of off-record strategies include metaphor and irony, rhetorical questions, understatement, tautologies, all kinds
of hints as to what a speaker wants or means to communicate, without doing so
directly, so that the meaning is to some degree negotiable. All the ‘direct speech
acts’ in terms of the Speech Act approach thus may be said to fall in ‘on record
act’ category while all the ‘indirect speech acts’ would fall under ‘off-record
acts’ category. This explains the strategic base of indirect illocutions - s may
have his cake and eat it.

Along the other dimension, acts could be classified as bald and redressed acts.
Doing an act baldly, without redress, involves doing it in the most direct, clear,
unambiguous and concise way possible (e.g. using the formula ‘do x!’ for
making a request). Redressive action is an action that gives Face to the
addressee. It is an attempt to counteract the potential Face damage by doing it in
such a way that indicates clearly that no such Face threat is intended or desired,
and that s in general recognises h’s Face wants and himself wants them to be
achieved. Such redressive action takes one of the two forms, depending on
which aspect of Face (negative or positive) is being stressed. This is perfectly in
accord with maxim of manner (cf. Grice’s CP). Normally, an FTA will be done
in this way only if the speaker does not fear a retribution from the addressee - for
example, in circumstances where (a) s and h both tacitly agree that the relevance
of Face demands may be suspended in the interests of urgency and efficiency;
(b) where the danger to h’s Face is very small, as in offers, requests, suggestions
that are clearly in h’s interest and do not require great sacrifices of s; and (c)
where s is vastly superior in power to h.

Positive politeness

Positive politeness is oriented toward the positive Face of h, the redressive
action in this kind of politeness tries to protect the positive self-image that the
member claims for himself. Positive politeness is approach based. It is an
attempt to save, safeguard, maintain or enhance Face. It protects the addressee’s
Face by indicating that in some respects, s wants h’s wants. This is done by
treating h as a member of an in-group - a friend, a person whose wants and
personality traits are known and liked. The potential Face threat of an act is
minimized in this case by the assurance that in general s wants at least some of
h’s wants (s, for example, considers h to be in some important respects ‘the same’ as s, with in-group rights and duties and expectations of reciprocity, or by the implication that s likes h so that the FTA doesn’t mean a negative evaluation in general of h’s Face).

**Negative politeness**

Negative politeness is oriented mainly towards partially satisfying (or redressing) h’s negative Face, his basic want to maintain claims of territory and self-determination. Negative politeness is thus essentially avoidance-based, and realizations of negative politeness strategies consist in assurances that the speaker recognizes and respects the addressee’s negative Face wants and will not (or will only minimally) interfere with the addressee’s freedom of action. Negative politeness is, therefore, characterised by self-effacement, formality, and restraint, with attention to very restricted aspects of h’s self image centering on his want to be unimpeded. FTAs in such cases, are redressed with apologies for interfering or transgressing, with linguistic and non-linguistic deference, with hedges on the illocutionary force of the act, with impersonalising mechanisms (such as passives) that distance s and h from the act, and with other softening mechanisms that give the addressee an ‘out’- a Face-saving line of escape, permitting h to feel that h’s response is not coerced.

There is a natural tension in negative politeness between (a) the desire to go on record as a prerequisite to being seen to pay Face (i.e. to let h know that s wants A done) and (b) the desire to go ‘off-record’ to avoid imposing. The desire to pay Face in (a) is the desire to get one’s Face want satisfied by getting h to recognise that s wants A done, whereas (b) involves implicating, rather than overtly stating, one’s communicative intentions making use of different strategies including indirectness. A compromise is reached in conventionalised indirectness. For whatever the indirect mechanism is used to do an FTA, once it is fully conventionalised as a way of doing that FTA, it is no longer off-record.

Face theory thus provides us with a tool for describing, with much more precision and simplicity, the quality of social relationships. These are the dimensions by which individuals manage to relate to others in particular ways.
The cross-cultural applicability of this tool, with its explanatory account has more than purely descriptive status. Anthropologists routinely make inferences about the nature of social relationships by observations of their interactional quality. They do this unreflectingly on the basis of implicit assumptions about Universal principles of face-to-face interaction. These assumptions, when made explicit, amount to the principles of politeness described here.

The notion of Face-wants explains the rationale behind h choosing to cooperate with s and adopting s’s personal goal in a goal directed talk exchange. Face theory, like the Pragmatic approach, thus provides a rationality-based account of human interactive behaviour. It views positive and negative politeness as Face satisfying acts. Face theory explains speech act typology in terms of functional classification. Speech acts may be classified as per their function in terms of Face-threatening, defending, maintaining, preserving, enhancing, etc. The present model of analysis of language usage is thus an attempt at a description of the principles that lie behind the construction of social behaviour.

This predictive model is essentially built on the assumption of rational agents. Brown and Levinson begin their account of language use by considering how this rational Face-endowed being, this cardboard figure (MP), would use language when confronted with (i) the want to satisfy another MP’s Face wants, and (ii) the want to say things that infringe those wants. They show this by deriving linguistic strategies as ‘means’ satisfying communicative and Face oriented ‘ends’. The MP, here, is a construct, an abstraction - a sort of common man, or an ideal being representing the universally agreeable choices and actions of human beings in normal circumstances. The properties attributed to the MP are simply the assumptions that all interacting humans know that they will be expected to be oriented to. These assumptions are useful especially as they facilitate making the most sense of the data. Generally, a talk exchange is heard as coherent only on the assumption that s and h intended to cooperate, and rationally chose a means that would achieve their cooperative ends. It is actually demonstrable in language use that such rational assumptions are in fact made. Moreover, it can be demonstrated that in order to derive the kind of inferences
from what is said that speakers can be shown to draw, such assumptions simply have to be made. In fact this point lies at the heart of the Gricean (1967, 1975) theory of ‘conversational implicature’. If A says ‘what time is it?’ and B replies ‘(well) the postman’s been already’, then A assumes that what B said was rationally oriented to what A said, and hence A derives from B’s utterance the inference that it is, say, past 11:00 am. This kind of inference is referred to as conversational implicature. The whole exchange is heard as coherent only on the assumption that B intended to cooperate, and rationally chose a means that would achieve his cooperative end. In language usage, thus, it is demonstrable that such rational assumptions are in fact made.

1.5.7 Ethnomethodological approach

Ethnomethodological approach has origins in sociology. It arose from Garfinkel’s involvement in a research project in the late 1940s examining the behaviour of jurors. The principles of conversational organization formulated by Harold Garfinkel (1974) provided the general theoretical backdrop for ethnomethodological conversation analysis. Ethnomethodology, as Garfinkel (1974: 18) put it, is ‘an organizational study of a member’s own knowledge of his ordinary affairs, or his own organized enterprises’.

Practical reasoning and intersubjective accountability

The fundamental assumption underlying ethnomethodological conversation analysis is that all aspects of social action and interaction can be examined in terms of conventionalised or institutionalised structural organizations which analysably inform their production (Heritage, 1984b: 1-2). Ethnomethodology assumes that there are discoverable structural organizations (rule systems or mechanisms) which serve to explain the observable regularities of conversational behaviour. Ethnomethodologists believe that ‘practical reasoning activities’ are managed by social actors who strive to produce what they and others in the community will recognize as orderliness in those activities. Ethnomethodology tries to account for this orderliness by identifying the rules, methods and procedures that produce this orderliness. Garfinkel viewed
orderliness in conversational interaction as resulting from the interactants' own knowledge, understanding or awareness of the commonsense or 'practical reasoning' rules which apply to different conversational situations, and form the interactional consequences of their choices of following or not following the rules. Interactants presumably share a tacit knowledge of the rule-systems and they know that however they act, their behaviour will be held accountable by their co-interactants. Accountability of action does not, however, entail the social actor's adherence to the rules or norms. Actors may, or may not, act in accordance with the normatively organized constraints which bear upon the acts, subject only to the condition that 'deviant actions may ultimately be recognizable, accountable, and sanctionable as such' (Heritage, 1984a: 291).

The ethnomethodological model differs from the orthodox models of conversation in that it does not see interactional behaviour as rule-governed. It holds rather that actors design their interactional behaviour with an awareness of its accountability. That is to say that the actors are aware of the rule relevant to the situation in which they find themselves, and that they choose to follow (or not to follow) the rules in the light of what they expect the interactional consequences of that choice to be. They assume that their co-interactants also know the rule and will be judging their behaviour accountable for its conformity or non-conformity to the relevant rule. Ordinarily, the relevant rules will be followed. But conversationalists may choose to contravene the rules and defeat the expectations. Such rule violations do indeed occur quite frequently. Interactants know that their deviation from the rules will be held accountable. When the rules are not followed, the co-interactants come to terms with this deviation by looking for the reasons as to why the actor is making a point, is angry or sloppy or inattentive, etc. It is this awareness of the accountability of their actions that compels conversationalists to conform to the relevant rules. This explains the regularity, stability, and normativity of the patterns observable in conversational behaviour. The rules are conformed to not because they determine behaviour, but because actors are generally aware of the consequences of non-conformity (e.g. what inferences they will generate and what the
subsequent effects of these inferences will amount to, etc). It is in this way that rules have normative force without having to be seen as internalised determinants of conduct.

The social actors themselves may not be explicitly aware of the rules but they are certainly aware of the expectations. It is the social scientist (or conversation analyst) who formulates these rules from the observed regularities of human behaviour for his own convenience in analysing conversation. Actors, for example, may not have an explicit knowledge of the rule which analysts would formulate as ‘return a greeting’; but they are aware of the expectation that greetings will be returned and of the probable inferences that will be drawn if those expectations are not fulfilled. Actors follow interactional rules (such as ‘return a greeting’) because they are aware of the interactional consequences of not doing so. The failure to conform to the norms here, for example, would generate inferences like - the recipient did not hear the greeting, or is being rude, etc.

**Reflexive intersubjectivity**

Closely related to the notion of the accountability of behaviour in interaction is the notion of ‘intersubjectivity’. As Heritage (1984a: 256) suggests, ‘Linked actions are the basic building blocks of intersubjectivity’. Intersubjectivity is the mechanism by which individuals participating in an interaction reach a shared interpretation of its constituent activities and of the rules to which they are designed to conform. As interactions are reflexively accountable, an actor’s response to another actor’s behaviour will be taken as indicating the respondent’s understanding of that behaviour. This ‘display’ of understanding by the respondent actor may then, in the third position, be ratified or corrected by the original actor. Supposing that A and B are the interactants, if A said in reply to B’s utterance - ‘I am sorry, I don’t have a watch’. A would thereby manifest his understanding of B’s utterance as ‘a request for the time’, an understanding which led him to design his own behaviour so as to conform to the rule ‘reply to a request’. Just as important is the subsequent opportunity for to correct or confirm A’s displayed understanding of B’s original utterance. Thus, if B said in

- 61 -
the third position - 'no, not the time, a dime', B would display his understanding both of A’s reply as well as of B’s original utterance and what would have been an appropriate response to it. A simple response like - ‘Ah, too bad’ on B’s part, however, would have confirmed A’s displayed interpretation of B’s original utterance as ‘a request for the time’. By means of such reliance on the reflexive accountability of actions situated in a sequentially ordered progression, actors ‘display’ their own understanding and correct or confirm those of their interactants, thereby coming to construct a shared understanding sufficient for the practical purposes of the interaction. Taylor and Cameron (1987: 101) describe this construction of shared understanding as ‘Sequential Architecture of Intersubjectivity’.

Garfinkel begins his account of intersubjectivity by first stipulating the privacy of different individuals’ experiences of their surroundings and the interactions in which they participate. However, the inaccessibility of the other’s private experience does not prevent actors from achieving an inter-subjective ‘shared world’ as an ordinary, practical accomplishment. Heritage (1984a: 59-60) observes that despite their non-identical experiences and despite their lack of access to the full particularity of one another’s experiences, the actors proceed on the basis of the assumption that their experiences are ‘identical for all practical purposes’. This is how a world of shared experiences is brought into being. Through the sequential progression of interaction the actors succeed in displaying their understandings of its constituent events and of the rules to which they are ‘orienting’, thus making possible the achievement of a shared interactional world. This shared world, since it is a product of the sequential progression of interaction, is publicly observable.

In conversations, interactants operate under the common assumption that there are no interactionally relevant differences between their experiences and that, if some should arise, they will inevitably be made public through their behaviour and its normative accountability. Once public, there are methodical ways of adjusting their understandings to bring them to a common ground that is identical for all practical purposes (i.e. similar enough for the practical demands
of the current interaction). Thus, mutual inter-subjective understanding arises as an interactional accomplishment based on (a) the interactants’ assumption that relevant differences will be made manifest in the interaction and (b) their interactional methods for recognizing and adjusting the differences that do surface. Both (a) and (b) may be seen to be dependant upon the reflexive accountability and sequentially ordered actions.

Sequential inter-subjectivity and reflexive accountability are the fundamental principles of ethnomethodological conversation analysis. Sequential inter-subjectivity is made possible by the reflexive accountability of actions which is characteristic of conversations. Because of these two principles the non-participant analysts are able to detect the nature of the actions being performed as well as the rules to which they are designed to conform. These principles provide the basis for the analytical methodology of conversation analysis.

**Ethnomethodological tools**

The ethnomethodological research has opened a rich mine of empirical findings regarding the details of conversational organization. It has established, for example, that conversationalists use mechanisms like turn taking, adjacency pairs, and preference organisation to create a network of reflexively accountable intersubjective actions which comprise conversation. The discovery of turn-taking system, adjacency pairs and preference organisation are the best-known features of ethnomethodological model of conversational structure.

**Turn-taking**

The discovery of the turn-taking mechanism and recognition of its seminal significance in conversational organisation is one of the fundamental contributions of ethnomethodological conversation analysis. In their article ‘A simplest systematics for the organization of turn taking in conversation’ Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974, rpt. 1978), argued for the existence of a turn-taking mechanism in conversational interaction. In allocating a turn to an individual, the turn-taking mechanism initially allows the individual at least one ‘turn-constructional unit’ (TCU) - i.e. an utterance that is interpretable as recognizably complete. Instances of the unit types so usable allow a projection
of the unit type under way, and what, roughly, it will take for a unit type to be completed.... The first possible completion of a first such unit constitutes an initial 'transition relevance place' (TRP). The rules for the turn-taking system stated by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1978: 13) could be summed up as follows:

At initial turn-constructional unit’s initial transition relevance place:
(a) If the turn-so-far is constructed as to involve the use of a ‘current speaker selects next’ technique, then the party so selected has rights, and is obliged, to take next turn to speak, and no others have such rights or obligations, transfer occurring at that place.
(b) If the turn-so-far is so constructed as not to involve the use of ‘current speaker selects next’ technique, self-selection for next speakership may, but need not, be instituted, with first starter acquiring rights to a turn, transfer occurring at that place.
(c) If the turn-so-far is so constructed as not to involve the use of ‘current speaker selects next’ technique, then current speaker may, but need not, continue, unless another self-selects.

The turn-taking mechanism seems to rely heavily on ‘current speaker selects next’ technique. If, at initial turn-constructional unit’s initial transition-relevance place, neither (a) nor (b) has operated, and, following the provision of (c), current speaker has continued, then the rule-set (a)-(c) reapply at next transition relevance place, and recursively at each next transition-relevance place, until transfer is effected.

These rules are proposed as a formulation of the norms speakers and hearers orient to in the management of the process of holding, securing, and giving up ‘the floor’ in conversation. In each case, for example, a ‘current’ action is analysed as projecting the production of a relevant ‘next’ (or range of ‘next’) by another speaker. When the relevant ‘next’ occurs, it is characteristically treated as requiring no special explanation. A relevantly produced next action is specifically non-accountable. When the relevance or appropriate ‘next’ does not occur, however, the matter is especially accountable (Heritage, 1984a: 253).

It is hypothesized that by their ‘orientation” to these rules and by the accountability of actions that fail to conform to them, interactants are able to produce the orderly exchange of turns that is so characteristic of ordinary conversations. For failing to abide by these norms would, by virtue of the
accountability feature, generate inferences with regards to the cause of such failure and would lead interactants to criticise and, if necessary, correct it by sanctions.

**Adjacency pairs**

An ‘adjacency pair’ is a pair of utterances the parts of which are regularly produced one after the other, generally by different speakers. In ‘Greeting - Greeting’ pair, for example, speaker A produces a ‘first part’ - a greeting, and then speaker B replies with a ‘second part’ - another greeting. A basic rule of adjacency pair operation is - ‘given the recognizable production of a first pair part, on its first possible completion its speaker should stop and a next speaker should start and produce a second pair part from the pair type the first is recognizably a member of’ (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973: 239). Prototypical adjacency pairs are ‘Invitation - Acceptance or Declination’, ‘Assessment - Agreement or Disagreement’, ‘Self-Deprecation - Disagreement or Agreement’, ‘Accusation - Denial or Admission’, ‘Summons - Answer’, ‘Request - Acceptance or Refusal’, etc.

It is important to remember here that the adjacency pair rule is not seen as a determinant of the speakers’ behaviour; rather it is a ‘structural organization’ to which the speakers orient and which thereby shapes their expectation that the appropriate second pair part will follow the production of the first pair part. In this sense, the second pair part (i.e. the sequentially relevant next move) is ‘accountably due’ (i.e. it is expected to be produced); and if it is not forthcoming, interactants will look for some account for its absence.

The notion of adjacency pair is crucial to the ethnomethodological model of conversational structure. In fact, the whole operation of the turn-taking system seems to rely upon it. And nearly every structural feature so far identified by conversation analysts (e.g. ‘openings’, ‘closings’, ‘repair’, ‘story-telling’, etc.) somehow incorporates the notion of adjacency pair into its formulation. The methodology of ethnomethodological conversation analysis seems to be best revealed in adjacency pair mechanism. And, at the same time, it is in the notion of the adjacency pair that the ethnomethodological principles on which
conversation analysis is based are most usefully and obviously employed. Without the concept of the adjacency pair, there would be no ethnomethodological model of conversation; and in turn, without the ethnomethodological principles of accountability and of the sequential architecture of intersubjectivity, there would be no concept of the adjacency pair. ‘Adjacency pair’ mechanism is not simply the statement of an empirical regularity, or of an invariant relationship. It is a normative framework for actions which is accountably implemented. Heritage (1984a: 247) makes this point sufficiently clear where he says. ‘...we are here in pursuit of structural organizations which shape the expectations, understandings, and actions of interactants’. The analyst thus explores adjacency pairs in pursuit of structural.

**Preference organisation**

Preference system is an important component of ethnomethodological conversation analysis. It is closely related with the notion of the adjacency pair. The notion of preference system, and of preferred and dispreferred second turns, is the consequence of the ethnomethodological practice of viewing interactants’ orientation to conversational rules and structures as accountable. The production of a first pair part of a particular adjacency pair makes the subsequent production, by the next speaker, of the most appropriate second pair part ‘accountably due’. If the appropriate (i.e. preferred) response is not forthcoming, distinctive marking of the actual response produced can serve, at least, to indicate its speaker’s acknowledgement of the absence of the preferred response and, thus also, of the dispreferred status of the actual response. The second speakers are seen to accompany the dispreferred second pair part with the characteristic features of markedness as a signal of their awareness of its dispreferred status, thereby acknowledging their orientation to the appropriate adjacency pair rule and to the accountable absence of the appropriate second pair part. For, just as ‘a question’ projects the relevant occurrence of ‘an answer’ next, so ‘an invitation’ projects the relevant occurrence of ‘an acceptance’ next. And just as the failure to answer a question is accountable, so too is the failure to respond affirmatively to invitations (Heritage, 1984a: 270). The important thing
to note in relation to the ethnomethodological notion of preference is that it is an essential part of the attempt to explain how conversational rules, such as the adjacency pair rule, actually come to influence the component utterances of the conversational sequences to which they apply. This is accomplished by the participants’ knowledge that, at the very least, a displayed awareness of the relevance of the rule is required, even if it is not being obeyed. Hence, when speakers produce the rejection of an invitation they should somehow indicate in that rejection their awareness that what they should have done, according to the rule for invitations, is to accept. In this way, respondents may succeed both in achieving their own aims (e.g. declining the proffered invitation) and, at the same time, in showing their desire to conform to the interactional rules. When this awareness is not shown, i.e. if no markedness feature appears, the speaker’s behaviour is held accountable and inferences are drawn regarding the non-occurrence of such markedness features. The inferences may include assessment of the speaker’s personality, such ‘that he is proud, or rude, or blunt and snobbish, etc. This is accomplished in a publicly displayed manner and is available for confirmation or correction.

In many cases, the first pair part of an adjacency pair will accept either of two possible second pair parts. For instance, an invitation has as its second pair part either an ‘accept’ or a ‘reject’. In other words, the issuing of an invitation leads those who tacitly know the relevant adjacency pair rule to expect the next speaker either immediately to accept it or reject it. However, one of these two options will be ‘preferred’ over the other. The term ‘preferred’ is used here not in its ordinary sense relating to psychological motivations implying the relevant speaker’s own wishes, desires, motives or the like. It does not refer to speakers’ or hearers’ individual preferences. Rather it is used as a technical term for referring to ‘sequence and turn organisational features of conversation’ (Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks, 1977: 362), and ‘to describe the systematic features of the design of turns in which certain alternative but non-equivalent actions are taken, as well as aspects of the sequential organization of such actions (Atkinson and Drew, 1979: 59). The term ‘preference’, here, refers to the
general rule regarding the appropriate favoured or expected response to an interactional unit.

It has been observed that generally the preferred second pair parts (e.g. the acceptance of an invitation, or agreement with an assessment) are typically produced immediately following the completion of the relevant first pair Part, and without any special features of markedness. The dispreferred second pair parts, on the other hand, (e.g. the rejection of an invitation, or a disagreement with an assessment), are regularly accompanied by the characteristics of markedness such as pausing before delivery, the use of a preface (e.g. (i) markers like ‘uh’ or ‘well’, (ii) token agreements, appreciations and apologies (iii) qualifiers, the use of accounts, i.e. explanations for why the preferred second pair part is not forthcoming), etc. The ‘declination component’, a form suited to the nature of the first pair part of ‘Invitation - Acceptance or Declination’ adjacency pair, for example, is characteristically indirect or mitigated (Heritage, 1984a; Levinson, 1983).

In ethnomethodological conversation analysis the social scientist (i.e. the conversation analyst) does not impose his analysis on the conversational data; rather the social actors (i.e. the interactants or participants in a conversation) themselves, during the sequential progression of the interaction, keep on analysing the conversation. The interactants identify particular actions or rules which these actions are designed to obey. They manifest their identifications in their subsequent actions and reactions. They display their understanding of events in their subsequent responses to events. The responses so displayed are either silently ratified or corrected by the producers of the original events. It is this phenomenon that enables the professional analyst to obtain a clear grasp of the ways in which the participants themselves are analysing the interaction. The reflexive accountability of actions and the related public display of understanding thus allow the analyst a view of the ‘emic’ categorisation of actions and action sequences with which the participants themselves are operating. The analyst thus employs analytical methods which are both ‘emic’ and empirical. They are empirical in that the analyst does not have to rely on his
own intuition in identifying particular actions or rules which these actions are
designed to obey. The participants themselves manifest their identifications in
their subsequent actions and reactions. In other words, the analyst doesn’t have
to impose his analysis on the conversational data; the conversation itself wears
its (or the participants’) own inherent (emic) analysis ‘on its sleeve’. In
ethnomethodological conversation analysis thus the analyst explores the
techniques people use while engaged in linguistic interaction. This approach
emphasises empirical, inductive data analyses in which natural conversations are
systematically analysed to identify the factors governing the conversational
mechanisms. The central concern, here, is to determine how individuals
experience, make sense of, and report their interactions. The pragmatic approach
makes use of the ethnomethodological tools for further interpretation of
utterances. Conversation analysis, as its title suggests, focuses on the analysis of
conversations and not on the production of texts. Pragmatics is concerned with
both. Conversation analysis thus covers only a portion of the total scope of
pragmatics.

1.5.8 Speech act approach

The theory of speech acts has origins in philosophy. It emerged from the work of
the British philosopher J. L. Austin. It was a reaction to some influential
traditional attitudes toward language, especially that of the logical positivists.
For the purposes of the present study the relevant logical-positivist assumptions
could be summed up as:

(i) The basic sentence type in language is declarative (i.e. a statement or
    assertion)
(ii) The principal use of language is to describe states of affairs (by making
    statements)
(iii) The meaning of utterances can be described in terms of their truth or
    falsity.

An important issue for the logical positivist thinkers was the verifiability of a
sentence, i.e. the extent to which, and by which, the sentence can be shown to be
true or false. In his 1955 series of Harvard University lectures published
posthumously as ‘How To Do Things With Words’ (1962), J. L. Austin refuted the claims of the logical positivist thinkers. In the first few lectures he distinguished between constative and performative utterances. Constatives, he said, are used to make statements. Performatives, on the other hand, are special kinds of utterances used to perform actions that could be stated explicitly by using performative verbs which name the acts. However, in the light of the more general theory proposed in the latter part of the book. Austin (1962: 150) argued that rather than a list of ‘explicit performative verbs’, what is needed is a list of ‘illocutionary forces’ which mark ‘speech acts’ that can be stated explicitly by using the performative formulae. Thus, by first proposing a distinction between performatives and constatives and then dismantling it himself, Austin tried systematically to develop a comprehensive theory of ‘speech acts’. He ultimately argued that all utterances, performatives and constatives alike, perform actions. For example, the utterance ‘I promise to be there tomorrow’ performs the act of ‘promising’. The utterance ‘grass is green’ performs the act of ‘asserting’, etc. Austin labelled these acts as ‘speech acts’. Speech Act Theory thus rests on the basic insight that language is used not to just to describe the world, but to perform a range of actions that can be indicated in the performance of the utterance itself.

Acts associated with the speaker’s utterance:

In a given speech situation a number of things are going on at once both in terms of the production of an utterance and in terms of its function. The users of a language (i.e. s and h) perform several actions in the production of an utterance. In other words, there are many kinds of acts associated with the speaker’s utterance, e.g.

(i) The speaker will characteristically have moved his jaw and tongue and made noises (acts of making movement and producing sounds)

(ii) He will further have characteristically performed some acts within the class which includes referring to Kennedy or Khrushchev or the North Pole; and he will characteristically have performed some acts within the class which includes predicating some action of the referent
He will characteristically have performed some acts within the class which includes informing (passing on information of the kind of Grice’s ‘natural meaning’), or irritating, or boring his hearers.

He will also have performed acts within the class which includes making statements, asking questions, issuing commands, giving reports, greeting, and warning.

Drawing upon these acts, Austin segmented the speech act into three component acts on the basis of the effect of utterances on the behaviour of speakers and hearers. He observed that three acts underlie the issuing of an utterance:

(a) A locutionary act - performing the act of saying something
(b) An illocutionary act - performing an act in saying something, and
(c) A perlocutionary act - performing an act by saying something.

**Locutionary act**

A locutionary act, according to Austin (1962: 95), is the act of ‘saying something’ in the sense of ‘doing something’. For Austin (1962: 148), ‘saying something in the full normal sense of doing something’ includes:

(i) the utterance of certain noises
(ii) the utterance of certain words in a certain construction, and
(iii) the utterance of (ii) with a certain meaning, i.e. with a certain sense and reference.

In technical terms, a locutionary act consists of (i) a phonetic act, (ii) a phatic act, and (iii) a rhetoric act (Austin, 1962: 95). The phonetic act is merely the act of uttering certain noises. The phatic act is the act of uttering certain vocables or words, i.e. noises of certain types belonging to, and as belonging to, a certain vocabulary; conforming to, and as conforming to, a certain grammar. The rhetoric act is the performance of an act of using those vocables with a certain more or less definite sense and reference. Austin said, for example, that ‘the cat is on the mat’ reports a phatic act, whereas ‘he said that the cat was on the mat’ reports a rhetoric act. A locutionary act thus involves the utterance of an expression with sense and reference, i.e. using sounds and words with meaning. This seems to capture the properties of the original constitutive group - the act of ‘saying something’. Locutions, according to Austin, are ‘the full units of speech’. Searle (1971: 262-75), however, rejected the notion of ‘locutionary act’. He argued that
Illocutionary act was not a separate species but a species of the illocutionary act. Instead, he proposed the content carrying propositional act of an utterance.

**Illocutionary Acts**

Illocutionary act, for Austin, is an act of investing an utterance with some communicative force, such as promising, warning, asserting, requesting, etc. An illocutionary act is performed characteristically 'in saying' a locution, such that what is said has the force, not the meaning, of that illocution. It is a case where 'saying is doing'. This level captures the acts initially viewed as performatives. These acts are conventional, and they could be made explicit by using a suitable performative verb in performative formulae. Some of the English verbs and verb phrases associated with illocutionary acts are - state, assert, describe, Warn, remark, comment, command, order, request, apologize, censure, approve, welcome, promise, express approval and express regret. Austin claimed that there were over a thousand such expressions in English.

Illocutionary acts are purposeful and goal directed. In a verbal interaction, utterances further the interests of social actors. Utterances can do this because they are recognizable tokens of illocutionary act types (Searle, 1969: 21). An illocutionary act, which can be designated by a specific name, has a shared core of meaning. Conversely, there are shared criteria for identifying those acts. Illocutions themselves come off because speakers can recognize them via shared knowledge of the types and their conditions of production. In fact, the speech act rules are part of one’s linguistic competence.

**Perlocutionary act**

A perlocutionary act consists in performing an act by saying something. The listener may feel amused, persuaded, warned, etc as a consequence of the speaker’s utterance. An assertion, for instance, may have the perlocutionary effect of persuading the hearer that something is the case, or a warning may prevent the hearer from doing something. Perlocutionary act, thus, refers to the ‘consequential effects’ of an utterance on the hearer. The illocutionary force of an utterance may not, however, coincide with its perlocutionary effect. Thus, if s warns h against a particular course of action, h may or may not heed s’s warning.
Illocutionary act refers to speaker’s intention, whereas perlocutionary act refers to the hearer’s uptake of the speaker’s intention and his reaction to it. The term Illocutionary Force may be said to refer to the illocutionary intent borne by an utterance.

In Austin’s (1962: 100) scheme, a Total Speech Act consists of these three kinds of act. In other words in the performance of a speech act one characteristically performs a locutionary act, an illocutionary act, and a perlocutionary act. In fact, all utterances perform speech acts that are consist of a ‘locutionary act’- the production of sounds and words with meaning or the act of ‘saying something’; ‘an illocutionary act’- the issuing of an utterance with conventional communicative force achieved ‘in saying’ something; and a ‘perlocutionary act’- the actual effect achieved ‘by saying’ something. The total speech act has to be studied with respect to the total speech situation. The words used are thus to some extent to be ‘explained’ by the context in which they are designed to be or have actually been used.

Speech Act Theory assumes that utterances have two kinds of meaning: (i) locutionary meaning and (ii) illocutionary meaning. Locutionary meaning refers to the proposition expressed by an utterance by virtue of the expression used by the speaker as a vehicle for the act of communication. It is, therefore, also known as propositional meaning. Words have meanings. But a word by itself does not express a proposition (or a complete thought). Words denote or refer to things in the world, whereas sentences express propositions. A sentence gets its meaning from the meanings of its component expressions (i.e. words and phrases or lexemes) and from the syntactic structure that binds these expressions. It is through sentences that we express propositions concerning the things that words denote. In terms of the speech act theory, the proposition so expressed by the sentence underlying an utterance is referred to as the locutionary meaning. This is the basic literal meaning, or sense, the sentence possesses by virtue of its component words and syntactic structure. This meaning results from the meanings of the individual words and the syntactic structure of the concerned sentence.
The illocutionary meaning, also known as illocutionary force, is the speaker-intended meaning. This is the meaning the speaker intends to communicate to the hearer. This is the meaning the speaker intends the utterance or written text to carry, and which the listener or reader generally understands as the one the speaker intends him to infer in the given context. This meaning is, therefore, also known as ‘communicative value’ of the utterance. It is through this meaning that the speaker communicates his intention regarding what ‘illocutionary force’ the utterance shall have (i.e. whether it is intended as a ‘request’ or as an ‘order’, etc); and, conversely, it is through this meaning that the hearer understands what type of speech act the speaker is performing. The illocutionary meaning is the product of the interaction between the locutionary meaning and the context of the utterance. The hearer has little problem in arriving at the illocutionary meaning of the utterance from the locutionary meaning because, though it is culture-specific, the given usage is more or less a conventional phenomenon. Interlocutors with shared cultural background can, therefore, infer the speaker-intended meaning by applying the norms of rationality to the proposition expressed by the locution.

Searle’s position on speech act theory:

Searle’s (1969) analysis of an utterance into speech acts closely resembles the one proposed by Austin. A Total Speech Act, according to Searle, consists of- (i) an utterance act, (ii) a propositional act, (iii) an illocutionary act, and (iv) a perlocutionary act. An utterance act consists simply in uttering a string of words. Propositional act includes the secondary acts of reference (i.e. referring to someone or something) and predication (i.e. predicing some act or property of the person or thing referred to). Illocutionary act refers to the communicative value the speaker intends the utterance to have. Illocutionary acts are constituted by rules. In addition to being rule-governed, they are intentional, they have a name, and they are what a speaker is doing, in relation to the hearer, with words. Correlated with the notion of illocutionary acts is the notion of the perlocutionary act. Perlocutionary act refers to the consequences or effects such acts have on the actions, thoughts, or beliefs, etc of hearers. For example, by
arguing one may ‘persuade’ or ‘convince’ a person; by warning him one may ‘scare’ or ‘alarm’ him; by making a request one may ‘get him to do something’; by informing him one may ‘convince’ him or enlighten, edify, inspire him, or get him to realise something. These expressions denote perlocutionary acts. Illocutionary act refers to speaker’s intention; whereas perlocutionary act refers to the hearer’s uptake of the speaker’s intention. The term ‘Illocutionary Force’ refers to the illocutionary intent borne by an utterance. Austin distinguished between illocutionary uptake (i.e. h’s understanding of the illocutionary force of an utterance) and perlocutionary effect (i.e. h’s reaction to the speaker’s utterance as a result of the illocutionary uptake). Illocutionary uptake precedes the perlocutionary effect.

An utterance, for Searle, consists of a proposition and the devices that are indicative of the illocutionary force. Illocutionary force is conventionally linked with explicit performatives and other illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs). The characteristic grammatical form of the illocutionary act is the complete sentence (it can be one word sentence); and the characteristic grammatical form of the propositional acts are parts of sentences- grammatical predicates for the act of predication, and proper names, pronouns, and certain other sorts of noun phrases for reference. Searle points out that Utterance acts, Propositional acts, and Illocutionary acts are separate acts which are performed alongside each other. In fact, these are not separate things that speakers do simultaneously. On the contrary, propositional acts and utterance acts are the acts that one characteristically performs in performing an illocutionary act. Illocutionary and propositional acts consist characteristically in uttering words in sentences in certain contexts, under certain conditions and with certain intentions. It is essential to any specimen of linguistic communication that it involves a linguistic act. When one takes a noise or a mark on paper to be an instance of linguistic communication, as a message, one of the things that is involved in his so taking that noise or mark is that he should regard it as having been produced with certain intentions. He cannot just regard it as a natural phenomenon, like a stone, a waterfall, or tree. In order to regard it as an instance
of linguistic communication one must suppose that its production is a speech act. Austin, however, observes that speech acts are successful only if they satisfy several criteria, known as felicity conditions.

The illocutionary acts, it is claimed, are the primary units of meaning in the use and comprehension of natural languages. Searle (1969: 21) argues that it is not the symbol or word or sentence, or even the token of the symbol or word or sentence, which is the unit of linguistic communication, but it is the production of the token in the performance of the speech act that constitutes the basic unit of linguistic communication. To put this point more precisely, the production of the sentence token under certain conditions is the illocutionary act and the illocutionary act is the minimal unit of linguistic communication. In Vanderveken's (1990: 1) view, any speaker who uses a sentence with the purpose of communicating a thought in a context of utterance means to perform a speech act of the type called by Austin 'an illocutionary act'. This view places speech acts at the centre of the study of language, meaning and communication.

**Classes of illocutionary force:**

Austin (1962: 94) proposed to classify the 'illocutionary forces' by producing a taxonomy of performative verbs. He arrived at a classification of speech acts into five very general families of related and overlapping classes, viz.

(i) **Verdictives**: an exercise of judgment
(ii) **Exercitives**: an assertion of influence or exercising of power
(iii) **Commissives**: an assuming of an obligation, or declaring of an intention
(iv) **Behabitives**: the adopting of an attitude
(v) **Expositives**: the clarifying of reasons, arguments, and communications

(Austin, 1962: 163)

Improving upon Austin's typology, J. R. Searle (1976) provided a different classification of speech acts. Searle sought for a more abstract schema based on felicity conditions. According to Searle there are just five basic kinds of action that one can perform in speaking, by means of the following five types of utterance:

(i) **Representatives** (or assertives), which commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition (paradigm cases: asserting, concluding, etc.)
(ii) **Directives**, which are attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something (paradigm cases: requesting, questioning),

(iii) **Commissives**, which commit the speaker to some future course of action (paradigm cases: promising, threatening, offering)

(iv) **Expressives**, which express a psychological state (Paradigm cases: thanking, apologizing, welcoming, congratulating)

(v) **Declarations**, which effect immediate changes in the institutional state of affairs and which tend to rely on elaborate extra-linguistic institutions (paradigm cases: excommunicating, declaring war, christening, firing from employment)

**Felicity conditions:**

The notion of felicity conditions emerged from Austin’s (1962) distinction between the so-called performatives and constatives. Constatives (i.e. statements, assertions and utterances like them), Austin said, could be judged or assessed in terms of truth or falsehood. Performatives, on the contrary, could not be true or false. However, they could go wrong or be unhappy or infelicitous in a number of ways. Austin produced a typology of conditions which performatives must meet in order to succeed. He called these conditions felicity conditions.

Austin distinguished three main categories of felicity conditions:

(i) There must be a conventional procedure having a conventional effect

(ii) The circumstances and persons must be appropriate, as specified in the procedure. The procedure must be executed (a) correctly and (b) completely.

(iii) Often, (a) the persons must have the requisite thoughts, feelings and intentions, as specified in the procedure, and (b) If consequent conduct in specified, then the relevant parties must so do.

(cf. Levinson, 1980: 229)

Austin argued that speech acts are successful only if they satisfy these criteria. For example, the preparatory conditions have to be right. There must be a conventional procedure having a conventional effect, and the person performing the speech act must have the authority to do so. This is hardly an issue with such words as apologise, promise, or thank, but it is an important constraint on the use of such verbs as fine, baptise, arrest, and declare a war, where only certain people are qualified to do the acts. Secondly, the speech act has to be executed in the correct manner. In certain cases there is a procedure to be followed exactly and completely (as in the act of baptizing); in others, certain expectations have to be met (e.g. one can only welcome someone with a pleasant demeanour). Thirdly, the speech act must be performed in a sincere manner. Verbs such as
apologise, guarantee, and vow are effective only if speakers mean what they say; believe and affirm are valid only if speakers are not lying.

Searle, however, proposed to classify felicity conditions on the basis of how utterances specify propositional content. He classified felicity conditions into four categories, viz. (i) propositional content conditions, (ii) preparatory conditions, (iii) conditions on sincerity, and (iv) essential conditions. He argued that felicity conditions are not merely dimensions on which utterances can go wrong; in fact, they are actually ‘jointly constitutive of the various illocutionary forces’ (Searle, 1969: 66, & 1976). Felicity conditions specify the context of the utterance such that if an utterance fulfils the felicity conditions characteristic of a specific category, it counts as the performance of the said speech act. One advantage of the classification based on felicity conditions is that it allows the analyst to compare the speech acts within one category in terms of related felicity conditions, and also to contrast one category of speech acts with the others. With the help of such a typology we can use the notion of felicity conditions as a kind of grid on which we can compare different speech acts. We can, for example, differentiate and compare requests and warnings along these dimensions.

Ordinary people automatically accept these conditions when they communicate, and they depart from them only for very special reasons. For example, the request- ‘will you shut the door?’ is appropriate only if - the door is open, - the speaker has a reason for asking, and - the hearer is in the position to perform the action. If any of these conditions does not obtain, then a special interpretation of the speech act has to apply. It may, for example, be intended as a joke, or as a piece of sarcasm.

Speech Act Theory is essentially a descriptivist approach. As Levinson (1983: 278) observes, it is basically concerned with ‘mapping utterances into speech act categories however these might be conceived’. This is usually done by predicting accurately the functions of sentences in context. An utterance characteristically performs a speech act, which is the basic unit of communication. It, therefore, takes an utterance as a functional unit in
communication. Speech Act Theory attempts to account for the phenomenon of language use by analysing speech into separate acts on the part of s and h, and between s and h. It then relates these acts in a systematic way to the contextual conditions of the utterance (i.e. felicity conditions) in order to arrive at the understanding of the function a particular utterance serves, and the way it serves the function. It analyses the conditions the utterance requires to meet for the successful performance of that function, such that the production of an utterance X under certain circumstances (i.e. if it meets certain necessary and sufficient conditions) counts as doing Y. The focus of this approach is on the communicative acts performed through speech. It is primarily concerned with identification, description and classification of units of communication. The mechanism so developed then serves as a tool for interpretation of speech functions. It tries to illustrate the interplay between text and context which mutually informs the production and interpretation of acts performed through words.

An utterance can perform more than one action at a time. In fact, in actual communication, most utterances can be seen as performing several speech acts at once. There is, therefore, no one to one mapping between utterances and speech acts. Contexts, however, help to separate multiple functions of utterances from one another. The literal meanings of words and the contexts in which they occur interact in our knowledge of the conditions underlying the realisation and interpretation of acts. An utterance may have a form peculiar to one type of act, whereas it may in reality function as the performance of a different speech act. Searle’s illustration of the indirect speech act performed by the utterance ‘Can you pass the salt, please’ is a classic case of this type. In Speech Act analysis, therefore, we analyse utterances as sets of hierarchically structured acts, from the most abstract to the most superficial. On the superficial level, Searle’s example seems to perform the speech act of asking a question regarding ‘the hearer’s ability to pass salt’. But the ultimate function it has is the performance of a request to the hearer for ‘passing the salt’.
An important contribution the speech act theory has made to the field of conversation analysis is that it has provided the analyst with an effective tool for analysing conversation. It is evident in the fact that almost all the approaches make use of the notion of speech act in one or the other form. They may differ in their conception of speech act, but nonetheless the idea that conversation comprises of discreet acts plays important role in almost all types of conversation analysis.

1.5.9 Pragmatic approach
Pragmatic approach is based primarily upon the philosophical ideas of H. P. Grice. Pragmatics is concerned with analysing speaker meaning at the level of utterances. Grice distinguished between different types of meaning and argued that the general maxims of cooperation provide inference routes to the speaker’s communicative intention. In face-to-face interaction one often comes across situations where utterances lack obvious connection. The lack of obvious connection in the production and interpretation of such utterances is a crucial issue in pragmatic analysis. Grice points out that this lack of connection does not prevent interlocutors from interpreting (or trying to interpret) each other’s utterances as cooperative at the level of understanding not readily available from the meanings of the words. What the hearers do is supplement the literal meaning of utterances with an assumption of human rationality and cooperation. These allow the interlocutors to make inferences regarding speaker meaning. Gricean pragmatics suggests that human beings work with very minimal assumptions about one another and their conduct, and that they use these assumptions as the basis from which to draw highly specific inferences about one another’s intended meanings.

Conversational principles
In his Harvard University lectures (1967) published under the title ‘logic and conversation’ (1975, rpt. 1989), Grice observed that conversation is not a random collection of utterances; that in a standard type of conversational interaction, while speaking, speakers seem in general to be guided by certain
tacitly known and generally agreed or accepted conventions. These conventions are variously called rules, norms, or principles of standard interactional behaviour. Depending upon their origin, focus and the purpose of study, different approaches to the study of conversation specify these conventions differently.

Cooperative Principle

Grice (1989: 26) formulated what he called ‘a rough general principle’ which participants in a conversation will be expected to observe, viz. ‘make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged’. He labelled this as the ‘cooperative principle’ (henceforth referred to as CP, for short). Grice explained the CP with an elaborate scheme. He proposed a set of four categories - that of Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner, which taken together exemplify the CP. Each of these categories may be said to relate to a particular aspect of conversational behaviour. The category of Quantity, for example, relates to the quantity of information to be provided, whereas the category of Quality relates to the truthfulness and sincerity of the information. The category of Relation concerns the relevance of the conversational contribution and the category of Manner concerns the way the information is formulated and presented. Each of these categories has a certain more specific maxim and its sub-maxim(s). These maxims may be stated as follows:

1. The category of Quantity consists of two maxims, viz.
   (a) Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange)
   (b) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required
2. The category of Quality consists of a super-maxim - ‘Try to make your contribution one that is true’ and two rather more specific maxims:
   (a) Do not say what you believe to be false
   (b) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence
3. The category of Relation consists of a single maxim, namely, ‘Be relevant’
4. The category of Manner consists of a super-maxim ‘Be perspicuous’ and various other sub-maxims such as:
   (a) Avoid obscurity of expression
   (b) Avoid ambiguity
   (c) Be brief (i.e. avoid unnecessary prolixity)
   (d) Be orderly
The four basic maxims of conversation together constitute the cooperative principle. The following of these maxims, Grice claims, ‘will, in general, yield results in accordance with the cooperative principle’. The category of quantity relates to the quantity of information to be provided, whereas the category of Quality relates to the truthfulness and sincerity of the information. The two categories always go hand in hand. As Geoffrey Leech (1983: 85) observes, the maxims of Quantity and Quality frequently work in competition with one another. The amount of information speaker gives is often constrained or limited by the speaker’s wish to avoid telling untruth. For this reason, Harnish (1976: 362) proposed a combined maxim - ‘the maxim of Quantity-Quality’ as - ‘make the strongest relevant claim justifiable by your evidence’. He even quotes a more detailed version of the same maxim formulated by O’Hair (1969: 45): ‘unless there are outweighing good reasons to the contrary, one should not make a weaker statement rather than a stronger one if the audience is interested in the extra information that could be conveyed by the latter’. This Quantity-Quality maxim accounts for a large number of informal inferences. The category of manner, unlike the previous categories, relates not to ‘what is said’ but rather to ‘how ‘what is said’ is to be said’ (Grice, 1975, rpt. 1989:27).

These maxims derive from a general consideration of rationality applicable to all kinds of cooperative exchanges. And, as Grice claims, at least to the extent that other, culture specific, constraints on interaction allow, they seem to have a universal appeal.

The cooperative principle and some subordinate maxims are, in Grice’s view, standardly (though not invariably) observed by participants in a talk exchange. Taking an idealised standard type of conversational practice as base, Grice (1989: 29-30) makes the following observation: ‘Talkers in general proceed in the manner prescribed by the CP and its maxims’. In his view, the observance of the CP and the maxims is of such importance on the part of the speaker that the talker who is irrelevant or obscure seems to have primarily let down not his audience but himself. Accordingly, listeners also normally assume that speakers
are following these maxims. On the basis of these observations, Grice postulates that ‘a talk exchange will be profitable only when it is conducted in general accordance with the CP and its maxims’.

It is not, however, the case that all maxims are equally important. Some of them are more important than the others. The first maxim Quality, for example, is so obvious and of such importance that stating it is like stating the obvious. For other maxims come into operation only on the assumption that this maxim of Quality is satisfied. However, observance of some of these maxims is a matter of less urgency than is the observance of others. For example, a man who has expressed himself with undue prolixity would, in general, be open to milder comment than would a man who has said something he believes to be false.

Conversational principles and the conversational implicatures connected with them are specially connected with the particular purposes that talk exchange is adapted to serve and is primarily employed to serve. The general purposes talk exchanges may be said to serve include a maximally effective exchange of information as well as such general purposes as influencing or directing the actions of others. Grice considers talking as a variety of rational and purposive behaviour. Gricean pragmatics is essentially a theory about how people use language. Grice suggested that there is a set of over-arching assumptions guiding the conduct of conversation. These assumptions arise from the basic rational considerations and may be formulated as guidelines for the efficient and effective use of language in conversation to further co-operative ends. Grice’s cooperative principle, its maxims and sub-maxims specify what participants have to do in order to converse in a maximally efficient, rational, co-operative way, viz. that they speak sincerely, relevantly and clearly, while providing sufficient information. It may, however, be observed that people do not always follow these guidelines to the letter. In fact, in ordinary conversations these principles are simply oriented to, such that when talk does not proceed according to their specifications. hearers assume that, contrary to appearances, the principles are nevertheless being adhered to at the deeper level. These principles are so powerful and pervasive that even when speakers seem to violate them,
hearers still assume that, contrary to appearances, they are adhering to these principles at the deeper level and then proceed to infer propositions that would establish the relevance of these utterances to the general purpose or direction of the talk exchange. In cases of this sort, inferences arise to preserve the assumption of co-operation. In fact such inferences arise only when the hearers have to make assumption contrary to superficial indications of the non-observance of the principles. Grice labelled this kind of inference as ‘conversational implicature’. Grice’s point is that wherever possible, people will interpret what we say as conforming to the maxims on at least some level. For example, in the following conversation:

(1) A: Where’s Bill?
   B: There’s a yellow VW outside Sue’s house.
   (Levinson’s (1983) example)

B’s contribution, taken literally, fails to answer A’s question, and thus seems to violate at least the maxims of quantity and relevance. We might therefore expect B’s utterance to be interpreted as a non-cooperative response, a brushing aside of A’s concerns with a change of topic. Yet it is clear that despite this ‘apparent’ failure of co-operation, A tries to interpret B’s utterance as co-operative at the deeper (non-superficial) level. A assumes that it is in fact co-operative, and then searches for the possible connection between the location of Bill and the location of a yellow VW, and thus arrives at a suggestion that, if B has a yellow VW, he maybe in Sue’s house. In this instance of communication B could be said to have effectively conveyed, i.e. implicated the proposition that Bill could possibly be in Sue’s house, and B’s utterance at T-2 position may be said to carry the said implicature.

**The Politeness principle**

Grice did not claim any finality for his scheme of conversational maxims. He suggested the possibility of the existence of other maxims as well. ‘There are’, he says, ‘all sorts of other maxims (aesthetic, social, and moral in character), such as ‘be polite’, that are also normally observed by participants in talk
exchanges, and these may also generate non-conventional implicatures" (Grice, 1989: 28). Building upon this suggestion, different pragmaticists have tried to account for the phenomenon of politeness in different ways. Brown and Levinson (1978), for example, explain the rationale behind politeness phenomenon in terms of positive and negative face-wants. They developed a very general and elaborate schema of rationality-based human interactional behaviour. As Brown and Levinson observe the basic principle behind the politeness strategies is ‘showing consideration for people’s feelings (or the notion of saving the addressee’s face). The need to protect or save the other’s face (i.e. the need to be sympathetic or considerate to others, the need to understand, appreciate or respect the thoughts, feelings, or ideas of others) is the chief motivating force behind the politeness principle. Politeness strategies may be employed consciously or unconsciously. The advantages of using them are that they mark the user as sophisticated, well bred and cultured. They avoid bitterness and promote amity and good relations, reduce antagonism or tension in the case of a clash or conflict. They win the respect and admiration from others and thus serve to maintain high profile for the self.

Saving, protecting, or enhancing the addressee’s face involves showing consideration for his feelings. The two vital ingredients of the addressee’s feelings relevant here are his desire to enjoy freedom of action and freedom from imposition and his desire to be loved and appreciated. The former relates to negative politeness while the latter relates to positive politeness. Negative politeness is avoidance-based. It tries to avoid a threat to the addressee’s face by assuring him that his freedom of action and freedom from intervention or imposition will be honoured. Positive politeness, on the other hand, is approach-based. It tries to redress (or minimise) a potential threat to the addressee’s face by attributing in-group membership to him and showing regard for his Face Want to be approved of by others. Positive politeness strategies include linguistic devices such as exaggeration of the positive features of face, expressions of sympathy, approval and agreement with the addressee, use of in-group identity markers, etc. The negative politeness strategies include devices
like use of hedges, impersonalisation, apologies, passivisation, nominalisation, and deferential address forms. Non-imposition strategy may include devices like giving options, using suggestive expressions, etc. The speaker can also appear to be polite by exploiting the rich poetic resources of language such as understatement, irony, rhetorical questions, ambiguity and vagueness. In most of these cases, the implied meaning is either at variance with, or in conflict with, the literal meaning. Opposite of politeness strategies are what Z. N. Patil (1994: 12) calls ‘vituperative strategies’ involving use of vituperative and bawdy language as aggravating factor.

**Leech’s account of the politeness phenomenon**

Drawing upon Gricean framework and model, Leech suggested six maxims of politeness principle (hereafter referred to as PP) as follows:

(i) Tact maxim: Minimise cost to other : [Maximise benefit to other]
(ii) Generosity maxim: Minimise benefit to self : [Maximise cost to self]
(iii) Approbation maxim: Minimise dispraise of other : [Maximise praise of other]
(iv) Modesty maxim: Minimise praise of self : [Maximise dispraise of self]
(v) Agreement maxim: Minimise disagreement between self and other : [Maximise agreement between self and other]
(vi) Sympathy maxim: Minimise antipathy between self and other : [Maximise sympathy between self and other]

(Leech, 1983: 32)

All of these maxims recommend the expression of polite rather than impolite beliefs. The first four maxims go in pairs because they deal with bipolar scales, the cost-benefit and praise-dispraise scales. The other two maxims deal with unipolar scales, scales of agreement and sympathy. Maxim one and two concern the cost or benefit of future action to other or to self respectively, whereas three and four respectively concern the degree to which speaker’s remarks convey some good or bad evaluation of the other or of self. the approbation maxim is thus exemplified in the intrinsic courtesy of congratulations, and the modesty maxim in that of apologies (Leech, 1983: 132).

It is evident from the maxims that politeness is focused more strongly on the ‘other’ rather than on ‘self’. This is why, of the twined maxims 1-4, maxim one appears to be a more powerful constraint on conversational behaviour than
maxim two, and maxim three than maxim four. Similarly, it seems that negative
politeness (avoidance of discord) is a more weighty consideration than positive
politeness (seeking concord). Thus, within each maxim, sub-maxim (a) is
stronger and carries more weightage than sub-maxim (b). Besides, politeness
towards an addressee is generally more important than politeness towards a third
party.
As Leech (1983) observes, the maxims of the CP and the PP apply differently to
different contexts, apply to variable degrees, may compete with one another, and
may be exploited for the purpose of implicature. They are regulative rather than
constitutive, and are interpreted as goal oriented. They serve the goals which are
common to s and h. Moreover, these maxims are observed up to a certain point,
rather than as absolute rules. This is particularly the case with the weaker sub-
maxims of the PP (i.e. those in square brackets) such as ‘maximise dispraise of
self’. For if a person continually seeks opportunities for self-denigration, he
quickly becomes tedious, and is more likely to be judged insincere. In fact, the
CP (especially the maxim of Quality) constrains s from being too modest, or
from being too tactful. There is, however, an unfortunate association of the term
politeness with superficially ‘nice’ but ultimately insincere, forms of human
behaviour, and it is therefore sometimes tempting to write-off politeness as being
a trivial and dispensable factor by the stamp of insincerity.

**General social function of conversational principles**

You have to be polite with your interlocutor if you want him to cooperate with
you just as you have to be polite with your neighbour when you wish to borrow
his equipments. For unless you are polite to your neighbour, the channel of
communication between you will break down, and you will no longer be able to
borrow things from him. PP thus is more central to communication than the CP
in that it ensures the very existence of CP. CP enables one participant in a
conversation to communicate on the assumption that the other participant is
being co-operative. CP thus has the function of regulating the conversation so
that it contributes to the assumed illocutionary or discoursal goal(s). Leech
argues that the PP has a higher regulative role than this - to maintain the social
equilibrium and the friendly relations which enable us to assume that our interlocutors are being co-operative in the first place.

There are, however, some situations where politeness takes a back seat. This is especially so when s and h are engaged in a collaborative activity in which exchange of information is equally important to both of them. There are also situations where the PP can overrule the CP to the extent that even the maxim of Quality (which tends to outweigh the other corporative maxims) is sacrificed. However, in certain instances speakers feel justified in telling ‘white lies’. For example, s may feel that the only way of declining an invitation politely is to pretend to have an alternative engagement. It is necessary, however, to distinguish between ‘white lies’ (harmless or small lies, especially the ones that are told to avoid hurting somebody) which are meant to deceive the hearer, and cases which are apparent breaches of the CP (an action that breaks an agreement to behave in accordance with the general expectations).

PP, thus, is not just one more principle added to the CP. In fact, it is a necessary complement which rescues the CP from serious trouble. The CP, for example, cannot of itself explain (i) why people are often so indirect in conveying what they mean; or (ii) what is the relation between sense and force when non-declarative types of sentence are being considered. Consider the following conversational exchange, for example:

2. A: We will all miss Bill and Agatha, won’t we?
   B: Well, we will all miss Bill.

Here B apparently seems to violate the maxim of quantity. For when A asks B to confirm A’s opinion, B merely confirms part of it, and pointedly ignores the rest. From this we can derive a putative implicature that ‘s is of the opinion that they will not all miss Agatha’. This implicature cannot be accounted for simply and solely on the basis of the CP, for B could have added ‘…but not Agatha’ without being untruthful, irrelevant, or unclear. The point is that B could have been more informative, but only at the cost of being more impolite to the third party. B, therefore, suppressed the desired information in order to uphold the PP. B’s response in the example above illustrates how an apparent breach of the CP is
shown, at a deeper level of interpretation involving the PP, to be no such thing. Thus the PP redeems the CP from difficulty. Similarly,

3. P: Someone has eaten the icing off the cake
   C: It wasn’t me.

In this typical exchange between parent P and child C, there is an apparent irrelevance in C’s reply. C seems to react as if he needs to exonerate himself from the evil deed in question; it is as if C were being directly accused of the crime. The explanation for this apparent breach of the maxim of relation can be stated as follows:

Suppose P is not sure who is the culprit, but suspects that it is C. Then a small step of politeness on P’s part would be to withhold a direct accusation and instead to make a less informative, but undoubtedly more true assertion, substituting an impersonal pronoun someone for the second person pronoun you. Thus P’s remark is interpreted as an indirect accusation. When C hears this assertion, he responds to it as having implicated that C may well be guilty, denying an offence which has not been overtly imputed. This suggests that the apparent irrelevance of C’s reply is due to an implicature of P’s utterance. C responds to that implicature rather than to what is actually said. The indirectness, here, is motivated by politeness - the negative form of the PP - minimise the expressions of impolite beliefs. The suppressed impolite beliefs in the communication instances (2) and (3) above respectively are:

(4) We won’t miss Agatha.
(5) You have eaten the icing off the cake.

The polite and impolite beliefs are respectively beliefs that are favourable and unfavourable to the hearer or to a third party, where ‘favourable’ and ‘unfavourable’ are measured on some relevant scale of values.

Leech (1983: 80) observes that some illocutions are inherently impolite (e.g. orders), and others (e.g. offers) are inherently polite. Politeness has two sides - a positive side and a negative side. Negative politeness consists in minimising the impoliteness of impolite illocutions, and positive politeness consists in maximising the politeness of polite illocutions. There are thus two sides to each
maxim of the politeness principle. The tact maxim, for example, has two sides- a negative side ‘minimise the cost to h’, and a positive side, ‘maximise the benefit to h’. Of the two, the second is less important, but it is a natural corollary of the first. It means, for example, that in proposing some action beneficial to h, s should bias locution towards a positive outcome, by restricting h’s opportunity of saying ‘no’. Thus an imperative, which in effect does not allow h to say ‘no’ is (in an informal context) a positively polite way of making an offer, e.g. ‘Help yourself’, ‘have another sandwich’, etc. The positive bias can be further increased by the persuasive emphasis as in ‘Do have another sandwich!’ or ‘You must have another sandwich’, etc. In this case, the more indirect forms are less polite than the most direct forms. The reason for this reversal of politeness strategies in impositives and commissives has to do with the ‘asymmetry of politeness’ (Leech, 1983: 109).

To sum up, it may be said that Pragmatic approach studies language as a communication system. It studies how utterances communicate meaning in context by providing a rationality-based account of communicative behaviour. This account is based on the general observation of how interactants behave. The fundamental assumption underlying pragmatic analysis is that in normal circumstances people seem to cooperate with each other such that they orient their interactional behaviour to the goals and the general direction of the conversation. The central concern of the pragmatic approach is communication of non-conventional meaning which is so systematically handled by users of a language in everyday life. It arrives at this meaning by relating interactional behaviour to the principles of language use. It is, thus, a study of the principles and practice of conversational performance- covering all aspects of language use, understanding and appropriateness. It is, however, a descriptive rather than prescriptive approach.

The pragmatic model is applicable to both spoken as well as written discourse. We can apply this model to conversational exchanges in a novel not only to examine how meaning is effectively communicated through conversations but also for examining how the novelist makes a strategic use of conversations for
aesthetic effects. The pragmatic model can apply, for example, not only to character-character discourse, but also to the way in which novelists convey messages to their readers. The novel being a written form, the writer has plenty of time to choose exactly what he wishes to say. This paves the ground for assuming a stronger adherence to the CP in the novel. Everything in the novel counts. Sometimes an author conveys what he wants to say directly and sometimes via conversational interactions between or among characters. In both kinds of case the novelist makes use of conversational implicatures and other rhetorical devices for making his artefact effective and aesthetically perfect.

1.6 Conclusion

This brief and sketchy survey of the various approaches to conversation reveals that Conversation Analysis is an interdisciplinary concern, and that it has to be studied as such. It has bearings in several quite different academic disciplines. Major contributions to this field have been made by philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists and linguists. However, what is distinctive about these different perspectives is that each studies conversation for its own special purpose and, consequently, each has a different orientation. Different approaches originating in different disciplines have different theoretical and methodological premises. These premises influence the assumptions, concepts and methods adopted by the approach. For example, different origins may be responsible for different assumptions and beliefs about language, e.g. assertions about the stability of linguistic meaning, the role of speaker intentionality, the degree to which language is designed for communicative purposes, the contribution of linguistic meaning to interactive meaning, etc. Different theoretical assumptions consequently give rise to methodological differences. For example, if the analyst assumes that linguistic meaning is less important to the interactive meaning than are sequential structures of talk, then he would pay little attention to linguistic form and structure per se (as is the case with ethnomethodological conversation analysis).
Different origins account for the different methods for collecting and analysing data. Each of these different approaches has its own method for collecting and analysing the data. Interactional socio-linguistics, for example, focuses intensively on a few fragments of talk; the variationists focus on distributions of discourse items across a wide range of texts. Ethnography of communication requires a great deal of social, cultural, and personal information about interlocutors, and may use interlocutors as informants in analysis of their own talk; Face Theory constructs the notion of an idealized speaker/hearer whose specific social, cultural or personal characteristics do not enter into participant strategies for building text at all. Each approach thus adopts a slightly different view of discourse, and provides a different way of analysing utterances. Lastly, a perspective thus developed provides a set of different practical interests or ultimate goals. Besides, not all the approaches to discourse explicitly concern themselves with discourse; even with those that do, there are often other overlapping domains of interest. Thus, the broader topics to which discourse is seen as relevant have important influences on the way in which its analysis is approached.

In spite of these superficial differences, however, it may be said that because all these approaches address the same issue, viz. conversation, there are several points of similarity among these approaches and their respective models. In fact, all these superficially quite distinct approaches resemble each other in their overall conception. They have all been influenced to some extent by the idea of behaviour as structured and rule governed. Problems of segmentation and classification on one hand, and of behavioural regularity and predictability on the other have been perceived by analysts as equally relevant to lower and higher levels of linguistic analysis. Matters of taxonomy and identification of acts in conversational interaction are the major concerns in almost every approach to conversations.

All approaches to conversation are thus crucially concerned with two issues, viz. (i) conversational structure, and (ii) utterance interpretation. Different approaches address the issues from different angles and, come up with different
perspectives. Some approaches confine themselves to the consideration of organisation of face-to-face conversational interaction, while the others address themselves to the larger issues of language use and communication. Some are preoccupied with explaining the creation and manifestation of particular aspects of social and cultural reality in terms of linguistic devices and strategies, while others make use of the knowledge, information and tools emerging from these sharply focused approaches for the purposes of utterance interpretation. The approaches focusing on conversation organisation are primarily concerned with (i) identification of acts in conversational interaction, i.e. taxonomy; (ii) classification of these acts i.e. developing relevant typologies; and (iii) combination of these units into structural patterns. These concerns ultimately shade into the issue of utterance interpretation. As both these issues are central to conversational activity, and as the one has bearings on the other, and vice-versa, it is inevitable that every approach take account of both aspects.

Any comprehensive approach to the study of conversation must inevitably study language in relation to both conceptualisation and communication of meaning. This phenomenon has been fruitfully investigated in different approaches. As has already been suggested, these approaches are interrelated by virtue of the commonality of their area of investigation. And though there are superficial differences in terms of terminology and other technicalities, it is evident that there is overwhelmingly evident conceptual unity among them. Each approach builds its theoretical and analytical framework using the tools provided by observations and discoveries of other approaches. It is evident that these different approaches and the methods and models of analysis they have produced, facilitate the understanding and analysis of language by providing tools to each others. They borrow tools from each other and adopt or adapt them for their respective purposes. The application of their significant discoveries and methods and models of language analysis help in explaining the mystery of language use in real life situations and in literature as relevant to these different disciplines. The pragmatic approach seems to dwell upon the end-products of other approaches as empirically tested ontological and epistemological
assumptions against which it proceeds to analyse language for arriving at a systematic and comprehensive understanding and interpretation of human linguistic behaviour.

The basic assumptions shared by almost all models of conversation analysis are:

(i) Conversations comprise of identifiable individual units like sentences/utterances, acts, moves, turns, etc
(ii) Conversationalists are guided by certain interactional rules in the production and combination of the individual units into higher structures (like opening, closing, etc) in the discourse
(iii) The interactional rules are tacitly known and shared by native users of a language. (This assumption accounts for the shared identification of individual acts which makes communication possible.)

Identification and classification of units, combination of these units in structural patterns, and utterance interpretation are, therefore, the key themes in conversation analysis. Every version of conversation analysis, for example, makes use of the notions of rules and units (or variants of them). Matters of taxonomy and identification of acts in conversation are the major concerns in almost every approach to conversation analysis. However, different models conceptualise these notions in different ways. The salient issues are:

(i) Do communicators identify the same conversational units in their behaviour? And if so, how do they bring off such a shared identification? Is it a matter of reason, of convention, of habit, or of experience?
(ii) Is communicative interaction governed by rules (tacitly) known to all interactants? And if it is rule-governed, how is it rule-governed?
(iii) Why do communicators follow the rules? Or how do the rules inform their production of behaviour?
(iv) How do communicators know if their co-communicators are following the same rules as they are?
(v) What are the interpretative strategies they apply in arriving at the shared understanding of each other’s act, plans and goals?

The answers to these general questions in the field of conversation analysis are crucial in linguistics as well as in the study of human communication. And, as we shall see in Chapter II, it is these issues that play significant role in the study of conversational implicatures.