,   continuing intonation: may be slight rise or fall in contour (less than '.' or '?'); may be followed by a pause (shorter than '.' or '?')

!   animated tone

...   noticeable pause or break in rhythm without falling intonation (each half-second pause is marked as measured by stop watch)

–   self interruption with glottal stop

:   lengthened syllable

italics   emphatic stress

CAPS   very emphatic stress

Bold type   is used in the examples to highlight those discourse markers being discussed in the text

When speech from A and B overlap, the starting point of the overlap is marked by a left-hand bracket, and the ending point of the overlap is marked by a right-hand bracket.

    A: Do you know what time the party's supposed [to start?]
    B: [Six o'clock.]

When lack of space prevents continuous speech from A from being presented on a single line of text, then '=' at end of A1 and '=' at beginning of A2 shows the continuity.

    A1:   Do you know what time the party's supposed [to start?=]
    B: [Six o'clock.]
    A2:   =Because I have to work late tonight.

When speech from B follows speech from A without perceptible pause, then ⊿ links the end of A with the beginning of B.

    A: Do you know the time?⊿
    B: Six o'clock.   ⊿Six o'clock.

When speech from B occurs during what can be heard as a brief silence from A, then B's speech is under A's silence.

    A: I can't wait to go to the party!   It'll be fun.
    B: Oh yeh!

1 Background: What is discourse?

1.1 Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis is a vast and ambiguous field. Consider two recent definitions. First, Brown and Yule (1983: 1) state that:

the analysis of discourse, is necessarily, the analysis of language in use. As such, it cannot be restricted to the description of linguistic forms independent of the purposes or functions which these forms are designed to serve in human affairs.

Second, Stubbs (1983a: 1) states that discourse analysis consists of:

attempts to study the organization of language above the sentence or above the clause, and therefore to study larger linguistic units, such as conversational exchanges or written texts. It follows that discourse analysis is also concerned with language in use in social contexts, and in particular with interaction or dialogue between speakers.

Brown and Yule emphasize a particular **perspective** toward language (functional versus structural) which is tied to a focus on *parole* (versus *langue*); Stubbs' emphasis on a particular **unit of analysis** ('above the sentence') leads him toward a similar pragmatic emphasis on 'language in use'. The authors then observe a definitional problem similar to the one noted above. Brown and Yule (1983: viii) observe that the term discourse analysis

has come to be used with a wide range of meanings which cover a wide range of activities. It is used to describe activities at the intersection of disciplines as diverse as sociolinguistics, psycho-linguistics, philosophical linguistics and computational linguistics.

Stubbs (1983a: 12) continues:

no one is in a position to write a comprehensive account of discourse analysis. The subject is at once too vast, and too lacking in focus and consensus... Anything at all that is written on discourse analysis is partial and controversial.

The vastness and ambiguity of discourse analysis is also suggested by

textbooks on different approaches to language, such as pragmatics, which define this field as 'the study of the general conditions of the communicative use of language' (Leech 1983: 10) and which include chapters on conversation analysis (Levinson 1983: Chapter 6), and by edited collections in sociolinguistics (e.g. Baugh and Sherzer 1984, Giglioli 1972) which include articles that could fit as comfortably into readers on discourse analysis.

It should not really be surprising that discourse analysis is so vast and diffuse: like pragmatics and sociolinguistics, it has its intellectual roots not only in linguistics, but in the social sciences and in philosophy. Discourse analysis began within linguistics through the work of Harris (1951, 1952), a structural linguist who used distributional methods of analysis to discover recurrent patterns of morphemes which would differentiate a text from a random collection of sentences. Within the social sciences, anthropology has promoted interest in naturally occurring discourse as a culturally relative realization of ways of acting and being (Hymes 1974). In addition, the distinction between referential and social functions of language which is so important to discourse studies had its roots in anthropologist Malinowski's (1930) concept of phatic communion. Sociology also shares responsibility for promoting interest in discourse. From Durkheim's (1895) notion of social fact (a constraint external to the individual) which was adapted by de Saussure in his characterization of *langue*, to Simmel's (1911) focus on forms of social life including conversation and small group interactions, discourse has long been one of the natural interfaces between sociology and linguistics. More recent work by Goffman (e.g. 1959, 1971, 1974, 1981a, 1981b) focused attention on microanalytic frames of social interaction, including the use of language as a sign-vehicle in discourse. The phenomenological movement within philosophy (Schutz 1970) was an impetus for a school of sociology (ethnomethodology) in which the focus of attention is on the common sense procedures used by individuals to construct social worlds: discourse not only provides one of the procedures, but it is part of the social world under construction. And also within philosophy, work by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) on speech acts, and by Grice on conversational maxims (1975) forced attention to language use.

Because discourse analysis is so vast a field, readers of discourse analyses may find themselves unexpectedly confronted by terms, concepts, and perspectives borrowed from a home turf which is different from their own. (Of course, an equally disorienting problem faces discourse analysts: they may need to wander into analytic terrain which is far from their own initial start-

ing point!) I therefore want to begin this book on discourse markers – words like *oh, well, and, but, or, so, because, now, then, I mean*, and *y'know* – by discussing some assumptions that I will be making about discourse (1.2) and some properties of discourse (1.3). Although I am sure that some readers will find even these assumptions and this discussion of basic properties to be disputable, I then go on to still more controversial ground: I discuss how discourse properties are to be integrated (1.4) within a model of coherence in discourse (1.5).

Note, then, that although this first chapter will say nothing about discourse markers *per se*, it is important background not only for the orientation reason mentioned above, but because it provides a theoretical background for the study of discourse markers, and a model upon which I will base both my analysis of specific markers (Chapters 4–9) and my general conclusions (Chapter 10).

1.2 Assumptions of discourse analysis

The key assumptions about language which I take to be central to current discourse analysis concern context and communication.[1]

1. Language always occurs in a context.
2. Language is context sensitive.
3. Language is always communicative.
4. Language is designed for communication.

1.2.1 Language always occurs in a context

A great deal of sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic research has detailed the specific contexts in which language is produced and interpreted – contexts which range from cultural contexts of shared meanings and world views, to social contexts through which definitions of self and situation are constructed, to cognitive contexts of past experience and knowledge. Understanding how language is used and how it is structured depends on consideration of how it is embedded in all of these contexts. In fact, the role of context is so pervasive that it figures even in grammatical analyses whose data consist of individual intuitions about idealized isolated sentences. Not only is the introspection which accompanies intuition actually a special kind of cognitive context in and of itself, but (as teachers of introductory syntax can no doubt attest) individuals are very adept at imagining discourse contexts in which ungrammatical sentences find a natural home.

And as Goffman (1981a: 30) states, the grammarian's effort to analyze single, isolated sentences requires a general understanding 'that this effort is an acceptable, even worthy, thing to do'. Goffman (1981a: 30–1) goes on to say that:

The mental set required to make sense out of these little orphans is that of someone with linguistic interests, someone who is posing a linguistic issue and is using a sample sentence to further his argument. In this special context of linguistic elaboration, an explication and discussion of the sample sentence will have meaning, and this special context is to be found anywhere in the world where there are grammarians. . . So all along, the sentences used by linguists take at least some of their meaning from the institutionalization of this kind of illustrative process.

As Goffman's point suggests, it is not only intuitions about the grammaticality of sentences which are inherently contextualized: so too, are intuitions about semantic meaning. Gazdar (1979: 3–4) suggests that Katz's (Katz 1977, Katz and Fodor 1963) effort to invent a sentence which is totally decontextualized (and would thus be free for semantic interpretation based solely on referential meaning) is futile precisely because inferences about contextually provided non-referential meanings can never be totally excluded. In fact, one of the problems for current research in pragmatics is to successfully limit which of the many features of context actually **do** enter into utterance interpretation.[2]

Thus, I assume that language always occurs in some kind of context, including cognitive contexts in which past experience and knowledge is stored and drawn upon, cultural contexts consisting of shared meanings and world views, and social contexts through which both self and others draw upon institutional and interactional orders to construct definitions of situation and action.[3]

1.2.2 Language is context sensitive

Not only does language always occur in a context, but its patterns – of form and function, and at surface and underlying levels – are sensitive to features of that context. Analyses from a variety of perspectives have documented systematic relationships between language and context which penetrate to all levels of language; see, for example, the quantitative sociolinguistic analyses which focus on how constraints drawn from cultural, social, psychological, and textual domains affect phonological, morphological, and syntactic variation (Fasold 1983, Fasold and Shuy 1975, Labov and Sankoff 1980, Sankoff and Cedergren 1981). Examples of the context sen-

sitivity of language could be almost endlessly multiplied from studies of the internal and external pressures on language change, to studies of how cultural presuppositions influence narrative structure, to studies of how different degrees of mutual knowledge influence language use and expression.

In sum, I assume that language is potentially sensitive to all of the contexts in which it occurs, and, even more strongly, that language **reflects** those contexts because it helps to constitute them.

1.2.3 Language is always communicative

Because language is always addressed to a recipient (either actual or intended) it is always communicative. Note that I am considering communication in a very broad sense here. Some analysts have argued that communication occurs only under certain conditions of speaker intentionality. Ekman and Freisen (1969), for example, differentiate messages which are informative from those which are communicative: the former elicit similar interpretations in observers but may be inaccurate information about the sender; the latter need not be informative (i.e. may not receive consistent interpretations) but are those which a sender consciously intends to send. Still other messages are interactive: they modify another's behavior, even though they need be neither consistently interpreted nor consciously intended toward a particular modification. MacKay (1972) offers another differentiation: communication is necessarily goal-directed and interpreted as goal-directed; whatever is either not goal-directed, or not interpreted as such, falls into the category of conduct. Similar to MacKay is Grice's (1957) well known concept of meaning-nn (an abbreviation for non-natural meaning): speaker's intended meaning which receives an interpretation and a response because a recipient recognizes the intention (rather than the meaning *per se*). A much broader view of communication is that of Ruesch and Bateson (1951) and Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson (1967) who suggest that whatever occurs within the presence of a sender and a receiver is communicative: so long as it becomes available to another within a shared domain, it need not have been intended as message to count as communication. Goffman (1959) makes the distinction between information given and information given-off: the first is communication in the narrow (intended and received) sense; the second is information which is interpreted for meaning, and assigned significance, simply because it occurs in the presence of another and because it resides within a shared sign system – regardless of its intentional transmission.

I assume that communication occurs when a sender either gives, or gives

off, information. Thus, I assume that language is always communicative either because it is directed toward a recipient (immediate or eventual), because it is intended to be so directed, and/or because it is attended by a recipient.

1.2.4 Language is designed for communication

My final assumption is that language is designed to reflect its communicative basis. Consider, for example, the design features of language discussed by Hockett (1958): some certainly contribute to the ease with which language can be used as a system of communication (e.g. the fact that language is a code with unrestricted displacement in time and space). (See also discussion in Lyons 1972, 1977a: 70–85.) Or consider those features of language which respond to the need for ease of comprehension: Slobin (1975) suggests, for example, that the tremendous amount of redundancy in language is designed to ease the comprehension process. Such features may be interpreted as designed to aid the recipient's end of the communication process (also Leech 1983: 64–70). Many features of language use are also recipient designed (Sacks 1971): for example, choice among reference terms (e.g. DuBois 1980) and the organization of information in sentences (e.g. Prince 1981) takes recipients' current information state into account, i.e. what information can be assumed to be shared. Furthermore, communicative processes guide the emergence and development of syntactic structures in language, both diachronically (Givón 1979, Sankoff and Brown 1976, Sankoff 1984) and ontogenetically (Bates and MacWhinney 1979, 1982, Ochs and Schieffelin 1979). And at another level of communication – the communication of social information and group membership – studies of sociolinguistic variation show how the communication of group identity leads to the maintenance or change of the sound system of language (e.g. Labov 1972d, Downes 1983).

In sum, I assume that language is designed for communication, or as Lyons (1977a: 638) states, that 'there is much in the structure of languages that can only be explained on the assumption that they have developed for communication in face-to-face interaction'.

1.3 Properties of discourse

I now discuss several properties of discourse: discourse forms structures (1.3.1), conveys meanings (1.3.2), and accomplishes actions (1.3.3). It will become obvious that these properties concern slightly different aspects

of discourse. The first two properties are largely concerned with discourse as extended sequences of smaller units, e.g. sentences, propositions, utterances. The third property is more concerned with language as it is used within a social interaction; included is speakers' use not only of extended sequences, but their use of a single unit (e.g. an utterance) within a social interaction. By examining relationships among these properties of discourse (1.4), I lead into a discussion of coherence (1.5) – which I view as an integrative property of discourse.

1.3.1 Structure

Studies of discourse structure have dealt with two related issues: is discourse structure a linguistic structure? Can discourse structure be studied with methods inherited from linguistics? One of the earliest analysts of discourse, Harris (1952), attempted to extend the methods of structural linguistics into discourse analysis: the structure of a text was produced by recurrent patterns of morphemes independent of either their meaning, or their relationship with non-textual factors. More recent approaches have based discourse grammars on transformational generative sentence grammars: van Dijk (1972), for example, claims that texts can be treated as extensions of sentences and that a text grammar can be written in the same form as a generative sentence grammar. Within such a text grammar, the acceptability of a discourse would be determined by a set of rules acting as formal criteria for the interpretability of sentences within the text. Several studies take a more liberal approach to non-textual factors in their suggestion that discourse structure reflects the informational content and structure of what is being talked about. Linde and Labov (1975) and Linde and Goguen (1978) show that the structure of specific discourse units (apartment descriptions, plans) is modelled after their informational structure and content. Grosz (1981) shows that the process of focusing on specific entities throughout a discourse is modelled after the structure of a specific task in which the referred-to entities are used.

Although the studies mentioned thus far differ in terms of their inclusion of non-textual factors, they all view discourse as a structured composition of linguistic constituents (morphemes, clauses, sentences) within a monologue. Other studies of discourse structure differ either because they focus on linguistic units within dialogue, or because they focus on non-linguistic units. Some analysts take the position that linguistic units are the basic constituents of dialogue structure. Polanyi and Scha (1983), for example, argue that discourse has a syntactic structure in which clauses belong to

discourse units ranging in size from local turn-taking exchanges, to more extended semantic units, such as narratives, and even to speech events and exchanges.

Many other studies of dialogue structure focus on units which are not strictly linguistic. Key to an ethnomethodological approach to discourse, for example, is the concept of adjacency pair: a sequentially constrained pair of turns at talk in which the occurrence of a first-pair-part creates a slot for the occurrence of a second-pair-part (a conditional relevance), such that the non-occurrence of that second-pair-part is heard as an official absence (Schegloff and Sacks 1973). Examples are question/answer pairs, compliment and response pairs. Evidence for the constraining influence of first-pair-parts comes from various observations about the consequences of absent second-pair-parts: first-pair-parts are repeated when their attendant expectations are violated, delayed second-pair-parts are accompanied with explanations for the delay (Schegloff 1972). Adjacency pairs exhibit structure not only because they strongly constrain linear sequence, but because they provide a basis for formal modifications of dialogue: insertion sequences (Schegloff 1972), for example, can be characterized as one adjacency pair embedded within another.

Other research takes us still further from a dependence on purely linguistic constituents of discourse structure to show how sequences of actions are formally constrained and modified. Goffman (1971) and Merritt (1976) demonstrate that sequences of particular conversational moves, e.g. requests, remedies, acknowledgements, can undergo formal modifications ranging from embedding to ellipsis to coupling, as can many ritual interactions, such as greetings (Irvine 1974, Schiffrin 1977). In these analyses, the formal modifications of action sequences are explicitly linked to variation in non-textual, situational factors.

In sum, whether monologue and dialogue structures are composed of linguistic constituents, and whether such structures can be studied with methods inherited from linguistics, are questions which are central to ultimate decisions as to whether discourse structure is purely linguistic, and whether that structure parallels other types of language structure (see Levinson 1981, Stubbs 1983a: Chapter 5).

1.3.2 Meaning

Our discussion of structure showed that some analysts apply methods used in sentence analysis to discourse, while either maintaining or rejecting the notion that it is linguistic units *per se* (morphemes, clauses, sentences)

which form the basic constituents of discourse. Other discourse analysts argue that texts are so different in kind from smaller linguistic units that methods used for analyzing such units should not be expected to provide a model for discourse analysis. Halliday and Hasan (1976) argue, for example, that although structure may be one definitional source of a text – a source that specific genres of texts share with sentences – a more compelling source is at the level of semantic relationships underlying the text. Thus, particular items such as pronouns, adverbs, and conjunctions help create discourse not because of their rule-governed distribution, but because they indicate an interpretive link between two parts within the text. And although we can recognize a cohesive element by its surface appearance in a clause, what such an element actually displays is a connection between the underlying propositional content of two clauses – the clause in which the element appears and a prior clause. In short, the cohesive link is established because interpretation of an element in one clause presupposes information from a prior clause.

Cohesion can be found not only in monologue, but in dialogue. A convenient way to locate conversational cohesion is to examine dialogic pairs whose propositional completion depends on contributions from both speaker and hearer. Question/answer pairs are an example. In asking a question, a speaker presents a proposition which is incomplete either as to polarity (a yes–no question) or as to who, what, where, why, when or how (a WH-question). Completion of the proposition is up to the recipient of the question, who either fixes the polarity or fills in the WH-information. Analyses of communicative development in children also suggest that shared responsibility for conversational cohesion extends to propositional completion in general (Ochs and Schieffelin 1979), discourse topic (Keenan and Schieffelin 1976) and reference (Atkinson 1979, Scollon 1979).

In sum, studies of cohesion indicate that the meaning conveyed by a text is meaning which is interpreted by speakers and hearers based on their inferences about the propositional connections underlying what is said. Cohesive devices do not themselves create meaning; they are clues used by speakers and hearers to find the meanings which underlie surface utterances.

Before closing this section, it is important to note that the underlying propositional connections cued by cohesive ties are not posited as the only source of textual meaning. Not only do Halliday and Hasan (1976: 23–6) make this point clear, but Halliday's (1973) model of language explicitly views cohesion as only one component of a broader textual function of

language (a function which includes both thematic and informational components). Thus, propositional meaning does not exhaust the meaning of a text. Nor is cohesion supposed to supply all the inferences and understandings made available through a text. (Pragmatic perspectives, including analyses of speaker intention (Grice 1957), communicative strategies (Gumperz 1982, Leech 1983), and cooperative maxims (Grice 1975) help to provide a principled account of these additional inferences.) Thus, a complete analysis of the meaning of a text would specify both the propositional meanings displayed by cohesive ties, and the inferences and understandings derived through application of contextual and pragmatic principles.

1.3.3 Actions

Structure and meaning are properties of discourse when discourse is considered as a linear sequence of smaller units, e.g. sentences, turns, propositions. Although action – or more accurately the accomplishment of action – is also a property of discourse, it is a property which emerges not so much from arrangements of underlying units, as from the organization of speaker goals and intentions which are taken up and acted upon by hearers, and from the ways in which language is used in service of such goals.

Four branches of study contribute to our understanding of discourse as a means of action. The most general contribution is from theoretical discussions of the functions of language. Many linguists distinguish a referential (also referred to as descriptive, representational, or cognitive) function of language from a social function (e.g. Gumperz 1964). Others suggest a three-part division in which a referential function is differentiated from social and expressive functions (e.g. Bühler's 1934 terms 'conative' and 'emotive'). Jakobson (1960) differentiates six functions of language, arguing that each is based upon a different component of the overall speech situation, i.e. emotive (the addressor), conative (the addressee), phatic (the addressor/addressee relationship), meta-linguistic (the code), poetic (the message form), referential (the context). These functional classifications share two insights. First, language is a vehicle through which a range of different functions can be realized – functions which differ markedly from the referential function, i.e. the transmittal of information about the world to one who does not share that information. Second, the various functions of language influence its structure, i.e. the different parts and patterns of language can be understood only by reference to the role which they play in the overall system. (See Lyons 1977a: 50–6 for discussion of these and

other functional classifications, and Halliday 1973 for a model of language which explicitly bases structure on function.)

The second source of insight about discourse as action is speech act theory. Since Austin's (1962) discussion of how to do things with words, and Searle's (1969) elaboration of speech acts, felicity conditions, and constitutive rules, there has been a great deal of effort to incorporate into formal linguistic theory the insight that language is used to perform actions (e.g. Cole and Morgan 1975, Sadock 1974), to account for how one can say and mean one thing but do quite another (e.g. Searle 1975), and to discover the procedures by which hearers interpret the actions that are performed by speakers' words (e.g. Bach and Harnish 1982). Although work in speech act theory and analysis has often focused on the actions performed (more accurately performable) by single sentences (often isolated and idealized from their contexts of use, see Stubbs 1983b), sociolinguists have begun applying the insights of speech act theory to the range of naturally occurring utterances which perform actions (e.g. Ervin-Tripp 1976).

The third source of insight on language as action comes from conversation analysis which is sociological in orientation. (See van Dijk (1985: 1–7) on the differences between sociological and linguistic interests in, and perspectives on, conversation.) Conversation analysts provide the critical insight that although actions are situated in a fairly broad sense of being performed by a particular speaker to a particular hearer in a certain social situation, they are also situated in two very local senses. First, they emerge in locally negotiated settings in which interactional identities may play as crucial a role as the institutional identities often focused upon by more macro-level sociolinguistic analyses. Second, what occurred in the immediately prior exchange of talk may play as critical a role in allowing the recognition of an action – and in influencing the form of its performance – as the set of static mutually known preconditions typically focused on by speech act theorists. Such insights also lead toward the identification of action structures (1.3.1), including those in which sequences of acts which differ markedly on the surface can be seen as similar in their underlying interactional structures and ritual functions (Goffman 1974).

The final source of insight about discourse as action is from the ethnography of communication (Bauman and Sherzer 1974, 1982, Saville-Troike 1982). Many ethnographies of communication have shown that cultures differ dramatically in terms of what speaker goals are culturally encoded in patterns of speaking, as units of speech (acts, events), and in situations for speech. Not only do different speech communities have widely divergent meta-languages for describing speaker goals, speech

units, and speech situations (e.g. Abrahams 1974, Stross 1974), but the rules for accomplishing what might at first seem to be the same act often differ tremendously, greatly complicating efforts for cross-cultural comparisons of speech acts.

These four branches of scholarship differ quite markedly in focus. Taken together, however, they show that language is used by its speakers for a tremendous amount of social work. Not only is language used for a referential function (to transmit information about the world), but it is used for a social function (to establish, maintain, and adjust relationships with others), and an expressive function (to display various selves and their attendant feelings, orientations and statuses). And not only is language used to accomplish the well-documented actions of promising and requesting, but also to perform the less well-understood actions of threatening, confiding, boasting, complaining, complimenting, insulting, and so on. And just as this tremendous amount of social work is both locally oriented and organized within an interaction, it is also more globally oriented and organized within cultural world views and sets of moral assumptions about being and acting.

In addition, these branches of scholarship all have applications (potential in some cases, and actual in others) not just to sentences, but to discourse. Speech acts, for example, are realized in and through social interaction: for example, there may be certain acts which emerge in particular interactions (Zimmerman 1984). Similarly, the patterns and norms of speaking isolated by ethnographers are situated in ongoing interactions (a point made quite emphatically by Gumperz 1981, 1984). Or, responsibility for the accomplishment of an action may be shared by both actor and acted-upon: Labov and Fanshel (1977: 93–7) suggest, for example, that a repeated request is a challenge because of the prior failure of the acted-upon to comply with a request whose appropriateness had been assumed to be guaranteed by assumptions about his social competence. And finally, because actions are directed by one person toward another, they become the basis for further action from their recipient; the actions accomplished by language are treated by recipients as a basis upon which to build interaction.

In sum, we have seen in this section that language is used to accomplish social actions. Such actions are an integral part of discourse: actions are accomplished in culturally defined interactional contexts in which what one person does is treated as a basis for what another does.

1.4 Relationships among properties

The fact that language has structure, creates meaning, and is used to perform actions is of course not limited to units of discourse. Indeed, we are more familiar with the syntactic structures of sentences than we are with structures of discourse. And although cohesion is defined by Halliday and Hasan (1976) as a textual property, linguists deal with similar phenomena whenever they address questions about semantics: questions about word-meaning and sentence-meaning both reside in the more encompassing problem of how language-texts provide information which allows language-users to make sense. Thus, cohesion actually depends on a general process of semantic inferencing by language-users who make sense not only out of texts, but out of sentences and words as well. Similarly, discourse is hardly the only domain of language through which speakers perform actions: in fact, speech act theory developed the notion that rules of use constitute the actions performed by sentences, and later developments of speech act theory continued to focus on sentences through attempts to explain syntactic restrictions by appeal to constituted actions.

Although speakers and hearers create and search for structures, meanings, and actions in domains other than discourse, examining these properties in discourse suggests that such properties are not autonomous: no one of these properties can be understood without attention to the others. Many discourse analysts readily acknowledge, for example, that the particular property of discourse on which they focus cannot be thoroughly described without attention to other properties. Van Dijk (1972) acknowledges that textual structure is partially determined by pragmatic, referential, and non-linguistic aspects of communication. Halliday and Hasan (1976) admit that although texture is produced primarily by cohesion, particular discourse genres or registers also gain their textuality through structure. Labov and Fanshel (1977: 350) argue that it is underlying actions which provide participant understandings of utterance connections; but they also acknowledge the role of surface structures in establishing actual sequencing patterns.

Studies of the function of particular discourse features also point out the necessity of not limiting attention to any single aspect of discourse. Metalinguistic phrases (Schiffrin 1980), and paraphrases (Schiffrin 1982a), for example, both contribute to discourse at levels of structure, interpretation, and action – binding discourse units, marking structural transitions, conveying speakers' attitudes, and displaying conversational adjacency-pair relations. Similarly, studies of discourse ordering options – referentially

equivalent ways of ordering discourse units – show the difficulty of separat-
ing the effect of semantic from pragmatic constraints, suggesting instead
that what does influence clause order in discourse is prior surface infor-
mation which contributes both semantically and pragmatically to the
emerging text (Schiffrin 1985b).

Very similar questions about the integrated nature of discourse are con-
fronted in two specific areas of discourse analysis: the study of narrative
and the study of argument. Narrative study is one of the most developed
areas of discourse analysis. The story grammar approach, formulated in-
itially by Propp (1928), formalized by Rumelhart (1975) and expanded by
cognitive scientists (e.g. Thorndyke 1977) and literary theorists (e.g.
Prince 1973), raises questions about the feasibility and the consequences of
treating stories purely as structural objects. Do stories really share the
structural properties of sentences (Fillmore 1982, Wilensky 1982)? Or
should the notion of story grammar serve more as a metaphor for story
comprehension, to which are added factors as varied as goals of storytellers
(Meehan 1982), the cultural base of stories (Colby 1982), and the affective
forces of stories as vehicles of entertainment (Brewer and Lichtenstein
1982) or instruction (Calfee 1982)? Even the definition of story is compli-
cated by uncertainty over the feasibility of assuming that structure, mean-
ing, and action can be separately considered. Stein (1982) concludes, for
example, that what is critical in differentiating stories from other discourse
is not just structure, but context, semantic content, and sequencing. And
Polanyi (1982) goes so far as to distinguish different genres of oral narra-
tive, relying not only on linguistic factors, but on social constraints, such as
speaker/hearer deference, and turn-taking.

Although the discourse analysis of argument is less well developed, some
of the same questions about structure, meaning, and action are confronted
as in narrative analysis. For example, a central problem for the analysis of
arguments concerns their underlying organization: are they sequences of
logically related steps? Why do some propositions allow the deduction of
others? Which inference steps result in fallacious reasoning? Such
questions concern both the structure and the meaning of arguments – the
steps in an argument form a logical sequence because their semantic con-
tent allows particular inferences. Another problem for the analysis of argu-
ments concerns how speakers use arguments to persuade others of a point
of view, although here analysts often speak of the field of rhetoric (e.g.
Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969) rather than logic. It is when the per-
suasive aspects of arguments are analyzed that their study touches on the
study of actions, i.e. persuasive actions. The initial source of work on both

logical and rhetorical aspects of argument is Aristotle, who labels 'the
faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion'
(1355–25) as the field of rhetoric, and who suggests that one element of per-
suasion is 'the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the
speech itself' (1356–5), i.e. the form of the argument in which all the logical
steps are explicit. Thus, even from its inception in Aristotelian logic and
rhetoric, the study of argument can be seen to focus upon the interplay
among structure, meaning, and action.

It will be helpful to review the way in which analyses of narrative and
argument approach structure, meaning, and action for two reasons. First,
this work illustrates my point that different dimensions of talk work
together by showing that specific discourse tasks are accomplished through
an integration of structures, meanings, and actions. Second, I will be using
examples drawn from both narratives and arguments throughout my analy-
sis of markers – since telling stories and arguing are two speech activities
frequently engaged in by my informants (Schiffrin 1984a, Chapter 2 in this
book). Thus, it is useful to know something about these two discourse
modes prior to that analysis.

My discussion of narrative presupposes some familiarity with the frame-
work proposed by Labov and Waletsky (1967) and Labov (1972a) in which
narratives are composed of five different parts: (1) an abstract which pre-
faces the point and/or topic of the story, (2) an orientation which provides
descriptive background about who, where and when story events occurred,
(3) a complicating action in which the story events are recounted in tem-
poral order, (4) a coda which closes the story by moving from the past story
world to the present conversational world, and (5) an evaluation whose dif-
fuse location throughout the complicating action, and within the syntax of
complicating action clauses, shows the way in which the storyteller is using
the particular experience to make a point. (See also Hymes 1981, Polanyi
1979.)

I will consider four discourse tasks which figure prominently in conver-
sational storytelling: initiating the story, reporting events within the story,
conveying the point of the story, accomplishing an action through the
story. At first glance, each task might seem to require the speaker's atten-
tion to just one aspect of talk. But upon closer examination, each task
actually requires simultaneous attention to several dimensions of talk from
both the speaker and hearer.

Consider, first, story initiation. Because stories take more time to tell
than turns at talk typically allow, they require that the storyteller enlist
from the hearer tacit agreement to bypass many potential turn-transition

points (Sacks 1971). In short, if a storyteller is to situate and complete the story, turn exchange has to be temporarily suspended. But more than the mechanics of turn exchange is involved: to gain a turn long enough for a story, speakers can project an anticipated turn length through strategies which manipulate several levels of discourse (e.g. Jefferson 1978, Sacks 1971): The prototypical story beginning *y'know what happened?*, for example, requires a listener not only to answer the question (*no*), but leads him/her to ask another question (*what?*). This question then opens both a conversational space for the storyteller's answer, and a proposition for the storyteller to complete, both of which can be accomplished by telling a story which does no less than describe *what happened*. In short, such a story-beginning builds on the adjacency pair organization of question/ answer pairs, and on the propositional completion accomplished by an answer to a question, to create a turn-taking space for the story. Or consider story prefaces which abstract an evaluative component of the story, e.g. *a funny thing happened the other day*. Such an abstract helps to create a conversational space for a story by alerting listeners as to what to listen for: something funny. Thus, by foreshadowing the evaluative meanings to be conveyed through the story events, it proposes that listeners refrain from exchanging speaking roles until something funny has been reported.

Second, consider reporting story events. This task seems to be, at least in part, a semantic and structural task: speakers present a set of event clauses in a basically linear structure, a set whose order is assumed to match the temporal order of events. But this linear structure has interactional consequences which may very well figure in its motivation: the linear structure seats the listener in the narrator's perspective, thus creating out of the listener an audience, and even more, a vicarious participant in the narrator's experience (Goffman 1974: 504).

Third, indicating the general point conveyed by the specific experience reported in the story (Labov 1972a) might be seen as a semantic task because it involves the hierarchical organization of a set of propositions into a larger schema. But, in fact, what is intended and understood as the point is strongly dependent on social, cultural, conversational, and personal contexts (Polanyi 1979, Tannen 1984), such that we cannot really speak of the point until we have grasped the larger schemas in which the story takes shape. In addition, speakers use prosodic, lexical, grammatical, and discourse modifications of the textual norm (Labov 1972a, Polanyi 1979) to convey the point, suggesting that multiple facets of language are used in service of what at first seemed to be a semantic task.

Finally, to propose the performance of the story as a specific interaction-

al move, speakers not only situate their story as a response to prior conversational actions, and in conformity with participant understandings as to what constitutes the performance of particular actions, but they modify the syntactic structure of constituent clauses, of repair structures, and of discourse referents in service of that action. And by repeating key phrases from prior conversation within the complicating action and evaluation of the story, they use a cohesive device to show that understanding the interactional meaning of the story requires reference to prior conversation (Schiffrin 1984b discusses these ideas in more detail).

Consider, now, that these discourse tasks – opening a story, reporting events, making a point, performing an action – are accomplished not only through speakers' manipulation of different aspects of talk, but through a finely tuned process of hearer participation: by withholding their own turn-incomings, displaying their appreciation and evaluation of the story at critical junctures, responding appropriately to the action, and in general making evident a receptive stance toward the story (Goffman 1974: 504), it is hearers of the story who ultimately provide the turn, realize the point, and endorse the action. In short, speakers have only partial responsibility for the construction of narratives: speakers can propose the form, meaning and action of what they are saying, but to be established as part of the discourse, such proposals need hearer endorsement.

Let us turn now to arguments. Since the discourse analysis of argument is less well developed than that of narrative, many of the issues considered here are of a definitional nature. Let us consider, first, whether there are two distinct modes of argumentative discourse – the first a monologue, and the second a dialogue. The first mode of argument would share features with other expository discourse, e.g. explanations, but the second mode of argument would share features with disagreements, e.g. disputes, confrontations, and quarrels. Although the monologue/dialogue distinction is useful in many discourse analyses, it does not seem to be readily applicable to analyses of argument. Many discussions that seem to focus on monologic argument, for example, assume that the point being established either has not been openly accepted or has already been disputed; once the question of hearer reception is raised, however, we are in the realm of dialogue. And many discussions that seem to focus on dialogic argument nevertheless describe how speakers support and defend positions through logical reasoning and personal evidence; attention to how speakers support a position, however, takes us back into the realm of monologue. Thus, argument seems to be a mode of discourse which is neither purely monologic nor dialogic.

How can we define argument in such a way as to capture both its textual properties as a monologue, and its interactive properties as a dialogue? In previous work (Schiffrin 1982b: Chapter 9, 1984a, 1985a), I have defined argument as discourse through which speakers support disputable positions. This definition incorporates both monologic and dialogic properties: the textual relations between, and arrangement of, position and support is monologic, and the interactional organization of dispute (challenge, defense, rebuttal, and so on) is dialogic.

Discussion of the three parts of argument central to my definition – position, dispute, support – suggests that the understanding of arguments requires attention to as many aspects of discourse organization as those to which we were forced to attend in discussion of narrative. Let us start with **position**. Although a key part of a position is an idea, i.e. descriptive information about situations, states, events, and actions in the world, another important part is speaker commitment to that idea. The simplest display of commitment is through an assertion, i.e. a claim to the truth of a proposition. In more complex displays, speakers indicate their confidence in that truth, e.g. by hedging or intensifying what they say. Still another part of a position is its presentation. Positions are often verbally presented in what Labov (1972c) has called soapbox style: the speaker uses increased volume, maintains the floor for an extended period, and seems to be addressing an audience larger than those in his immediate co-presence. Although positions are often personally held beliefs about the way the world is, they may also be beliefs about the way the world should be. Thus, it is not surprising that speakers often adopt a verbal style in which they seem to be addressing as wide an audience as possible. Nor is it surprising that the presentation of such claims can reveal not only ideas, but moral values and claims to competence and character. (Goffman 1959 argues that all performances have this capacity.)

In **dispute** of a position, individuals can address their opposition to any one (or more) of its parts: a dispute can be centered around propositional content (the accuracy with which a position represents a given state of affairs), speaker orientation (challenging the speaker's stance *vis-à-vis* the facts), or personal and moral implications of the verbal performance (the kind of person the speaker is revealed to be). Sometimes oppositions are obscured because they are presented indirectly (Labov and Fanshel 1977) or mitigated through accommodative devices (Pomerantz 1984). Oppositions are also obscured because they may be definable only by reference to a framework of background knowledge which speakers bring to their understanding of a discourse – reference to information going well beyond the surface meanings of the text itself. Some topics of talk, for example, seem

to be culturally defined as disputable (e.g. politics, religion); other topics are sources of dispute only within particular relationships. In either of these cases, understanding the source of an opposition requires reference to background knowledge which is not explicitly presented within a text.

The final component of argument is **support**. A speaker can support a position on any of the levels at which it can be disputed: one can explain an idea, justify a commitment, defend a presentation. Support at any one of these levels can of course be labelled as different speech acts, e.g. one might speak of an explanation, a justification (or an account), or a defense. (None of these speech acts are restricted to arguments: explanations, for example, can be used to clarify; justifications to apologize, and so on.) Each such act, however, consists of the provision of information through which a speaker induces a hearer to draw a conclusion about the credibility of the position.

The examination of support in an argument touches not only on speech acts, but on inferential relations between ideas. Although a main source of insight about the semantic relation between support (premises) and position (conclusion) has been logical analyses of argument, other approaches challenge the applicability of such analyses to everyday arguments. Allwood *et al.* (1977: 104–5) mention some general problems in applying logic to everyday argument, e.g. the role of hidden premises, the need for background information. Toulmin (1958) rejects a formal syllogistic model, arguing that a jurisprudential model of argument provides a less ambiguous framework – since the traditional units of premises and conclusion obscure the more differentiated units of data, warrant, backing, qualification, claim, and rebuttal. Furthermore, in many of the arguments which I have examined, both the content of support, and the inferential relationship between support and position, are widely variable: modes of support as different as personal example, analogy, and appeal to authority require different modes of reasoning if they are to be interpreted as validating a position. Scribner (1979) finds cultural differences responsible for the use of the two different modes of support, i.e. empirical evidence rather than syllogistic proofs. She also locates the problem of learning to 'speak in syllogisms' firmly within communicative competence, arguing that we know little about the social or cultural conditions which give rise to the logical genre, nor how cultures define occasions for its use. The growing literature on children's arguments (Adger 1984, Brenneis and Lein 1977, Eisenberg and Garvey 1981, Lein and Brenneis 1978, Genishi and DiPaolo 1982, Maynard 1985) also provides insights into the wide range of circumstances which can be responsible for the emergence of particular means of support.

Although the issues raised by narrative and argument analysis differ in

detail, the general point illustrated by analysis of either discourse genre is the same: speaker and hearer divide responsibility for the construction of discourse at several levels of talk simultaneously. This point conforms to the overall thrust of this section, that is, that discourse cannot be considered the result of any single dimension or aspect of talk from either speaker or hearer alone. If we attempt to analyze the structure (or syntax) of discourse without also analyzing the meaning that is conveyed (both semantic and pragmatic) or the action that is performed (the interactional force), and without also viewing such properties as joint accomplishments of both speaker and hearer, we may not get very far in understanding what quality (or qualities) distinguish discourse from a random collection of sentences, propositions, or actions.

Halliday (1978: 134) states the importance of integration not just for discourse, but for linguistics in general:

a linguistic description is not just a progressive specification of a set of structures one after the other, ideational, then interpersonal, then textual. The system does not first generate a representation of reality, then encode it as a speech act, and finally recode it as a text.

Just speaking of the need for integration, however, specifies neither the precise way in which it should be accomplished, nor the precise shape which it should take. In fact, there are numerous ways that structures, meanings, and actions could be integrated, with each assigning a different degree of autonomy to the individual components. For example, one might argue that meaning and action are inherently separate aspects of discourse, but that one influences the other (or that they influence each other). Alternatively, one might argue that actions are a type of meaning, and thus that the relationship is not one of influence, but of identity. In short, the same diversity of solutions that have been proposed for integrating different components of language in general – phonology, morphology, semantics, pragmatics, syntax – are faced by discourse analysts. (See, for example, the current debates concerning the semantics/pragmatics boundary, e.g. Gazdar 1979, Kempson 1975: Chapters 7–9, 1984, Leech 1983: 5–7, Levinson 1983: Chapter 1.) But because of the vastness and ambiguity of discourse analysis (recall my comments in 1.1), scholars are able to specify neither the route toward, nor the eventual shape of, discourse integration in a way that allows the empirical testing of different predictions.

In the next section, I suggest that we approach the task of understanding how different dimensions of discourse are integrated through a model of

discourse coherence. The model will not only specify different planes of talk, but it will allow us to suggest several different ways in which those planes are integrated with one another.

1.5 A model of discourse coherence

Although the concept of coherence is of central importance to discourse analysis, it is notoriously difficult to define. We often have an intuitive feeling about why one discourse is coherent, and another is incoherent, but it is difficult to provide a principled account for these different judgements, and even more difficult to predict which sequences will be interpreted as coherent. Greetings, for example, form an adjacency pair: an initial greeting constrains the next available interactional slot such that whatever occurs there will be heard as (or examined for its adequacy as) a second greeting. One would not expect, however, that a second part from a **different** adjacency pair would turn up in the second-greeting slot. Yet, I recently returned a telephone call to someone who responded to my 'hello' and self identification with 'thank you'. When I later asked her why she had said this, she said she was thanking me for returning her telephone call so quickly. The point is not that this kind of sequence is typical; the point is only that although it might not be predicted to be so, it can be produced and interpreted as a coherent sequence.

Difficulties of this sort have led discourse analysts away from direct definitions of, and accounts for, coherence. Yet many acknowledge a need for a theory of (or theories of) coherence. Stubbs (1983a: 147) suggests a need for multiple theories of discourse coherence:

we need accounts not only of surface lexical and syntactic cohesion, and of logical propositional development. We also need an account of speech acts, indirect speech acts (in which the illocutionary force of an utterance is overlaid by markers of mitigation or politeness), the context-dependence of illocutionary force, and the sequential consequences (predictive power) of certain speech acts. In other words, we have to have multiple theories of discourse coherence.

Gumperz's recent work (1982, 1984) suggests an integrated view of coherence. Gumperz suggests that communicative meaning is achieved through a process of situated interpretation in which hearers infer speakers' underlying strategies and intentions by interpreting the linguistic cues which contextualize their messages. Such cues are called contextualization cues: they are the verbal (prosodic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, rhetorical) and nonverbal (kinesic, proxemic) aspects of a communica-

tive code which provide an interpretive framework for the referential content of a message. Crucial to Gumperz's model is the idea that such devices are reflexive: not only are they constrained by the larger interactional frames in which they are situated, but they actually create interpretive contexts through which a speaker's underlying communicative intention can be inferred. Thus, production and reception of a message depend upon shared access to culturally defined repertoires of verbal and nonverbal devices which are both situated in, and reflexive of, the interactional frames within which they occur. Coherence, then, would depend on a speaker's successful integration of different verbal and nonverbal devices to situate a message in an interpretive frame, and a hearer's corresponding synthetic ability to respond to such cues as a totality in order to interpret that message.

I suggest that the properties of discourse discussed in the previous section also contribute to the overall sense – to the coherence – of discourse. Not only do speakers and hearers use many different kinds of contextualization cues to situate their communicative intentions, but they do so within an integrated framework of interactionally emergent structures, meanings, and actions. This peripatetic tendency of language-users would help account for the peripatetic tendencies of discourse analysts, who acknowledge the need for analyses of meaning and action in their analyses of structure, or who wander from cognitive expectations (e.g. Brown and Yule 1983) to social actions (e.g. Labov and Fanshel 1977) in their analyses of coherence.

I also propose that both language-users and language-analysts construct models of the relations between units (sentences, propositions, actions) based not only on how such units pattern relative to other units of the **same** type, but on how they pattern relative to units of **other** types. In other words, both users and analysts of language build models which are based on a patterned integration of units from different levels of analysis. Such models are what allow them to identify discourse segments with parallel patterns, and more importantly for my current point, to make overall sense out of a particular segment of talk – to define it as coherent.

Any such model faces two immediate difficulties. First, it is almost impossible to identify a pattern which is categorically prohibited, that is, formally disallowed to the same degree as an ungrammatical sentence is not generated by a sentence grammar. Second, it is almost impossible to identify a pattern which is categorically required: there always exist multiple candidates which can fill any particular slot within a pattern, and even worse, there usually exist multiple slots.

Another way of saying this is that multiple options for coherence are always available for both speakers and hearers. Indeed, even when coherence options are relatively limited, there still exist multiple candidates for what can be heard as a coherent response. Take the limitation of coherence options through the form and content of a question. Asking someone's age with the tag question *you're twenty one, aren't you?* constrains coherence options for an answer fairly strongly, but many responses are still possible, and more important, coherent (e.g. *Thanks!* or *Here's my identification card*). And, of course, even silence can still be interpreted as a response to such a question and imbued with meaning, simply because of its sequential location in an adjacency pair (Schegloff and Sacks 1973; see also Tannen and Saville-Troike 1985). Or consider the limitation of coherence options set by the first part of a ritual interchange: saying *Hi how are you* delimits what will conventionally follow, but answers as varied as *Fine*, *Hi*, and *Bye* can all be understood as coherent (Goffman 1971, Schiffrin 1977).

Of course responses which do not draw from the conventional range of coherence options (however that is to be defined) may require hearers to undertake substantial inferencing if they are to construct for them a coherent interpretation (Grice 1975). But it is partially the availability of just such context dependent, defeasible inferential procedures that so expands the range of coherence options. In addition, as Goffman (1974, 1981a) has pointed out, gaps between utterance and action, or between contiguous utterances, may be resolved by participants only because they understand other moves to have been deleted or re-arranged, or because they share a focus of attention which is several utterances (or several interactions) prior to their current focus of attention. That individuals can draw upon such understandings also creates an expanded range of coherence options.

Bateson (1953) makes a point which suggests a solution for some of these worries about coherence options: one cannot see the outline of a conversation when one is in the middle of it, only when it is finished. The solution is this: one may not have anticipated the range of coherence options created by one speaker's utterance until after that utterance has received a response which has drawn from that range. In other words, it is because discourse has emergent structure that one cannot always know from what system an option will be selected until the choice has been made.

My overall point in this section has been that speakers' and hearers' efforts to build coherence face the same problems, and rest on the same principles, as analysts' efforts to describe discourse. Conversationalists

devote a great deal of joint effort toward the accomplishment of coherence; discourse analysts devote great effort toward description of how discourse differs from random collections of smaller units. Both efforts depend on the integration of different dimensions of talk, and both efforts are greatly complicated by the near lack of either categorical prohibitions or requirements. Of course the conversationalist's immediate goals differ from those of the analyst: he or she is expected to be an active participant in a conversation through construction of a next unit, which will in turn be assessed as a candidate upon which to base still another unit. But regardless of the immediate communicative or contextual importance of their models, both language users and language analysts use essentially the same procedures in its construction.

I now want to propose a model of coherence in talk, which I also take to be a model of discourse. The model focuses on local coherence, i.e. coherence that is constructed through relations between adjacent units in discourse, but it can be expanded to take into account more global dimensions of coherence. It not only summarizes (at the risk of great reduction) and adds to much of what we have been discussing in this chapter, but it will also be a source of definitions, as well as a framework, for the analysis of markers in the rest of this book. Furthermore, I will be viewing markers as indicators of the location of utterances within the emerging structures, meanings, and actions of discourse. The model will thus also show the contexts to which utterances are indexed. (I expand this aspect of the model in Chapter 10.)

Figure 1.1 presents the model. I first distinguish two kinds of non-linguistic structures: an **exchange structure** and an **action structure**. The top part in each structure is from an initial speaker, the bottom part is from a next speaker. Later on in the model, I'll bring in these two participants more explicitly.

The units of talk in an **exchange structure** are the sequentially defined units attended to by ethnomethodologists: I've labelled them turns (because this is the primary unit) but they include conditionally relevant adjacency-pair parts – in other words, questions and answers, greetings. In general, then, exchange structures are the outcome of the decision procedures by which speakers alternate sequential roles and define those alternations in relation to each other (hence, an answer is defined in relation to a question). In addition, an exchange structure is critical in fulfilling what Goffman (1981a: 14–15) called the system constraints of talk. System constraints are concerned with the mechanical requirements of talk: a two-way capability for transmitting acoustically adequate and readily interpretable
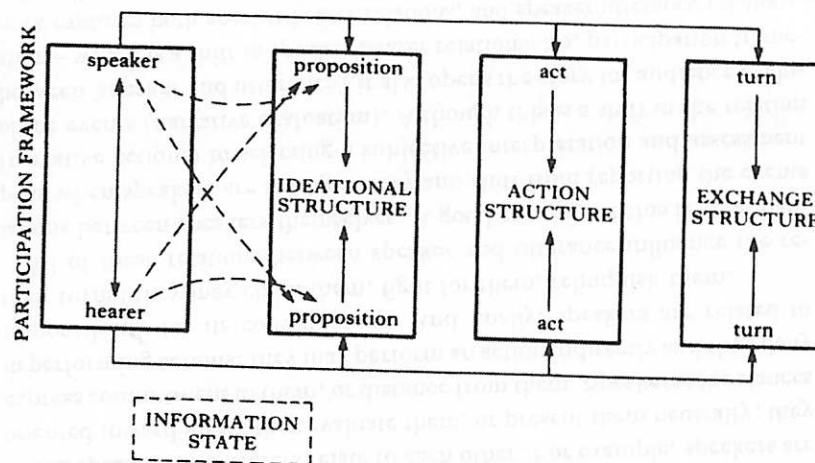
Figure 1.1   *A discourse model.*

messages, feedback capabilities, contact signals, turnover signals, preemption signals, framing capabilities, such as rekeying signals.

Next is an **action structure**. I am using this term to indicate that speech acts are situated – not only in terms of speakers' identities and social setting, but in terms of what action precedes, what action is intended, what action is intended to follow, and what action actually does follow. Thus, I use the term structure here for the same reasons that I used it in discussion of exchange structure – to direct attention to orders of occurrence and to the decision procedures through which such orders emerge. In short, actions occur in constrained linear sequences – they are not randomly ordered, there is a pattern and a predictability to their occurrences – and they are interpreted as situated. Finally, although the distinction is not absolute, action structures revolve more around fulfilling what Goffman (1981a: 21) has called ritual constraints (than the system constraints fulfilled by exchange structures). Ritual constraints are concerned with the interpersonal requirements of talk: the management of oneself and others so as not to violate appropriate standards regarding either one's own demeanor or deference for another; they are designed to 'sustain and protect through expressive means what can be supportively conveyed about persons and their relationships'.

Another structure of discourse is **ideational**. In contrast to exchange and action structures (which I view as pragmatic because of the central role which speakers and hearers play in negotiating their organization), the units within this structure are semantic: they are propositions, or what I'll

just call ideas. Three different relations between ideas contribute to the overall configuration of idea structures: cohesive relations, topic relations, and functional relations.

Cohesive ties are established when interpretation of an element in one clause presupposes information from a prior clause (Halliday and Hasan 1976) because of the semantic relationships underlying a text. Another part of an idea structure is its organization of topics and subtopics – what is being talked about. Unfortunately, I have no solution to propose as to how to find topics and subtopics, although it often seems intuitively very clear, especially when topics shift. In addition, although the topics of sentences clearly contribute to the topic of discourse, it does not seem to be a cumulative process such that adding all the sentence topics produces the discourse topic. More promising is the view that topic is a summary of the important parts of discourse content – like a title. (See Brown and Yule 1983: Chapter 3 for an excellent review of topic.) Functional relations between ideas are also part of an idea structure. These are somewhat easier to identify, for they concern the roles which ideas play *vis-à-vis* one another, and within the overall text: for example, in a narrative, some ideas may serve as a descriptive background for others; in explanatory discourse, some may provide specific instances to illustrate a generalization, or reasons which support a position.

As I noted above, idea structures differ from action and exchange structures because they consist of linguistic units (propositions with semantic content), whereas exchange and action structures emerge through units (turns and acts) which are realized by the use of language, but are not linguistic *per se*.

Another difference concerns whether these three structures are definable in relation to both monologues and dialogues, or just to one. Exchange structures, for example, emerge only in dialogue (even though a particular turn may be oriented toward its eventual completion, and thus, oriented toward its role in an exchange). But action structures can emerge in either dialogue or monologue: for example, a pre-request and a request ('are your hands free?', 'can you hand me that ladder?') touch on both. In contrast, idea structures are clearly found in both monologues and dialogues. Examples of monologues with clear idea structures are narratives, descriptions, and explanations. Question/answer pairs illustrate a dialogue with a specific idea structure: in asking a question, a speaker presents a proposition which is incomplete either as to polarity (a yes–no question) or as to WH-information (a WH-question).

The next plane of discourse is the **participation framework**, a term

introduced by Goffman (1981b). The terms 'speaker' and 'hearer' here are a gross oversimplification of the various levels of identity which are reflected, and allowed to emerge, through talk. Goffman differentiates, for example, among different 'production formats', including an animator (who presents talk), a figure (who is presented through talk), and a principal (who is responsible for the content and implications of talk). (See also Clark and Carlson 1982.) The term 'hearer' is also underdifferentiated for it fails to discriminate among different 'reception formats', for example, hearers who are intended recipients of talk (addressees) from those who are unintended recipients (overhearers), and passive listeners from those who are expected to contribute to talk. The terms 'speaker' and 'hearer' also ignore the ways in which institutional aspects of identity – teacher/student, doctor/patient – and interpersonal differences of power and solidarity influence the allocation of participant roles. Keeping in mind all the intra and inter-individual differences the terms 'speaker' and 'hearer' capture, I will merely define this aspect of participation framework as the different ways in which speaker and hearer can relate to one another.

There is another aspect to participation frameworks. Although speakers and hearers are related to each other, because of their mutual presence and shared responsibility for talk, they are also related to talk – to what they are producing. The ways in which speakers and hearers can be related to their utterances – to their propositions, acts, and turns – is another part of the participation framework, and these relationships also influence the ways in which speakers and hearers relate to each other. For example, speakers are oriented toward ideas: they evaluate them, or present them neutrally; they express commitment to them, or distance from them. Speakers take stances in performing actions: they may perform an action indirectly and thus deny responsibility for its consequences. And finally, speakers are related to their turns: they may claim them, fight for them, relinquish them.

All of these relations between speaker and utterance influence the relations between speakers themselves. A good example of this is what happens when speakers are telling a story and shift from reporting the events (narrative actions) to selecting a subjective interpretation and assessment of the events (narrative evaluation). Although this is a shift in the relation between 'speaker and utterance', it also opens the story for audience evaluation – which is a shift in speaker/hearer relations. So, participation framework captures both speaker/hearer relations, and speaker/utterance relations.

Recall, now, that I mentioned that I will consider exchange and action structures to be basically pragmatic in nature because of the central role played by speakers and hearers in their negotiation. Participation frame-

works are also pragmatic because they involve speakers' relations to each other and to what is being said, meant, and done. Thus, I am taking a very broad view of the scope of pragmatics in which pragmatics concerns the relation of language to its users. (This follows Morris' (1938: 6) initial definition of pragmatics as the study of 'the relation of signs to interpreters'.) Furthermore, I will also be considering these three pragmatic components as more interactional in nature than the others – again, because of the central role played by speakers and hearers in their negotiation.

The final component in my model is **information state**. Here we also find speaker and hearer playing a central part, but unlike the participation framework, they do so not in their social interactional capacities, but in their cognitive capacities. This cognitive focus is because information state involves the organization and management of knowledge and meta-knowledge.

Speaker/hearer knowledge concerns what a speaker knows and what a hearer knows: a speaker may have complete access to information, a hearer may have complete access, both speaker and hearer may have complete access (Labov and Fanshel 1977). Speaker/hearer meta-knowledge concerns what speakers and hearers know about their respective knowledge, and what parts of each knowledge base one knows (or assumes to know) the other to share.

Both knowledge and meta-knowledge vary in terms of their certainty and their salience. Although individuals make assumptions about each other's knowledge and about each other's meta-knowledge, the certainty of those assumptions varies, depending on such factors as the source of information, recency of mention, and so on. Knowledge and meta-knowledge also vary as to their salience for a current discourse. Obviously, not all information to which speaker and hearer share access – and know one another to share access to with different degrees of certainty – is relevant (either directly or indirectly) for the production and interpretation of a particular message. Thus, only parts of speaker/hearer knowledge need to be activated for a hearer's successful decoding of a speaker's message.

Note, now, that although information state involves speakers and hearers in their cognitive capacities, there is still an interactional relevance to knowledge and meta-knowledge. Because discourse involves the **exchange** of information, knowledge and meta-knowledge are constantly in flux, as are degrees of certainty and salience. Another way of saying this is that information states are constantly evolving over the course of a conversation: what speakers and hearers can reasonably expect one another to know, what they can expect about the other's knowledge of what they

know, how certain they can expect one another to be about that knowledge, and how salient they can expect the other to find that knowledge are all constantly changing. In short, information states are dynamic interactive processes which change as each one of their contributing factors change.

Since information states are interactively emergent, they **can** become pragmatically relevant so long as speakers display their knowledge and meta-knowledge to one another. But in contrast to turns and actions, which are constituted only through talk, and to participation frameworks, which emerge only because speaker and hearer are orienting their communicative conduct toward each other, knowledge and meta-knowledge can also be essentially internal states (and this includes not only the static organization of knowledge but the dynamic internal processes by which inferences are drawn). It is because an information state is only **potentially** externalized that I speak of it as pragmatically relevant, rather than as pragmatic *per se*.

In sum, my discourse model has both non-linguistic structures (exchange and action) and linguistic structures (ideational). Speaker and hearer are related to each other, and to their utterances, in a participation framework. Their knowledge and meta-knowledge about ideas is organized and managed in an information state. Local coherence in discourse is thus defined as the outcome of joint efforts from interactants to **integrate** knowing, meaning, saying and doing.

How and where does such integration occur? There are three different possibilities. First, different parts of one component are related to each other: ideas to ideas, actions to actions, and so on. Second, different components are related to each other: action structures to exchange structures, information states to participation frameworks, and so on. Third, a part of one component can be related to a part of another component. But since each component has been conceptualized as forming a structure **individually,** these latter sorts of mutual dependencies might challenge an assumption left untouched by the other means of integration, i.e. the assumption that each component is autonomous. Although I will not attempt to describe exactly how and where these different means of integration occur, I will return to the general issue again in Chapter 10, where I suggest that discourse markers have a role in accomplishing the integration needed for discourse coherence.

1.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have tried to define discourse by briefly summarizing the scope of academic interest in discourse, outlining some assumptions which

play a critical role in my view of discourse, and describing several properties of discourse. I then argued that discourse structure, meaning, and action are jointly integrated by speaker and hearer in their efforts to find coherence, and suggested a model of local coherence.

This first chapter has said nothing about discourse markers *per se*. Yet it provides a theoretical background for the study of discourse markers, as well as a model upon which I will base both my analysis of specific markers (Chapters 4–9) and my general conclusions (Chapter 10). Furthermore, it provides a background for my operational definition of discourse markers and description of data (Chapter 2) and for my discussion of the questions which are raised by discourse markers (Chapter 3).

2 Prelude to analysis: Definitions and data

This chapter has two aims. The first is to present an operational definition of the items I analyze as discourse markers: *oh, well, and, but, or, so, because, now, then, I mean, y'know* (2.1). This definition will allow us to identify markers by some principled set of criteria: we need to know not only how to find the markers that we are analyzing, but why we are proposing their similarity. The second aim is to describe the data that I am using in my analysis (2.2).

2.1 Operational definition of markers

I operationally define markers as **sequentially dependent** elements which bracket units of talk.[1] In (2.1.1), I motivate the decision to define markers in relation to units of talk, rather than a more finely defined unit such as sentence, proposition, speech act, or tone unit. In (2.1.2), I define brackets as devices which are both cataphoric and anaphoric whether they are in initial or terminal position. In (2.1.3), I discuss sequential dependence.

2.1.1 Units of talk

Defining markers in relation to 'units of talk' is a deliberately vague way of beginning our definition. To be sure, there have been many efforts to more precisely define units of language, as well as units of speech. In fact, we discussed many such units in Chapter 1: units defined because of their structural relations with other units, their cohesive relations, or their interactional relations. Yet, because there are many units of talk which influence the use of markers, basing our definition on a more precise unit would place a tremendous limit on our analysis by restricting our attention to just that unit.

Consider first, a syntactic unit. Although markers often precede sentences, i.e. syntactic configurations of an independent clause plus all