PART 1

FIELD AS THE RECONTEXTUALISATION OF SOCIAL PRACTICE
Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis is the outcome of a lengthy period of apprenticeship in systemic-functional linguistics generally, and in the teachings of M.A.K. Halliday and J.R. Martin in particular. Not a word of it would have been possible without their ideas and without their methods of working. When I first undertook it, I was interested in how language is used to represent the social world, and I turned to systemic-functional linguistics because it has done more to make linguistics relevant to the study of this problem, and of other problems in the social sciences, than any other form of linguistics, with the exception, perhaps, of the work of the East Anglia school of critical linguistics (which, in any case, owed much of their inspiration to Halliday's work). Yet, in attempting to use systemic-functional theory and method for studying linguistic representation, I hit upon problems. And in comparing the work of Halliday, Martin and other systemic-functional linguistics to other readings about language and representation, from literary theory, non-linguistic forms of discourse theory, the sociology of knowledge, I hit upon questions. It was time to start using what I had learnt to try and formulate my own ideas. In this chapter I concentrate on the literature. Problems encountered in the practice of analysis will permeate the thesis throughout.
1.1.1 The end of representation?

Systemic-functional linguists generally stress that language is a social phenomenon. The key text is Halliday's *Language as Social Semiotic* (1978) which unequivocally affirms that 'language actively symbolises the social system' (p.3) and that both 'language as representation', language in its ideational function, and 'language as interaction', language in its interpersonal function, must be seen as social, the former because 'social reality is encoded in language' (p.2) and the latter because interaction is by nature always social. Still, wherever systemic-functional linguistics is explicitly elaborated as a social theory of language, 'language as interaction' tends to receive a great deal more emphasis than 'language as representation', and the ideational is often discussed in individual, psychological, 'intra-organism' (1978, p.12) terms (Halliday also speaks of the ideational function of language as the 'observer' function, e.g. in Parret, 1974, p.95). When Halliday introduces his notion of 'sociosemantics' (1973, p.48 ff), for instance, the emphasis is on behaviour, and the example is a paradigm of the various (socially situated) ways in which mothers may control their children - without any reference to what is being controlled, without any content. Again, in describing the contextual variable 'field', content ('subjectmatter') is seen as a 'special
category of a more general concept’, that of ‘what we are doing’, ‘what is going on’ within which the language is playing a role’ (1978, pp.221-222). In his account of child language, finally, Halliday, taking his cues from Malinowski’s (1923) account of ‘primitive speech’, sees interaction as the ontogenetic, possibly even the phylogenetic origin of language (1975, p.37), even though arguably the child’s language begins to resemble language (rather than a bi-stratal animal communication system) only in what Halliday calls ‘Phase II’, that is, when the child begins to use language for ‘mathetic’ purposes, to comment on observations, to recall things, to predict - in short, to represent.

The same tendency is present in Martin’s work (1992). Genre, that is, text as a ‘linguistically realised activity type’ (1984a, p.3), a ‘goal-oriented social process’ (1984b, p.32), divorced from content, is the dominant mode of describing text structure, as well as an overarching category in the model as a whole, a factor determining the way of language in every aspect (1984a, p. see also 1985b). Again, the difference between ‘language in action’ and ‘language as reflection’, originating also in Malinowski (1923, p.296), is seen, not as part of field, that is, of the category which Martin explicitly connects with ‘content’ (1984b, p.1), but as part of
'mode', that is, as part of a more neutral ('textual') contextual variable (I will return to this point below). And although he initially equates field with content, when it comes to a more specific definition, content disappears from view: 'we are almost always participating in one of the institutions into which we have been socialised, playing out one of its activity sequences (i.e. field)' (1984b, p.5). In other words, 'we' are not, say, 'representing the activities of other institutions in ways typical of the institutional discourses within which our representing activities are located', but we are just 'participating in activities'. The difference between an activity which does and an activity which does not represent another activity is glossed over: 'feeding is just as much part of the field of dog showing whether one is doing it or talking about it' (1984b, p.5). This differs little from the way in which, for instance, Schank and Abelson's (1977) 'restaurant script' is described as a mental representation feeding equally into people's ability to play the role of customer when actually visiting a restaurant, and into their ability to understand texts about it, or from the role played by 'background knowledge' in the work of pragmaticists like Levinson (1983) and Brown and Yule (1983). Van Dijk (1977), like Schank and Abelson a writer with a cognitivist orientation, at least acknowledges that knowledge of
activities is ‘framed’ differently in different types of discourse.

Why this emphasis on behaviour, and this sidestepping of content? Perhaps it is unfair to blame linguists, for in favouring format over substantive content they follow a trend which is manifest also in many other spheres of social activity, and which has its roots in rationalisation, in the sense in which Weber has used this term (linguistics is no exception to the rule that ‘experience is codified in language through the intermediary of the social structure’, Halliday in Parret, 1974, p.117). Weber (e.g. 1977), and others, in more recent elaborations of his ideas (Zijderveld, 1972, 1979; Habermas, 1984, 1987), have described rationalisation as a form of social organisation in which social interaction is (a) oriented, not towards meanings, values and beliefs, but towards purposes, not towards the question ‘Is it true?’ or ‘Is it good?’, but towards the question ‘Does it work?’ ‘Does it achieve its purpose?’, not towards the ends, but towards the means, and (b) rational, that is, proceduralised, turned into a step by step method through intricate legalistic rules (‘techniques’) that are motivated by their efficiency and economy in helping to achieve the purpose of the interaction. In rationalised social interaction, therefore, it is no longer meaning, no longer consensual representation, which binds together the
members of a society, but common practice, procedure, genre. This is what Zijderveld (1979) calls the ‘supersedure of meaning by function in modernity’. While meaning loses its bearings and becomes fragmented and heterogeneous, ‘what people do’ becomes increasingly regimented, homogeneised and proceduralised. In universities, for instance, a large variety of discourses is permitted. There is no need for unifying doctrine or belief to guarantee the cohesion of the institution. But there are increasingly many procedures to be followed: bureaucratic rules, prescriptions for the organisation and presentation of courses, guidelines for the grading of students, all formulated without reference to the content of courses or to what it is that is being graded, all supposedly applying to anything from a course in nursing to a course in nuclear physics. Or, to take another example, the idea that radio broadcasting would strengthen the unity of the nation and help create consensual representations, a fundamental aspect of the Reith doctrine, and also of propaganda in the totalitarian states of the 1930s, has long ago lost its credibility. Although the ABC’s ‘Radio National’ still broadcasts across the nation, only 2% of the population listens. Radio has exploded into a multitude of different stations, all catering for different kinds of music. The programme formats, however, become increasingly similar: everywhere the same
alternation between short 'grabs' of talk and music; everywhere the same segments - the 'breakfast programme', 'housewife time', 'drivetime', etc (cf. Van Leeuwen, 1991) - and this quite irrespective of any actual variety in practices (shiftwork, gainful employment of married women, use of public transport). Systemic-functional linguistics could well be invoked as a third example: the same analytic procedures (e.g. methods of grammatical analysis) underlie discursively vastly different enterprises, from the critical analysis of technocratic discourse (Lemke, 1987), to the construction of artificial intelligence systems (Mann and Matthiessen, 1983). Everywhere there are fewer (and more powerful) genres, and more (but less powerful) discourses. Everywhere there is generic homogeneity and discursive heterogeneity.

Attali (1985) speaks in this connection of 'the end of representation'. Although writing about the political economy of music, his ideas can be, and are by him, applied to other spheres of social activity as well. The secularisation of society in the age of bourgeois capitalism created the conditions for the hegemony of representation. God's word could no longer function as social cement in the way it had before. Empirical truth, the grounding of the social structure in a common reading of 'nature' had to take its place, and, as a result, reference became
the central notion in semiotic (and philosophical) thought, so much so that the idea of language as interaction (speech act theory) could, in our century, seem new again (as could, for instance, Brecht's idea of actors directly addressing audiences in the theatre, rather than representing events for them in the 'proscenium arch' mode). However, the hegemony of representation was disrupted by the age of repetition, made possible by reproductive technology. In being endlessly repeated, forms could no longer be a 'record' of some real event. They lost their connection with the reality that preceded them and guaranteed their meaning as representation. In short, the sign lost its referentiality.

But perhaps what has ended, or is slowly dying, is not so much representation itself as the cultural hegemony of representation - and this both in theory (including linguistic theory) and practice. In everyday life people continue to care about representation, and continue to 'call each other liars' with their own 'rough and ready criteria of truth', as Hodge and Kress note (1988, p.23). Representation thus goes underground, losing the finesse that came from its elaboration in high theory, but continuing to exist, despite the hegemony of abstract art, formalist theory, value-free economic rationalism, and so on, and despite the great
loss of meaning that has occurred in the dominant culture. So, as Hodge and Kress say:

A practical semiotics should have some account of the relationship of semiosis and 'reality', that is, the material world that provides the objects of semiosis and semiotic activity. Unless semiotics confronts this relationship, it can have no relevance to the world of practical affairs, with its confident assumptions about 'reality', and it cannot account for the role of semiotic systems in that world.

(Hodge and Kress, 1988, p.23)

I would like to add a plea for the critical relevance of sticking with representation. Critical discourse analysis cannot just concern itself with the way in which inequality is realised in the forms of social interaction, it must also concern itself with the representations which socially dominant subjects make and distribute about the 'others' they dominate in order to provide ideological scaffolding for the unequal social practices themselves (cf. e.g. Van Dijk's work on racism, 1991). It must continue to ask 'how is such-and-such represented by so-and-so within such-and-such an institution', and it must continue to improve its tools for doing so.
So I want representation to be the central theme of this thesis, not because the study of language as social interaction (e.g. the study of genre) is unimportant or wrongheaded - on the contrary, the crucial importance of 'procedure' in rationalised society makes it a number one priority, both at a theoretical and at an applied level. It is because representation must also continue to be studied, and not unthinkingly, in the name of progress, be dropped from linguistics. For a language in which meaning would truly be 'superseded by function' would no longer be a language.

1.1.2 Field as social cognition

In Halliday 'field' is defined in behavioural terms, as 'the social action in which the text is embedded', and this 'includes the subjectmatter as one special manifestation' (1978, p.110). Halliday's definitions are often augmented with 'glosses' of the fields of the texts he uses as examples. Thus the field of a radio talk by the Bishop of Woolwich is described as follows: 'Maintenance of institutionalised systems of beliefs; religion (Christianity), and the members' attitudes towards it; semi-technical' (Halliday and Hasan, 1985, p.14).
In other words, (a) 'subjectmatter' is social only in that it forms the input into a social interaction, not because it is itself affected and shaped by social forces; and (b) describing 'field' is describing, in purposive terms, 'what is going on' (the Bishop is 'maintaining beliefs', and influencing 'members' attitudes'), and not describing the discourse, the meanings exchanged, the way in which religion is represented. Most other systemicists define field in similar ways, although Ellis (1966) and more recently Fawcett (1980) have made the notion of subjectmatter more central, if not more social: for Ellis 'social action' is a separate contextual category (the category of 'role'), while Fawcett has a cognitivist interpretation of 'subjectmatter'. Hasan (Halliday and Hasan, 1985, p.56) defines field as 'the kinds of acts being carried out and their goals', and this 'purposive' aspect, not explicitly included in Halliday, but certainly present in his 'glosses', also plays a role in Gregory's conception of field, although Gregory's 'purposive role' is a separate situational category which, he says, informs or selects the category of 'field of discourse', so that, for example, the 'purposive role' of 'establishing contact' selects such fields as 'the weather', 'politics', 'the cricket score', and so on (Gregory and Carroll, 1978, p.28). Again: what is lacking is any indication that 'the weather', 'politics', 'the cricket
score' etc. are not (socially neutral) background knowledges to be called upon in (socially non-neutral) contexts of interaction, but themselves socially specific. Notions like the 'subject matter' of the systemicists, the 'world knowledge' of the artificial intelligence specialists (e.g. Schank and Abelson, 1977), the 'background knowledge' of the pragmaticians (e.g. Levinson, 1983; Brown and Yule, 1983) are too neutral, and, as Fairclough (1985, p.754) has noted, obscure that the 'relationship between proposition and fact' is 'mediated by representational activity'. Or, in terms of Foucault (1977, p.135), discourse does not just involve 'a field of objects', but also 'the definition of a legitimate perspective for the agent of knowledge'. It is knowledge elaborated in the context of, and for use in specific social institutions. It is social cognition (Van Dijk, 1991, pp.226-227). Or, again, it is ideology, that is, a representation of reality which legitimates and maintains social actions such as those so much foregrounded in systemic-functional definitions of field.

The use of the term 'cognition' does not have to mean that field is 'outside language', that it consists of thoughts waiting to be put into words. On the contrary, language is the principal instrument of social cognition, and social cognition is manifested in the concrete use of language, and can therefore
be reconstructed from linguistic utterances. This was realised clearly in critical linguistics (cf. especially Kress and Hodge, 1979, pp.15–27; Fowler et al, 1979, pp.95–156), where representation was seen as an active process (‘processes of interpreting, explaining, judging and the like’, Trew in Fowler et al, 1979, p.96) and as the ideological transformation of reality into discourse - and this not just in a broad abstract sense, but in terms of specific, concrete linguistic transformations such as nominalisations and passive agent deletions. In Halliday, on the other hand, these same transformations are seen as ‘devices for giving to any particular clause the desired structure in terms of theme and rheme’ (in Parret, 1974, p.105), in other words, as neutral rather than ideological transformations, and as textual (‘enabling’) rather than representational ‘devices’. Martin (1985) is more willing to engage with the ideological dimension of nominalisation, but at times also slips into the Hallidaian view, for instance when he interprets high incidence of nominalisation as the mark of ‘mature expository style’ (1985, p.35 ff) or as typical of writing in general (ibid), that is, in terms of genre or of mode, rather than in terms of field. I do not want to deny the validity of these interpretations, I merely want to stress that these transformations also and very importantly play a role as options in the representation of participants
and processes (alongside the options specified in the system of transitivity). I want to see them, and others like them, become part of the description of field as social cognition, as the ideologically significant framing or ‘putting in perspective’ of knowledge.

What is it that is ‘put in perspective’ in this way? An important step beyond the commonsense, unexplained notion of ‘subject matter’ was made by Martin (1984a, 1988, 1989) who took the concept of lexical cohesion (in Halliday and Hasan [1976] a purely textual category, functioning to provide a neutral textual cement) and developed it into an instrument for describing field in terms of activity sequences, that is, representations of ‘what people do’, and taxonomies, representations of the conceptual systems behind texts (see 2.3.6, 3.5.1 and 3.5.2 for greater detail).

Social cognition of a subject matter thus has two aspects: a dynamic aspect, a representation of ‘what people do’, and a synoptic aspect, in the form of classifications of the participants, processes and circumstances involved. Initially Martin concentrated on procedural texts, which he saw as relatively transparent with respect to the activities they proceduralised. In other words, he equated
‘field knowledge’ and ‘world knowledge’ (feeding the dog ‘is just as much part of the field of dog showing whether one is doing it or talking about it, 1984b, p.5). More recently, he has stressed that ‘all fields are semiotically constructed’ (1989, p.57), but without indicating how this constructedness can be made part of the description of fields, so that the study of field can become critical, and engage with the stereotyped and prejudiced nature of so much social cognition (again, cf. Van Dijk, 1991), rather than, as typically happens in cognitive psychology and artificial intelligence research, take reference entirely for granted – in Schank and Abelson (1977), for instance, subjects, defined non-socially, have decontextualised ‘world knowledge’ of ‘scripts’ which allow them to participate in actual social practices and to understand texts referring to those practices. In contrast Van Dijk (e.g. 1977), though in many ways oriented towards cognitive psychology and influenced by Minsky (1975), Winograd (1975) and others, has a notion of ‘frame’ which, like ‘field’ in Martin, is stated in terms of actions (p.135) and centrally involving cohesion, but which is also socially specific: different types of discourse have different frames, and these frames, in turn, have a different type of relevance and a different function in the different types of discourse.
Close to Martin's approach is the work of linguists like Gleason (1973) and Grimes (1975). Both pay attention, not just to the representation of the activities themselves and their interconnections, but also to such concomitant elements as the 'participant roles', 'identification', 'setting', and 'background', etc., to suggest that such elements are, in representations, closely bound up with activities. The next two chapters will show how much I have relied on this idea: field is not just 'what people do', but also how they do it ('performance indicators'), how they are dressed when they do it ('dress'), what tools and other props they use in doing it ('tools'), when they do it ('times'), where they do it ('places') as well as socially specific versions of what they do it for ('purpose') and why it is right and proper that they do it the way they are doing it ('legitimations'), and all these are dynamically interconnected in the representation.

Grimes deals only with narrative texts, but in my own research I have taken the view that all texts must, in the end, connect with 'what people do' - it's just that in some the weight shifts towards discussion of the purposes and legitimations, while the activities themselves are more or less taken for granted, or referred to in truncated, abstract, and generalised ways. I therefore use the same methods in studying narrative
and expository texts, rather than replacing the idea of 'activity sequences' with a 'thematic structure' (Lemke, 1983, 1985) or with 'implication sequences' (Martin et al., 1988): the logical structures in expository texts or sections of texts serve, at the level of representation, to connect purposes and legitimations (and evaluations) to activities, and, at the level of interaction, they are the generic structure, the text's 'way of doing' rather than its 'way of knowing' (Trew, again: 'the processes of interpreting, explaining and judging', Fowler et al., 1979, p.96).

Activity sequences have of course played a role, not only in linguistic discourse analysis and cognitive psychology, they have played a significant role also in literary analysis. The theory of 'functions' in narratology (initiated by Propp, 1968), and, especially, the distinction between 'fabula' and 'syuzhet' first developed by the Russian formalists (cf. Eagle, 1981), are analogous to the theory of activity sequences, except insofar as they exclude reference: no relation of any kind is posited between the structure of stories and the structure of the social practices which the stories might represent, and stories are not seen as socially specific transformations of, or forms of knowledge about, 'what people do', out there, in the real world. This is the opposite of the 'world knowledge' view and
equally unhelpful for the purposes of critical discourse analysis. Only Barthes (1977) allows for the possibility of reference, despite his emphatic and not altogether convincing claim that ‘the function of narrative is not to represent’ (1977, p.123), a claim based on a narrow, ‘mimetic’ view of representation. It is interesting, however, that a number of studies in film theory use Propp, but nevertheless reinstate reference. Wright (1975) correlates significant changes in the (Proppian) structure of Westerns with broad changes in social practice such as the rise of professionalism and the intrusion of corporate practices in Government. Nichols (1981) claims that in the documentaries of Frederick Wiseman the (again Proppian) functions ‘are in fact governed by social interactions in institutions rather than that they represent Propp’s more ‘mythological’ narrative functions’ (p.213). Bell (1983), in a study of the way drug-related issues are reported in the press, describes the way newspapers report the activities of social institutions in a somewhat ‘mythological’ manner, with heroes, villains and victims. Other writers could be quoted. Lévi-Strauss (1964), for instance has shown how marriage practices may be inverted in myths, and Bettelheim (1976) has mapped the structure of fairytales onto the practices of the institution of the family. Stories always represent (and hence transform) social
reality, whether we call them factual or fictional, naturalistic or mythical.

To conclude, I have, in this section, argued that field should be defined as a ‘way of knowing’, as social cognition, rather than as a ‘way of doing’ (Halliday’s ‘the social action in which the text is embedded’), and, following Martin, I have argued that it should be described in terms of activity sequences which are transformed by means of linguistic processes. To put it another way, using a term from Bernstein (1981, 1986), field is recontextualised social practice, ‘what people do’ transformed into the discourse of an institutional practice other than that in which it is actually done, a ‘way of doing’ transformed into a ‘way of knowing’. The way Bernstein uses this term relates specifically to the recontextualisations that occur in educational practices. He describes how knowledge is produced in ‘the upper reaches of the education system’ (1986, p.5), where it has the form of an activity (skills, practices of producing knowledge), and then embedded into a pedagogic context, where it is objectified (subjected to linguistic processes of objectification) and made to serve the contextually defined purpose of a ‘discourse of order’, that is of ‘moral education’ in the Durkheimian sense, or of legitimatory ideology in the framework used in this thesis. I will in fact from hereon use the
term recontextualisation in preference to transformation, in part to avoid the mentalistic connotations which, since Chomsky, cling to this term, but, more importantly, to express that the transformations occur as a result of a shift in context.

1.1.3 Sociology and linguistics: from 'context' to 'practice'

Linguistics is, or ought to be, a branch of sociology, for the simple reason that language is, first and foremost, a social phenomenon. In systemic functional linguistics this is widely acknowledged. Yet explicit references to sociological theory are few and far between, and remain for the most part restricted to the work of Malinowski (e.g. Firth, 1964; Halliday and Hasan, 1985), Bernstein (cf. Halliday, 1973; Hasan, 1986), and occasionally Berger and Luckmann (e.g. Halliday, 1978, pp.169-170). The sociological foundations of the theory (especially its functional nature, its interactionism, and its emphasis on the purposive nature of language and text) are presented as essentially given and commonsense (but cf. the critique in Thibault, 1992), and analyses of social context, e.g. in the form of Halliday and Hasan's 'glosses' of the contextual configurations of texts, have been presented without argument, as

The same can be said of other schools of linguistics. Saussure emphasised that language is a social fact, but did not acknowledge his debt to Durkheim and, rather than explicitly linking social and linguistic structures, constructed language as an autonomous domain (this of course systemic-functional linguistics, with its emphasis on register, does not do). There have been exceptions, most notably Voloshinov (1973) and the school of Bakhtin (1968, 1984, 1986) and Pêcheux (1982, see also Woods, 1977)”, but they have remained exceptions. In this thesis I want to use an explicit sociological model to guide linguistic analysis, following Habermas’ suggestion that a ‘formal pragmatics’ (in his own work this is more or less synonymous with sociological theory) must be elaborated before fruitful work in ‘empirical pragmatics’ (text analysis) can become possible:

It is only in formal-pragmatic investigations that we can secure for ourselves an idea of reaching understanding that can guide empirical analysis into particular problems —
such as the linguistic representation of different levels of reality, the manifestation of communication pathologies, or the development of a decentered understanding of the world.

(Habermas, 1974, p.331)

A key feature of this model is the methodological primacy of social action. This premise should not be confused with Halliday's 'behavioural' definition of field and with the relative neglect of representation in systemic-functional linguistics, for it is also, and even especially, in the sociology of knowledge that social action is given primacy. Where in linguistics theory systems (paradigms) generate processes (syntagms), in most sociological theory processes (actions) generate systems (institutions, objectified forms of knowledge). The primacy of social action runs like a thread through European as well as American sociology. It is there in Marx (e.g. 1970), for whom social practice, together with the social relations brought about by it, forms the 'base' and the ideas produced by social practices the 'superstructure'. It is there in the works of the key sociologists of knowledge (e.g. Mannheim, 1936; Scheler, 1960; Berger and Luckmann, 1985). It is there in the classic sociologists (Durkheim, 1961, 1963, 1966, 1976; Weber, 1977). It is there in the symbolic interactionism of G.H. Mead (1934)
and its offshoots (e.g. Goffman, 1971a, 1971b; Garfinkel, 1967). It is there also in the more recent writings of Bourdieu (1977, 1986), Giddens (1976), and Habermas (1984, 1987). It is true that sociologists do sometimes derive processes from systems. One may think of Durkheim’s ‘collective consciousness’, Bourdieu’s ‘habitus’, of Talcott Parsons’ systems theory (1977), and of Lévi-Strauss’ structuralist anthropology as positing abstract schemata which then generate social ‘behaviour’. Yet the primacy of social action keeps asserting itself also in the work of these writers, sometimes against the grain of their general methodology. Bourdieu has elaborated the primacy of practice and the fundamental difference between the knowledge of the participant and the knowledge of the ‘outsider’ in his Outline of a Theory of Practice (1977). Talcott Parsons, even in his systems theory, still can say that ‘the subject of social interaction is in a fundamental sense logically prior to that of social system’ (1977, p.145). Even Lévi-Strauss (1964) at times derives the meaning of myths from social practices rather than from the abstract schemata which, to him, underlie practice. And Durkheim, especially in The Elementary Forms of Religious Life (1976) and Primitive Classification (Durkheim and Mauss, 1963), stresses that myths are modelled after rites, conceptual
categories after social life, classifications after social organisation:

The first logical categories were social categories. The first classes of men, into which things were integrated. It was because men were grouped, and thought of themselves in the form of groups, that in their ideas they grasped other things, and in the beginning the two modes of groupings were merged to the point of being indistinct. Moieties were the first genera, clans the first species. Things were thought to be integral parts of society, and it was their place in society which determined their place in nature.

(Durkheim and Mauss, 1963, pp.82-83)

In the next chapter I will describe in more detail the sociological model I will take as my point of departure, a model of social practice which concentrates on very concrete features of the ‘context of situation’, and is closer, therefore, to Firth (1950, p.182), whose model includes the ‘participants’, the ‘linguistic and nonlinguistic actions’, and the ‘relevant objects’, than to Halliday’s field-tenor-mode model, and which is a dynamic model, that is, a model described as a sequence of activities with attendant circumstances integrated in the description and linked to the relevant activities, rather than as the ‘situation’ or ‘environment’ of a text, hence as a syntagm rather than as a paradigm or network (which is how Martin (1984c) has described the contextual variable
'mode', as Poynton (1985) the contextual variable 'tenor'). In other words, I am replacing the notion of 'context' with that of 'social practice', on the ultimately very Hallidaian grounds that the social world should be described in terms of 'what people do', rather than statically, as an 'environment' or 'situation' for 'text'. At the same time I am keeping the notion of context in the more active term 'recontextualisation'.

It follows that two kinds of social practice can be discerned, those which do, and those which do not recontextualise other social practices. In systemic-functional genre theory (and that excludes Halliday) these two have constantly been confused. Hasan (e.g. 1977, 1984; Halliday and Hasan, 1985) uses the term 'genre' both for social practices like shopping, which do not recontextualise any social practice, and therefore in fact merge field and genre, and for social practices like the 'nursery tale' which do recontextualise other practices, and which, despite their fundamental ideological importance, are described in a much less socially situated and much more formalistic way, as vehicles (genres) for the recontextualisation of other practices (fields) but without reference to this latter aspect, to content.
NOTES

1. This is, in the end, not really all that different from Bloomfield's (1933) early linguistic behaviourism, in which 'meaning' was seen, not as 'what is being exchanged', but as the exchange itself: 'We have defined the meaning of a linguistic form as the situation in which the speaker utters it and the response which it calls forth in the hearer' (p.139), i.e. as a unit of interaction.

2. The suggestion that the 'instrumental' function could be seen as the origin of all language (Halliday, 1975, p.37), seems problematic, at least when framed in the context of functional evolutionism: social animals manage their 'instrumental' interactions quite well without language. Somehow or other a need for ritual and representation, rather than instrumental needs, must have triggered the development of language.

It is typical of many 20th century thinkers (this would include Malinowski and Bloomfield as well as Halliday) to combine referent-less behaviourism with a belief in the referentiality of science. Science, and with that, one's own discourse, is made to differ categorically from the speech of primitives, children and the majority of humankind. Malinowski: 'It is only in certain very special uses among a civilized community and only in its highest uses that language is employed to frame and express thoughts' (1923, p.316); Halliday: 'The meaning of a poem, or a technical discussion, cannot be expressed in terms of behavioural options' (1973, p.62).

I would like to give both children and ' primitives' more credit, and feel that Halliday could well have concluded from his own researches on child language, that language (tristratal language) is already used, in its very first manifestations, 'to frame and express thoughts' rather than only 'as a behavioural option': the human animal is a mathetic animal.
3. Martin (1992) appeared when this thesis was almost completed. There was no time to compare all my references to the published and unpublished (but widely circulated and influential) papers on which Martin’s book is based to the book itself.

4. For Malinowski, too, reference was unproblematically based on firsthand, unmediated experience, at least in ‘narrative speech’: ‘The words of a tale are significant to the listeners because of their previous experiences’ (1923, p.313). His concept of the ‘language of ritual and magic’, a form of language which constructs its referents, rather than that it reflects them, has not been taken up by Halliday.

5. But it should be noted that in Lemke (1985b) thematic systems are created and maintained by the processes of social action. His approach here corresponds very closely to mine.

6. Hasan makes considerably more reference to sociological theory than most other systemicists, including Connell (e.g. 1988, 1989), Durkheim (e.g. 1985, 1986), and Bourdieu (e.g. 1991).

7. There is no room here to discuss the exemplary way in which Pécheux combines psychoanalytic and linguistic theory to explain the principles of repression (oubli) which cause representation to seem transparent, rather than ideologically inflected through the instruments of lexicogrammar.

8. Halliday does of course give a linguistic justification for his field-tenor-mode model, arguing that the contextual variables are realised by the linguistic metafunctions which, in turn, are realised by distinct lexicogrammatical structures. The result, however, is that, looking at it from the linguistic end, the model is very satisfying, as it neatly distinguishes lexicogrammatical systems. Looking at it from the sociological end, however, questions can be raised: why is the distinction between monologue and dialogue seen as part of mode, when it has such profound repercussions for the question of power, hence for tenor? And why is nominalisation seen as realising a mode category (the distinction
between speech and writing) when it plays such a crucial role in representation, that is, in field? In this thesis I want to start, not with language, but with the social - not because that is intrinsically better, but in order to see whether that approach can lead to ideas that could help solve the problems of the metafunctional 'hookup'. Like Halliday, however, I will be concerned, throughout this thesis, with the realisation relation between my sociological categories and the categories of lexicogrammar.

9. As a result of the repression of representation, definitions of field and genre may come perilously close to each other, e.g. Halliday's 'field' as 'the social action in which the text is embedded' (Halliday, 1978, p.110; Hasan, 1985, p.56). It is striking, however, that Halliday's definition of field comes much closer to mine when, instead of defining field in the abstract, or characterising a text broadly, he analyses a specific utterance. In an analysis of Ben Johnson's 'To Celia', he says:

the field - the fact
that it is a love
poem, with the concept
of love realised
metaphorically (...
) is reflected (...
) in
the vocabulary, in the
naming of processes
and participants (and)
also embodied in the
transitivity
structures in the
grammar...

(Halliday and Hasan, 1985, p.24-25)

Here the field is neither the social action of communicating by means of a poem, nor the social action of loving as such, but a specific version of love = the metaphors from part of field, not of mode, or of genre.
Chapter 2: The elements of social practice

In this chapter I present a first sketch of my model of social practice. To do so, I must ask the reader’s indulgence for my method of exposition. I will, on the one hand, use a specific text to introduce the social practice I want to talk about, the practice of ‘going to school for the first time’, yet, on the other hand, ignore that I am talking about a specific text, and extrapolate beyond what is in the text to exemplify my categories, as if it were possible to talk unmediatedly and unproblematically about reality. All this is necessary for the sake of exposition and will be rectified in due course.

The text, then, is a short newspaper article from the ‘family’ pages of a Sydney tabloid newspaper, the Daily Mirror (24/1/1984), which appeared a few days before the beginning of the school year, an event that never fails to get some media attention:

1:1 ‘When Mum first took me to school I stated to cry because I thought I would never see her again.’
‘But after a few days I really loved school’ - Mark, aged six.
Mark, now 10, quickly discovered starting school wasn’t as ‘scary’ as he thought.
Mark was one of the many children teacher-turned-author Valerie Martin spoke to when writing From Home To School, a book dealing with the first day.
'The first day at school can be a happy and a memorable one', Valerie said. 'But the secret is getting ready and preparing now.' Valerie said the main problems for new pupils were separation from families, meeting large numbers of children they didn't know and conforming to a classroom situation. Here are some of Valerie's suggestions to help take the hassle out of the big day. Over the next few days try to get your child used to: - putting on and taking off clothes - tying shoe laces - eating and drinking without help - using a handkerchief Valerie says it is important your child knows how to: - use and flush a toilet - ask for things clearly - say his or her name and address - cross a road safely On the first day it is important not to rush children. Valerie says give them plenty of time to get ready, eat breakfast and wash and clean their teeth. If possible, get everything ready the night before because children become unsettled if they have to rush. 'And finally don't worry if you or your child cries', Valerie says, 'It won't last long.'

1.2.1 Social Practice

Social practices are the things people do, insofar as these are, with greater or lesser degrees of freedom, fixed by custom or explicit prescription, or some mixture of these two. Below I will discuss the elements
that make up social practices. It should not be forgotten, however, that these elements are integrated in a dynamic whole, and that something will inevitably 'escape analysis': 'the complex and living unity that these elements form when they are all joined together, when they interpenetrate or fuse.' (Durkheim, 1962, p.253).

1.2.2 **Participants**

A social practice first of all comprises a set of participants.

Text 1:1 intertwines reference to four social practices, each with its own set of participants, although there is some overlap, in the sense that some of the participants participate in more than one practice:

(a) **Mothers** hand over their **children** to a teacher on 'the big day';

(b) An **expert author**, through the medium of a book, counsels **mothers** on how to 'prepare their children for the first day';

(c) The **expert author** interviews many **children** as part of her research for a book about the first day;

(d) **Mothers** prepare their **children** for the first day.

The article itself constitutes a fifth social practice:
(e) A journalist reports to readers (readers of the 'family pages') the counsellings of an expert author, and, in this way, indirectly counsels those of her readers who are also parents.

1.2.3 Activities

The social practice also contains a set of activities, occurring in an order which is fixed to a greater or lesser degree, and which may or may not allow for choice, that is, for alternatives with regard to a greater or lesser number of the activities of some or all of the participants, and for concurrence, that is, for the simultaneity of different activities during part or all of the sequence. The resulting activity sequence serves to achieve some kind of goal, e.g. the production of goods or the acquisition of status, and, through the way in which the goal is achieved, realises the social relations of the participants to each other with respect to that goal (i.e. a certain hierarchy, a certain division of labour).

The following activities from the social practice of the first day are mentioned in text 1:1:

(1) Mother takes child to school
(2) Teacher separates child from mother
(3) Child starts to cry
(4) Child meets large number of children
(5) Child conforms to classroom situation
(6) Child discovers school is not 'scary'
(7) Child loves school

The social practice of 'going to school for the first time' is not so closely regulated that the order of the elements is entirely determined. Leaving aside, for a moment, those activities which are really reactions by the child (3, 5, 6 and 7), the child may, for example, meet the other children before or after the teacher separates the child from the mother (cf. Cleave et al., 1982, ch. 8). On the other hand (1) and (2) must logically occur in the order listed above. As for the child's reactions, these too must logically occur in the order listed above, although the child might of course start to cry even before the mother takes it to school, or only after its first meeting with the 'large number of children'.

Some of the participants in a social practice have more choice as to what they may and what they may not do than have others. In the case of 'going to school for the first time', the mother has little choice: she can neither decide not to take the child to school, nor to take it to some other kind of place. She can choose another school, perhaps, but she will still have to follow the same 'procedure' - she will still have to take her child there and hand it over to a teacher.
Schools, on the other hand, depending, perhaps, on departmental policy, may have alternative courses of action available to them — to allow the mother to stay in the classroom for a certain period or not, to assign an older child to look after a newcomer or not, and so on (Cleave et al., 1982, ch.8). The child itself, finally, has no choice other than to continue to resist for a shorter or longer period.

Activities may be concurrent. It may be, for instance, that the child is given some toy to play with, while the mother is being interviewed. Or, again, to take text 1:1 as a source, the child may cry during some or all of the activities (1), (2) and (4).

What is the goal of the practice of 'going to school for the first time'? Learning? The acquisition of social status? 'Making the difference' (Connell et al., 1982)? Producing 'maturity'? It is easy enough to say that social practices are goal-oriented, but harder to agree on what the goals actually are. And in many cases people act on impulse or from habit, and ascribe goals to their actions only afterwards, when these actions are challenged: 'The ideal type of meaningful action when the meaning is fully conscious and explicit is a marginal case' (Weber, 1964, p.112). This problem will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3 below.
What people do to or for or with each other, realises the social relations between them. In the case of ‘going to school for the first time’, the mother is initially in charge of the child, the child subject to her authority. Then an exchange takes place. The mother hands over authority to the teacher, for a certain period of the child’s day, and with respect to certain tasks. The child has no authority in either situation, although, to compensate for this, it has greater license to show its emotions than have adults (this seems to be a law in our society: the greater the power, the less emotion may be visible, or, at least, the more unexpected actually visible emotion will be). Thus both hierarchy (institutionalised agent-client relations) and division of labour (certain things are taught by mothers, others by teachers) are achieved.

Looking now at the social practice of ‘preparing children for the first day’, we find that its constituent activities can be listed as follows:

(1) Mother teaches child to put on and take off clothes;

(2) Mother teaches child to tie shoe laces;

(3) Mother teaches child to eat and drink without help;

(4) Mother teaches child to use a handkerchief;
(5) Mother teaches child to use and flush a toilet;
(6) Mother teaches child to ask for things clearly;
(7) Mother teaches child to say his or her name and address;
(8) Mother teaches child to cross a road safely.

These are, of course, all general labels for smaller scale activity sequences, and had 'Valerie’s suggestions', as reported in text 1:1 been more than suggestions, and included precise instructions, for example on how to teach a child to blow its nose, these various more detailed activities would have been describable as an ordered sequence. However, stated as broadly as they are, the activities do not seem to require any particular order. The social practices of the family, despite incursions by experts, are not subject to as rigid a sequencing as are the social practices of school life, where the order in which things are taught is often worked out in detail, for instance on the basis of theories of child development. At home the mother has more freedom of choice. There are no precise legalistic instructions, only 'suggestions'. In other words, different social practices involve different degrees of freedom, different margins for resistance, and different modes of enforcing conformity. A mother who does not teach her child to blow its nose may be tolerated, even though,
perhaps, considered slightly negligent. A mother who does not take her child to school, on the other hand, will not be tolerated.

Looking, finally at the social practice of 'counselling parents for the first day', the following sequence of activities can be extracted from text 1:1 (systematic methods of 'extracting' these sequences are discussed in part 3):

(1) The expert author asserts that the first day can be happy and memorable;

(2) The expert author warns that this is so only on the condition that parents prepare their children properly;

(3) The expert author states the problem;

(4) The expert author suggests the solutions;

(5) The expert author counsels not to rush children;

(6) The expert author counsels not to worry and predicts success.

These activities, of course, are speech activities. The practice of giving counsel is a practice which recontextualises another practice. It is a 'genre'. The order of the activities in such a practice is certainly not arbitrary, and must follow a certain narrative or expository or other logic - in this case an expository one. But this still leaves a certain amount of freedom. (1) and (2), for example, might have followed (6), as a kind of summary. On the other hand, (3) and
(4) must necessarily appear in the order shown above. Speech act sequences, depending on their institutional context, differ in the amount of freedom they offer writers or speakers in choosing from among different strategies to achieve their goals. And these rules or strategies are not autonomous linguistic structure potentials, but modalities of institutionalised social control that should be studied as different kinds of practices. What their goal is, is, of course, again difficult to determine. Easing the transition? Defining the role of the parent? Defining the ‘well-presented’ child?

As for the social relations between the participants, it is the relation between the professional expert and the ‘lay’ parent. The mother, although she is left a certain amount of freedom by this particular expert, is nevertheless in the position of a ‘client’. If she were to have different ideas of her role, if, for example, she thought it her province to teach her child reading and writing, or if she had different ideas on what constitutes the ‘well-presented’ child, she would be put under some pressure to conform (cf. Cleave et al., 1982, p. 97, where it is established by educational experts that ‘parents are wary of anything which might suggest that they were teaching children to read: ‘You shouldn’t educate them to know words, that’s the teacher’s job’).
1.2.4 *Performance indicators*

Related to the activity sequence as a whole, or to specific parts of it, are the *performance indicators* that specify how the activities are to be performed.

In text 1:1, for instance, parents are advised 'not to rush children'. In other words, if the social practice of 'preparing children for the first day' is to achieve its goal, it is not enough that parents perform all the activities that make up the sequence. They must also do so at a certain pace, and this tempo does not relate to all of the activities of the sequence, but only to those that occur 'the night before' and 'on the first day' itself.

1.2.5 *Eligibility conditions: participants*

*Eligibility conditions* are the qualifications participants must have in order to be eligible to participate, in a certain role, in a given social practice.

In text 1:1 Mark is 'aged six': to be eligible for the role of child in the social practice of the first day, a certain age is required. Similarly, to be eligible for the role of 'expert author' certain
qualifications are necessary: Valerie has experience as a teacher (she is a ‘teacher-turned-author’) and she has researched her topic with thorough, quantitative methods (she has ‘spoken to many children’).

Such eligibility conditions refer to further social practices: the social practice (by no means universal) of keeping track of people’s age by means of a certain calendar (cf. Ariès, 1973; Sorensen et al., 1986; Baars, 1991) in the one case; the social practices of teaching and social science research in the other. It is only in respect to the particular practices on which we are focussing here that they become ‘eligibility conditions’.

1.2.6 Dress and grooming

Social practices also involve a set of dress and body grooming requirements for the participants.

In text 1:1 these are stated mainly in terms of hygiene: the child should be clean and have brushed its teeth. The advertisements which appeared in the same issue of the Daily Mirror were more explicit, and showed the clothes children should wear to school: ‘They’ll start the new term in fine style
with the top brands from Grace Bros! Fine quality, super values and vast choice of regulation gear!'

Dress and body grooming requirements may be explicitly prescribed (school and other uniforms, wedding rings, and so on) or not, and social practices vary a great deal in the amount of freedom they leave to (some or all of) the participants in this respect, but dress and body grooming requirements are never absent. Even people who work at home alone, unobserved by anyone, will dress for the activities of the day in a socially regulated way. Like performance indicators, these requirements may apply to the whole of a social practice or to specific parts of it: the wearing and taking off of hats by men during certain social practices (e.g. burials) is one example. Like eligibility conditions, dress and body grooming requirements also refer out to other practices: the 'preparatory practices' of dressing, shaving, hair dressing, make up, and so on.

1.2.7 Times

Social practices as a whole as well as specific portions of them also take place at more or less definite times.
In text 1:1 several time constraints are indicated: the social practice of going to school for the first time must take place when the child has reached the age of six, and on a specific day, the beginning of the school year. The child's adaptation to school life happens 'quickly'. 'Getting everything ready' must occur 'the night before'. 'Preparing children for the first day' takes place 'over the next few days', that is, during the days prior to the beginning of the school year. Evidently a time constraint specific to the practice of newsreporting interferes here with the representation of 'preparing for the first day'. News reports must be linked to events that can be related to a specific point in time and this point in time must be as close to the time of publication as possible (Galtung and Ruge, 1973; Hall, 1973; Hartley, 1982). But as a result parents do not get much time to follow up Valerie's suggestions.

The other social practices referred to in text 1:1 are not linked to specific (or unspecific) times, and would therefore appear to be free of time constraints. However, although the time constraints on social practices vary in strictness, they are never altogether absent: the writing and publishing of books is subject to time schedules, and counselling on how to 'prepare' children for the first day must evidently take place towards the time that such preparation is due
to begin, which, in turn, is determined by the beginning of the first schoolyear.

1.2.8 Locations

Social practices are also related to specific locations.

The two locations that play a key role in text 1:1 are 'home' and 'school' - other locations mentioned are 'the toilet' and 'the road'. But on the whole the text is not very explicit about location, and we will see later that in texts written for children and texts written for the teachers of young children location is referred to in considerably more detail.

Practices may involve changing locations. The first day, for example, may involve not only the classroom, but also the playground, the hall, the cloakroom and so on. Within the classroom the furniture may be rearranged for the various activities that make up the first schoolday.
1.2.9 Eligibility conditions: locations

Text 1:1 does not refer to conditions of this kind, but it is evident that a room must fulfil certain conditions if it is to qualify as a classroom, or a livingroom, or a kitchen. Such conditions will relate to the size and shape of the room, and to its decoration or lack thereof (e.g. whether the floor is covered with carpet, or tiles, or lino; what colours are used for the floor and the walls), but also, and especially, to the type of furniture in it, and to the way that furniture is arranged (at least in our culture: in other cultures the distance between and the postures of the participants, rather than 'fixed feature' arrangements, might make a room into a classroom or a livingroom, cf. Hall, 1963, 1966, 1974). Even if, for example in the case of some emergency, a room not originally designed as a classroom is to be used for this purpose, it must first be arranged in accordance with a number of crucial eligibility conditions.

Like the eligibility conditions for the participants, the eligibility conditions for the locations refer back to 'preparatory practices' - of building, of interior decorating, of arranging furniture, of cleaning. And, different social institutions will allow a different amount of freedom with regard to each of the aspects mentioned.
1.2.10 **Objects: tools and materials**

Text 1:1 related 'preparing your child for the first day' to several objects. One needs shoes (with laces) to teach a child how to tie shoelaces; one needs handkerchiefs to teach a child how to blow its nose.

Such objects may relate not only to all or part of the sequence of activities itself, but also to other elements of the social practice. Clocks, for example, are a crucial tool in relation to the time constraints of strictly scheduled social practices (*cf.* Mumford, 1934), and so is the school bell in the case of 'schooling'.

1.2.11 **Eligibility conditions: tools and materials**

Like participants and locations, tools and materials are subject to eligibility conditions: not any bag qualifies as a schoolbag; not any piece of paper qualifies as material for the activity of learning how to write. And, again, how precise the prescriptions are will vary from practice to practice. Some conditions, however, will always apply.
1.2.12 Summary

Figure 1.1 summarises this chapter by showing, in tabular form, how the elements discussed in the chapter relate to each other. These, then, are the concrete, material elements of the social practice as it actually happens - and all of them should be taken into account in any study of a specific social practice or of social practices in general, including studies of social practices which recontextualise other social practices, that is 'genres'. To study only the 'text', the linguistically realised activities, is, in the end, sociologically of restricted interest.

The problem however, lies in the phrase 'as it actually happens', for although the first day does happen, to all of us, what I have looked at, and what I have shown in figure 1.1, is not a social-practice-as-it-happens, but a representation of it. And where I have added to this representation, I have quoted other representations, or worked from my memory, in which experiences and representations of schooling have become inextricably intertwined. The problem lies in the relation between practices and discourses about them.
Chapter 3: From practice to discourse

So far I have failed to make a crucial distinction - the distinction between social practices and discourses about these social practices. I have discussed such practices as 'going to school for the first time', 'preparing children for the first day', and so on, as though it were possible to learn something about them from texts that refer to them, as though reference to what people do stands in a direct and transparent relation to what people actually do, and as though texts about such doings vary only in the degree of detail they offer. This, of course, is exactly what I have argued in chapter 1 should not be done.

1.3.1 Participant knowledge and outsider knowledge

There are two ways in which we can have knowledge of social practices. We can know them as participants, and in that case our knowledge consists in our ability to participate; or we can know them as 'outsiders', and in that case our knowledge necessarily passes through the mediation of texts.

A participant's knowledge of a social practice is a knowing how which allows the
participant to achieve goals in situations which subjectively are always new, always different, always requiring fresh strategies, while yet also accommodating to social expectations of what may and what may not be done. It is tacit knowledge, *docta ignorantia* ('learned ignorance' - Bourdieu, 1977, p.19). When participants temporarily become 'outsiders', when for example they have to make their knowledge explicit to outsiders (social scientists, students, the 'public'), they remain aware of the gap between doing it and being able to explain what they know so well how to do - for such explaining is of course another social practice (the 'informant interview', the 'lesson', etc.) which, in turn, must be learnt, and which, in turn, would be difficult to explain to some 'meta' outsider.

An outsider's knowledge of a social practice is a knowing that, a knowledge of rules, of abstract schemata that can be applied to a variety of situations seen as objectively the same: to recognise that sameness is the essence of this kind of knowledge. Where the participant's knowledge is a knowledge of how to act or react when immersed in the unfolding of a specific situation, the outsider's knowledge is a knowledge of a completed whole, which can be analysed into its components. Where the participant's knowledge is tacit and implicit, the outsider's knowledge is articulated and
explicit. Where to a participant situations are never quite the same and life’s possibilities never exhausted, to an outsider, once knowledge is achieved, situations repeat themselves and become predictable.

Discourse about practice, then, always takes place outside the context of that practice, and within the context of another social practice. This process of inserting one social practice into another is what I have in mind when I use Bernstein’s (1986) term ‘recontextualisation’.

1.3.2 Recontextualisation

In recontextualisation, the recontextualised social practice may either be a sequence of nonlinguistic activities, for example dressing, or having breakfast; or a sequence in which linguistic and nonlinguistic activities alternate, as, for example, in the ‘language in action’ of Malinowski’s (1923) Trobriand fishing expedition; or a sequence of linguistic activities, a ‘genre’ (‘linguistic’ may, of course, extend to acts realised in some other semiotic, e.g. images). The recontextualising social practice, however, must always be a sequence of linguistic (and/or other semiotic) activities, a ‘genre’.
Recontextualisation not only makes the recontextualised social practices explicit to a greater or lesser degree, it also makes them pass through the filter of the practices in which they are inserted. The way in which they are made explicit is never transparent, but depends on who the participants of the recontextualising social practice are, on how they relate to each other, on what the goal of the recontextualising social practice is, and so on - all those things which form the tacit know-how of the recontextualising social practice.

Finally, recontextualisation is recursive - it can happen over and over again, removing us further and further from the starting point of the chain of recontextualisations. As figure 1.2 shows, text 1:1 starts off with the practice of 'preparing your child for the first day', with the things that mothers actually do to ensure that their children are 'ready' for school. To mothers this would not appear to be an activity which follows a clearcut recipe, but a new situation requiring specific strategies, even if they rely on what their mothers did (times have changed) or have already gone through it with one or more other children (every child is different). Were they asked precisely what they do and why they do it, they might find it difficult to know what to say. Yet, in doing it they may be influenced by discourses about the practice - books such as Valerie
Martin’s, or articles such as text 1:1, perhaps via discussions with friends and relatives.

This initial practice is then inserted into another one, the practice of interviewing children for research purposes. In the process it will be recontextualised: the assumptions, values and goals pertinent to research on this subject will inform the interviewer’s questions and also, even if perhaps with some room for differing views, the interviewees’ answers (cf. Van Leeuwen, 1986; Van Leeuwen and Bell, 1993).

The texts resulting from the interviews, in turn, are inserted into yet another practice, the practice of ‘counselling parents by means of a book’. Another recontextualisation takes place, in which, for example, the difference between differing views may be reduced, or even removed; and in which, as a result of the new goal of ‘counselling’ and the new social relation of professional expert and ‘lay’ parent, ‘what parents and children do’ (as ascertained by the interviews) is recontextualised into ‘what parents and children should do’.

The book, itself a recontextualisation, is then inserted into the social practice of newsreporting, and, in the process, ‘preparing children for the first day’ is recontextualised yet again. News reports,
when making general statements about the world, attribute these to experts or other authorities - unattributed statements must relate to specific events with temporal proximity to the date of publication (here 'the first day'). This particular newsreport appeared in the 'family' section of the paper and therefore could be said to have, next to the goal of 'reporting', another goal, that of 'providing a service to families': it not only reports what the expert has said, it also, though only obliquely, counsels those of the readers who are also parents. As we have seen, the two goals do not sit together all that well. The generic structure of the article provides us with some evidence of what the writer is trying to achieve. I have, elsewhere, discussed this aspect of text 1:1 in detail (Van Leeuwen, 1987), and will here only give a brief summary.
Figure 1.2: Recontextualisation chain for text 1:1
The text contains four (4) distinct generic stages, and one speech act ('Mark was one of the many children teacher-turned-author Valerie Martin spoke to...') which could either be seen as belonging to stage 1 or as belonging to stage 2, and is therefore labelled 'hinge'. In other words, it begins as a mini-story, then moves in to an expository account of the first day as 'problem'. This is followed by a series of adhortations addressed to parents and a prediction. Conclusive conjunction links the adhortations to the exposition of the 'problem'. Thus the text first draws the reader in with a short confessional narrative, a story of individual experience with which one can identify easily. It then generalises this story, turning it into a 'problem' which is analysed and interpreted in the authoritative language of the expert. A series of do's and dont's for parents, distilled from this analysis, follows, and finally success is predicted - always provided the instructions are adhered to.

Confessional narrative

↓

Hinge

↓

Discussion: analysis of the general problem distilled from the narrative
Adhortation: solution of the problem in the form of instructions

Prediction: prediction of success (happy ending)

This structure realises a particular kind of discursive practice, a particular kind of (short, secular) sermon, commonly used when apparently neutral professional experts address a 'lay' audience (usually women) on matters of a 'personal' nature - health, child rearing, sexuality, and so on. It is based on three premises: (1) professionals know the experiences and feelings of their clients even before the clients have related them, and can therefore relate their advice to the clients' feelings, and ground it in the clients' needs; (2) professionals know how to generalise and interpret the clients' experiences, whereas the clients themselves are not capable of doing so; (3) professional expertise allows professionals to predict the outcome of the clients' behaviours (cf. Johnson, 1972; Illich, 1977b; Van Leeuwen, 1982). Given these expert powers, there is no need to explicitly invoke the social sanctions that would be incurred by deviant behaviour, and the adhortations can be framed as 'advice', 'recommendations', 'suggestions', rather than as 'rules' or 'regulations'. The following short text, from
the agony column of an upmarket women’s magazine, employs more or less the same structure, albeit within the context of a question (1-5) and answer (6-15) format:

1:2 (1) I am a 35-year-old mother who loves her husband very much (2) but I can’t stop imagining every second man I see as a lover, be it men we both know, movie actors, or the guy from the petrol station. (3) When I’m making love with my husband it’s much more exciting to imagine he’s the neighbour or my husband’s mate. (4) What is wrong with me? (5) Why can’t I be content with one partner happily ever after? (6) Mid-30s and over are often a sexually restless time for women. (7) At this age a lot of women, like you, have been with the same man for many years. (8) Many are just coming out of that sexually dampening period of caring for young children (9) and are beginning to relax and enjoy their sexuality in a way that was not possible earlier in their lives. (10) In such circumstances, the desire is very natural. (11) Sexual curiosity tends to take over, leaving us wondering and fantasising in a way we never did before. (12) So rest assured, (13) it’s perfectly normal to feel the way you do, (14) and you are certainly not doing any harm in exercising that torrid imagination. (15) For the sake of your husband’s ego, however, I would think twice about telling him.

Confessional narrative (1-3)

Request for advice (4-5)
When this structure is used in a news article, as in the case of text 1:1, an additional factor enters the picture. Most of the speech acts have a double structure, because they are projected. If one regards the projecting clauses (clauses like ‘Mark, aged six’, ‘Valerie says’, etc) as the main clauses, the speech acts are reports (of what ‘Mark’ and ‘Valerie’ said), and the structure becomes a fairly loose concatenation of reported sayings. In this way newspaper writers indicate that they want to be seen as conduits for the discourses of others, rather than as, themselves, agents of social control (cf. Van Leeuwen, 1982). As a result, the piece can be read in terms of two discursive practices: as a journalistic report, and as a piece of expert guidance.

My thesis, then, does not deal with social practices directly. Social practices cannot be known directly other than by participating in them. As soon as one writes or speaks about them, one is already recontextualising. It deals, instead, with the way social practices are referred to in texts, with the
products of recontextualisation, the 'traces' left behind by recontextualisations (they are all we have), and it seeks to study how social practices are transformed when they are inserted into other (discursive) social practices. The structure of the social practice of 'counselling parents about the first day' as I have discussed it in chapter 2, is not the structure of that activity itself, but the structure of that activity as recontextualised by the social institution of the tabloid press. And the structure of 'going to school for the first time' and of 'preparing children for the first day' is not the structure of these activities themselves, but the structure of these activities as twice recontextualised, once by the expert author, then by the journalist.

The problem is, of course, that, as soon as I speak of 'recontextualisation' or of 'transformation', I invoke the spectre of something that is not recontextualised, not transformed, something by reference to which I can discover which changes, which transformations have occurred. I have in fact argued that there does exist an 'untransformed' social practice - in our example the social practice of 'preparing children for the first day'. But I have argued also (a) that this social practice cannot be known directly, so that I will not be able to pinpoint the 'real facts', and can at best learn something about them.
indirectly, by comparing different recontextualisations of the same social practice (which in the end only proves consensuality, rather than reality), and (b) that the 'untransformed' social practice will, in any case, be subject to historical transformation as the result of (among other things) the influence of discourses. I will nevertheless persist in formulating the principles of recontextualisation in process terms, speaking of objectivation, abstraction, and so on, thus acknowledging that recontextualising social practices is something people do, and hence itself a social practice.

1.3.3 **Substitutions**

What happens, what kinds of transformation take place in the process of recontextualisation? To specify this in linguistic terms will be one of the major concerns of this thesis, and here I can only give an indication and some examples.

First of all, the elements of the social practice may be 'substituted' by others. In text 1:1, for instance, some participants are particularised and nominated (e.g. 'Mark', 'Valerie'), others generalised and aggregated ('large number of children'), and some
activities are objectivated, through nominalisation (e.g. 'separation from families'), while others are spatialised (e.g. 'the classroom situation').

What kinds of substitution occur depends on the social institution into which a practice is recontextualised. Text 1:1, for instance, particularises 'what parents do', but generalises and objectivates 'what teachers do', perhaps because the text is addressing parents/readers from a position which is ultimately derived from, and aligned with, the social institution of education (Valerie Martin, the principal source, is a 'teacher-turned-author'). As such the text withholds from parents any detailed knowledge of 'what teachers do', of what goes on inside school. It keeps the parents outside of the school gate, so to speak. The article nominates when, to draw in the reader, it tells the story of Mark, and also when it fulfils its reporting function (e.g. 'when Mum took me to school'; 'Valerie says') because both narration and reporting are oriented towards concrete, specific events, though in different ways: where, in the epistemology of reporting, we live in a world of disconnected, isolated events, morsels of fact, in the epistemology of narration we live in a world of causally linked events that culminate in a logical outcome, a resolution. On the other hand, the article generalises in Valerie's exposition of 'the
problems’, because the expertise of experts consists in knowing how to recognise similarity and pattern in events, and how to predict events on that basis. In the epistemology of the expert abstract concepts and issues are the real, ‘personalisations’, ‘dramatisations’ and so on the transformations, while in the epistemology of the journalist and the storyteller, specific people and events and places are the real, and ‘generalisations’, ‘abstractions’ etc. the transformations. It is an opposition with deep religious and philosophical roots in our culture, which has on the one hand the heritage of the Hebrew God who is known by what He does (lead the Israelites out of Egypt, send His Son, and so on), and, on the other hand, the heritage of Plato, of the timeless, abstract, and universal essence behind the manifold specific appearances, a heritage which led to a God who is rather than a God who does.

1.3.4 Deletions

Recontextualisation may also involve the deletion of elements of the social practice.

In text 1:1, for instance, the participant ‘teacher’ has been deleted, as a result of nominalisation (‘separation from families’): the parent/reader is not told who does the
separating, at least not explicitly. This might again be seen as related to the maintenance of strict boundaries between the domain of the family and the domain of the school. But teachers are given the right to more information about what goes on in the family, than are parents about what goes on in school (and children often comply with this state of affairs). The deletion of elements of social practices in re-contextualisations may play a significant role in the way knowledge of these practices is distributed in society, and such distribution is often unequal.

Generalised names for whole activity sequences, or large portions thereof (e.g. 'getting ready for the first day', or 'the first day' itself), do not necessarily imply deletion. The detailed activities may be referred to elsewhere in the text. When this is not the case, however, they cause the detail to be deleted. It may be that such detail is readily supplied by the reader (e.g. the deletion of the 'objects' involved in 'cleaning your teeth'), so that the inclusion of the detail would seem overcommunicative and condescending. But it may also be that the detail is withheld for other reasons. In text 1:1, the practices of researching and writing a book are not referred to in detail, perhaps because they are deemed to be irrelevant to the Daily Mirror reader. In other contexts (e.g.}
research reports) such detail is usually supplied. When 'experts' address 'experts', their credibility hinges on it. When 'experts' address 'the public', the mystique of expertise is thought sufficient proof, and the activities of experts are, accordingly, kept a mystery. The public will then have only a vague and woolly knowledge of the experts and activities, and reify the results of these activities beyond the possibility of critique.

1.3.5 Rearrangements

Elements of the social practice, insofar as they have a necessary order, may be rearranged, scattered through the text in various ways. In text 1:1, for instance, the activity of 'preparing for the first day' comes after the activity of 'taking the child to school', when, in reality, the two would have to occur in reverse order. Again, 'separation from families' follows 'really love school'; when, in reality, the opposite order would have to apply.

Such rearrangements are motivated by the concerns of the recontextualising practice: the generic structure of the article, with its stages of 'drawing the reader in', 'explaining the problem' and 'providing the solutions in the form of adhortations to
parents’ necessitates them. The activities are rearranged to suit the persuasive and hortatory purposes which constitute them as a social practice.

1.3.6 Additions

Elements may also be added to the recontextualised social practice:

(1) Repetitions
The same element may occur a number of times in the text, for the purpose of redundancy and textual cohesion. In text 1:1 we have, for instance:

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starting school
the first day
the first day
the big day
the first day
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From the point of view of reference (cf. Halliday and Hasan, 1976) this is a series of repetitions, a series of synonyms, but when, as in this example, a number of different expressions are used to refer to the same element of a social practice, substitution and the addition of new elements are also involved. New angles, new semantic features are then added by each new expression in such a way that a kind of ongoing concept.
formation takes place, of which one becomes fully aware only when analysing the strings of lexical elements referring to the same participant or activity or other element of the social practice. The resulting concept then fuses the semantic features of all the expressions used as synonyms. In the case of text 1:1 this adds, for instance, an element of evaluation ('the big day') to the way the activity of 'starting school' is recontextualised.

(2) Reactions
Like many other texts, text 1:1 includes (some of) the participants' subjective reactions to the activities that make up the social practice (Mark 'starts to cry', children 'can become unsettled' and so on). It is not immediately clear whether these should be seen as part of the structure of the social practice itself, or as elements added in the recontextualisation. On the one hand reactions can often be related to the concerns of a recontextualising social practice. Radical 'anti-schooling' texts such as Illich's Deschooling Society (1971), a text to which I will return in more detail later, include many negative reactions of both children and parents, while in text 1:1 reactions are positive ('happy', 'memorable'). Negative reactions, such as those of Mark when 'Mum first takes him to school', are particularised and construed as
instances of 'deviance'. 'Worry' is discouraged.

On the other hand, reactions may also be obligatory elements of the social practice. In this case, however, they must be behaviouralised, become activities in their own right. For the 'proper performance' of a social practice it may be necessary that participants smile, or look solemn, or even cry, as in the funeral rites of many societies. What matters here, however, is not what the participants really feel - such 'real feelings', if they figure in a text, can be considered elements added in the recontextualisation -, what matters is whether or not they act out their feelings in accordance with social expectations (or deviantly, in opposition to these social expectations).

The question of how to determine whether or not reactions are added in the process of recontextualisation, will be discussed in detail in part 3. For the moment I can only indicate that the answer lies in the structure of the activity sequence as a whole, as recontextualised. In children's books dealing with the first day, for instance, feelings of apprehension are often described, but the children do not cry or behave rebelliously, and their feelings are not represented as affecting the events. In
teacher training texts, on the other hand, the opposite is true. The children’s emotions are acted out, and form a constant threat to the proper unfolding of the first day. These texts expect a significant number of children to cry or behave rebelliously, and they include advice on how to overcome the problem. Unlike the children’s books, they represent children as not fully capable of acting out their social roles ‘responsibly’.

(3) Goals
The goals of one and the same social practice may be construed differently in different recontextualisations of that practice. An ‘anti-schooling’ text might construct the goal of text 1:1 as obtaining parents’ complicity with the school system, against their better interests. A ‘pro-schooling’ text might see it as helping to smooth the inevitable transition between home and school. Text 1:1 itself is silent about its own goal. It is not silent, however, about the goals of the social practices which it recontextualises. The goal of ‘getting ready for the first day’, for instance, is explicitly provided: ‘to take the hassle out of the first day’.

Goals, then, are not intrinsic parts of activities or activity sequences, at least not in ways that can be known explicitly.
They are added to activities and activity sequences in discourse. And as such they are often the stuff of controversy and debate.

(4) Legitimations
Apart from the 'what for', the goal, recontextualisations may also add the 'why' to their representations of social practices, that is, they may add legitimations, reasons why either the whole of a social practice or some part of it must take place, or must take place in the way that it does. Texts not only represent social practices, they also explain and legitimate (or de-legitimate, critique) them.

The legitimations in text 1:1 are either 'psychological', founded on the expert author's special knowledge of the needs and feelings of children (e.g. parents must 'get everything ready' because 'children become unsettled if they have to rush') or pieces of stoical, commonsense wisdom ('it won't last long'). As Berger and Luckmann (1985) have pointed out, legitimations can be realised on a number of different levels: (i) 'explanations built into the vocabulary', (ii) 'rudimentary theoretical propositions', e.g. proverbs, moral maxims, wise sayings, etc., (iii) explicit theories (in which case the legitimations result from institutionalised operations on text which are
themselves social practices), and (iv) 'symbolic universes', such as religions (1985, p.112 ff).

The same social practices, or parts thereof, may be legitimated in different ways, depending on the concerns of the recontextualising practice. 'Getting ready', for instance, might also be legitimated by an appeal to tradition ('that's how my mother did it'), rather than by expert psychological knowledge. And the same legitimation discourses may serve to legitimate different social practices. 'Child psychology', for instance, is used in family counselling education, in the publishing industry (rules for writing and illustrating books aimed at certain age groups), and so on. Domains of knowledge used for legitimating or de-legitimating social practices have a specific distribution across recontextualising practices, determined by the social relations that obtain in the recontextualising social practices (e.g. class and gender differences) and the nature of the practices that are being recontextualised (e.g. whether or not they involve children).

The role of legitimation in texts may vary in importance. Some texts are almost entirely about legitimation or de-legitimation, and have only rudimentary reference to the social practices that are being legitimised or de-legitimised. In other texts legitimation
plays a minor role, or is absent altogether. The relative paucity of legitimations in text 1:1, for instance, shows that the practice of ‘getting children ready for the first day’ is regarded here as essentially commonsense and in little need of legitimation. This of course makes this kind of text all the more important to study: commonsense practices are the most deeply ideological of all. In any case, it usually turns out that they were hotly debated when they first became institutionalised, and the ‘genesis amnesia’ (Bourdieu, 1977, p.23) which has since taken place is no doubt itself a mechanism of legitimation, enacted in practises of education and training, and, as Bourdieu notes, ‘by the objectivist apprehension which, grasping the product of history as an opus operatum, a fait accompli, can only invoke the mysteries of pre-established harmony or the prodigies of conscious orchestration to account for (...) the coherence of works or institutions such as myths, rites or bodies of law...’ (1977, p.79).

(5) **Evaluation**
Finally, recontextualisations may add evaluations to elements of social practice, or to social practices (or parts of them) as a whole.
In themselves such judgements are not legitimations, and they may appear in texts without being further legitimised. Yet they are ultimately always connected with legitimations. In this, there is, however, a difference between 'morally good' or 'morally bad', and other kinds of 'good' and 'bad', for instance functionally good ('useful', 'handy', etc) aesthetically good ('beautiful', 'elegant' etc.), and emotionally good ('exciting', 'satisfying', etc). 'Morally good' necessarily bears a relation to a legitimating discourse - the laws instituted by God, the laws of Nature, the laws of Society, or some combination thereof. This applies also to such common evaluations as 'innovative', 'big', 'progressive', and so on, which relate to the normative discourse of continuous progress towards bigger and better things that underpins so many of our institutions. Other kinds of 'good' and 'bad', on the other hand, refer back to the social practices themselves. A tool is 'useful' because it allows a certain activity. An activity is 'useful' because it allows the achievement of a certain goal. An activity is 'exciting' because it allows a certain reaction. In other words, while a legitimating discourse is needed to legitimate 'moral' evaluations, other evaluations are legitimated by the practice itself, or by the goals or reactions connected to it in a given recontextualising practice. In the latter case evaluation
circumvents morality, and cannot be further legitimated other than in a circular fashion.

Which kind or kinds of evaluation will occur in a particular recontextualising social practice will, again, depend on the concerns and values connected to that practice. In journalistic reporting evaluations are, in the main, comparatively rare. Text 1:1 has some 'emotional' evaluations, realised by lexical items with an evaluative connotation ('hassle', 'unsettled'), in a context which suggest ways of avoiding these negative emotions. On the evaluative aspects of the adjective 'big' I already commented when discussing concept formation.

There is, of course, also an evaluative element in reactions, since these can be seen as forming a spectrum that runs from positive to negative. However, reactions are expressed or felt by participants of the recontextualised practice, rather than expressed by the agent of the recontextualisation, or by the agent of an alternative recontextualisation of the practice which may be quoted or reported within a recontextualisation.

Finally, evaluation needs to be distinguished from modality - the evaluation, in terms of 'true' or 'untrue', 'credible' or 'not credible', of alternative recontextualisations quoted or reported within
a recontextualisation. Just as there are different kinds of 'good' and 'bad', so there are different kinds of 'true' and 'untrue', and 'truth' may be substituted for by 'usefulness', 'beauty', 'emotional attractiveness', and (moral) 'goodness', depending on the concerns and values of the recontextualising institution - 'Sentimental' may be 'untrue' in texts when truth is founded on some concept of what is 'real', say in Marxist essays. 'Moving' may be 'true' in texts where truth is founded on emotional responses, say in revivalist sermons or romantic movies. In each case, however, the objects of such modalisations differ from the objects of evaluations, and are always themselves recontextualisations: 'sentimental' is what a bourgeois novel quoted in the Marxist essay says about social relations, not some aspect of these social relations as they are discussed by the Marxist writer her or himself.

1.3.7 Field

It now becomes possible to return to the definition of field. A field, in the context of this model, comprises the set of recontextualisations of social practices on which a given discursive (recontextualising) social practice (say, tabloid journalism) draws, together with the relations into which
these recontextualisations may enter in texts. The field of a particular text is the selection which that text makes from the field of the discursive practice as a whole. This definition of field can be related also to a definition of social institutions: a social institution is here a set of interrelated social practices (many, or even all, of which may be recontextualising other social practices), together with their fields. In other words, institutions comprise a set of practical 'participant' knowledges, ways of doing, practices, and a set of theoretical 'outsider' knowledges, ways of knowing, social cognitions, fields.

In the case of the press, for instance, reporting is one of the institution's (recontextualising) practices. Its field comprises a certain number of recontextualisations of other social practices, set in other institutions. Education is one of these, a subfield, one might say. In the institution of the press, such subfields are fairly strongly compartmentalised, both in terms of the division of labour within the institution, and in terms of the organisation of the newspaper itself (the different 'sections': foreign news, sports, the arts, business, and so on), though not as strongly as in some other institutions: journalists can change their specialisation fairly easily, and too much specialisation is even discouraged, as
it is held to interfere with journalistic impartiality and seen as 'changing sides'. The ways in which the different subfields are recontextualised, moreover, are very similar, and all founded on the unified concerns and values of the practice of newspaper reporting, this in contrast, for example, to the different 'subjects' in education (cf. Tunstall, 1971; Bell, 1991) which are based on very different ways of knowing (cf. Martin et al., 1988).

The subfield of education brings together a number of social practices, among them: the practices of Government Education Departments and Ministers; the practices of schools; the practices of educational and child-psychological experts; the practices of educational critics; the practices of parents in relation to all these institutions. These practices are recontextualised in their own specific ways, related to different reactions, different goals, different legitimations and evaluations. And they are also related to each other in specific ways: expert practices, for instance, are brought in to legitimate (and imperativise) parent practices.

Text 1:1 brings to light only a small part of the educational subfield of journalism: I have dealt with the field of a single text.
Another practice frequently reported in newspapers, for instance, is the surveillance of school attendance by (State) Education authorities. This practice is legitimised by particularising (‘case stories’) or generalising (‘statistics’) re-contextualisations which invert the activity of ‘attending school’ into its opposite, into ‘not attending’, into the deviant practice of ‘wagging school’.

Finally, fields also include alternative re-contextualisations of the same social practice, together with the modalisations which, in the given institution, attach to them. This is especially prominent in the practice of newspaper reporting. Reporters typically select and modalise the re-contextualisations of others, and relate these modalised re-contextualisations in certain ways, e.g. by ‘balancing’ them. Text 1:1 includes two such alternative re-contextualisations: the practice of the first day as re-contextualised by Mark, and the practices of ‘preparing for the first day’ and of ‘the first day’ as re-contextualised by Valerie Martin. The former is more or less discredited, given low modality, through the use of a past tense subjective mental process (‘I thought’). The latter is given high modality, through the present tense attributions (‘Valerie says’), the explicit
mention of her expert credentials, and the amount of space and prominence given to her statements.

Two objections to this way of defining field may be raised. First of all, can reference be reduced to reference to social practices, as I have done throughout this chapter? It is my conviction that it can be. The weather, for instance, is itself not a social practice. But whenever reference is made to it in texts, it will be via social practices or elements thereof. Weather reports, for example, objectivate the social practices of meteorologists - practices of observation, of recording, and of performing mathematical and linguistic operations on these recordings:

Even in the most abstract and theoretical aspects of human thought and verbal usage, the real understanding of words ultimately derived from active experience of those aspects of reality to which the words belong. The chemist or physicist understands the meaning of his most abstract concepts ultimately on the basis of his acquaintance with chemical and physical processes in the laboratory. Even the pure mathematician, dealing with that most useless and arrogant branch of his learning, the theory of numbers, has probably had some experience of counting his pennies and shillings or his boots and buns. In short, there is no science whose conceptual, hence verbal, outfit is not ultimately derived from the practical handling of matter.

(Malinowski, 1935, p.58)
Outside of science, reference to the weather will relate to social practices also. In literary stories, for instance, the weather exteriorises reactions – a ‘sunny day’ exteriorises a ‘happy mood’, or a ‘grey day’ a ‘sombre mood’. In a similar way it may objectivate ‘emotional’ evaluations: a storm may indicate that a sequence of activities is ‘troubling’, hence emotionally ‘bad’, for instance. Social practice always provides the model. Even things that are in themselves not social become so in representation. I have already quoted Durkheim, but perhaps it is worth quoting him again:

'It is because men were grouped, and thought of themselves in the form of groups, that in their ideas they grasped other things’

(Durkheim and Mauss, 1963, p.82)

A second objection might be that my definition of field relates only to recontextualising (‘discursive’) practices, and not to the use of language in non-recontextualising social practices, to what Malinowski called ‘language in action’. According to the definitions presented here, social practices which do not ‘transform’ other social practices do not have a field. They fuse ‘field’ and ‘practice’ into a unity, and should be described in the way I have described social practices in chapter 2.
Recontextualising practices, on the other hand, can be described from two points of view: as ways of doing, that is, as practices, and as ways of knowing, that is, as fields. Both aspects are social. Both are realised in language (and/or other semiotics). In this thesis I have chosen to focus on the latter, though, of course, always in relation to the former: I am studying, not the representation of the first day of school, I am studying how the first day of school is represented in the context of such discursive practices as newspaper reports, children's books, and teacher training texts.
Chapter 4: Linguistics and sociology

Starting out from the model described in the previous two chapters, parts 2 and 3 of this thesis will present frameworks for analysing the recontextualisation of two key elements of social practices, participants and activities, and one added element, reactions. Behind the frameworks are these simple questions: What are the ways in which participants can be represented in texts? What are the ways in which activities can be represented in texts? What are the ways in which reactions can be added to texts? In other words, I am presenting a grammar which takes as its point of departure, not grammatical categories such as transitivity and mood, but the sociological categories of my model, and which seeks to align grammatical categories with these sociological categories, or, to put it a different way, which uses the sociological categories as a guide for mapping how language is used to represent. The theory therefore remains grammatical: it matches a social semantics (e.g. ways in which participants can be classified, for instance according to age, gender, ethnicity or class, or according to occupation) with the linguistic forms that realise these meanings (e.g. classes of nouns). That the two kinds of category are closely related is evident from the many terms which have both a sociological and a linguistic sense - terms
such as 'participant', 'agent', 'passive', 'material process', 'cognition', 'subject', 'object', etc. However, not every sociological participant is also a linguistic participant (in the sense in which Halliday, 1985, uses this term), and not everything that is sociologically 'passive' (as, say, in 'the passive audience') is also linguistically passive, to take just two examples. There is no perfect fit, no seamless hook-up, and hence no unproblematic way of using linguistic analysis for the ultimately sociological purposes of critical discourse analysis. Something is likely to stay a bit messy, either at the linguistic end or at the sociological end of the equation. As I will discuss in detail in parts 2 and 3, systemic-functional linguistics opts for neatness and order at the linguistic end, despite its Firthian aim of being a 'sociological linguistics', and despite Halliday's oft repeated dictum that 'language is messy'. That is good from the point of view of describing linguistic form, but not so good from the point of view of critical discourse analysis which is concerned with language in relation to such sociological issues as 'the reproduction of sexism and racism through discourse; the legitimation of power; the manufacture of consent; the role of politics, education and the media; the discursive reproduction of dominance relations between groups; the imbalances in international communication and
information' (editorial statement of the journal Discourse and Society). In critical discourse analysis it is not linguistic form, but social meaning which must guide the description of discourse. Critical discourse analysis does not ask: Is this text characterised by 'material processes' in the grammatical sense of that term? It asks: Does this text represent the world in terms of concrete, material actions and events? And if the grammatical definition of 'material process' can include the statement that the participants in material processes can be, not only 'persons and objects', but also 'institutions, abstractions, actions, events, qualities, states and relations' (Halliday, 1985, p.108), then it is evidently of little use in identifying anything like 'material processes' in a more sociological sense, then the question of how 'material processes' (in the sociological sense of the term) are linguistically realised must be looked at anew. It is important now for sociologists to turn to the study of language, to confront the abstractions of their models with the empirical variety of discourse. It is equally important, however, for linguists to turn to sociology, to confront the indeterminacies of their models of context, and the consequences of the way in which the dogma of the autonomy of language is still and despite everything so much part and parcel of linguistic methodology that it will surface even in avowedly sociologically inspired forms of
linguistic discourse analysis, such as that of Pédru (1975, 1982; see also Woods, 1977), and indeed also that of systemic-functional linguistics.

The fragments of grammar I will present in this thesis are, in contrast to the model described in chapters 2 and 3, not ‘models’, or, to use the more fashionable term, ‘simulacra’. They derive from extensive text analysis, from empirical work - and are then applied in the text analyses which are presented in parts 2 and 3 in order to demonstrate the usefulness of my frameworks for the purposes of critical discourse analysis. My question (How can participants, activities and reactions be represented in texts?) is also and at the same time the question: how do these texts represent participants and activities, and how do these texts represent participants and activities, and how do these texts add reactions? This means, among other things, that all my examples are taken from actual texts (strange as it may seem to outsiders, linguistics, including systemic-functional linguists, often prove their points with invented examples, and this can, in my opinion, lead to dubious results, particularly where the spoken word – e.g. intonation – is concerned). It also means that, to account for everything I have found in my texts, I have had to go into a considerable amount of detail, and invent quite a bit of
terminology. For this I make no excuses. It is the way of theses to doggedly and
detailedly pursue a single trail - a simpler version can always be distilled at a later
classic occasion. Finally, it means that the classic question of empirical research will
inevitably rear its ugly head: how representative are these texts? I will
attempt to answer that question. The texts
(those which I have, in whole or in part,
alysed according to the methods described
in this thesis are listed in appendix 1)
constitute a variety of discursive practices
(advertisements, news reports, radio
interviews, children's stories, brochures for
parents, teacher training texts, radical
critical essays about compulsory schooling,
and so on), but they all represent the same
social practice, the practice of 'the first
day at school'. The sample is sufficiently
large and varied to provide a picture of the
way 'the first day of school' was represented
in the second half of the 1980s. But can the
frameworks which I derived from studying this
material be applied to the representation of
social practices other than 'the first day of
school'? I believe they can, because it is
the generic variety of the corpus which
guarantees the variety of modes of
representation found in it. And, as can
readily be seen from my examples, I have
augmented the corpus with texts representing
other genres, especially (adult) novels,
autobiographies, poetry, plays, sociological
texts, and scientific texts. To put it another way, with the model presented in chapters 2 and 3 as my compass, I have explored a fairly large and varied terrain, and mapped the language I found, looking out, at this stage, in particular for language used in the representation of participants, activities and reactions, but planning, of course, to return to the field later on for the study of other elements of the social practice (performance indicators, times, locations, etc.) and other types of added element (goals, legitimations and evaluations) - because for each of these categories frameworks such as those I have developed here for participants, activities and reactions, can be constructed. The further my exploration advanced, the more familiar the terrain began to appear and the less often I hit upon surprises. This made me feel I was beginning to master my subject. But it does not, and cannot, provide a guarantee of the empirical completeness of my investigation.

Why, finally, 'the first day at school'? It does not, at first sight, seem to fit in with the overtly political agenda of critical discourse analysis. It seems an innocent topic. Something to be contemplated with a feeling of indulgent tenderness for the child we once were and for the children who now are. Compulsory schooling is not (not any longer) a contentious issue. It has become a
taken for granted part of the fabric of our society. The critical views which emerged in the 1960s (e.g. Ivan Illich, 1971) have died down. The contestation of compulsory schooling, insofar as we become aware of it through the media, is now restricted to the members of ‘sects’ who are rather mercilessly depicted as deviants, especially in commercial television. Yet the first day is not only the most profound initiation rite of our lives, it is also, in the present social constellation, a vital precondition for (again I quote from the editorial statement of Discourse and Society) ‘the legitimation of power; the manufacture of consent; the discursive reproduction of dominance relations between groups’, and these phenomena, as Kress has noted (1990, p.84), ‘are to be found in the most unremarkable and everyday of texts — and not only in texts which declare their special status in some way’. They were and are also to be found in my own life, and that, in the end, was perhaps the strongest motivation for my choice of field: as an immigrant father I have felt quite acutely how great a power the State acquires over the mind of the child on that ‘first day’. I remember reading one of those charming and innocent children’s books to my four-year-old son, not just once, but time and time again, one of Dr. Seuss’ books about the Berenstain Bears. The story is quickly told. The young bears go camping with their father, but every initiative the father
takes leads to disaster. Luckily the young bears carry a book, a textbook, a source of educational knowledge, and this book tells them all they need to know to put things right. The story ends with the young bears carrying their father home on a stretcher, the construction of which they have also learnt from the book. I still cannot understand why it took me so long before, one day, I suddenly asked myself: but why am I reading this to him? Why should I be undermining myself in this way? It was from that day that I began to look more closely at the ‘innocent’ texts that prime children for school, and parents for complicity with the school system, and teachers for a role which, for the most part, has little to do with the passing on of skills and knowledge. And by saying this I am not assuming that the main burden of social reproduction should fall on the family rather than on the school. I am merely saying that the first day at school is an absolutely crucial moment in terms of this highly important question: Who has which powers over the child, which powers of social reproduction? And I am asking (this is what my thesis is all about): What can we learn about this question by looking closely at these ‘innocent’ texts? And how should we look at them to find the answers to this question?