

A theory of contact situations and the study of academic interaction

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The concept of academic competence must be viewed within the context of globalization. The intensification of cultural contact in the current historical period has contributed greatly to the recognition and evaluation of variation in academic systems and to subsequent strategies of adjustment. Contact between varying academic systems is thus being 'managed' in the sense in which the word is used in management theory dealing with the noting, evaluation and adjustment of deviations from norms.

Theories of contact have existed for decades in linguistics as well as in the study of communication and other disciplines, but it is time to transform them into theories of contact in interaction in general. Contact situations must be viewed not merely as situations in which processes of linguistic misunderstanding occur, but as situations in which a number of social processes, including those of power, assert themselves. One of the concepts that must be accommodated in this scheme is contact between 'major' and 'minor' academic systems. Another question is that of the assimilation of academics (or acquirers of academic systems) from 'minor' systems into socially strong systems. In order not to remain within the constraints of old frameworks of cultural relativism, it is necessary to work towards a theoretically-based evaluation of academic patterns.

1. Towards a theory of contact situations

1.1 Intercultural contact and academic inquiry

Intercultural as well as intracultural contact has been one of the defining features of our historical period. What I call the 'postmodern paradigm', a paradigm that might perhaps also be called the 'globalization paradigm', can be characterized by at least four interrelated principles:

- a. development,
- b. special relationships of power,
- c. reduction in internal variation and
- d. intensified external contact (Neustupný, forthcoming 1).

Needless to say, this paradigm should not in itself be glorified. It does not represent the ideal solution for the problems of humankind. Although it has produced the ideology of multiculturalism, it is also responsible for rationalistic ideologies that try to justify the position of the establishment. Within the existing areas of linguistic inquiry it has amplified interest in language typologies as well as areal and genetic linguistics and resulted, in the 1960s and 1970s, in a number of new disciplines such as sociolinguistics, the study of language acquisition and of language problems. The fourth feature quoted above has been particularly instrumental in the development of the study of intercultural communication. I believe that the current interest in academic competence (cf. Marriott, 2000), such as shown in the Monash project headed by Helen Marriott (Note 1), historically forms an extension of the same line of thought.

Academic inquiry has always been an intercultural project, with traditions, schools and centres of learning being distributed across countries and continents — but it has not always been perceived as such. Within the world of modern structuralism, academic behaviour was considered to be universal. Science lay across continents, we were told, but this was not true. In fact there were huge divisions, variation was pervasive, and misunderstanding common. However, as long as modern societies remained isolated within their own boundaries, this variation was unnoted. The isolation broke down in the 1960s but considerable time was needed before the new awareness of intercultural variation in academic disciplines gained momentum in the 1980s and 1990s, mainly in connection with problems encountered by foreign students in other countries.

1.2 Contact situations

The study of linguistic contact started in historical linguistics (Clyne, 1987a), but already prior to WWII synchronic approaches had emerged (e.g., Polivanov, 1931; Mathesius, 1934). In what later became postwar ‘mainstream’ sociolinguistics Einar Haugen’s influential paper on *The analysis of linguistic borrowing* was published in 1950 and reprinted a number of times, while Uriel Weinreich’s book *Languages in Contact* dates back to 1953. A number of other papers preceded and followed. Personally I have always profited from being

close to Michael Clyne who stood at the forefront of one of the most stimulating branches of such research (Clyne, 1975, 1991, 1994). He also directly contributed to research on academic behaviour (Clyne, 1987b, 1994).

Although there were exceptions, I risk little danger of overgeneralization in claiming that many early studies were oriented towards the output of contact — the results of the contact processes. The typical question was ‘how does system A influence system B’. The concept of ‘contact situations’, adopted in this paper, attempts to break away from this tradition and concentrates on intercultural contact as a process. The typical question has now changed to ‘what happens in the process of contact’. The term ‘situation’ has been employed here to designate a playground in which the multiplicities of processes of contact take place. The process-oriented approach to intercultural contact appeared gradually and in my own case intensified in mid-1980s. I believe that concern for this point of view, also highlighted in Clyne (1994), should pervade the study of academic contact situations as well. Researchers are not interested in the results alone but in the processes through which the results come into being. For example, they want to know how problems in academic interaction are noted, evaluated and how adjustment is subsequently sought.

1.3 Towards a theory

Over the last few decades much work on contact situations has been conducted on the basis of a limited-range theory, such as expounded in my paper *Gaikokujin bamen no kenkyuu to nihongo kyooiku* (The study of foreign user situations and the teaching of Japanese) published in the journal *Nihongo kyooiku* in 1981 (No.45, the ‘Monash Issue’), and in Neustupný (1985a). The former paper was re-published in 1995 with the content virtually unchanged, but translated into my contemporary idiom. For example, instead of ‘foreign user situation’ I used the term ‘contact situation’. However, the need is felt today for an expanded model of contact, a model that can perhaps contribute not just to the study of linguistic contact, but to cultural contact in general.

1. *Three types of competence*

Initially, problems of academic situations in contact were considered as problems of language. One spoke of Academic English, or Academic Japanese as if this were a problem of adequate lexicon, complex sentence structure and a set of connectors. This implied that if we could provide the appropriate ‘language’, all problems in intercultural academic interaction would be solved.

This was in agreement with the world view, shared with most of traditional language teaching, that elevated a narrowly conceived concept of language (*grammatical competence*, GR) to an overarching concept of intercultural understanding. Today grammatical competence is certainly considered important, but it is widely recognised that it cannot account for the whole problem. Other issues of communication have been added. I shall call them *non-grammatical communicative competence* (NGC), or sociolinguistic competence. However, this addition does not cover the whole issue either. The object of academic behaviour is knowledge and this is not an issue of communication in the technical sense of the word. I call this dimension *sociocultural competence* (SC). We can say that

GR+NGC = communicative competence, and

GR+NGC+SC = interaction competence.

Our ultimate aim is to understand interaction competence in academic contact. The sociocultural dimension of contact situations is the basic one. This is what interaction is about. Communication is the means. Marriott (2000) and Jernudd (2002) have adopted this trichotomy as one of the basic supports of their approach to academic interaction. Since all these three types of competence are affected in a contact situation, their joint consideration is indispensable for any theory that tries to account for them.

2. *Modelling sociocultural competence*

Systematic models of sociocultural behaviour are still incomplete, lacking such lists of items and processes as are available in traditional grammars of grammatical competence. In the absence of better alternatives it is possible to start by taking stock of behaviour using the Hymesian model of NGC (cf. under (3)), starting from processes involved in selecting varieties and situations of behaviour and proceeding to the selection of functions, participants and other components. I have already suggested this possibility in a previous publication (Neustupný, 1997) and shall proceed further in this paper to suggest an application to academic competence. Needless to say, the Hymesian model includes some components (such as 'channels of expression') that are particular to communication and cannot be interpreted in terms of SC behaviour.

3. *Modelling non-grammatical communicative competence*

It is proposed to utilize here a version of the Hymesian model of communicative competence which accounts for the formation of communicative acts (Neustupný, 1997). The model I currently employ works with four processes of the structuring of communication acts:

1. Selection of sets of elements to be used. There are two kinds of such sets:
 - a. varieties, and
 - b. situations.
2. Once the set (or sets) to be applied are selected, interactants proceed to the choice of individual items:
 - a. functions,
 - b. settings,
 - c. participants,
 - d. content, and
 - e. frames ('forms').
3. These selections must subsequently be implemented. This is where
 - a. channel strategies, and
 - b. performance strategies are applied.
4. However, an integral part of structuring communication is the fact that the processes above do not work without trouble. It is therefore necessary to attend to such trouble and undertake the 'management' of behaviour. This component, adumbrated but not fully developed in Hymes' writings, is of great importance. The model of language management used in this paper developed from the 'correction theory' (Neustupný, 1973; Jernudd, 1982) through Neustupný 1983 and reached its classical stage in Jernudd and Neustupný 1987.

This listing of processes under (1) to (3) is basically coterminous with Hymes' classical models except that it is more process than category oriented. I emphasize that the model used in this paper is Hymesian, not simply Hymes' model: it grew on the fertile ground developed by Dell Hymes (Hymes, 1974) but it would be improper to impose the responsibility for all its present properties on the original author.

4. *Grammatical competence models*

Models of grammatical competence abound. It is unnecessary to give details here.

2. The process of academic contact situations

2.1 Sociocultural and non-grammatical communication processes

The following processes take place in contact situations in general, but in this paper I shall emphasize those items that are particular to academic contact. The

order of presentation will slightly change from the scheme given in 1.3 above, in that I shall commence with situations and subsequently pass over to the other components of interaction.

2.1.1 *Situations*

1. **Types of situations**

Situations are processes characterized by features that customarily co-occur. Contact situations can be considered as a special set within the overall category of situations, while academic contact situations are a subset of contact situations in general.

It is important to list the situations that are the object of our inquiry. Situations can be accounted for if placed in the 'domains' (Fishman, 1972) in which they occur. In the case of this paper we are particularly interested in situations within the academic sub-domain. Jernudd (2002) lists the following categories: 1. teaching, 2. study, 3. administrative, 4. research, 5. writing and other presentation, 6. service and 7. governance, the last category including relations between representatives of universities and outside governing bodies. He further analyses the first three categories in the particular case of Hong Kong universities. All these categories can further be divided into situations. I shall employ a somewhat different arrangement from Jernudd's in the following listing which is still tentative but may be useful for further considerations of academic contact behaviour:

1. *Research situations*

Selection of a research topic

Self-inspection/ Bibliography survey/ Consultations/
Research proposal

Data collection situations

Pilot study/ Main study

Data arrangement situations

Data arrangement (transcript, etc.)/ Analysis/
Conclusions

2. *Writing-up situations (reports)*

Planning/ Bibliographical search/Library work/
Drafting/ Referencing/ Final copy

3. *Written presentation situations*

Planning/Manuscript revision/ Handing in/Editing (corrections after
comments)/ Proofs/ Distribution

4. *Oral presentation situations*
Planning/Manuscript/Powerpoint,etc./Presentation/ Discussion
5. *Academic conferences and meetings*
Planning and organizing/ Directing/ Selecting papers/
Listening to papers/ Discussion
6. *Translation situations* (much translation takes place for academic purposes)
7. *Social system situations (academics)*
Work place meetings/ Associations (including students' associations)
8. *Administrative and service situations*
Course and program administration
(Situations between students and teachers, administrative and clerical staff: enrolment situations, departmental secretary, library staff, etc.)
Institutional administration
(Various meetings, including, among others, Jernudd's governance situations)
9. *Acquisition of academic competence*
Lectures/ Individual guidance/ Individual study
Research (see above under 1)
Tutorials ('*zemi*' in Japan)
Listening/ Oral presentation/ Discussion
Examinations

As in all situations, sociocultural and communicative behaviour in the academic situations alternate and co-occur (Hymes, 1974: 51). Hence, the above list of situations can be used for both SC and NGC behaviour. A list such as this indicates a research agenda much wider than issues of paper-writing by professional academics or listening to lectures and producing written work in the case of students. Furthermore, there are associated situations, such as social contact between academics, teachers and students, or students alone. In the case of students, the issue of everyday out-of-class activities is of importance. The academic sub-domain in general shows a fuzzy transition into the daily life, friendship and other domains of behaviour.

2. Internal and external contact situations

Originally it was assumed that situations could simply be divided into native and contact. This position was still taken in Neustupný (1985a), but has gradually been revised (cf. Neustupný, 1996). There are several issues that must be faced.

Firstly, problems arise with regard to the terms ‘native’ and ‘contact’ situations. Contact situations occur when norms of more than one system are applied in a particular situation. However, there is variation in ‘the system’ to start with. For example, in the GR area not all foreign speakers possess the same competence, some being beginners and some semi-native speakers, and in the case of semi-native speakers the contact nature of a situation may be much less apparent. Also, some foreign speakers can control the influence of their native system on the situation and not all native speakers react in the same way. A similar situation exists in the case of SC and NGC norms in contact situations. It is therefore more expedient to work with various *degrees of contactness*. For example, it can be expected that the degree of contactness will be different for a Korean and American postgraduate student in Japan, because the Korean system is much closer to the Japanese than the American one and the American student is likely to produce more deviations.

Secondly, it became obvious that contactness is not only evoked by differences in rules over national boundaries. For example, similar phenomena occur in contact between members of different social strata of the same society. Hence, it is necessary to distinguish between:

- a. *internal* contact situation (defined by ethnic, social, gender, age, use area, degree of competence, and other similar features) and
- b. *external* contact situation (so-called intercultural contact situations, defined by a cluster of features that operate across boundaries of national networks).

If we apply the category ‘internal contact situation’ consistently, there are no native situations left, with both (a) and (b) being just different types of contact situations.

In my view, such a fundamentalist variational position should not be easily accepted. It is true that contactness applies internally, but in all cases there seems to also remain a number of common properties that justify grouping varieties that belong to the same ethnic dimension together as ‘native’. On the other hand, external contactness frequently develops with few features shared, and in its extreme cases it may well be very different from the internal types. Hence, as a working model we suggest the following:

Situations:

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| internal | – native |
| | – contact |
| external | – contact |

However, the degree of commonalty is an empirical question and it remains to be confirmed whether transition between various internal varieties of academic interaction do in fact constitute a type of contact situation different from that of the external (intercultural) group. It is conceivable that in the case of academic interaction the boundaries between ethnic varieties are less important than boundaries between paradigms, traditions or schools. For example, a relevant question is whether within areas such as East Asia (Japan, Korea, China) which definitely share many features the more important boundary runs along ethnic lines or along the lines of developmental formations (Early Modern, Modern or Post-Modern).

3. Fan's three types

S.K. Fan (1992, 1994) has turned our attention to the fact that what we called a contact situation may be only one of several possible types. She distinguished between three types:

1. Partner situations. This is the originally studied contact situation; the term 'partner variety situation' was selected because it was the variety of language of one of the partners within the situation that was being used. 'Partner' conditions apply in the case of intercultural communication such as Australian-Japanese, Japanese-Korean, or French-Algerian, where the language of one of the members of the pair is used. When this condition is applied to academic interaction — including not only GR but also NGC and SC behaviour — this represents contact in which normally the stronger participants (Fan calls them 'hosts') retain their own norms, while the weaker partner (in Fan's terminology 'guest') is supposed to adjust. Let us not ignore the fact that in today's world the strongest partners are usually English native speakers, typically from the USA or Britain.
2. Third-party situations. A second 'set' are the 'third-party situations', best illustrated by Fan's example of communication between Japanese and Hong Kong Chinese. In academic situations this normally amounts to the use of English. This use may be without a hierarchical arrangement, with no one being anyone else's master, as described for some Japanese-Hong Kong situations by Fan (1992). However, some non-native participants are semi-native members of an English-speaking network, for instance, those people who possess English (and a system of English academic interaction) as their semi-native system. These participants may in fact apply stricter English-speaking norms than native members.

A special type of third-party situation is the situation of using English or another language for instruction in settings such as Hong Kong (Jernudd, 2002). English is not the native language of a large number of teachers in Hong Kong and virtually all students are Chinese speaking. However, most teachers possess semi-native if not native competence, and this brings such situations close to the partner variety situations. Students do not participate in these contact situations by choice: when a choice between English and Chinese is given, according to Jernudd, they “normally select Cantonese” (p. 303). Jernudd points to the need of language management for these situations. With reference to the GR/NGC/SC distinctions quoted above, he claims that the management task is much more complex than ‘teaching English’ and foresees a solution in providing settings for English use that are more situational and agree with realities of the participants’ norms of communication.

3. Cognate system situations. The third ‘set’ are situations of communication in dialects of the same language, which Fan calls ‘cognate language situations’. In academic interaction we can include interaction between
 - a. academics who possess different varieties of English (and the associated academic systems),
 - b. academics of Scandinavian countries, Czech, Slovak and Polish academics, and similar cases, where languages of each of the group are mutually comprehensible and there are hardly any differences between the academic systems (cf. Haugen’s concept of ‘semi-communication’ (Haugen, 1966), and
 - c. probably also situations where participants from two academically similar systems interact, even if they use the partner’s or a third-party language. I have in mind groupings such as those of East Asia (Japan, Korea, China).

No doubt, interaction in these cases is not necessarily equal, because some of the systems may have achieved or claimed hegemony.

4. Two-languages situations. One could argue that a fourth ‘set’ should be established to cover cases such as people using a completely different language to each other, native or not — for example, a Frenchman using French to a Hungarian who replies in German. These ‘two-languages situations’ may also produce inequality because one of the systems may be native or close-to-native, while the other may be foreign.

In written communication all four types have in fact been practised, particularly by members of some minor systems (cf. below), who cannot rely exclusively on their own system. At the spoken language level, academic meetings throughout the world present a very complicated picture that has been unaccounted for. Whatever type of contact they may belong to, participants who are first or second language speakers of the official (sometimes called 'procedural') language of the meeting possess a distinct advantage. Others are participants with a diminished degree of power who are variously discriminated against. In Japan, when the procedural language is Japanese, less competent foreign speakers often cannot ask questions, because questions frequently must be written down and handed over to the organizers during the break, and foreign participants may lack the competence to write the question on a question slip during the limited interval period.

One important issue concerns what will happen in the case of academic communication if the trend to use English as the only language continues. Will this English be native English (retaining the character of Fan's partner language), will it become an international language (Fan's third party language) or will it allow concurrent use of other languages (two-languages situations)? What will happen with non-grammatical components of communication such as rules for turn-taking in discussions or others? And what will happen with patterns of academic thought — will native thought common in English academic networks take over or will variation be allowed? These questions are of importance not only for established academics but for novice academics as well.

Our prescriptive statements will need to consider which types of academic situations to strengthen and retain. It is difficult to claim that English is an international language if it leads to partner situations alone, in which English native or semi-native speakers dominate the floor. Foreign students often start with a bicultural situation in which they generate academic behaviour in poor English with other behaviour (NGC or SC) being dominated by their native system. It is prescriptively important to consider whether they should be allowed, for example in Australia, to create third-party situations (in which the Australian system will function as an international, rather than a national language). Should the present day partner situations, where native norms are expected, be accepted as the only legitimate solution? Or shall we accept a small degree of variation (cognate systems)? Is it opportune to more vigorously require the birth of an internationally neutral system (third-party system), which will use English as an international, rather than a national, language? Or, to what extent, and how, should we foster the acknowledgment of the 'two-

language' type of situations? These questions are basic to both expert and novice situations. Again, the important point is that the questions are valid not only for GR but also for NGC and SC competence.

4. Experts' situations and acquisition situations

There is a difference between academic situations of established professional academics (experts) and 'foreign students' (novices) who are acquiring some or all strategies of the system. In some systems the distinction is pervasive, while other systems — I find the Japanese system to be of this type — allow for much more mixing. For example, students attend conferences and, normally starting from the MA level, publish papers and often become the main speakers at conferences. Marriott's project deals with the novices, but we can imagine its extension to cover situations in which there is no intention of acquisition although different systems of strategies are in contact, either in the case of transfer of personnel or at an international meeting of academics.

It would be unrealistic to ignore the fact that most foreign students are either foreign or not very advanced second language speakers of the language of the host institution. However, competence in GR (language in the narrow sense of the word) is not the only feature of novice situations, although this is sometimes not realised by the receiving side. Spelling mistakes may be forgiven but I wonder how many academics realize that in contact situations the content of oral communication may change, personality may be miscommunicated and the students' intention misunderstood. Perhaps these facts are better known than I imagine.

2.1.2 *Variety selection*

1. Varieties of academic competence: the concept

In Neustupný (1978:4) I claimed that academic systems are divided into 'varieties', similar to 'varieties of language', except that such varieties also include the content, social system and idiom of the discipline. For example, Chomsky's system of linguistics of the *Syntactic Structures* period is an example of a variety. It is these varieties that enter into the academic processes.

In the academic domain there is variation between paradigms, disciplines, traditions and schools (cf. Hymes, 1983) and these are both SC and NGC categories. Interaction between these types of varieties results in contact, and various contact phenomena take place. Academics are usually expected to select strategies of academic interaction from a single variety or from several related varieties, the mixture of which is sanctioned by members of their social group.

When unapproved mixture take place, this establishes a deviation from norms and management of behaviour may be required.

Acquisition of academic varieties is usually not a problem for native acquirers, because they are only extending the use of strategies they have already acquired. For example, Australian university students in their first year are certainly acquiring new strategies, but these are based on strategies they know from the secondary school (e.g. there is an essay genre, independent study in the library is essential, strict constraints exist on the use of quotations as a form of anti-plagiarism control, etc.). Novices from other cultures may possess different strategies to start with, even if subsequently they acquire new strategies analogous to native students.

Established academics may possess a different variety of strategies of conduct. This will be clear, for example, in the case of academics who come from areas with a different academic style, such as described by Galtung (1981): saxon, teutonic, gallic, or nipponic. In the contemporary world the difference between major and minor varieties of academic strategies is of importance. There are 'MAJOR' academic systems (Evžen Neustupný, who introduced the concept in Neustupný 1997–98 for archaeology, called such systems 'mainstream'). These systems allow little space for other norms. Of course, within the context of globalization the top among the major systems in most disciplines is the Anglo-American system (which is internally further diversified). When the American variety of the Anglo-American system is selected, this may be the only variety in the system and since it is self-sufficient, contactness may be minimal. On the other hand, when a 'MINOR' (Evžen Neustupný calls it a 'minority') system, such as Danish linguistics, becomes the base, the system will normally have ties with one or more major systems as well as with neighbouring minor systems, and the degree of contactness may be high.

Differences between varieties may be noted and evaluated. There may be differences in the language used (GR), in NGC components (structuring of the text, system of referencing, etc.) or in theories and other components of content and the social system (SC). Contrary to the lay understanding of science, the adjustment of deviations is generally not achieved through a careful evaluation of alternatives, but simply by penalizing the deviant academics. In the case of novices there are examinations where inappropriacy will be pointed out, and such inappropriacy is measured by norms of the target system, not on the basis of an independent evaluation process. The usual penalization of expert academics is through critique (within papers, or in the genre called review) or through avoidance of (ignoring) their work.

Evaluations of differences between varieties of academic interaction are strongly influenced by power. Major systems possess power and mostly exercise it (cf. E. Neustupný 1997–98 for an analysis within a different discipline).

Prescriptively speaking, we face the question of how to handle the varieties of academic contact situations. Linguists have long demanded equal rights for different varieties of language. The same question should also be asked for varieties of linguistics: “If we accept multilingualism, we should also be prepared to accept the multiplicity of linguistic varieties [i.e. varieties of linguistics] within one integrated system...” (Neustupný, 1978:23). In other words, one possible solution is to provide equal rights for all. Basically this is, I believe, the right position. However, I believe today that there is a proviso to this relativist statement. I shall deal with it later in this paper (3.3).

2. Norms in contact situations

Contactness means that norms of more than one system are present in a given situation. These norms may not necessarily surface. They may remain covert. Also, norms may exist in a ‘nascent stage’: it would be incorrect to assume that Japanese students do not possess certain Japanese norms just because they have never used them in Japan. Although some norms may be culturally acquired, others derive from strategies already existing in the system, and may be generated on the spot at any stage. It will be superfluous to emphasize the necessity to accord a separate position to such ‘nascent’ norms both in theory and practice (Note 2).

When selecting a variety of academic competence, the phenomenon of ‘contact norms’ (Marriott, 1990) must be taken into consideration. In partner contact situations the norm usually applied is the norm of the base system (Neustupný, 1985b), where the base system is determined by the language employed. However, in situations other than academic situations, participants possess different expectations of (i.e., norms with regard to) native and non-native participants. This probably applies to academic contact situations as well.

As mentioned above, one of the basic prescriptive issues of academic contact situations is to accept that more than one system of norms exists. The traditional ‘territorial’ attitude which prescribes that guests should honour the customs of their hosts is hopelessly old-fashioned. An anti-relativistic position asks which of the two norms is right. Here it should not be forgotten that there is also the contact norm. This means that neither side should expect that they have the right to apply their norms. When foreigners interact in Japan they necessarily apply many Japanese base norms. However, their Japanese partners

should accept that they possess other norms as well, and that there may be a need for a compromise. Is such a compromise creating a contact norm?

3. Special contact varieties

In contact situations in general, foreigner talk operates as a special variety that is appropriate for the situation. I wonder whether there is anything corresponding to foreigner talk in academic contact situations. Admittedly, foreigner talk is used by native instructors to foreigners with limited competence in the language. However, it remains to be ascertained to what extent the characteristics of foreigner talk also affect the specific features of academic communication, including its academic content. I remember an editor who attempted to make an English speaker writing a paper in English for a Japanese audience tone down his highly elevated style — in fact to use a kind of foreigner talk. This attempt remained unsuccessful, but I am sure that similar cases do exist.

4. Language varieties in contact

It is still necessary to emphasize that grammatical competence is important, but that it is not the only component of interaction problems of academic interaction. As Evžen Neustupný (1997–98: 20) notes, there is a widely spread belief among academics from other than English language environments (for example, European non-English, Japanese, etc.) that success in academic interaction depends on the language through which ideas are communicated. (“I’ll publish it in English...” say Japanese academics, implying that everyone then will read their papers.) However, this is not so. Admittedly, a paper written in a language other than English will not be read much and possibly not at all. However, even if English is the medium, there is still no guarantee that the paper will be read. NGC features will be inspected by potential readers to ascertain if the language of the text agrees with the reader’s ‘language in the wider sense of the word’. This concerns the structure of referencing, but also the structure of the text as a whole and of individual paragraphs. All these features will be taken into account to decide whether the paper is ‘rigorous’ enough to deserve reading. Should the paper pass the NGC test, SC facts such as its content, paradigmatic and ideological orientation will be assessed and reading can be interrupted at any stage if ‘coherency’ of the paper is in doubt.

2.1.3 *Functions*

Interaction fulfils functions, satisfies objectives or aims, is driven by motivation and targets and responds to needs. All these terms belong to the same family: what they share is that interaction plays a particular role within a wider context

(Matthews, 1997). I shall use the term ‘function’ to cover all these terms. In contact situations this function can be affected by the presence of foreign factors (i.e. elements of other systems). For example, foreign participants may be unable to perform the communicative function, they may experience problems in expressing their mental states, in appealing to or directing others, attaching an aesthetic function to their discourse, creating new terminology and similar.

There are differences in functions of academic interaction in the case of contact between the first and third world. Some aspects of the distinction are well captured in Jernudd’s paper about linguistics. In brief, Jernudd (1981) claimed that while most foreign students come to study in first world countries in order to prepare for work in their own social milieu, the first world country academics assimilate (that may not be the word Jernudd used) them to the non-applied functions of the academic disciplines they are in charge of. Of course, many foreign students arrive with the aim to be assimilated, not only linguistically but academically as well, and they should be given the opportunity to achieve their aim.

In Japan many foreign students wish to improve their qualifications as teachers of Japanese, but they may be placed by the receiving universities in departments of Japanese literature where their supervisors are professors of classical Japanese literature. Their study develops accordingly, concentrating on literature rather than applied linguistics. It should be said that departments of Japanese in some countries welcome job applicants with qualifications in traditional disciplines, but the fact is that these students return home unqualified as teachers of Japanese. Yet, it seems that few people in Japan are concerned. The principle that students are assimilated into the environment of their teachers seems to be firmly established and does not invite critical comments.

There may be studies I am not aware of about the motivation and expectations of students from Malaysia who come for their tertiary education to Australia. The situation is of course different from that described by Jernudd, who set his mind particularly on students from Africa. The important thing is that the goal of their academic pursuit may be different from that of comparable Australian students.

2.1.4 *Settings*

‘Setting’ strategies, in the sense used here, regulate two aspects of communicative acts: time and place (Hymes, 1974:55). The setting of an interaction is frequently the reason for interaction problems when non-native participants cannot adhere to host norms of structuring interaction, or the system by which

certain interaction is conducted in certain places and at certain times (Neustupný, 1982:44).

In the case of academic novices the problem of establishing contact with their Japanese supervisors in Japan has been previously noted (Neustupný, 1987:92). The place where they expected to be able to reach their supervisor by telephone was the supervisor's office, and the time they selected was the usual office hours. However, telephone calls to these settings were ineffective, because in Japan Japanese academics normally adhere to a different structuring of interaction: they only come to their office immediately before and after a class or a meeting. Setting is often a problematic issue for foreign students in a host country. Such students are placed in preparatory classes, without any contact with native students, and domiciled in university hostels where, again, the majority of students may be foreign. Such settings do not provide them with sufficient opportunity to acquire either the general or the academic interaction patterns of their host country.

Academic experts participate in 'international conferences' which are located at particular places and in particular times which often suit academics from the major systems (see above 2.2.2). In some systems the weekend, including Sunday, is the preferred day for academic conferences. This is, for example, the case in Japan, where foreign resident academics with young families feel that they should give precedence to their families rather than the conference. The normal place for academic business, including the receipt of mail, at least in the English-speaking countries, is the working place. Consistent mailing to their home address by academics from systems where the distinction between work and home settings is not rigid is received with amazement and sometimes with displeasure. Note that here, as well, we cannot simply assert that one of the systems is 'correct' without further inquiry.

2.1.5 *Participants*

According to Fan, participants in contact situations consist of language hosts and guests, but this is only true of the partner situation sets (Fan 1994, 2003). She notes that in other situations the matter is more complicated. In Neustupný 1996 I suggested that another way to classify participants in contact situations is by their differential power. This is not the whole story, but it carries important implications for the issue of academic contact situations.

In the case of professional academics, power depends on the situations and roles in which they appear. In the case of students, we should not accept that they are simply people with low status. In many countries foreign students are

an important source of income for their universities and as such possess considerable power, sometimes greater than local students. When they stage a revolt, it is usually as a result of their host not adhering to the rules of the host system; however, they do sometimes voice demands for more consideration of their limited competence in the host language.

In contact situations power is connected not simply with the competence of the academic. Academics from major networks (see 2.2.2 above) normally possess more power than academics from the minor networks. As Evžen Neustupný (1997–98) demonstrated, they are backed by a more extensive profession and a more powerful social system. Of course, it remains to be shown through empirical studies in what way and to what extent this fact exercises influence on ways in which individual academic contact situations are conducted.

Participants in academic networks are not only the academics themselves. There are also institutional administrators, committees and governmental institutions such as the ministry of education and international bodies. They all participate in various ways in academic interaction in contact situations.

2.1.6 *Content*

Content of academic communication can be classified in a number of ways. A classification, which still comprises only a limited number of situations and lacks systematicity, is as follows:

1. Data, which may later be described and given significance, but which also carry meaning in themselves.
2. Design, in other words, the thought expressed in the situation (this includes themes, topics, motifs and evaluation by participants).
3. Referencing, through which allegiance to particular networks is expressed.

There are communicative rules of content in academic contact situations such as ‘paying lip service’ to a particular methodological procedure, a motif or a person. These can be included in the ‘idiom’ of the respective varieties of academic competence. For example, one must use a certain system of transcription and present it in a paper; or one must swear allegiance to multilingualism, whether sincerely or not; or refer to a particular author who is supposed to represent the field of inquiry.

On the other hand, other content rules also possess ideological validity: through their use one subscribes to a particular world view within the range of the discipline. In academic criticism, such as in reviews, thought is often portrayed as something that should be universal. In fact, different norms are

applied and the processes are complex. Frequently, though not always, these processes contrast two different ideologies, as in the case of the humanistic ideology of linguistics that defends variation, and the rationalistic ideology that mostly cares for efficiency. It is imperative to know more about the way academic thought clashes in contact situations: the solution should not simply be the victory of the socially stronger system; on the other hand, problems should not be solved solely in the style of relativism ('everyone is entitled to his/her own'); we must be careful about universalistic judgments, but at the same time should not give up searching for universalism in our evaluation.

Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish which features are an idiom and which are of ideological nature. The ideological rules are also conceived by native participants as of normative character and within a contact situation, especially a partner one, it is expected that they will be used. Unusual data, themes, motifs or references to unfamiliar personnel are normally negatively evaluated. Evžen Neustupný (1997–98: 19) observed that in the case of work published by minor system academics, references to papers by compatriots may be evaluated negatively.

2.1.7 *Frames*

Most studies of academic writing by foreign students belong in this category, which focuses on the way a message is structured in a contact situation.

This category contains rules that determine the form of acts within various academic situations (cf. above, 2.1.1), such as a discussion or a paper. Note that the content of such acts is defined by content rules, while the frame rules only refer to the order of presentation and to the form — for example, subheadings, numbering, notes or the form of references.

One problem with the frame in contact situations is that owing to problems in grammatical and non-grammatical communicative competence, a text written by a non-native participant may be too short and too condensed. The form of a typed paper may also suffer from minute differences in style. For example, in English a space is left after each punctuation mark (comma, period, etc.) but this is not necessarily required in typewriting in many European systems. In the spoken language, the form of argumentation requires fixed formulae that have not been developed by many non-native participants. Turn-taking, mentioned by Marriott and Miyazaki (2000), also presents considerable difficulties.

In some genres affecting foreign students there are differences between their native and the host system. For example, in Japanese universities most teachers require that a 90-minute examination script is “not more than one page in

length”. This leads to very short condensed answers that are unacceptable in Australian universities. In my own experience, the academic content conveyed in both systems is roughly equivalent.

2.1.8 *Channels*

Channels of communication may be affected in contact situations. Many foreigners prefer writing papers to presenting them at conferences, because of fear of discussion. Students often prefer reading to listening. There may be problems in non-verbal communication due to pidginization: for example, participants may gesticulate ‘to help’ themselves to express their ideas in discussion.

2.1.9 *Performance*

Many of the preceding strategies may be correctly selected, but the participants may not possess the competence to implement them. Long-term memory may fail in discussions. When writing, much more time is required by non-native participants to complete a task. As Marriott (2000:291) notes, the issue of timing is not negligible. Students often do not have sufficient time to generate their written work and subject it to proper management.

One common fallacy of contact studies is the belief that the main problem of performance is the interference of a participant’s native norm. No doubt, such cases exist and are important (see the Japanese “not more than one page” norm in testing quoted above). However, this is not the whole story.

Perhaps the most salient problem is pidginization, that is, the inability to interact according to norms (including managing their own interaction). For example, the brevity of expression, mentioned above, frequently derives from pidginization. Many studies conducted so far indicate that the role of pidginization in producing deviations is as important as that of interference. In academic situations the burden of controlling a large number of rules and strategies is considerable and it frequently leads to problems of performance. One of these result in adjustment through avoidance, as documented by Marriott’s subject who said: “I wanted to say something during a class but didn’t have the confidence and while I vacillated between whether I would say something or not, in the end I wouldn’t” (Marriott, 2000:285). No interference can be identified here. It is the student’s inability to control the use of rules and strategies necessary for conducting the situation that initiates the management process.

3. Management

3.1 The importance of management in contact situations

Various types of management are symptomatic for processes of interaction in academic contact situations. In fact, all processes characteristic of contact situations seem to be processes of language management. Contact situations only attract our attention so far as they present 'problems'. Hence, language management is a central concept in any theory of language contact.

The language management process consists of five stages (Neustupný, 1985a; Jernudd, & Neustupný, 1987):

- a. deviations from norms occur,
- b. such deviations are noted,
- c. noted deviations are evaluated,
- d. adjustment ('correction' of problems) is planned, and
- e. the adjustment is implemented.

With regard to academic situations Marriott's *Japanese students' management processes and their acquisition of English academic competence during study abroad* (Marriott, 2000) cannot be valued enough. There is a need for more empirical studies such as this. How do participants in fact deviate, note, evaluate and adjust? In particular the first stages of the process are of importance. The study of the management process in general started with the process of adjustment ('correction') which are easily visible. At present, much attention is being paid to evaluation (Fairbrother, 1999) and noting. Empirical studies of norm-deviation are still rare (but see Kato, 2002). However, many deviations, although they are deviations from norms valid for certain situations, are not noted, and many noted deviations are not evaluated. Still, they may be important for the assessment of the processes as a whole.

3.2 The process (1): deviations

The process of language management starts with deviations from norms, some of them being base norms, while others are contact situation norms. I have already noted the need for more understanding of the issue of norms in contact situations in general, and the same applies to norms of academic contact situations. What is expected from academics in various types of contact situations? Even at the level of acquisition (foreign students) this is still an

unresolved problem. I suggest that it is not only native norms that should be expected to occur, and that universal norms must be considered.

To what extent deviations are noted is an important issue. Undoubtedly, in daily life contact situations not all are. What is the case in academic contact situations, including the acquisition situations? A comparison with native acquisition may be useful. For novice situations, Marriott (2000: 284) concluded that “considerable time may pass before students engage in some sort of corrective adjustment because they simply do not recognize the existence of a problem”.

3.3 The process (2): evaluation

Evaluation of noted deviations is an important research task. For evaluation, researchers have traditionally used comparison with native norms of participants commanding a high degree of authority. For example, in an acquisition situation, foreign students were expected to deal with the content and form of their essays principally as native professionals would. A form of relativism may well be preferable to this rather crude approach.

An interesting example of a position close to relativism, which is well developed in detail, is Alastair Pennycook’s thesis on plagiarism (Pennycook, 1996). In his paper Pennycook notes the strong and intellectually arrogant anti-plagiarism platform of many Western academics; he is quite right. Then he suggests that there is a different attitude to text ownership in some Asian countries and that “relations between texts and learning are far more complex than a simple accusation of plagiarism” (p.226); and he is right again. However, he does not demonstrate how individual types of plagiarism should then be evaluated. I assume that although cultural relativism is difficult to beat in detail, in intercultural contact our task is not only to state what is different but also which of two alternatives, if any, is THE RIGHT alternative, and under what circumstances.

In a paper on Czech academic writing, Čmejrková and Daneš (1997) suggested that while the German, Czech or Finnish academic style was ‘contextualizing’, Anglo-American academic discourse was ‘decontextualizing’. Hence, they say, the Anglo-American style is more suitable for inter-cultural communication. I do not propose to make a judgement concerning the empirical adequacy of this generalization. More important, and refreshing within an atmosphere of relativism, is the conclusion of the authors: it is legitimate to evaluate speech styles and one should not be afraid to say, when this is the case, that the Anglo-American style is superior.

3.4 The process (3): adjustment plans

One principle has often been mentioned in the study of intercultural contact but has never been turned into practice on a large scale: adjustments are needed not only in the case of foreign participants but also in the case of native participants. This principle can obviously be applied to academic contact situations. Both in expert and novice situations, native partners need to exercise adjustment such as conscious monitoring, conscious re-evaluation of their evaluative judgments, and conscious re-assessment of their adjustment plans. This may occur at the level of 'simple management' but 'organized management' (Jernudd, & Neustupný, 1987), such as training courses, is also advisable.

In the case of non-native participants the following types of adjustment have been shown to be useful in the case of contact situations in general and can be assumed to be of relevance to academic contact situations as well:

- a. The use of the base norm. This seems to be the preferable strategy, but is not always easily achieved. As Marriott's studies of acquisition of academic norms by Japanese students in Australia show, these students consciously attempt to apply Australian academic norms but their attempts do not necessarily meet with success (Marriott, 2000).
- b. The use of non-native participant's norms. This is so-called interference or transfer. It can be either conscious or unconscious. Some academics who possess what Galtung calls the Teutonic style intentionally only quote the place of publishing in references. This is a transfer from their native system. The mainstream Anglo-Saxon strategy also requires the name of the publisher.
- c. The use of intercultural strategies (Marriott, 1993). These strategies, referred to as 'interlanguage' in theories of language acquisition, aim at reaching the target system, but stop short of it. One of these strategies is overgeneralization. Another case is the application of strategies that may lead to simplification or, as Skoutarides (1981) has shown, to elaboration. In other words, foreigner talk, mentioned above, is an instance of an interlanguage strategy.
- d. The release of control (so called pidginization). As mentioned above, academic contact situations display much pidginization of content as well as form. Release of control is applied as a strategy when other strategies fail. An interaction act is left without cultural constraints — but it is important that the act is there.

3.5 The process (4): implementation

Implementation of adjustment plans under (a) to (c) within contact situations is not automatic. This is probably also true of academic situations. A considerable amount of control is needed here.

3.6 Pre-/in-/post-management

According to when management is executed, it is possible to speak of pre-management (executed before a deviation appears), in-management (executed after the generation of a string commences), and post-management (executed after a deviation appears). The relevance for academic contact situations is obvious. In the case of paper preparation and presentation, non-native participants pre-manage extensively. In- and post- management is typical for their oral presentation and conference attendance. In the case of students, attendance at courses that improve their academic writing is a case of pre-management.

3.7 Self-management and other-management

This distinction is important for language management in general, and also for language management in contact situations. In the case of academic situations, both types exist. Some other-management of written acts appears as a separate genre (review) and some is distributed within papers (attitudes to existing literature); in spoken language situations the most important genre is discussion. All of these require formulaic speech that is culture specific and becomes, itself, the object of management. As Marriott (2000) and Marriott and Tse (forthcoming) note, most Asian students in Australia prefer self-management to other-management of their academic writing.

3.8 Simple and organized management

The distinction between simple and organized management is of importance (cf. Jernudd, & Neustupný, 1987). Simple management is management in discourse, while in organized management systematicity increases. The most organized forms of language management are language teaching and a systematic public language policy.

Academic situations are the object of organized language management at various levels. In the case of expert academics, institutions with which they are

connected require that certain situations take place (employers require that employees write papers), and publishing outlets require certain content and form of papers. These requirements set the stage for problems in contact. According to the principles proposed above, such contact should be the object of careful consideration through organized management, but I wonder to what extent this requirement is fulfilled. It seems that at present publishers accept little variation although there is often provision for ‘Englishing’ of papers to be published in English. Deviance at the level of content is often handled through a decision not to publish a paper. Form is normally imposed as if it were a matter of course.

At the level of novices, institutions that receive them usually do possess clear management policies and these have been described in Marriott, 2000:287–288: universities provide preparatory and concurrent courses and there are systematic responses from individual members of staff.

3.9 Power and the management of contact

An important point that must be made here is the relationship between the management of contact and power. Contact situations, in general, display the differential interests of the parties in contact, and such interests are or are not realized. The realization of interests depends on differential power. Intercultural contact is not just a technical process. It is a process in which much is at stake.

Power relationships start in individual interaction acts (Neustupný, 1996) and it is there where they must be identified. Deviations can be perceived as actions which are in the interest of certain participants, but they may also be perceived as running against the interests of others. Evaluation is conducted from the point of view of such interests. The adjustment strategies I have outlined above have been linguistic strategies. However, management of intercultural contact also leads to attitudinal and emotive adjustment, which may be positive (“I like the French”) or negative (“I hate the Martians”). Among adjustments outside the linguistic area, Jernudd (1996:838) noted displacement of communities and conquest. This is, of course, where we leave the micro-level of discourse and embark on macro-management.

There are also differential interests in academic contact situations. In particular, the overall interest of the globalizing centre(s) lies in the assimilation of minor systems. This is not in the interest of humankind. Academic disciplines require a considerable degree of variation and such variation is endangered by assimilation. Members of minor systems (in the sense described above)

may personally be interested in maintaining their distinctiveness or (as mentioned above) in joining the globalizing mainstream. Empowerment is needed to realize their interests.

The power problem is not the only social problem of the academic systems. For example, another problem concerns the closed nature of the systems. Variation is of little use if it cannot assert itself because there is no contact. What other 'social' problems of academic contact exist is an important question.

At the present stage the awareness of the interests and relationships of power in the academic contact situations is still weak. Non-native participants are discriminated against and non-native students are being assimilated. There are still strong non-Anglo-American major systems (German, French, Japanese and others) but the question is how fast they will be assimilated. At present it seems that the forces of globalization will celebrate an easy victory, easier than in other areas. Is this going to happen? Should it happen? And if not, what should be done?

4. Conclusion

I have tried to outline a system for dealing with academic competence in contact situations. Much of what I have said lacks novelty but this paper has been intended as an exercise in systematization and a tool of reference. Admittedly, a systematic framework is not needed for writing a simple essay. However, I hope that it will be of some use to those who aim at a more analytical approach to a broad range of issues about academic competence.

Notes

1. This paper was presented in the session on academic transitions across cultures at the conference, Cultural Flows with(in) a Globalizing Asia, Monash University, November 29–December 1, 2002. I am indebted particularly to Helen Marriott for inviting me to participate and for providing comments on the initial draft of this paper. My sincere thanks are also due to Evžen Neustupný and Sandra Kipp for their very extensive comments on a later draft.
2. Ballard and Clanchy (1984) say that foreign students bring "their own cultural attitudes to knowledge as an unconscious part of the baggage" (Marriott, & Miyazaki, 2000). This resembles what I have just said. However, the way they use the notion of 'unconscious baggage' has a taste of a stereotypic general principle used to explain all — similar to what is known from various kinds of *nihonjin-ron* (popular theories of Japanese society). As

Marriott and Miyazaki emphasize, there is no need to do away with typologies and general principles, but the point is how we apply them.

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