

*Editors' introduction*

*Discourse Studies*  
 Copyright © 2005  
 SAGE Publications.  
 (London, Thousand Oaks,  
 CA and New Delhi)  
 www.sagepublications.com  
 Vol 7(4–5): 403–407.  
 10.1177/1461445605054399

ANJALI BROWNING  
 AND ALESSANDRO DURANTI  
 UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES



The articles in this special issue were presented at a symposium hosted at UCLA by the Center for Language, Interaction, and Culture (CLIC)<sup>1</sup> on February 27, 2004. The focus of the symposium, *Theories and Models of Language, Interaction, and Culture*, had two main goals. The first was to renew and extend conversations on the relationship between language, interaction, and culture that we had been having at UCLA both among ourselves and with colleagues from other campuses, especially those at UCSB. Out of such dialogues, the 1996 volume *Interaction and Grammar*, edited by Elinor Ochs, Emanuel Schegloff and Sandra Thompson, emerged as an effort to define a research agenda in which interaction plays a primary role in making sense of what people say to one another in the course of various daily activities. Many other CLIC faculty and students were also involved in new projects and new collaborations as the circle of colleagues with whom to have a dialogue expanded. A formal symposium involving some of those colleagues could make public these on-going separate conversations about research goals and theoretical implications.

The second goal behind the symposium was to make research paradigms about the intersection of language, interaction, and culture more explicit. Reviewing the past 100 years of scholarship in the study of language as culture in US anthropology, Duranti (2003) identified three major paradigms and argued that, unlike the radical shifts described by Thomas Kuhn (1962) for the physical sciences, in the social sciences older paradigms are not completely replaced by new paradigms. Furthermore, despite basic differences in goals, views of language, units of analysis, issues and methods, practitioners of different paradigms often act as if they are all doing the same thing and easily borrow data and concepts from one another.

Invoking 'theories' and 'models' was therefore a way to help us create a time and space where, under an umbrella of mutual admiration and respect, we could

think about what we do, why we do it the way we do it, and what the implications of our research practices are, especially in terms of inclusion and exclusion (of topics, issues, and approaches). The symposium would be an occasion for thinking about the logic of research and argumentation that characterizes our individual and collective efforts to make sense of language as social life – the social life that is outside of us, in human encounters, and the social life that is inside of us, in our thoughts and emotions.

The participants (speakers<sup>2</sup> and discussants) were selected from a wide range of scholars whose approaches constitute a revealing family resemblance, especially with regard to their common interest in the role of interaction in constituting linguistic, cultural, and social structures or processes. This can be seen in the articles that follow. Even when the authors address well-established topics and issues, they do so while introducing the possibility of new intellectual connections and methodologies.

In the opening article, 'On theories and models', Duranti expands on the basic principles and themes presented in his 'seven theses' that were circulated among participants prior to the symposium. Drawing from anthropology, linguistics, cognitive science, and the history of science, the article outlines ways of overcoming at least some of the challenges faced by anyone interested in identifying general patterns in the role of interaction in language and other cultural practices. Given that there are hidden theories and potential models in all analyses, for Duranti, the task then is to make them explicit so that others might evaluate and expand upon them.

Stephen Levinson's article, 'Living with Manny Schegloff's dangerous idea', constitutes an example of the kind of intellectual engagement anticipated by the ambitious title of the symposium. On the basis of his recent fieldwork on Rossel Island, Papua New Guinea, Levinson presents a case that, in his view, simultaneously supports the need for a detailed interactional analysis of face-to-face communication of the kind offered by conversation analysts, and at the same time, exposes the limitations of making interpretations based exclusively on micro-level analyses. As such, Levinson proposes a two-tier model of language, culture, and interaction that is meant to avoid what he calls 'interactional reductionism' by allowing the integration of micro and macro variables while taking the implications of these two levels of analyses into account.

The following article by Emanuel Schegloff, 'On integrity in inquiry . . . of the investigated, not the investigator', is both a demonstration of the method of analysis referred to in Levinson's essay and a rebuttal of his argument. For Schegloff, specific cultural practices need to be inductively discovered through a detailed account of what participants are manifestly trying to achieve through talk. This concern is reiterated in the article, which argues in favor of maintaining the 'integrity' of a strip of interaction rather than breaking it down into subcomponents, with each of them being the subject matter of separate academic disciplines.

Sandra Thompson and Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen bring to this volume the

contribution of two grammarians who use interactional data to rethink the foundations of linguistics as an empirical discipline. In 'The clause as a locus of grammar and interaction', they present a new perspective on the 'clause', a typically unquestioned category and *locus classicus* of grammatical analysis. As members of an innovative group of linguists who believe grammar is an emergent process rather than a static structure, Thompson and Couper-Kuhlen, using data from spontaneous English and Japanese interactions, argue that grammar is a dynamic conversational architecture that is co-constructed moment-by-moment in talk.

With few exceptions, the material world is usually left out of discourse analysis. Herbert Clark's article, 'Coordinating with each other in a material world', is thus a welcome contribution that provides us with an opportunity to pay attention to what is being done, with what, and where. A psychologist who has always taken interaction very seriously in his work, Clark here analyzes joint activity and builds upon his previous work on coordination and demonstration to propose a model in which what he calls *material signals* play a crucial role in mediating between people, places, and actions. As such, for Clark, a communicative signal is always a process that involves a dynamic collaboration in multiple stages.

Elizabeth Keating expands upon her long-time interest in the understanding of newly emerging communicative events, contexts, and activities in her article, 'Homo prostheticus: problematizing the notions of activity and computer-mediated interaction'. She adopts an ethnographically informed account of the complex interactions among deaf people who use new real-time technologies of communication to re-evaluate the two classic theoretical notions of activity and mediation. As such, she demonstrates how the traditional view of 'subjects' cannot account for the new roles that both participants and technology play in shaping new communicative experiences. Rather than looking at technological tools as mediators, Keating suggests the notion of 'prostheses', which interactants learn to inhabit as they achieve intersubjectivity by extending and transforming the reaches of the human body.

Elinor Ochs, Olga Solomon, and Laura Sterponi have been collaborating for a number of years on issues of language socialization, cognitive development, and literacy. In their article for this issue, 'Limitations and transformations of habitus in child-directed communication', they propose a new model of child-directed communication (CDC) and argue that it can be applied to understand the limitations of a community's habitus when caretakers interact with children affected by neurological disorders such as autism. In such situations, innovative caretakers and teachers must find new ways of communicating with children that transform their taken-for-granted communicative and socialization practices. The CDC model presented here offers a theoretical tool for researchers and practitioners alike.

Issues of identity have dominated theoretical debates across the social sciences and the humanities for at least two decades. Sociolinguists, discourse

analysts, and linguistic anthropologists have made their contributions to these debates by focusing on the role played by communicative practices in constructing, supporting, and challenging identities. Mary Bucholtz and Kira Hall have been at the forefront of such discussions and in their article, 'Identity and interaction: a sociocultural linguistic approach', they pull together the extensive literature on this topic and formulate five basic principles that constitute a model of how identity is constructed through interaction.

Don Kulick's concluding article, 'The importance of what gets left out', is an invitation to consider the role of the unconscious in communication and social action. Elaborating on a point made in his book with Deborah Cameron, *Language and Sexuality* (2003), Kulick argues that in order to understand human subjectivity and social action, what happens in interaction is not *all* that matters. We also need to pay attention to what does *not* happen, to the unsaid. This is particularly important, according to Kulick, when we study sexuality, a dimension of human subjectivity that he does not see as reducible to identity. By evoking the notions of desire and repression, Kulick argues that the unsaid structures give meaning to the said.

We hope that the issues posed in these articles, while by no means comprehensive, will challenge readers to re-evaluate the way in which the relationship between language, interaction, and culture is theorized. As such, we view this special issue as an attempt to expand our dialogue within and across our respective disciplines, especially around the need to formulate explicit theoretical positions. In fine-tuning our ideas of what constitutes social and linguistic *structures* such as grammar or kinship and how these interact with, or are transformed by, social and linguistic *practices* such as child-directed communication, computer-mediated activities, joint problem-solving, and ordinary conversation, we are hopefully forced to sharpen our focus on what constitutes useful models for research and analysis.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our gratitude to the Dean of the Social Sciences at UCLA, Scott Waugh, for his support of the Center for Language, Interaction, and Culture (CLIC), and for the funding that made the symposium possible. We would also like to thank the editor of *Discourse Studies*, Teun van Dijk, for his encouragement and guidance in preparing this special issue and the discussants at the symposium for their insightful comments: Patricia Baquedano-Lopez, Charles Bazerman, Niko Besnier, Charles Goodwin, Marjorie Goodwin, John Heritage, Lanita Jacobs-Huey, Gene Lerner, and Cheryl Mattingly.

#### NOTES

1. For more information on the UCLA Center for Language, Interaction, and Culture (CLIC), please visit the center website: <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/clic/>
2. All of the speakers at the symposium contributed to this special issue with the exception of Ben Rampton.

REFERENCES

- Cameron, Deborah and Kulick, Don (2003) *Language and Sexuality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Duranti, Alessandro (2003) 'Language as Culture in U.S. Anthropology: Three Paradigms', *Current Anthropology* 44(3): 323–47.
- Kuhn, Thomas S. (1962) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ochs, Elinor, Schegloff, Emanuel A. and Thompson, Sandra A. (eds) (1996) *Interaction and Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.