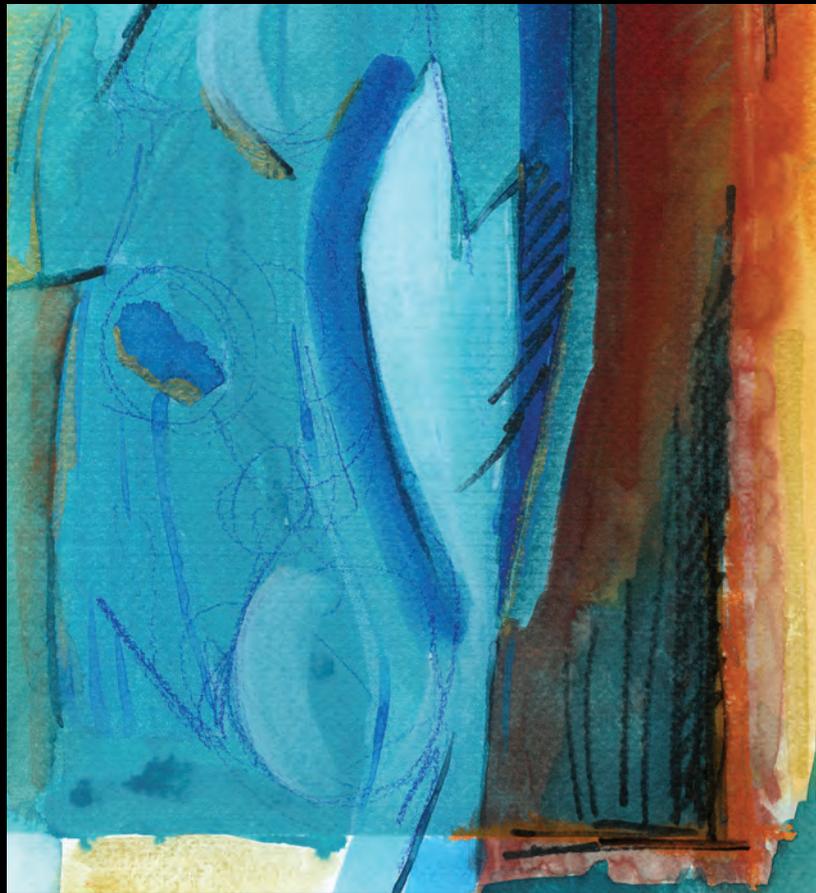


*The Handbook of*  
**Discourse  
Analysis**

*Second Edition*

*Volume I*



*Edited by*

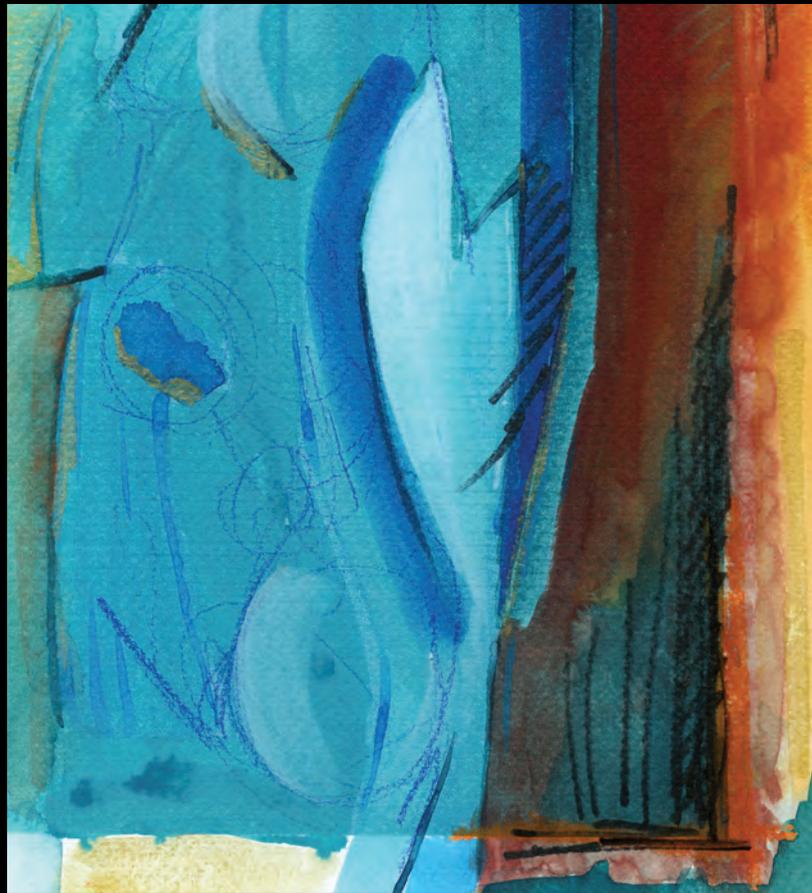
**Deborah Tannen, Heidi E. Hamilton,  
and Deborah Schiffrin**

**WILEY** Blackwell

*The Handbook of*  
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*Second Edition*

*Volume II*



*Edited by*

**Deborah Tannen, Heidi E. Hamilton,  
and Deborah Schiffrin**

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*Deborah Tannen,  
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VOLUME I

**WILEY** Blackwell

This second edition first published 2015

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Edition History: Blackwell Publishers Ltd (1e, 2001)

*Registered Office* John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester,  
West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

*Editorial Offices* 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA  
9600 Garsington Road, Oxford, OX4 2DQ, UK  
The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

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*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

The handbook of discourse analysis / edited by Deborah Tannen, Heidi E. Hamilton & Deborah Schiffrin. – Second edition.

volumes cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-470-67074-3 (cloth)

1. Discourse analysis—Handbooks, manuals, etc. I. Tannen, Deborah, editor. II. Hamilton, Heidi Ehernberger, editor. III. Schiffrin, Deborah, editor.

P302.H344 2015

401'.41—dc23

2014048413

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Cover image: Painting on canvas © petekarici / iStock

Set in 9.5/12pt Palatino by Aptara Inc., New Delhi, India

For Michael, Dan, and Louis  
with love



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# Preface to the Second Edition

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DEBORAH TANNEN AND  
HEIDI E. HAMILTON

The success of the first edition of *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* has been gratifying, and sets the bar high for this second edition. Our goal for this edition, as it was for the first, is (1) to provide a vital resource for scholars and students in discourse studies as well as for researchers in related fields who seek authoritative overviews of discourse analytic issues, theories, and methods; (2) to serve the needs of students and scholars in professional and academic domains such as education, law, medicine, business, government, and media who may consult the *Handbook* as they consider how fine-grained examinations of discourse can illuminate central problems in their fields; and (3) to constitute an essential addition to personal, academic, and professional libraries around the world, as new collaborators join the area of discourse studies.

During the nearly 15 years since the publication of the first edition, new research has been conducted in all areas covered by the original 41 chapters. New theoretical frameworks have taken on importance even as existing ones have been expanded and enriched both by young scholars who have risen to the forefront of the field and by established researchers who have built on their own prior advances. Moreover, new types of discourse have appeared with the invention and adoption of new technologies. To capture and reflect these developments, we invited 20 new chapters for the second edition. In order to accommodate them, 19 chapters from the first edition were of necessity replaced. We regret their loss, as all made significant contributions to the field, and we hope and expect that readers will continue to consult them in the first edition.

Of the 22 chapters remaining from the first edition, 19 have been updated and one is an entirely different chapter by the same author (Emanuel Schegloff). The remaining two are unchanged because the nature of their contents is not affected by the passage of time: John Gumperz (who, sadly, passed away in 2013) provided a personal perspective on his founding of the field of Interactional Sociolinguistics, while Robin Lakoff illustrated how a single communicative act, apology, can be best understood by the application of multiple approaches. We are gratified that, in addition to adding the work of scholars who have come to prominence since the publication of the first edition and while retaining the voices of many who helped establish the field of discourse analysis, we have also been able to add chapters by leading scholars who were missing from

the first edition. We have sought to maintain the international character of perspectives represented, as reflected by the fact that the contributors hail from 11 countries.

Given that nearly half the chapters in the current edition are new and that almost all of the rest are significantly revised, it was clear that the organization needed to be reconceptualized. The new organization progresses from a focus on the linguistic analysis of discourse (Part I) to increasingly broad perspectives on the world outside language: the range of academic approaches and methodologies (Part II); the individual, society, and culture (Part III); and the real-world contexts that are in part created by discourse as they are sites for its use (Part IV). We have slightly revised and significantly shortened the original introduction, retaining those sections that remain relevant and excising those that no longer apply.

It is our hope that this new edition of *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* will not only reflect the range, depth, and richness of current research in the field but also inspire new, illuminating work by providing students, scholars, and practitioners with state-of-the-art discussions of key aspects of this now well established but still burgeoning field. We look forward to continuing to engage in vibrant scholarly conversations as researchers in a broad range of disciplines explore the complexity of discourse and the numerous ways in which its analysis enhances understanding of human communication and its role in tackling key problems confronting our world and the people who live in it.

We would like to express our gratitude to those who helped in a multitude of ways. First, our sincere thanks go to the contributors for their huge investments of time and creativity. We know that all have many demands on their time, and we are grateful to them for choosing to devote such a full measure of it to this project. We ourselves learned much from each chapter, and we know readers will as well.

With equal fervor, we express our deep gratitude to Gwynne Mapes for her unwavering, proactive, and perspicacious efforts on behalf of the *Handbook*. Gwynne's dedicated oversight, organizational genius, and consummate communication gifts shepherded the chapters through the twisting byways from submission to publication. We cannot imagine having brought this volume to fruition without her.

We are grateful, as well, to the students, staff, and our faculty colleagues in Georgetown University's Department of Linguistics. The entire department, and in particular our students and colleagues in the sociolinguistics concentration, inspire and educate us daily, as they create the intellectually stimulating and interpersonally supportive environment that grounds and nurtures all our work.

Deborah would like, in addition, to express her gratitude to the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University, where she was a fellow during the academic year 2012–13, for providing an otherworldly beautiful and academically inspiring environment in which to edit chapters as they arrived.

In closing, we express our enduring gratitude, admiration, and affection for our treasured colleague and dear friend Deborah Schiffrin. Her vision, dedication, and hard work were pervasive at every stage of the first edition of this *Handbook*, and in the conceptualization of this second edition. Although health challenges precluded her participation in the execution of this edition, it nonetheless benefits from her significant influence throughout. We felt her spirit beside us always, as we will going forward. We see this volume as a part of her legacy, a testament to the enormous role she played in the establishment and development of the field of discourse analysis at Georgetown University and within the field of linguistics.

# The Handbook of Discourse Analysis

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# The Handbook of Discourse Analysis

Second Edition

Edited by

*Deborah Tannen,  
Heidi E. Hamilton, and  
Deborah Schiffrin*

VOLUME II

**WILEY** Blackwell

This second edition first published 2015

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Edition History: Blackwell Publishers Ltd (1e, 2001)

*Registered Office* John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester,  
West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

*Editorial Offices* 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA  
9600 Garsington Road, Oxford, OX4 2DQ, UK  
The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

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*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

The handbook of discourse analysis / edited by Deborah Tannen, Heidi E. Hamilton & Deborah Schiffrin. – Second edition.

volumes cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-470-67074-3 (cloth)

1. Discourse analysis—Handbooks, manuals, etc. I. Tannen, Deborah, editor. II. Hamilton, Heidi Ehernberger, editor. III. Schiffrin, Deborah, editor.

P302.H344 2015

401'.41—dc23

2014048413

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Cover image: Painting on canvas © petekarici / iStock

Set in 9.5/12pt Palatino by Aptara Inc., New Delhi, India

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# Introduction to the First Edition

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DEBORAH SCHIFFRIN, DEBORAH TANNEN,  
AND HEIDI E. HAMILTON

## What Is Discourse Analysis?

Research in the rapidly growing and evolving field of discourse analysis flows from numerous academic disciplines that are very different from one another. Included, of course, are the disciplines in which models for understanding, and methods for analyzing, discourse first developed, such as linguistics and anthropology. But also included are disciplines that have applied, and extended, such models and methods to problems within their own academic domains, such as communication, cognitive psychology, social psychology, philosophy, literary criticism, and artificial intelligence.

Given this disciplinary diversity, it is no surprise that the terms “discourse” and “discourse analysis” have different meanings to scholars in different fields. For many, particularly linguists, “discourse” has generally been defined as anything “beyond the sentence.” For others (e.g., Fasold 1990: 65), the study of discourse is the study of language use. These definitions have in common a focus on specific instances or spates of language. But critical theorists and those influenced by them can speak, for example, of “discourses of power” and “discourses of racism,” where the term “discourses” not only becomes a count noun but further refers to a broad conglomeration of linguistic and non-linguistic social practices and ideological assumptions that together construct or reinforce power or racism. So abundant are definitions of discourse that many linguistics books on the subject now open with a survey of definitions. In their collection of classic papers in discourse analysis, for example, Jaworski and Coupland (1999: 1–3) include 10 definitions from a wide range of sources. They all, however, fall into the three main categories noted above: (1) anything beyond the sentence, (2) language use, and (3) a broader range of social practice that includes non-linguistic and non-specific instances of language.

Issues associated with definitions are by no means unique to discourse and discourse analysis. In his two-volume reference book on semantics, for example, Lyons (1977) illustrates 10 different uses of the word *mean*, and thus an equal number of possible domains for the field of semantics. In his introductory chapter on pragmatics, Levinson (1983) discusses 12 definitions of the field of pragmatics (including some that could easily cover either discourse analysis or sociolinguistics). Since semantics, pragmatics, and discourse all concern language, communication, meaning, and context, it is perhaps not surprising that these three subfields of linguistics are those whose definitions seem to be most variable.

Rather than seeking to establish a single definition, the variety of papers in this *Handbook* reflects the broad array of definitions of – and approaches to – discourse analysis. The different understandings of discourse represented reflect the rising popularity and ever-expanding range of the field. Our own intellectual/academic histories – all in linguistics – reveal some of the different paths that have led us to an interest in discourse. Since each of our paths is different, we here speak in our own voices – in the order in which we arrived at Georgetown University.

## Deborah Tannen

When I decided to pursue a PhD in linguistics, I held a BA and MA in English literature and had for several years been teaching remedial writing and freshman composition at Lehman College, the City University of New York. Restless to do something new, I attended the 1973 Linguistic Institute sponsored by the Linguistic Society of America at the University of Michigan. That summer I fell in love with linguistics, unaware that “language in context,” the theme of that Institute, did not typify the field. Inspired by A. L. Becker’s introductory course and by Robin Lakoff’s course on politeness theory and communicative strategies, as well as by Emanuel Schegloff’s public lecture on the closings of telephone conversations, I headed for the doctoral program at the University of California, Berkeley, where Robin Lakoff was on the faculty. There I discovered, in addition to Lakoff, Professors Charles Fillmore (then interested in frame semantics), Wallace Chafe (then interested in theories of frames and scripts as well as the comparison of speaking and writing), and John Gumperz (then developing the field that later became known as Interactional Sociolinguistics). Not for a moment did I think I was doing anything but linguistics. The word “discourse” was neither a category with which I identified nor a term I regularly heard. There were no journals with the word “discourse” in their titles. The only journal that specialized in language in context was *Language in Society*, which had a strongly anthropological orientation. I vividly recall the sense of excitement and possibility I felt when a fellow graduate student mentioned, as we stood in the halls outside the linguistics department, that another journal was about to be launched: *Discourse Processes*, edited by psychologist Roy Freedle.

When I joined the faculty of the sociolinguistics program at Georgetown University in 1979, I redefined myself as a sociolinguist. That year I submitted an abstract to the annual LSA meeting and checked the box “sociolinguistics” to aid the committee in placing my paper on the program. But, when I delivered the paper, I found myself odd man out as the lone presenter analyzing transcripts of conversation among a panel

of Labovians displaying charts and graphs of phonological variation. I promptly redefined what I was doing as “discourse analysis” – the name I also gave to courses I developed at Georgetown. When invited to organize a Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics in 1981, I titled the meeting (and the book that resulted) “Analyzing Discourse: Text and Talk” and invited as speakers linguists, anthropologists, and psychologists, all of whom were examining language in context. During these early years, a number of journals appeared that reflected and contributed to the development of the field: *Text*, the first of several journals founded and edited by Teun van Dijk in Amsterdam (it was later renamed *Text & Talk*, under the editorship of Srikant Sarangi), and *Journal of Pragmatics*, co-edited by Jacob Mey and Hartmut Haberland in Denmark. As the years passed, many other journals were added – too many to name them all, but including *Discourse & Society*, *Discourse Studies*, *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, *Multilingua*, *Narrative Inquiry*, *Pragmatics*, and *Research on Language and Social Interaction*. In recent years, the list has expanded to include *Critical Discourse Studies*, *Discourse & Communication*, *Gender and Language*, *Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict*, *Journal of Language and Politics*, and *Pragmatics and Society*. The proliferation of journals in itself testifies to the upsurge of interest in discourse analysis, and its many incarnations.

The changes I have seen since I first began defining myself as a discourse analyst reflect the tremendous growth in this area. Work in discourse analysis is now so diverse that “discourse” is almost a synonym for “language” – coming full circle to where I saw such work at the start.

## Deborah Schiffrin

I discovered linguistics and discourse analysis in a very roundabout way. In my senior year of college at Temple University, I read Erving Goffman’s *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* during a course in sociological theory (the last requirement of my major). I was so excited by his work that I went on to read everything else he had written and then decided to continue studying face-to-face interaction in a PhD program in sociology at Temple. There my studies included an eclectic blend of sociological and social theory, semiotics (which included initial forays into structural and transformational linguistics), statistics, and urban studies. While still at Temple, I wrote an article on the semiotics of the handshake, which I boldly sent to Goffman. What followed was an invitation to a personal meeting and then his permission to audit a course with him. (The course prerequisite was to read all his work before the first class!) When my advisor at Temple decided to leave for another position, I had already decided to try to work with Goffman. Ironically, it was Goffman himself who first turned my thoughts toward a PhD in linguistics: during our first meeting, he proclaimed his belief that linguistics could add rigor and respectability to the analysis of face-to-face interaction.

Once I was enrolled in the PhD program in linguistics at the University of Pennsylvania, I quickly learned that, although linguists knew that understanding social interaction was important, the *study* of social interaction itself had a somewhat peripheral role in the linguistics curriculum. What I found instead was Labov’s sociolinguistics: an energizing mix of fieldwork, urban ethnography, variation analysis, and narrative

analysis. I gladly immersed myself in the life and work of the faculty and students in the sociolinguistics community: we interviewed people, measured vowels, coded narratives, and wondered (and worried) about how to measure different “styles.” Although many of my teachers published articles about discourse (Bill Labov on narrative and ritual insults; Ellen Prince on syntax, presupposition, and information status; Gillian Sankoff on grammaticalization in Tok Pisin), there was little sense of collective interest or of a community of discourse analysts.

As it became time for me to write my dissertation, I decided that I wanted to use what I had learned as a linguist to study social interaction. I remember my sense of confusion, though, when I tried to use what I had learned about the systematicity of language, as well as to follow the advice of both Labov and Goffman. Labov presented me with one mission: solve an old problem with a new method. But Goffman presented me with another: describe something that had not yet been described. After spending some time trying to apply these directives to the study of everyday arguments, I ended up focusing on discourse markers.

When I joined the faculty of Georgetown in 1982, I was immersed in the study of discourse, even though I was hired as a sociolinguist who could teach pragmatics and speech acts. Discourse analysis gradually filtered into those courses, as did face-to-face interaction, variation analysis, fieldwork, and even my old friend sociological theory. These various interests further jelled when I organized a Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics in 1984, with the title “Meaning, Form and Use in Context: Linguistic Applications.” Thanks to the interest in discourse created by Deborah Tannen and the receptiveness of my sociolinguistics colleagues Roger Shuy and Ralph Fasold, I found – and continue to find – a community of faculty and students eager to pursue a collection of interests similar to my own under the rubric of “discourse analysis.”

## **Heidi E. Hamilton**

My motivation to study discourse came from my real-life experiences with what Gumperz has called “crosstalk.” After receiving my bachelor’s degree in German language and literature and cross-cultural studies, I worked in the field of international education for four years. Day after day I witnessed misunderstandings related to (what I would later learn were called) contextualization cues, framing, and complementary schismogenesis. I decided it was time to search for a graduate program to study the linguistic underpinnings of these misunderstandings. After culling through numerous graduate catalogs, I discovered that the courses that I had identified as the ones that seemed most intriguing and relevant led to a degree in linguistics at Georgetown University with a concentration on sociolinguistics. So off I went.

I was fortunate to begin my studies in 1981. The Georgetown University Round Table focusing on discourse had just been organized by Deborah Tannen. The entire department – students and faculty alike – was infused with a sense of excitement and open-ended possibility regarding the future of discourse studies. It was within this context that I worked as Deborah’s research assistant and took her eye-opening courses on the analysis of conversation. In my second year of graduate study Deborah

Schiffrin arrived at Georgetown as a new assistant professor, bringing with her a deep understanding of sociology and an approach to the analysis of discourse that was greatly influenced by Labov's work on variation. We graduate students were in the enviable position of working with two of the most innovative young discourse scholars at the time – a situation that became even more apparent to us a couple of years later.

In the summer of 1985, Georgetown University hosted 600 students and faculty who came from around the world to participate in the LSA Linguistic Institute organized by Deborah Tannen. Through the whirlwind of courses, lectures, and discussions, the interactional sociolinguistic approach to discourse analysis that we had been steeped in for several years was taking shape and gaining in prominence. Those of us educated at Georgetown kept hearing how very lucky we were to have the opportunity to study “this kind” of linguistics year-round. In retrospect, these comments seem to have foreshadowed the movement of the study of discourse from the fringes to a more mainstream position within linguistics.

Though my initial interest in crosstalk within international contexts never diminished (I came close to writing my dissertation on directness in German conversational style while living in Berlin for several years), I ended up shifting gears to another type of problematic talk – that of Alzheimer's disease. Little did I know that, with that choice of dissertation topic, I was jumping headfirst into a paradigmatic maelstrom. Being trained as an interactional discourse analyst, I was attempting to study a population that was firmly entrenched in the territory of neuro- and psycholinguistics. Time after time I found myself having to justify (to linguists and to gerontologists and neurologists alike) my attempt to marry the odd couple of Interactional Sociolinguistics and Alzheimer's disease. In the process, I learned quite a bit about how to talk across disciplinary boundaries, an enterprise that can be both frustrating and invigorating.

In 1990, when I joined the Georgetown Linguistics Department faculty, the program in discourse analysis was already very well established. Graduate students were entering our program better prepared than ever before and were ready to take their study of discourse to a new level. The field was mature enough to be expanded to include the study of “exceptional” discourse, which in turn can illuminate the often invisible workings of more ordinary, everyday discourse.

## Purpose of the *Handbook*

Our own experiences in the field have led us to the conviction that the vastness and diversity of discourse analysis is a strength rather than a weakness. Far from its being a liability to be lamented because of the lack of a single coherent theory, we find the theoretical and methodological diversity of discourse analysis to be an asset. We thus envision this handbook as fostering the cooperative use – by linguists and others interested in empirically grounded studies of language – of the many theoretical and analytical resources currently proliferating in the study of discourse.

This collection of articles suggests that the future cooperation that we hope will emerge will respect the many differences that distinguish the approaches reflected here. There are differences in the types of data drawn upon, ranging from political speeches

to everyday conversation to literary texts. There are also differences in the types of context considered, including community, institutional, and ideological contexts. Finally, there is a varied range of theoretical paradigms, such as Interactional Sociolinguistics, Conversation Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis, and Systemic Functional Linguistics; and of methodology, including interpretive, statistical, and formal methods. As a result, the articles collected here suggest a foundational paradigm for “discourse analysis” that should be broad enough to support a wide range of assumptions, approaches, methods, analyses, and even definitions of discourse.

We hope that the range of chapters, and connections across them, will enhance the ability of discourse analysts to deal with a variety of problems and phenomena in ways that are not only internally coherent but also enriched by multiple resonances with one another. We also hope that the wide scope of chapters will reinforce the synergy between theory and data analysis that is reflected in the pervasive understanding of discourse analysis as the examination of actual (not hypothetical) text and/or talk. Although the authors have pursued a range of formats within the general topic assigned to them, we have encouraged them – in keeping with the term “discourse analysis” as well as the strong empirical bent that has characterized the field – to illustrate and substantiate general points by drawing upon concrete analyses of real discourse data. This springs from our conviction that theory and data are inseparable and mutually enriching: theoretical insights are needed to move the analysis of discourse beyond instance-specific insights, at the same time that analysis must be grounded in actual instances of language in order to provide both realistic constraints and empirical bases for theory-building. Though we have not asked contributors to address the need for – or even the desirability of – a single discourse theory, what contributors chose to include and emphasize, the themes and problems they address from the perspective of their specific areas, and the analyses and findings that they report all reveal the richness that must be respected and encompassed in discourse theories.

We hope, finally, that the breadth of articles collected here will provide a comprehensive view of the central issues in contemporary discourse analysis that is both accessible to students and informative to scholars. To this end, we have included articles by leading scholars in the field that provide an overview of their previous work, as well as chapters that survey the history of an area and summarize recent developments. In other articles, firmly established domains are assessed in order to link past approaches and findings with future challenges. In still others, authors develop relatively new fields of inquiry. Thus, we hope that the *Handbook* will serve not only as an authoritative guide to the major developments of discourse analysis but also as a significant contribution to current research.

## Conclusion

We return, in conclusion, to the question, “What is discourse?” Years ago, Charles Fillmore captured the essence of discourse by presenting the following two sentences, each of which appeared as a sign at a swimming pool. One sign said, “Please use the toilets, not the pool.” The other said, “Pool for members only.” Read separately, each sign is reasonable enough. But, when the two sentences are read as if they were part of a single

discourse, the second sentence forces a reinterpretation of the first that provokes laughter. Fillmore's example captures what we might call the gift of discourse: new meanings are created through the relationships between sentences. But the example also illustrates what we might call the challenge of discourse: Since more than one meaning can be created, how do we decide which meaning is intended, is justifiable, and/or makes the most sense?

We hope, through this *Handbook*, to offer a comprehensive sense of the scope and possibilities of discourse analysis, like the gift of multiple meanings. We know that some will see areas we have omitted or pathways we could have walked down that, due to the usual vagaries of human fallibility, we either did not pursue or were not able to realize. These omissions, though regrettable, are inevitable given the challenge of discourse: the directions in which its meanings may fan out are limitless. We have tried, at least, to provide a starting point from which the major highways emanate.

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# I Linguistic Analysis of Discourse

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# 1 Discourse and Grammar

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MARIANNE MITHUN

## 0 Introduction

Language has traditionally been understood as a hierarchical system of systems: phonology, morphology, syntax, etc. A tenet of much of linguistic theory, particularly the American Structuralist and Generative approaches that arose during the twentieth century, was that intellectual rigor depended on a strict separation of these levels as autonomous, self-contained domains. For practical reasons, work began at the smaller, more concrete levels. Phonology was the study of the patterning of sounds; morphology how morphemes are combined to form words; syntax how words are combined to form sentences. Within mainstream theory in America, the focus had not yet moved to discourse, presumably the study of how sentences are combined to form texts, that is, structure beyond the sentence.

But running alongside this mainstream trajectory throughout most of the century was an interest in discourse in other circles. Members of the European Structuralist Prague School, founded in 1929, articulated their influential theory of Functional Sentence Perspective (Firbas 1966, 1992). Other scholars in North America integrated discourse into their work on language structure early on, among them Pike (1945, 1964a, 1964b, 1967, 1983), Bolinger (1964, 1968, 1972, 1982, 1989), Grimes (1971, 1975, 1978, 1982a, 1982b), Longacre (1977, 1978, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 2003), Longacre and Shin (2012), and Halliday (1967–8, 1973, 1975, 2002; also active in Britain and Australia). References cited here represent only a small sample of the work of these productive scholars. All looked at language as an integrated communicative phenomenon.

As described by Tannen (Schiffrin, Tannen, and Hamilton 2001: 2–3), the last quarter of the twentieth century saw a blossoming of the status of the field of discourse analysis. Symposia devoted to discourse analysis began to spring up, first at Georgetown University and then elsewhere, as did journals such as *Discourse & Society*, *Discourse Studies*, *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, *Journal of Pragmatics*, *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, *Multilingua*, *Narrative Inquiry*, *Pragmatics*, *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, and *Text*. In certain quarters, work on grammar began to include consideration of the discourse context and the cognitive factors behind discourse structure. Among the important figures leading this were Chafe (1976, 1980, 1987, 1994) and Givón (1979, 1983, 1990; Givón and Gernsbacher 1994). (Both of these authors have continued to produce pioneering work.) All discourse analysis work shares a focus on extended bodies of speech in its communicative context. It is generally strongly empirically based. But it is not a monolithic endeavor characterized by a single set of questions, a single focus of inquiry, a single methodology, or a single theory. The variety of interests and approaches that characterize the field is richly exemplified in this volume.

For those interested in language structure, it is now generally recognized that discourse is more than an autonomous level beyond the sentence. Grammar provides speakers with tools for packaging information. And how information is packaged depends on the larger discourse context, the flow of thought through time, the communicative and social goals of the speaker, the presumed knowledge state of the audience, and more. Many of the grammatical choices speakers make at all levels – morphology, simple clause structure, and complex sentence structure – can be detected and understood only with respect to the discourse situation. At the same time, a full understanding of the discourse structures of a language depends on the recognition of the grammatical devices that signal them. Discourse structure is indicated by markers at all levels. It is more than the simple manipulation of sentences.

The relationship between discourse and grammar goes deeper. Recurring patterns of expression play a major role in the development of grammatical structures through time. What speakers choose to say the most often in the course of their daily interactions can become crystallized in grammar. In some cultures, for example, acceptable patterns of speech include specification of the source of information. With use, an expression such as ‘they say’ can become routinized, processed as a single unit. Over time, the expression may lose its internal compositionality and erode phonologically, until it is just a particle, a clitic, or an affix. It may even become obligatory. As Ariel puts it, “discourse depends on grammar, which in turn depends on discourse” (2009: 5).

A central aspect of the study of grammar is discovering what features all languages share and the ways they can differ. But, as long as our vision stops at the sentence, we will miss too much. The study of speech in its full discourse contexts can reveal cross-linguistic differences at all levels that may not be obvious when grammatical analyses focus on one level of structure at a time, each in isolation from the others. This chapter illustrates the kinds of intimate relations that hold between discourse and grammar in a language that is typologically quite different from more familiar major world languages. This is Mohawk, an Iroquoian language of northeastern North America, spoken primarily in Quebec, Ontario, and New York State. Much of the essence of the language could go unnoticed without examination of spontaneous, interactive speech in its discourse context.

## 1 The Basic Sentence

Pedagogical grammars are often rich in sentences constructed in isolation. Those in (1) all occurred in materials designed for teaching Mohawk. (Spelling has been regularized.<sup>1</sup>)

(1) Textbook sentences

- a. ì:'i    wa'kkontsherárho'    kahentará:ken    kí:ken    anitskwà:ra'.  
 I        I painted                    light green        this        chair  
 'I painted this chair light green.'
- b. Ne        rón:kwe        ró:ien'        ne        atókwa'.  
 the        man            he has        the        spoon  
 'The man has the spoon.'
- c. Thí:ken    iakón:kwe    ienòn:we's    kí:ken    rokstèn:ha    raowennókwás.  
 that        woman        she likes     this        old man        his radio  
 'That woman likes this old man's radio.'
- d. Óhonte'    ken    nikahiatonhserò:ten'    ró:ien'    thí:ken    rón:kwe?  
 green    Q    it is such kind of book    he has    that        man  
 'Does that man have a green book?'

All of the words here are morphologically correct. It is unlikely that any of these sentences was ever uttered spontaneously by a speaker, however. If grammatical descriptions of the language were based on such sentences alone, the essence of the language would be severely distorted. The organization of information here, both the packaging of ideas into words and the combination of words into clauses and sentences, is decidedly un-Mohawk. Other grammatical features that are pervasive in normal speech are simply absent. The following sections will show how even seemingly straightforward grammatical structures cannot be understood fully without a consideration of their uses in their discourse contexts. All of the Mohawk material cited from this point on is drawn from a conversation at Kahnawà:ke, Quebec, involving a lively group of speakers ranging in age from their mid-twenties through their mid-seventies.<sup>2</sup> All examples are from first-language speakers over the age of 60. They are arranged such that each line represents a separate intonation unit or prosodic phrase. In some cases, the larger context is provided just in free translation, but the original was in Mohawk.

## 2 The Word

One obvious difference between Mohawk and English is the packaging of information into words. Often a single Mohawk word corresponds to multiple English words. A typical example is in (2).<sup>3</sup>

- (2) Tesewatenna'tsherénhawe'  
 te-se-wa-atenna'tsher-enhaw-e'  
 CISLOC-2-PL-lunch-carry-ST  
 'You all brought your lunches.'

But speakers have choices. Direction or location, for example, can be indicated by a verbal prefix, such as the cislocative *te-* 'hither, here, there' in (2), but also by a separate word, such as *kén:* 'here' or *thó* 'there.' Referents are identified by pronominal prefixes, such as *sewa-* 'you all' in (2), but also with separate words, such as *í:se* 'you.' Objects can be identified inside words, such as 'lunch' here, or by separate nouns, such as *atennà:tshera* 'lunch, groceries.' As will be seen throughout this chapter, such choices are not random.

## 2.1 Lexical categories

A basic unit of grammatical structure is the word class. Languages differ in the ways information is distributed among kinds of words. Mohawk contains just three lexical categories, clearly distinguished by their internal morphological structure: particles, nouns, and verbs.

Particles have no internal structure and serve a variety of functions, such as *ì:i* 'I,' *ne* 'the aforementioned,' *kí:ken* 'this,' and the interrogative *ken* in the examples in (1) above.

Morphological nouns contain a gender or possessive prefix, a noun stem, and a noun suffix. The neuter prefix is *ka-*, *o-*, or zero, as in *atókwa* 'spoon' in (1). A possessive prefix *rao-* 'his' can be seen in *rao-wennókwás* 'his radio.' The most common noun suffix *-a'* appears at the end of *atokw-a'* 'spoon.' Nouns generally function syntactically as arguments, as would be expected.

Morphological verbs contain minimally a pronominal prefix and a verb stem. The prefix identifies the core arguments, one for intransitives and two for transitives. The verb *wa'kkontsherárho* 'I painted' in (1a), for example, contains the first-person-singular prefix *k-*, the stem *-kontsherarho-* 'paint,' and the perfective suffix *-'*. Verbs may also contain numerous other elements. They can function syntactically as predicates, as in (1a) 'I painted the chair,' but they can also serve as full clauses. The word *wa'kkontsherárho* is a complete grammatical sentence in itself: 'I painted it.'

Morphological verbs can also serve other syntactic functions. They can be used as referring expressions with no change in form, such as *kawennókwás* 'radio,' and function syntactically as arguments.

- (3) kawennókwás  
 ka-wenn-okw-as  
 N.AGT-word-disperse-HAB  
 'it word-disperses' = 'radio'

Many morphological verbs, such as 'radio,' have been lexicalized as referring expressions. If a Mohawk speaker were asked about the meaning of *kawennókwás*, the first

answer would probably be 'radio.' Lexicalization is a matter of degree: some verbs are normally used as nominals, others as both arguments and predicates, and still others only as predicates. Some other examples of verbal arguments from this conversation are in (4).

- (4) a. ronathiatonhs heraweiéhstón  
 ron-at-hiation-hsher-a-weien-hst-on  
 M.PL.PAT-MID-write-NMZR-LK-know.how-INST-ST  
 'they know how to write' = 'literate people, learned people'
- b. tewahrónkha'  
 te-wa-ahronk-ha'  
 1INCL.AGT-PL-speak-HAB  
 'we all speak/understand a language' = 'we fluent ones'

Mohawk contains no adjective category. Properties expressed with adjectives in other languages are conveyed in Mohawk with verbs.

- (5) a. Ranekenhterón:tahkwe'  
 ra-nekenhteront-ahkwe'  
 M.SG.AGT-be.handsome-HAB.PAST  
 'He was handsome.'
- b. Né: thi: kwah iótteron.  
 né: thí:ken kwah io-at-ter-on  
 it.is that quite N.PAT-MID-frighten-ST  
 'That's scary.'

Morphological verbs can also function as adverbials, like *sewatié:ren's* 'sometimes' in (6).

- (6) Tanon' sewatié:ren's  
 tanon' se-w-at-ieren-'s  
 and REP-N.AGT-MID-happen.spontaneously-DISTR  
 and it happens here and there  
 'And sometimes

kwah kí:ken tsi niwenhniseró:ten  
 on a day like this

thé:nen' ó:ia' nahò:ten' wakaterihwahtentià'tonhátie' we.  
 I go along and do something different, you know.'

Due in part to their ability to function syntactically like the clauses, predicates, arguments, adjectives, and adverbs of other languages, morphological verbs are extremely frequent in Mohawk speech. When Wallace Chafe counted the proportion of nouns to

verbs in a corpus of English conversation, he found a noun-to-verb ratio of about 1:1. A count over a similar Mohawk corpus yielded a proportion of 1:17.

The difference is not confined to morphological category. It appears in syntactic predicate-to-argument ratios as well. Patterns of idiomaticity vary interestingly across languages: what might normally be expressed in a predicate in one language might be expressed more often in an argument in another. During the conversation examined here, one speaker rehashed the morning's activities for a latecomer. What she later translated into English as 'we did work' was expressed with just the Mohawk predicate 'we worked.' What she translated as 'a lot of' was expressed in the Mohawk predicate 'it was much.'

- (7) *Shiiorhón'ke*  
as it has dawned place  
'This morning

<u>nia'té:kon</u>	<u>wa'onkwaió'ten'</u>	né:	ki'	kí:ken ...
so it amounts variously	we worked	that	in fact	this
in fact <u>we did a lot of work ...</u> '				

This conversation was full of similar differences. What was translated as an English possessed noun phrase 'your habit' in (8) was packaged in Mohawk in a predicate 'how you are habituated.'

- (8) *Hen;* *thó:* *satekhwahra'tsheraia'ákhons*  
yes there you are table pounding  
'Yes, you're pounding the table

<i>tsi</i>	<i>ní:</i>	<u><i>saren'nhà:'on.</i></u>
as	so it is	you are habituated
as is <u>your habit.</u> '		

A sentence translated 'I am waiting to have some soup' contained no noun 'soup' in Mohawk. The idea of soup was conveyed by a predicate based on the verb stem *-atshori* 'slurp.'

- (9) *Wakerhà:re'* *ki:* *ni'* *a:katshó:ri'.*  
I am waiting this myself I would slurp  
'I'm waiting to have some soup.'

The sentence 'he'll still be a young man' contained no noun 'young man.' The idea was expressed in a predicate based on the verb root *-nekenhter-* 'be good looking, be a young man.'

- (10) Shé:kon enhanekenhterón:take'.  
 still he will continue being a young man  
 'He'll still be a young man.'

Mohawk speakers often use predicates for the idiomatic expression of ideas that English speakers convey with arguments. The difference is striking, but it emerges most clearly in unscripted speech in context.

## 2.2 Incorporation

Mohawk speech is characterized by a higher proportion of predicates for another reason. It contains a robust noun-incorporation construction, a kind of noun-verb compounding that yields a complex verb stem. Incorporated nouns are somewhat rarer in isolated constructed sentences than in spontaneous speech, though they do occur in lexicalized expressions such as *ka-wenn-ókwas* 'it-word-scatters' = 'radio.' Mohawk verbal counterparts to attributive adjectives in other languages often contain incorporated nouns.

- (11) Ionkwanontsistahní:ron.  
 ionk-wa-nontsist-a-hnir-on  
 1PAT=PL-head-LK-be.hard-ST  
 'We are hard-headed.'

Some adverbial notions are expressed with incorporating verbs.

- (12) Enhontewennahsnó:ronte'.  
 en-hon-ate-wenn-a-hsnoron-t-e'  
 FUT-M.PL.AGT-MID-WORD-LK-be.fast-CAUS-PFV  
 'They will word hurry' = 'They'll speak fast.'

But the full nature of noun incorporation cannot be appreciated in isolated sentences. Some of the motivations behind speakers' choices between independent and incorporated nouns can be seen by tracing the use of the noun root *-wenn-* 'word, language' through a stretch of the current conversation. The remark in (7) above, 'This morning we did a lot of work,' was addressed to a man who had just arrived. It was followed by (13). This first mention of the language to the newcomer was accomplished with an independent noun: *onkwawén:na* 'our language.'

- (13) Wa'akwa'seréhshon kí:ken nahò:ten',  
 we dragged around this what  
  
 tsi ni:ioht tsi ioió'tens ne,  
 as so it is as it works that

<u>onkwawén:na'</u>	né:ne.
onkwa-wenn-a'	it is
1PL.AL-language-NS	it.is
<u>our language</u>	it is

'We discussed the way our language works.'

The group lamented the difficulty of speaking Mohawk without reverting to English. The new arrival said (in Mohawk), 'My older brother's like that. When we get together and talk, he starts speaking English to me. And he's my older brother.' In the next sentence, 'You would think he would push the language,' the noun *-wenn-* 'language' was incorporated. The language was already the established topic of conversation, so a separate word was not necessary to focus special attention on it.

- (14) *Á:hsenhrek*  
'You would think

<i>tóka'</i>	<i>raónha</i>	<i>ia:hawennà:reke'</i>
<i>toka'</i>	<i>raonha</i>	<i>i-aa-ha-wenn-a-hrek-e'</i>
maybe	himself	TRLOC-OPT-M.SG.AGT- <u>language</u> -JR-push-PFV
maybe	himself	he would <u>language</u> push
		that he would push the <u>language</u> .'

Incorporation is used as a rhetorical device for controlling the flow of information. One speaker could have said simply, 'You'll add to the story.' Instead, he developed his point in two intonation units, two clauses, the second, with an incorporated noun, an elaboration of the first.

- (15) *Tanon' ostòn:ha a:ki:ron' ienhsahsónteren'*  
*tanon' oston=ha aa-k-ihron' i-en-hs-ahsonten'*  
 and bit=DIM OPT-1SG.AGT-say-PFV TRLOC-FUT-2SG.AGT-add-PFV  
 and a little I would say you will add there  
 'And I'd say you'll add on just a bit,

*iensehskarahsónteren'*  
*i-en-se-hs-kar-ahsonteren'*  
 TLOC-FUT-REP-2SG.AGT-story-add-PFV  
 you will story add again there  
 you'll add to the story.'

Incorporated nouns do not bear a specific grammatical relation in the clause. They simply evoke a kind of entity, much like the non-head in English noun-noun compounds.

There is more to noun incorporation in Mohawk than online management of attention. Speakers do not necessarily produce language morpheme by morpheme as they speak. Frequently recurring chunks of language become routinized over time. As noted earlier, many verbs containing incorporated nouns have become lexicalized,

stored as unitary expressions for single concepts. Lexicalization is a significant factor in noun incorporation: in speech, in many cases, both those like 'radio' and those like the alternation between incorporated and independent 'language,' incorporation is not an online process of word formation but rather a choice between existing alternatives.

Lexicalization can extend beyond the boundaries of the word, a fact that also affects the frequency of incorporation. A speaker remarked:

- (16) Teiotierónnnion'                      tsi      nitewawennò:ten  
 te-io-at-ieron-nion'                      tsi      ni-tewa-wenn-o'ten'  
 DV-N.PAT-MID-be.strange-DISTR    how    PRT-1INCL.PL-language-be.a.kind.of-ST  
 it is strange                                  how    so our language is  
 'Our language is strange.'

The language was already under discussion, so the incorporation of *-wenn-* could be attributed to its information status. But there was another factor. The construction consisting of the particle *tsi* plus a verb containing the partitive prefix (here *ni-*), an incorporated noun, and the verb root *-o'ten* 'be a kind of' is well established in the language. It is the way one talks about what something is like.

Frequency of use is an important aspect of incorporation. Some verb roots can appear with or without incorporated nouns. But some never incorporate, some rarely incorporate, some often incorporate, some usually incorporate, and some always incorporate. Some verbs that always incorporate denote relative properties, such as *-iio* 'be good.'

- (17) Wakatshennón:ni      tsi      niió:re'                      tsi      sewenní:io.  
 wak-at-shennonni      tsi      ni-io-r-e'                      tsi      se-wenn-iio  
 1SG.PAT-MID-be.happy    how    PRT-N.PAT-be.far-ST    how    2SG.AGT-language-be.good  
 I am happy                      how    it is so far                      how    you are language good  
 'I am happy at how good your language is.'

Some verbs that always or usually incorporate contribute little independent information of their own, such as *-ien* 'lie,' which often serves simply to indicate the presence or absence of a referent.

- (18) Iáh    kwah    thiekawén:naién'.  
 iah    kwah    th-ie-ka-wenn-a-ien'  
 not    just      CONTR-TRLOC-N.AGT-word-LK-lie-ST  
 not    just      does it word lie there  
 'There just isn't a word.'

Noun stems show a similar range of frequency of incorporation. Some are never incorporated, some rarely, some often, and some always. Many of those that incorporate more frequently have more general, even abstract meanings, such as *-nikonhr-* 'mind' in verbs pertaining to mental phenomena, *-iá't-* 'body' in verbs pertaining to physical properties of animate beings, and *-rihw-* in verbs pertaining to abstract matters.

Without discourse, our understanding of noun incorporation would be superficial at best. Noun incorporation allows speakers to package familiar unitary concepts in single, lexicalized words, and also to carry established referents within verbs in ongoing speech without drawing special attention to them.

### 3 The Clause

In most models of syntax, a basic clause is assumed to consist of a predicate and one or more arguments. As seen in the previous section, the two may be packaged in a single word in Mohawk, a verb, such as *Tesewatenna'tsherénhawe'* 'You all brought your lunches.' Arguments can also be identified by additional words, as in *Aonsetewatshèn:ri' nonkwawén:na'* 'We could find our words,' with *nonkwawén:na'* 'our words.'

#### 3.1 Arguments

As in other languages, arguments in Mohawk may be identified by a simple pronoun or noun, or a more elaborate construction. The isolated sentences in (1) seen above show argument structures similar to those of English. A look at discourse shows a quite different story.

##### 3.1.1 Pronominal arguments

In addition to the pronominal prefixes in verbs, Mohawk contains independent pronouns.

- (1a)  $\dot{\text{I}}:\dot{\text{i}}$  wa'kkontsherárho' kahentará:ken kí:ken anitskwà:ra'.  
 I I painted light green this chair  
 'I painted this chair light green.'

But these pronouns are actually rare in speech. Such patterns have sometimes been referred to as 'pro-drop': the pronoun is assumed to be present to begin with, then dropped under certain circumstances, as when reference is otherwise clear.

In the conversation discussed here, there are 195 first-person references, of which 12 are independent pronouns; there are 128 references to second persons, of which eight are independent pronouns. Given the numbers, the hypothesis that independent pronouns are dropped when reference is clear would be difficult to defend. All Mohawk verbs contain obligatory pronominal prefixes identifying their core arguments, so reference is always clear, even when an independent pronoun is used. The clause in the third line of (19), for example, contains both the independent pronoun *í:* and the pronominal prefix *k-* in the verb.

- (19) Ahská:raton  
 'You could tell a story,  
 sok uh,  
 then ah,

<u>í:</u>	iaonsakatahsónteren'	tanon'
<u>ì:'i</u>	i-a-onsa-k-at-ahsonteren'	tanon'
1	TRLOC-OPT-REP-1SG.AGT-MID-add-PFV	and
I	I could add onto it again	and
<u>I</u>	could continue and,	

sha'tekakarò:ten' akká:raton',  
I'd tell the same story

tetiattíhen tsi ní: tsi . . . entkawenníneken'ne'.  
the words would come out differently.'

The pronominal prefixes actually make more distinctions than the independent pronouns. There are, for example, distinct prefixes for first-person-singular agent, first-person-inclusive-dual agent, first-person-exclusive-dual agent, first-person-inclusive-plural agent, first-person-exclusive agent, first-person-singular patient, first-person-dual patient, first-person-plural patient, first-person-singular inalienable possessor, first-person-dual inalienable possessor, first-person-plural alienable possessor, first-person-singular alienable possessor, first-person-dual alienable possessor, and first-person-plural alienable possessor. All of these categories are expressed with the same independent pronoun: *ì:'i*, often shortened to *i:*.

The independent pronouns have special discourse functions. One is to mark a shift in topic, as in (19) above: 'You could tell a story, then I could continue ...' Another is to mark focus, information that the speaker deems especially important. Speaker A below was making fun of the dialect spoken in a neighboring community. Speaker B, who was born there, protested.

- (20) B: 'Come on.'  
A: 'I'm not making fun of you.'  
B: 'I never spoke like that.'  
A: 'That's not what I'm saying.'

B: Í: kwi' tehsekkà:nere' tsi né: sá:ton  
í well you are looking at me as that you are saying  
'Well you're looking at me while you're saying that.'

A: Í:se' ki' wáhe' ákta' íhsete'.  
2 in fact TAG near you are standing  
'Well you're the one that's standing close by.'

This focus construction is often characterized by distinctive intonation as well. The focused element is pronounced with extra-high pitch, visible in the bump in the pitch trace in Figure 1.1.

Independent pronouns are also often used to highlight a focus of contrast.

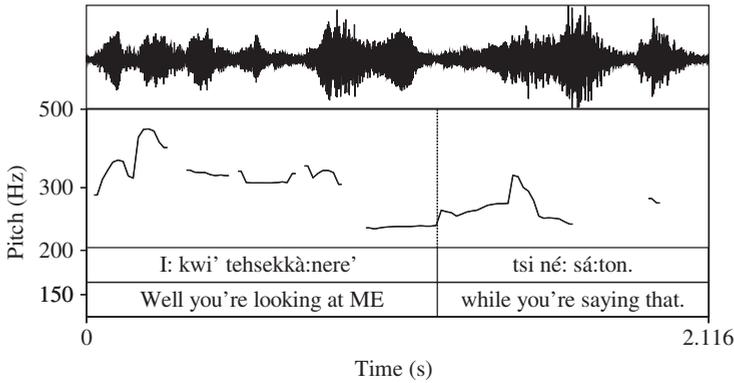


Figure 1.1 Focused pronoun 'me.'

- (21) Akwé:kon            ne                    ísten'néha                    enkhenatahren'sè:ra'  
 all                    the                    my mother                    I will go visit  
 'Even when I go visit my mother
- í:  
 1                    wakahkwíshron                    onkwehnéha'                    a:katá:ti'  
 I am striving                    real person style                    I would speak  
 'I'm the one that's trying to speak Mohawk.'

### 3.1.2 The Determiner Phrase

In most current syntactic theory, arguments are analyzed as clausal constituents, Determiner Phrases, with an internal structure of their own. The prototypical Determiner Phrase consists of a determiner (article or demonstrative), optional adjectives, and a noun: *a nice book, this lovely house*. As noted, Mohawk has no adjective category. It does, however, contain both an article and demonstratives.

If we look at the isolated sentences in (1) earlier, the Mohawk article *ne* seems comparable to English 'the.'

- (1b) Ne    rón:kwe    ró:ien'    ne    atókwa'.  
 the    man            he has    the    spoon  
 'The man has the spoon.'

The absence of Mohawk *ne* corresponds to an indefinite article in the English translation.

- (1d) Óhonte'    ken    ( )    nikahiatonhserò:ten'    ró:ien'    thí:ken    rón:kwe?  
 green    Q                    such kind of book    he has    that    man  
 'Does that man have a green book?'

As described in detail by Chafe (1976, 1994), the English definite article indicates identifiability: it signals that the speaker assumes the hearer can identify the referent. Identifiability can come from various factors: uniqueness (*Don't look at the sun* [there is only

one sun]), common knowledge (*I've already fed the dog* [we have just one dog and we both know who it is]), prior mention (*I bought a coat and matching scarf. The coat ...*), or association with something identifiable (*I bought a coat. The sleeves ...*). Judging from (1b) and (1d) above, Mohawk *ne* seems to mark general identifiability.

But, in more extensive bodies of speech, Mohawk *ne* sometimes appears in contexts where English *the* would not.

(22) With *ne*

I: akwé: tewáhawe' ne onkwawén:na'.  
 we all we all hold ne our language  
 'All of us hold ( ) our language.'

And it is sometimes absent from contexts where English *the* is used.

(23) Without *ne*

Wà:kehre' tsi ( ) iakenheion'taientákhwa'  
 I thought place one lays out the dead with it  
  
 tsi tehshakotitsèn:tha' ieie:teron'.  
 place they cure people there she resides.

'I thought maybe she was in the hospital.'

An accurate understanding of *ne* emerges only from discourse. Speaker A below brought up a word she had heard used for 'thousand,' *iohsóhserote*'. (The entire conversation was in Mohawk.)

(24) A: Teiotierónnnion' tsi nitewawennò:ten'.  
 it is strange how so our language is a kind of  
 'Our language is strange.'

*Iohsóhserote*'.

B: Hen  
 'Yes.'

A: Né: ken né: owennaká:ion ne iohsóhserote'  
 it is Q it is old word ne  
 'Is that an old word, ne *iohsóhserote*'?'

B: No, it comes from French. See, the hundreds are added to it.

C: That's how I heard X on the radio. He said, 'The hundreds are standing.'

B: Yes, that's it isn't it.

Nonkwawén:na' iáh se' teionkwaién:tahkwe'  
ne=our language not indeed did we use to have

ne:            tho            niió:re'            a:i:ron'  
 it is            that            far            one could say

'In (ne) our language, we couldn't count that far.

É:so'            ne            onkwawén:na'  
 many            ne            our word  
 A lot of (ne) our words

ionkwaterákwen,  
 we have taken  
 are borrowed.

wateníhen    ne            owén:na'.  
 it is rented    ne            word  
The word is rented.'

A:    Hen: orihwí:io,  
 yes    good matter  
 'Yes, it's a fact.

Nahò:ten'    iotié:ren            ne    aetewatáteni'.  
 what            it is surprising    ne    we would rent it  
 What would be wrong with (ne) our renting it?'

Mohawk *ne* does not mark general identifiability but rather previous mention within the discourse. The first time the word *iohsóhserote'* was mentioned, there was no *ne*. The second time it was preceded by *ne*: 'Is it an old word, *ne* *iohsóhserote'*?' The *ne* next appears with a possessed noun: 'ne our language,' pronounced *nonkwawén:na'*. At this point the language was already under discussion. The *ne* appears again in the following line, this time before 'our words,' also a central topic of the ongoing discussion. Two lines later, it appears before 'word' (*ne* *owén:na'*), again a referent established a few lines before. Finally, in the last line, it occurs before a complement clause: 'our renting it.' This clause, the argument of the matrix *iotié:ren* 'it is surprising,' is functioning as a nominal, identifying a previously introduced idea. The Mohawk *ne* is thus better rendered as 'the aforementioned.' It often appears to function like the English definite article *the*, because previous mention is a common way of establishing definiteness. But the actual meaning 'the aforementioned' can only be seen in discourse.

This refined understanding now allows us to make sense of the two sentences seen earlier. The sentence 'All of us hold *ne* our language' in (22) occurred in the midst of a discussion about the Mohawk language. When the speaker remarked in (23), 'I thought maybe she was in (the) hospital,' this was the first mention of the hospital, so there was no *ne*, even though there is only one hospital in this community. Sentences constructed in isolation, even by skilled native speakers, often do not reflect the functions of markers whose meanings depend on a larger discourse context.

It is generally assumed that a fundamental element of the Determiner Phrase cross-linguistically is the demonstrative. Judging from the isolated sentences in (1) earlier, the Mohawk *kí:ken* and *thí:ken* seem comparable to English 'this/these' and 'that/those.'

- (1c) Thí:ken iakón:kwe ienòn:we's kí:ken rokstèn:ha raowennókwas.  
 that woman she likes this old man his radio  
 'That woman likes this old man's radio.'

At first glance, spontaneous speech appears to reflect a similar structure.

- (25) Ahkwesáhsne né: rón'tsha' thí: otsì:tsia'.  
 Ahkwesáhsne it is they use that flower

The prosody reveals a different structure. The group had been discussing dialect differences between communities. In Kahnawà:ke, where this conversation took place, the cluster /ts/ is pronounced [dz] before a vowel: [odzì:dza?] 'flower.' In another community, Ahkwesáhsne, it is pronounced [dʒ]: [odʒì:dʒa?]. The utterance in (25) actually consisted of two prosodic sentences. The first ended with *thí:* 'that' and a full terminal fall. It was separated from the next by a response from a listener. The second sentence began with a high-pitch reset on the stressed syllable. (The pitch appears extra high because of the tone, characterized by an extra-high rise followed by a steep plunge.)

- (26) A: Ahkwesáhsne né: rón'tsha' thí:.  
 Ahkwesáhsne it is they use that  
 'They use it in Ahkwesáhsne, that [pronunciation].'  
 B: Yeah.  
 A: Otsì:tsia'  
 flower  
 'Otsì:tsia'.'

A pitch trace can be seen in Figure 1.2. The sequence *thí: otsì:tsia'* does not constitute a single constituent.

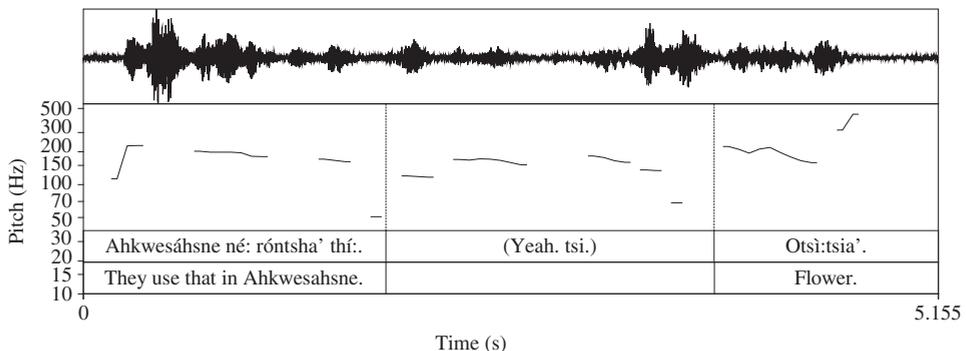


Figure 1.2 Demonstrative *thí:* 'that.'

Larger stretches of discourse show that demonstratives are rarely elements of a Determiner Phrase constituent in Mohawk. Demonstratives do occur on occasion before nouns, but they are usually referring expressions on their own. Furthermore, they more often serve functions beyond what would be predicted from the expected Determiner Phrase structure. As seen earlier, a Mohawk verb can constitute a complete sentence on its own. Additional elaboration is possible with lexical arguments. But, as pointed out by Chafe (1987, 1994), speakers are careful not to introduce too many major new ideas at once. One strategy for conveying one new idea at a time is to begin with a predicate (perhaps with particles) followed by a demonstrative. The demonstrative serves as a place holder, signaling that further specification is to follow. In (27), as throughout, each intonation unit is presented on a separate line. The proximal demonstrative is *kí:ken* ‘this,’ often shortened to *kí:*.

- (27) Demonstrative as place holder
- |   |                           |                   |                    |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Wà:kehre’                                   | ki’                       | <u>kí:ken</u>     | um,                |
| I thought                                   | actually                  | this              |                    |
| ‘I thought <u>this</u> ,                    |                           |                   |                    |
|   |                           |                   |                    |
| teitonhontsóhon                             | ne–,                      |                   |                    |
| it is necessary                             | the                       |                   |                    |
| it would be good,                           |                           |                   |                    |
|   |                           |                   |                    |
| tsi   | nikarihò:ten’             | <u>kí’</u> ,      |                    |
| how   | so it matter is a kind of | in fact           |                    |
| the way things are                          |                           |                   |                    |
|   |                           |                   |                    |
| énska                                       | enkahwistà:’eke’          | enkherihónnien’   | ne: <u>kí:ken,</u> |
| one   | it will metal strike      | I will teach them | it is <u>this</u>  |
| I would teach them for one hour <u>this</u> |                           |                   |                    |
|   |                           |                   |                    |
| wa’onkwaio’tén:ta’ne’                       | ...                       |                   |                    |
| we worked                                   |                           |                   |                    |
| what we worked on ...’                      |                           |                   |                    |

The segmentation of ideas into phrases can be seen in the sound wave and pitch trace in Figure 1.3.

The Determiner Phrase, considered a fundamental element of syntactic structure in most current models of syntax, might appear to be a language universal on the basis of

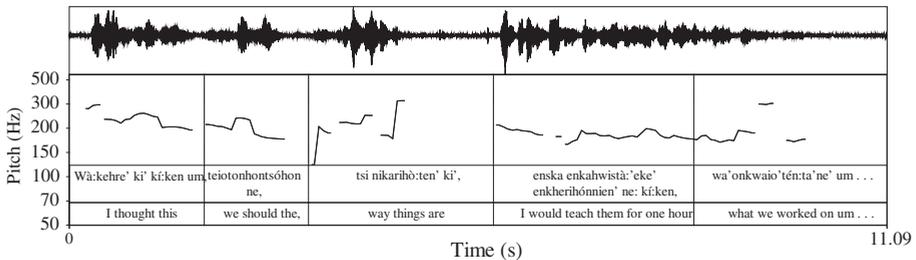


Figure 1.3 Demonstratives as place holders.

sentences constructed in isolation. It is well known, of course, that languages vary in the order of elements within their Determiner Phrases; in some languages, for example, determiners and other material precede the noun, as in English, while in others they follow, as in Japanese. Examination of spontaneous speech in context, however, indicates that there can be deeper differences involving the relationships between these constituents.

### 3.2 Core and oblique

Mohawk speakers differ not only in how they distribute information over words within clauses but also in how they distribute ideas over clauses within sentences and beyond. Such patterns and the reasons behind them are not always obvious from isolated sentences.

As mentioned, a basic notion in syntax is that the clause consists of a predicate, one or two (or three) core arguments, and any number of obliques (adjuncts). In English, obliques are usually marked with prepositions.

(28) Sally went to the park on Sunday with John by bicycle for some fun.

In some languages, obliques are marked with case endings. Mohawk has neither adpositions nor case endings. Core arguments are identified by a pronominal prefix in the verb, but the roles of lexical nominals are simply inferred. In (29), the location is identified by the word *Kahnawà:ke*. This is a placename, but there is nothing in the sentence to indicate its syntactic role. The same form would be used if the speaker were saying 'Kahnawà:ke is a beautiful place' or 'We were discussing Kahnawà:ke.'

(29) Tetsá:ron ki' ne' thí: rónstha' ne Kahnawà:ke.  
 tetsiaron ki' ne'e thiken ron-at-st-ha' ne ka-hnaw=a'ke  
 both actually it is that M.PL.AGT-MID-use-HAB the N-rapids=place  
 'They use both of those in Kahnawà:ke.'

But this language differs in a subtle way from canonical expectations. Mohawk clauses are not stacked with arguments. Ideas expressed in obliques in other languages are often expressed in other ways in this language. One is with noun incorporation, like the boat and the island in (30). Their semantic roles are often inferred from the verb, such as 'encircle.'

(30) Wa'akwathonwà:reke' . . .  
 wa'-akw-at-honw-a-hrek-e'  
 FACT-1EXCL.PL.AGT-MID-boat-LK-push-PFV  
 we boat pushed  
 'We got into the boat. . . .  
 Sok wa'kiakwatehwehnohkwatá:se'.  
 sok wa'-t-iakw-ate-hwehn-ohkw-a-tase-'  
 then FACT-DV-1EXCL.PL.AGT-MID-island-be.in.water-NMZR-LK-encircle-PFV  
 then we island encircled  
 Then we went around the island.'

In (31) the instrument ‘elbow’ is incorporated into the applicative verb ‘hit-with.’

- (31) Wa'tekheiathióhsaienhte'.  
 wa'-te-khei-at-hiohs-a-ien-ht-'  
 FACT-DV-1SG/F.SG-elbow-LK-hit-INST-PFV  
 I elbow hit her with  
 'I hit her with my elbow' = 'I elbowed her.'

But often the additional referent is introduced in a separate clause, like the location ‘baskets’ in (32) and the companion ‘my grandmother’ in (33).

- (32) É:só'                    ki:                    ohwistanó:rón',  
 much                    this                    precious metal  
 'A lot of gold

thonwaná:wi's.  
 it was given to them variously.  
 was handed to them.

A'therakónhson                    í:wa.  
 various basket interiors    it is in them  
 It was in baskets.'

'A lot of gold was handed to them in baskets.'

- (33) Ó:nen                    akhsótha                    entieráthen',  
 Then                    my grandmother    she will climb up here  
 'Then my grandmother would come upstairs.'

Thò:ne                    ó:nen,  
 then                    now  
 At that time

tsik                    eniatia:rente'.  
 tsi=k                    en-iaki-ahrent-'  
 so=only    FUT-1INCL.DU.AGT-sleep.together-PFV  
 so                    we two will sleep together  
 we would sleep together.'

'Then my grandmother would come upstairs and I would sleep with her.'

On their own, these examples do not appear unusual. But monoclausal alternatives like ‘Gold was handed to them in baskets’ are rare in spontaneous discourse. When

asked directly for a translation of the English 'She fried her eggs with butter,' a Mohawk speaker provided the bi-clausal construction in (34).

- (34) Elicited instrument  
 Owistóhsera' wà:tiehste'  
 butter she used  
 'She used butter
- tsi wa'e'nhonhsakeri:ta'we'.  
 as she egg fried  
 as she fried the eggs.'
- 'She fried her eggs with butter.'

In (35) the time was introduced in one sentence and the language in another.

- (35) Énska enkahwistà:'eke' kwah nekne tentewahthá:ren'.  
 one it will metal strike just and you all and I will talk  
 'We'll just talk for an hour.
- Kanien'kéha' tentewahthá:ren'  
 Mohawk you all and I will talk  
 We'll talk Mohawk.'

Rather than presenting the idea 'The learned people call it "polysynthetic"' in a single sentence, the speaker packaged it in two sentences, three intonation units:

- (36) Né: ki' konwá:iats'.  
 that actually one calls it  
 'That's its name.
- Né: ki' ratina'tónhkhwa',  
 that actually they call it by name  
 That's what they call it,
- ne ronathiatonhsheaweíénhston.  
 the they know how to write  
 the learned people.'

As can be seen in the pitch trace (Figure 1.4), each sentence begins with a pitch reset.

Most current syntactic theories are founded on a notion of the basic clause consisting of a predicate, one or two core arguments, and any number of obliques or adjuncts. While logically straightforward, this formulation fails to capture the way speakers of Mohawk and many other languages actually package information as they speak. Without observation of longer stretches of discourse, we could easily miss the ways languages differ in their sentence organization, and the opportunity to explore the kinds of cognitive factors that might underlie such organization.



- (40)
- |                                 |     |                 |                      |
|---------------------------------|-----|-----------------|----------------------|
|                                 |     | O               | V                    |
| Akwé:kon                        | ne  | ísten'néha      | enkhenatahren'sè:ra' |
| all                             | the | my mother place | I will go visit her  |
| 'Even when I go visit my mother |     |                 |                      |
- 
- |   |               |                   |              |
|---|---------------|-------------------|--------------|
|   |               | O                 | V            |
| í:  | wakahkwíshron | onkwehnéha'       | a:katá:ti'.  |
| I   | I am trying   | real person style | I would talk |
| I'm the one that's trying to speak Mohawk.' |               |                   |              |

Such patterns are called *scrambling* in some models of syntax. This term could suggest that the variation is random, but, when the discourse context is taken into account, principles emerge. Mohawk constituent order is not governed by syntactic function as in English: there is no basic word order. Instead, major constituents are ordered according to their newsworthiness at that point in the discourse. Constituents are ordered in descending order of importance. Significant new information appears early, followed by progressively more predictable and incidental information.

The SV sentence 'Wariá:nen helped me' in (37) occurred after 'I thought I should teach the material we worked on.' The nod to the assistant, who was present, was deemed more newsworthy (and polite) than the fact that there was help. The VS sentence 'But that's how the language is, isn't it' followed a discussion about whether borrowed words should be included in language classes. The main point was not the language, the ongoing topic of discussion, but the fact that that is how people speak.

Clauses with object-like arguments show the same pattern. The VO sentence 'Did you get to know old man B?' immediately followed the remark 'He was handsome, just like Whatsisname, B.' In OV clauses, the O generally introduces significant information. The sentence 'Even when I go visit my mother, I'm the one that's trying to speak Mohawk,' there are two object-like arguments, the mother and Mohawk. This continued the observation that people tend to veer into English.

Ordering variation is not restricted to core arguments. In (41), *kari:wes* 'a long time' occurred early, but in (42) the same word occurred late.

- (41) Sahtentió:né' ken?  
'Have you been away?
- kari:wes                      tkonkéhne.  
it is matter long      since I saw you  
It's been a long time since I've seen you.'
- (42) Skáthne    ionkeniió'tehkwe'    kari:wes.  
together    we two worked      it is matter long  
'We worked together for a long time.'

The point of (41) was more the length of time than the seeing. (42) occurred just after the speaker had introduced a visitor. It provided supplementary information about the person as a co-worker. Of course speakers have choices concerning what they consider the most newsworthy elements of their messages, and they do not necessarily all make the same choices.

Order has been routinized in one kind of construction: complement constructions. Normally the matrix clause occurs first, followed by the complement.

- (43) Teiotohontsóhon  
it is necessary  
'We have to

[ne kwah tekèn:'en ia:kaién:take'                    [tsi ni: tsi ionkwáhthare']]  
the quite certainly it should be complete as so as we speak  
really be complete the way we speak.'

This routinized matrix–complement order follows an oft-cited processing motivation. In many languages, heavy complements routinely follow the matrix, no matter what the basic constituent order otherwise.

As can be seen throughout this section, our view of basic syntactic structure, the structure of the simple clause and its constituents, Determiner Phrases, would be superficial and narrow at best without an awareness of the choices speakers make through discourse.

## 4 Beyond the Nuclear Clause

Another set of Mohawk constructions that would be easy to miss indicate marked information structure. Some examples were seen in the discussion of pronominal forms.

One is the topicalization construction, where the speaker shifts to a new but accessible discourse topic. It is usually characterized by a left-detached topic phrase, followed by the nuclear clause with a pitch reset. The two may or may not be slightly separated prosodically or otherwise. At one point the group was discussing kinship terms. One speaker gave the words for in-laws that he used, then noted that his father's side of the family used *Tiári!* to address a sister-in-law.

- (44) Rake'níha                    ses                    aa,  
he is father to me    formerly    HES  
'My father and his family ah,

wahonì:ron',  
they said  
they used to say

'Tiári!'  
'Sister-in-Law!'

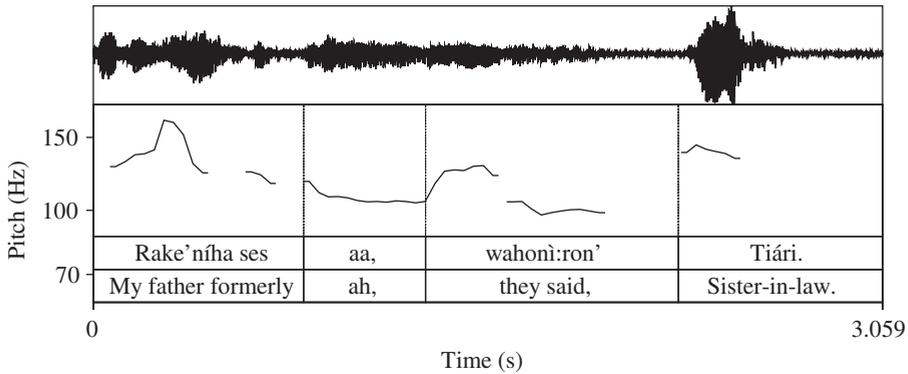


Figure 1.5 Topic shift.

Here the new topic, 'My father,' was separated from the nuclear clause by a hesitation marker (see Figure 1.5).

Another construction indicating marked information structure is a focus construction, whereby a constituent conveying particularly important information occurs before the nuclear clause. (45) contains a topic shift to *rakhtsi:'a* 'my older brother' and a focus construction with *ráonha* 'he.'

(45) A: 'You have to be determined if you want to speak pure Mohawk.  
It's too easy. You don't even realize you're talking English again.'

B: *Rakhtsi:'a*                      tho              ní:iøht  
he is older sibling to me    there              so it is  
'My older brother's like that.

'When we get together and talk, he starts speaking English to me.  
And,

*ráonha*                      *rakhtsi:'a*                      í:ken    wáhi.  
he                      he is older sibling to me    it is    TAG  
he's my older brother you know.'

Topic and focus constructions are similar in some ways. In both, an element appears before the nuclear clause. In rapid or unemotional speech they may be prosodically similar. But, in a prototypical topicalization construction, the new topic occurs in its own intonation unit, ending with a fall in pitch. There may be some separation before the following nuclear clause, which begins with a pitch reset. In a prototypical focus construction, the focused element is pronounced with extra-high pitch, but there is then a continuous fall until the end of the sentence. (In Figure 1.6, the apparent high pitch on *rakhtsi:'a* is caused by the affricate and special tone inherent in the word rather than the construction.) An important aspect of intonation is its scalable nature: pitch may be raised or lowered to varying degrees, elements may be separated to varying degrees,

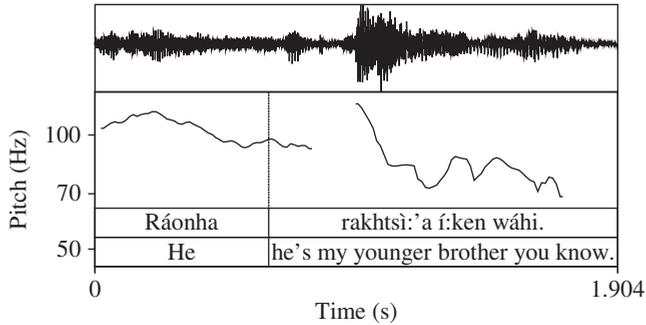


Figure 1.6 Focus construction.

and tempo may vary in the same way. Segmental markers, on the other hand, are either present or absent. Significantly, the topicalization and focus constructions have different functions in connected speech. While the first shifts the topic of discussion to another accessible referent, the second highlights some element of the message.

There is a third construction that signals special information structure. This is the antitopic construction, used to confirm the identity of a continuing topic. The antitopic nominal follows the nuclear clause, like 'we fluent ones' in (46). It often occurs when several referents are in play, to mark the conclusion of a discussion, or to emphasize a point.

(46) A: 'We're not conscious of it (the complexity of the language) when we're writing. When we're writing, that's when we realize how smart we are.'

B: 'And that's why I strive to write our language correctly.'

Iáh tekari:wes            iáh kén: taonsetewè:seke',  
not it is matter long    not here will we still be walking around

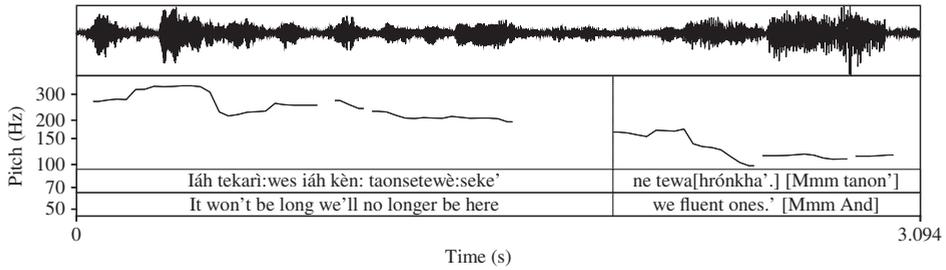
ne tewahrónkha'.  
the we talk the lg

'Before long we'll no longer be here, we fluent ones.'

The antitopic is typically pronounced with lower, flatter pitch, and sometimes creaky voice. (The waveform in Figure 1.7 is slightly complicated by the overlap with another speaker.)

## 5 The Complex Sentence

Speakers also have choices in information-packaging at higher levels of structures. Here we consider just one set of alternatives: the expression of simultaneity.



**Figure 1.7** The antitopic construction.

Speakers may package simultaneous events in two separate sentences. In (47), speaker B could have said, 'Once when I came here you didn't have a gathering.' But he used two grammatically and prosodically separate sentences.

(47) A: 'Have you been away? It's been a long time since I've seen you.'

B: 'Yes, I did go away . . . .'

Wa''kkwátho' énska.

I came here one

'I did come here once.

Iáh ki' tesewatia'tarohròn:ne'.

not in fact did you all come to get together

You didn't have a gathering.'

He apparently chose to make an independent statement that he had come, in response to the earlier remark by A.

Two events can be expressed in separate sentences, giving each the force of a statement, but the events can be related temporally by various adverbial particles, as in (48).

(48) Tóka' entewawennokeríkhon.

maybe we'll shorten our words.

'Maybe we'll shorten our words.

Sok ronónha' ò:ni' enshatiwennokeríkhon.

then M.PL too they'll shorten their words again

Then they'll shorten their words too.'

Time can be indicated in a dependent clause. The group had been discussing the grammatical complexity of the Mohawk language.

- (49) Iah ki' tetewattó:kas, [nó:nen iah teionkwahiatonhátie'].  
 not actually do we notice the when not are we writing along  
 'We're not conscious of it [when we're not writing].'

Separate sentences would have conveyed a different meaning: 'We're not conscious of it. We're not writing.'

Mohawk offers an additional, morphological option for expressing simultaneity. A verbal prefix *sh-* can indicate similarity or coincidence. Coincident clauses are generally used for background situations. The speaker below had been telling the group that she and her friend had been working together on the language for many years. She then turned to her friend.

- (50) Ken' na'tétena's [shontetiáhsawen ki: wa'onkeniió'ten'] wáhe'.  
 small so we two were sized when we two began this we two worked TAG  
 'We were just so high [when we started working on this], right?'

Oié:ri sha'teionkeniiohseriia:kon.  
 ten when we two winters had crossed  
 We were ten years old.'

The fact that the two had been working was already well established.

The development of the *ó:nen* 'when' construction in (49) can still be traced. The particle *ó:nen* originated as a temporal adverbial 'at the time, then, now,' a meaning that persists in Mohawk and related languages. Frequent juxtaposition of sentences ultimately resulted in the construction in (49): 'He saw her. At the time, she was planting.' > 'He saw her when she was planting.' Now the temporal clause may precede or follow the matrix.

## 6 Coherence

Particles are pervasive in Mohawk speech, but many do not occur in isolated sentences. Yet they can play crucial roles in structuring discourse. Mohawk contains a rich inventory of them, which skilled speakers use in powerful but sometimes subtle ways. Only a sample are described here.

One is *né:*, often translated as 'that.' It does not appear in the textbook examples cited at the outset, and it is in fact conspicuously absent from isolated sentences. Yet it is pervasive in connected speech. Its use can be seen in (51), originally all in Mohawk.

- (51) A: Polysynthetic  
 B: Né: ki' konwá:iats.  
 that in fact they call it  
 'That's its name.'

Né: ki' ratina'tónhkhwa'  
 that in fact they call it by name  
That's what they call it,

ne ronathiatonhsheawaiénhston.  
 the learned people.'

A: 'Darn but we're pitiful, aren't we, using these kinds of words.'

B: Né: ki' ratina'tónhkhwa' ne tsi  
 that in fact they call it by name the how

ní:ioht tsi ioi'ó'te' ( ... )  
 so it is how it works

'That's what it's called, the way it works, (the way our words are connected).

Sometimes it's a short word with just a few connections.  
 And sometimes there's a huge lot of connections.

Né: ki' aorì:wa' tho ní:ó:re' tsi  
 that in fact its reason there so it is far how

kanontsisti:io's ne kanien'kehá:ka.  
 it is head hard variously the flint place people

That's why the Mohawks are so smart.'

*Né:* is a discourse anaphor: it refers to a person, an object, or a whole idea mentioned previously in the discourse. The first three occurrences of *né:* in (51) refer to the term *polysynthetic*, and the fourth and fifth to the fact that the Mohawk language is so complex morphologically. The demonstrative *né:* permits speakers to manage the flow of information through time. An idea can be developed in one sentence or longer discussion, then integrated into a new sentence with just a word. Without extensive samples of speech in context, this small but powerful particle might never be encountered. Its antecedent is usually not in the same sentence and often not even in the same turn.

This discourse demonstrative *né:* is the likely etymological source of the unstressed article *ne* 'the aforementioned,' reflecting a common pathway of development cross-linguistically. In modern Mohawk, the article now shows reduction in phonological independence and substance. It is normally pronounced in the same phrase as the nominal it modifies (except before a word search), it is unstressed, and it is often contracted before a vowel-initial word: *n=otsi:tsa'* 'the aforementioned flower.'

Another particle that relates sections of discourse has developed from the demonstrative *thó*, literally 'there.' It, too, permits speakers to construct an idea over a stretch of discourse then carry reference to it into a new sentence. People were discussing the

range of meanings of the verb *-atshori* 'slurp.' In (52) the particle *thó* referred to the use of the verb only for soup.

(52) 'The way I know it it's just soup.'

Thó ki' ní:ioht tsi wakhronkhà:'on.  
 there in.fact so it is how I have become fluent  
 'That's how I learned it.'

(52) shows another pervasive but nearly inaudible particle, *ki'*. It is used to indicate that the current statement is pertinent to the preceding discourse. A rough translation might be 'in fact,' 'actually,' or 'well.' The particle was seen earlier in 'This morning we did a lot of work.'

## 7 Interaction

Coherence is also key to successful interaction. The particle *ki'* just mentioned is pervasive in conversation. It indicates that the speaker's utterance is pertinent to the previous discussion, often a comment by another participant. One man was about to trip over an electrical cord. Speaker A's use of *ki'* in the last line marks this as a response to his question.

(53) A: Se'nikòn:rarak  
 'Watch out!'

B: Nahò:ten enke'nikòn:rarak'.  
 'What should I be careful of?'

A: Wats' ki' tho enhsia'tièn:ta'ne'.  
 wait there you will bodily come to lie  
 'You might fall down.'

The same particle was seen earlier in (20) in the exchange "'I'm not making fun of you," "Well you're looking at me while you're saying that," "Well you're the one that's standing close by."

Another pervasive particle in conversation is the tag *wáhi'/wáhe'*. Like English tags, it is basically a request for confirmation, but it also serves a much broader range of interactive functions. It can indicate less than complete certainty. It can also be an effective tool for bringing listeners into the conversation and establishing common ground.

(54) Tho ní:ioht ne owén:na' wáhe'.  
 there so it is such the language TAG  
 'That's how the language is, isn't it.'

It is pervasive in co-constructed narrative.

- (55) Ken' na'tétena's shontetiáhsawen ki: wa'onkeniió'ten' wáhe'.  
 small so we two were sized as we two began this we two worked TAG  
 'We were just so high when we started working on this, weren't we.'

It is used in polite suggestions for joint action.

- (56) Aetewahiatónnion ka' nón: teiotonhonsóhon wáhi'?  
 you all and I should write where it is necessary TAG  
 'We should write where it fits, OK?'

It is also used to emphasize the importance of a point, essentially requesting commitment from the listener. An example was seen earlier in (45).

- (57) 'My older brother's like that.  
 When we get together and talk, he starts speaking English to me.  
 And,

ráonha rakhtsi:'a í:ken wáhi'.  
 he he is older sibling to me it is TAG  
 he's my older brother!'

If we hope to understand the essence of language and languages, we cannot ignore the most usual use of language: interaction. And of course tracing grammatical structure through interaction entails looking at substantial stretches of interactive discourse.

## 8 Conclusion

Over a long period, mainstream theories of grammar viewed language as a set of hierarchical structures whose components should be studied as autonomous systems. As technological advances have facilitated the collection and analysis of substantial bodies of connected, interactive speech, complete with the sound that carries it, it has become ever clearer that none of these components can be understood fully in isolation. Elements of each, from the smallest to the largest, play important roles in shaping discourse; discourse in turn plays crucial roles in shaping structures of each. This chapter has provided a glimpse of how much of the essence of a language could be missed if the description of it were based on isolated sentences alone. The implications for our understanding of language in general are substantial. A language is much more than a set of structural parameters. It is the entirety of how speakers choose to express themselves, to package their ideas into words, sentences, and discourse to meet their communicative and social needs.

## NOTES

- 1 Transcription is in the standard community orthography. Most symbols represent sounds close to their IPA values. The letter <i> <i> is a glide [j] before vowels and a vowel [i] elsewhere. Digraphs <en> and <on> represent nasal vowels [ɛ̃] and [ɔ̃]; apostrophe <'> glottal stop [ʔ]; the colon <: > vowel length; an acute accent <ó > high or rising tone; and a grave accent what is termed falling tone <ò >, actually characterized by a steep extra-high rise followed by a plunge to below the baseline pitch.
- 2 Thanks to the following speakers who participated in the conversation: Warisó:se Myrtle Bush, Aronhiíostha' Reynold Deer, Kaia'titáhkhe' Annette Jacobs, Konwatién:se' Carolee Jacobs, Tekaronhió:ken Frank Jacobs, Chera Warisó:se Lahache, Akwiratékha' Martin, Margie Meloche, and Billy Kaientarónkwen Two Rivers. I am especially grateful to Kaia'titáhkhe' Jacobs for sharing her expertise during transcription and translation.
- 3 The following abbreviations are used: 1 first person, 2 second person, AGT grammatical agent, AL alienable possession, CISLOC cislocative, DIM diminutive, DISTR distributive, DV duplicative, EXCL exclusive, F feminine, FACT factual, FUT future, HAB habitual aspect, INAL inalienable possession, INCH inchoative, INCL inclusive, INST instrumental applicative, M masculine, MID middle, N neuter, NMZR nominalizer, NS noun suffix, OPT optative, P grammatical patient, PFV perfective aspect, PL plural, PROG progressive, PRT partitive, REP repetitive, SG singular, ST stative ASPECT, TRLOC translocative.

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# 2 Intertextuality in Discourse

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ADAM HODGES

## 0 Introduction

A key element of social life is the interconnectivity of discourse across different contexts of situation. Social actors do not formulate utterances in a vacuum; nor do individual “speech events” (Hymes 1974) take place in isolation from one another. Rather, as Mannheim and Tedlock (1995) describe, “any and all present discourse is already replete with echoes, allusions, paraphrases, and outright quotations of prior discourse” (7). In short, discourse produced in one context inevitably connects to discourse produced in other contexts. As social actors interact, they imbibe their discourse with voices indicative of their social world, draw upon established genres to frame their discourse, engage with words that have come before them, and orient to anticipated responses. At issue in this chapter are the ways that intertextuality factors into the analysis of discourse. The chapter begins with a review of the philosophical foundations and terminology associated with the concept of intertextuality, and then proceeds to examine various aspects of intertextual discourse analysis.

## 1 Philosophical and Definitional Foundations

Central to the concept of *intertextuality* is the notion of *text*. In common usage, a *text* conjures up the image of a book or written document (e.g., novel, poem, letter) – that is, linguistic content bound together as a coherent whole that can be detached from a particular setting and moved about. The privileged position given to language – specifically, written language – is evident in this view. Yet, a text can more broadly be defined as “any coherent complex of signs” (Bakhtin 1986: 103; see also Hanks 1989: 95) so that

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*The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Second Edition.

Edited by Deborah Tannen, Heidi E. Hamilton, and Deborah Schiffrin.

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the concept can be extended into the domains of film, visual art, and music to talk about any creative work (e.g., movie, painting, musical score) that can be “read” for meaning. For the purpose of discourse analysis – whether focus is placed squarely on language in use (spoken or written) or broadened to include “all forms of meaningful semiotic human activity” (Blommaert 2005: 3) – a text can be thought of as an “objectified unit of discourse” (Gal 2006: 178) that can be lifted from its originating context (*decontextualized*) and inserted into a new setting where it is *recontextualized* (Bauman and Briggs 1990). In this way, fragments of discourse from one setting seemingly take on a life of their own as they are turned into texts (*entextualized*) and enter into social “circulation.”

The concept of intertextuality is grounded in the ideas of the Russian philosopher and literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, who worked in the early part of the twentieth century (along with several contemporaries collectively known as the Bakhtin Circle) and recognized that language use is “filled with *dialogic overtones*” (Bakhtin 1986: 92; italics in original). By *dialogic*, Bakhtin does not merely mean instances of discourse that are externally structured as dialogue. Rather, he wishes to emphasize the “internal dialogism of the word” that permeates all forms of speech, including forms externally structured as monologues (Bakhtin 1986: 279). Even traditional monologues – as well as the “inner speech” within one’s mind (Jakobson 1953: 15) – are located in a world filled with prior utterances and are therefore implicated in an implicit dialogue with that pre-populated world of discourse. In other words, as Bakhtin (1981) writes, “in real life people talk most of all about what others talk about – they transmit, recall, weigh and pass judgment on other people’s words, opinions, assertions, information” (338). As a result, we continually “assimilate, rework, and re-accentuate” what has come before us (Bakhtin 1986: 89) and anticipate what may come ahead of us in “subsequent links in the chain of speech communion” (Bakhtin 1986: 94).

From the Bakhtinian perspective, language use is fundamentally a social phenomenon as “our speech, that is, all our utterances (including creative works), is filled with others’ words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of ‘our-own-ness,’ varying degrees of awareness and detachment” (Bakhtin 1986: 89). This perspective differs fundamentally from the approach espoused by linguists working first in the tradition established by Ferdinand de Saussure and later within the Chomskyian paradigm, where the source of language is taken to be the individual speaker rather than the social context in which the speaker lives, operates, and interacts (Mannheim and Tedlock 1995: 1). In the Bakhtinian perspective, “*The organizing center of any utterance, of any experience, is not within but outside – in the social milieu surrounding the individual being*” (Voloshinov 1973: 93; italics in original). Although the common notion of linguistic creativity forwarded by linguists involves an individual’s ability to generate an infinite number of utterances out of a finite number of words, in practice those infinite possibilities are socially constrained and limited. From a Bakhtinian perspective, creativity exists in the myriad ways prior utterances, voices, and types of discourse are appropriated and reanimated.

Perhaps due to the dominance of Saussurean and then Chomskyian linguistics throughout most of the twentieth century, as well as the health problems and political repression faced by Bakhtin throughout much of his career, his ideas had limited reach until the late 1960s. Literary theorist Julia Kristeva is credited with introducing his ideas to French audiences (Kristeva 1967, 1968, 1969, 1974), and English translations of many of his writings were published in the 1980s (Bakhtin 1981, 1986)

along with English translations of Kristeva's writings (Kristeva 1980, 1984, 1986). The term *intertextuality* is therefore first associated with Kristeva (1980), as she coined the term to describe the Bakhtinian idea that "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (66). The imagery of weaving is intentional here since, as Barthes (1977) points out, "etymologically, the text is a tissue, a woven fabric" (159). In this way, any text is woven out of previous pieces of discourse that are merely stitched together into a new patchwork of coherence. As Kristeva (1980) describes, a text is "a permutation of texts, an intertextuality" (36).

The ideas of the Bakhtin Circle have been a natural fit among sociocultural linguists interested in the social embeddedness of language use, and the concept of intertextuality has been broadly applied among scholars interested in the analysis of discourse. Given discourse analysts' broad focus on discourse practice and not merely the products of that practice (i.e., texts), the term *interdiscursivity* has arisen sometimes in lieu of and sometimes in addition to the term *intertextuality*. Thus, it is important to outline how these terms have been presented in the literature.

Kristeva (1980) distinguishes between two axes of intertextuality – horizontal and vertical – which capture the "three dimensions or coordinates of dialogue ... writing subject, addressee, and exterior texts" (66). For Kristeva (1980), the horizontal axis involves a subject–addressee relationship so that in written texts "the word in the text belongs to both writing subject and addressee" (66). These are the types of dialogical connections discussed by Bakhtin as "links in the chain of speech communion" (1986: 94) and elaborated in his discussion of dialogism (92–4) and addressivity (94–100). The notion of *horizontal intertextuality*, as picked up by discourse analysts (e.g., Fairclough 1992: 103; Johnstone 2008: 164), can be seen operating when one speaker responds to remarks made by another speaker, building upon those prior remarks to formulate a new conversational turn (cf. Du Bois 2014 on *dialogic syntax*). In this way, horizontal intertextuality involves sequential (or syntagmatic) relationships between texts (Johnstone 2008: 164). Of course, horizontal intertextuality is not limited to a dialogue that takes place in a single setting. Speech chains may form across contexts of situation where, for example, a speech delivered by a candidate at a campaign rally responds to criticisms waged by the opposing candidate in a televised campaign ad. The prior words may be quoted directly, paraphrased, or implicitly alluded to in the candidate's response. These are examples of repetition in discourse that Tannen (2006) terms "recycling," where previous statements or conversational topics are carried forward across distinct interactional moments. Where other texts are explicitly present, Fairclough (1992: 104) uses the term of French discourse analysts Authier-Révuz (1982) and Maingueneau (1987) to refer to this as *manifest intertextuality*. The texts (i.e., objectified units of discourse) may be "manifestly" marked by features such as quotation marks (in written discourse) or quotatives (in spoken discourse) – or otherwise made manifestly apparent as instantiations of prior discourse. Applying the familiar linguistic distinction between token and type, Silverstein (2005: 9) refers to the repetition of discourse fragments across encounters as "'token-source'd" intertextuality, where a token of speech (i.e., text) from a previous setting is placed into a new setting. In one way or another, these different terms deal with the horizontal relationships between discursive encounters where texts are produced and reanimated.

For Kristeva (1980: 66), the vertical axis (text–context) deals with the orientation of a written text to the broader literary and cultural context in which it is embedded. *Vertical intertextuality* has been taken up by discourse analysts to refer to the way a text relates (paradigmatically) to others as one member of a larger category of texts (Johnstone 2008: 164). Silverstein’s (2005) notion of “‘type-source’d” intertextuality further captures this idea. Here, social actors draw upon “an internalized notion of a type or genre of discursive event” to connect the language used across different discursive settings (9). Other discourse conventions (registers, voices, styles, or plots associated with traditional characters and genres) can be (re)configured to constitute new texts. Thus, Authier-Révuz (1982) and Maingueneau (1987) use the term *constitutive intertextuality* for the confluence of discourse conventions that contribute to text production. Fairclough (1992: 104) introduces this term but prefers instead to specifically refer to this type of intertextuality as *interdiscursivity* while reserving the term *intertextuality* as a broad label for all the phenomena discussed thus far. Yet it is important to keep in mind that other scholars, including American linguistic anthropologists, often use *interdiscursivity* as a general term that focuses on discursive practice while “reserving *intertextuality* for matters having to do with texts” (Bauman 2005: 146). Regardless of the terms used, there are clearly a variety of directions that intertextual discourse analysis can take. The following sections sample some of the main themes.

## 2 (Re)Contextualization, Genre, and the Intertextual Gap

To talk about the way prior text enters into new settings through *recontextualization* presupposes an unmarked process of *contextualization*. In line with the Bakhtinian perspective on language, sociocultural linguists have approached contextualization as “an active process of negotiation” that creates meaning (Bauman and Briggs 1990: 69; cf. Voloshinov 1973: 102; see also Duranti and Goodwin 1992). For example, in his work on contextualization cues, Gumperz (1977, 1982, *inter alia*) illuminates the process by which cues such as prosody, lexical choice, choice between phonological variants, and even choice between languages (i.e., code-switching) leads participants to interpretive frameworks that allow them to actively construct meaning. As Gumperz (1996) points out, “It is clear from the existing literature on discourse that, to enter into an encounter, participants always need some advance extra-textual knowledge about what is expected to be accomplished and how it is to be conveyed” (397). As often is the case, such “extra-textual knowledge” comes in the form of intertextual links to prior text types or tokens. In Gumperz’s (1996) own explication, contextualization cues indexically invoke “the memories of what Bakhtin has called previously heard texts, suggesting likely interpretations” (382). As Becker (1995) explains, “When we speak or write, we take those imperfectly remembered prior texts and reshape them into new contexts” (15). Meaning in language is therefore not the product of a single, isolated speech event; “meaning in language results from a complex of relationships linking” current with past (or future) discourse (Tannen 2007: 9).

A primary means by which (re)contextualization is achieved is through intertextual links to recognized “kinds” of texts and talk, or genres. As Bakhtin (1986) notes, language patterns into “types of utterances” or “speech genres,” which he describes

as “relatively stable thematic, compositional, and stylistic types of utterances” (64). Setting aside stylistic elements, which are more typically associated with the concept of *register* (Agha 2003, 2004), *genres* can be defined in general terms as “recurrent forms” or “recurrent actions” (Johnstone 2008: 181). For example, oral narratives are typically formed by combining an abstract, an orientation, a complicating action, an evaluation, a result of resolution, and a coda (Labov 1972; Labov and Waletzky 1967). A news report recognizably consists of several subcomponents, including headline, lead, satellites, and wrap-up (Fairclough 1995). Common literary genres, such as the romance novel, crime story, or murder mystery, are also prime examples. Examples of recurrent actions, or “activity types” (Levinson 1979), include an “informal chat, buying goods in a shop, a job interview, a television documentary, a poem, or a scientific article” (Fairclough 1992: 126), all of which are associated with a set of conventions that guide the activity. The activities typically involve established “participant roles” (Goffman 1981). The genre of the cowboy western, for example, has the roles of good guys (white hats) and bad guys (black hats) along with certain characteristics that the individuals in these roles are expected to fulfill (e.g., the hero stands for justice). In sum, genres provide “orienting frameworks, interpretive procedures, and sets of expectations” (Hanks 1987: 670; see also Bauman 2004: 5) that function to “frame” (Goffman 1974) discourse, providing conventionalized expectations for how those encounters should unfold and be interpreted. A soliloquy within a staged theatrical production is contextualized differently from a political speech broadcast on prime-time television, in large part due to the “genre knowledge” (Berkenkotter and Huckin 1995) associated with these culturally recognized discourse types.

As Bakhtin (1986) discusses, genres are only “relatively” stable patterns. They are locally formed and situated, are particular to a given culture at a given historical moment, and reflect “all the changes taking place in social life” (Bakhtin 1986: 65). Genres may mix, hybridize, and form new ones. Genres “are thus open to innovation, manipulation, and change” (Briggs and Bauman 1992: 143; see also Hanks 1987: 671, 677). Fairclough (1992, 1995) illustrates this point through his discussion of what he terms the “conversationalization” of news programs, where formal, public forms of address have mixed with more private, conversational ones. Fairclough (1992) claims that this is “part of the major restructuring of the boundaries between the public and private domains” (204). Another example of a hybridized genre is the “mockumentary,” which uses the form of a documentary with fictitious, comedic content.

The intertextual relationship between a particular text (or instance of talk) and an associated genre necessarily entails what Briggs and Bauman (1992) call an “intertextual gap.” A gap arises because the linking of particular utterances to generic (or prior text) models can never produce an exact fit by virtue of the fact that even prototypical and faithful re-creations always introduce some variation on the theme. However, the gap can be suppressed to minimize the difference, or it can be foregrounded to maximize the difference. For example, in ritualized intertextuality, such as in rehearsals of religious texts, the gap between the current recitation and the model is minimized in an effort to sustain textual (and hence religious) authority. The use of Latin in Catholic mass or the use of language from the King James Bible in a Protestant sermon harken back to “original” authoritative sources and reproduce traditionalizing modes of discourse. On the other hand, the gap can be maximized in an effort to introduce claims of “individual creativity and innovation” (Briggs and Bauman 1992: 149; see also Bauman

2004: 7). For example, a modern performance of a Shakespeare play may foreground the gap by setting the play in 1960s America with all that is associated with that era, including clothing and slang words to replace the traditional garb and linguistic features of Shakespeare's time. Thus, the notion of the intertextual gap underscores the fact that "diachronic repetition" (Tannen 2007) or "taking old language ... and pushing ... it into new contexts" (Becker 1995: 185) inevitably reshapes meanings.

In discussing the reanimation of prior discourse, Bakhtin (1981) introduces the notion of *double-voiced discourse*. "It serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking, and the refracted intention of the author" (Bakhtin 1981: 324). Prior meanings may be reshaped imperceptibly and subtly or radically. Another voice can be sympathetically represented through double-voiced discourse that is "unidirectional," or critiqued through double-voiced discourse that is "varidirectional" (Morson and Emerson 1990: 149ff). Perhaps the most obvious examples of varidirectional discourse are forms of parody that introduce "a signification opposed to that of the other's word" (Kristeva 1980: 73; see also Bakhtin 1981: 340).

Parodied recontextualizations effectively maximize the intertextual gap between prior text, a typified voice or generic model, and the recontextualized performance. Parody can be a powerful form of resistance to hegemonic structures by working to subvert traditionally established meanings. When comedian Tina Fey played vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin on the comedy show *Saturday Night Live* during the 2008 presidential election season, the skits certainly did not help Governor Palin's claims to authority. Instead, the parodies – in which Fey often reanimated verbatim utterances attributed to Palin in speeches and media interviews – seemed to undercut her seriousness as a candidate. Another example of parody for political effect comes from the pun used by Rev. Joseph Lowery while speaking in February 2006 at the Coretta Scott King funeral (Hodges 2011: 107–10). In the speech, with President George W. Bush and the past living presidents sitting behind him on the stage, Lowery reshaped the phrase "weapons of mass destruction" (associated with Bush in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003) into the phrase "weapons of misdirection" as an indictment against the Bush administration's policy. "The broader social meaning associated with the phrase ['weapons of mass destruction'] draws upon the already established meaning it has been given in Bush's prior speeches, but now that meaning is creatively reworked in the context of Lowery's speech" (Hodges 2011: 109). Parodic recontextualizations therefore create the potential for powerful transformations of prior text.

Varidirectional discourse in the form of intertextual "play" can also be seen in the artistic creativity of improv comedy. As Trester (2012) shows, improv performers consciously attune themselves to past discourse, looking "for opportunities to hang on to texts, and by noticing them, render them extractable (entextualizing them), moving them from the original interactional context in which they were used (decontextualizing them), and looking for an opportunity to use them again (to recontextualize them)" (Trester 2012: 238). Through this process of entextualization, performers are able to "play off" previous discourse in a manner that parodies, extends, or otherwise heightens the prior text for comedic effect. Particularly skilled instances of intertextual play are recognized as enjoyable by both performers and the audience. Neither, of course, may look upon the process from the analytic perspective of discourse analysts who, like Trester (2012), break down the analysis using an intertextual framework. Nevertheless,

for audience members the effect is spontaneous, enjoyable humor, and for performers the effect is satisfaction of a performance well played.

Recontextualizations are often much more subtle, however. Drawing from Goffman (1974), Tannen (2006) discusses the way recycled topics in everyday interaction are “reframed” and “rekeyed.” In particular, she shows how family members reshape their discourse over the course of a week as they attempt to negotiate ongoing conflicts by changing the meaning of the recurring texts (reframing) and the tone or tenor of the interactions (rekeying). For example, an initial proposal to make popcorn is reframed as an argument over who usually burns the popcorn, and later the serious tone is rekeyed as humorous when fault is admitted and the couple settles their differences. This everyday “intertextuality in action” (Tovares 2005) underscores the way the reshaping of prior texts effectively shapes social relations.

As Becker (1994) observes, “Social groups seem to be bound primarily by a shared repertoire of prior texts” (165; see also Becker 1995). Social actors draw from this shared repertoire to establish common ground, forge relationships, and create alignments of solidarity with one another. Gordon (2006, 2009) illustrates the way prior texts are reshaped in family interaction to create interactional alignments and situational identities among family members. For example, in Gordon (2006), words uttered by a mother to her child in one setting are recycled in a subsequent context to perform different interactional alignments. In the originating context, the mother – who is trying to talk on the phone while the child throws a tantrum in the background – warns her child of a time-out if the screaming doesn’t stop. Two days later, the same words feature in a pretend-play reenactment. This time, the mother and child swap roles as the child in role of “Mommy” recycles the warning of a time-out to the misbehaving “child.” Gordon (2006) notes that the repetition of this prior text “could be seen as having a ‘binding’ effect between interlocutors, tying them together and building rapport by referencing a particular shared experience” (568).

Another source of shared prior texts comes from the mass media. In her examination of intertextuality in everyday family interaction, Tovares (2006, 2007) demonstrates how prior texts from a television show become resources in private conversations. As family and friends draw upon these prior texts, they evaluate and interpret the words and actions associated with the television show, which allows them to display beliefs, voice values, and affirm friendships. Tovares (2006) argues that the talk, which “produces and blurs the boundaries between the public and private,” ensures that those boundaries remain constantly shifting (487–8). In addition, it is evident that the shared prior texts act as important resources for the construction of meaningful relationships.

Also examining the role of media discourse in everyday interaction, Spitulnik (1997) emphasizes the way intertextual links are central to the formation of a wider community. Specifically, Spitulnik (1997) demonstrates the way language originating in radio broadcasts makes its way into ordinary interactions among members of Zambian society to contribute to the sense of a national community. One example she details involves discourse emanating from Radio 2, an English-language station that operates primarily from a studio in the capital city of Lusaka. The station hands over operations to another studio in the town of Kitwe each weekday for several hours. When the broadcaster in the Lusaka studio gets ready to pass over control to the studio in Kitwe – a task frequently complicated by technical difficulties – he or she attempts to make

contact by saying, “Kitwe, are you there?,” “Kitwe, can you hear me?,” or “Hello, Kitwe?” Of interest to Spitulnik is the way pieces of discourse such as these may be recycled in other contexts. She illustrates this by describing an interaction that took place between two women in a crowded store in Lusaka, where one woman was trying to get the attention of her friend in a different aisle. After being unable to connect with her friend through loud whispers, the woman shouted, “Hello, Kitwe?” Not only did the friend hear her but also so did other customers “who were clearly amused by this clever allusion to the bungled ZNBC [Radio 2] communication link” (Spitulnik 1997: 168). Instances such as these draw from common reference points in widespread social circulation and help generate an “*experience of belonging and mutuality*” that leads to “*an idea of belonging to a collectivity,*” claims Spitulnik (1997: 163–4; italics in original).

Notably, intertextual links do not merely reach backward through the recontextualization of prior text in new settings; they also reach forward in anticipation of expected discourse. Oddo (2013, 2014) uses the term *precontextualization* for the process of previewing and evaluating a future rhetorical event. For example, Oddo examines the way journalists on NBC television provided a favorable framework for interpreting Secretary of State Colin Powell’s address to the United Nations in 2003. Powell addressed the international body to make the case for war against Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, and, in the days leading up to the actual speech, news outlets discussed the anticipated speech event and provided a supportive context for receiving Powell’s argument when it finally came. The result, Oddo claims, was that circumstantial evidence was accepted as solid proof by much of the public.

Thus, the “politics of recontextualization” (Hodges 2008) ultimately involves controlling how texts – prior or future – are interpretively shaped. Wilce (2005) points out that speakers often exercise what he calls “strategies of entextualization” in an attempt to control how their words are taken up by others in future contexts. In one case discussed by Wilce (2005), a Bangladeshi woman, Latifa, engaged in two weeks of lamenting while visiting the home of her uncle and cousins. In her laments, she complained of the treatment she had been receiving from her brothers. The lament positioned voices in support of her situation, and, importantly, used a recognized genre for legitimizing her problems in the eyes of community members. However, as Wilce (2005) explains, these strategies failed as her laments were recontextualized by witnessing family members not as *bilāp*, the traditionally recognized lament genre, but as *ai purān kāndā*, which translates as “that same old crying.” In other words, her relatives recontextualized her laments as inconsequential personal complaints. Obviously, social actors want to avoid negative recontextualizations of their words. However, while strategies of entextualization may aid social actors in positioning their words, they have no guarantee over the control of their discourse once it enters into social circulation.

### 3 Reported Speech and Constructed Dialogue

Words attributed to another speaker frequently find their way into subsequent contexts as reported speech. The Bakhtinian perspective is well represented on this topic

through Voloshinov's (1973) discussion in which he characterizes reported speech as "speech within speech, utterance within utterance, and at the same time also *speech about speech, utterance about utterance*" (115; italics in original). The emphasis provided in Voloshinov's comments underscores the capacity for reported speech to be recontextualized with "varying degrees of reinterpretation" (Bakhtin 1986: 91). Voloshinov (1973) writes that the reporting of speech "imposes upon the reported utterance its own accents, which collide and interfere with the accents in the reported utterance" (154). In this way, rather than a clean separation between the reported (prior) speech and the reporting (subsequent) context, Voloshinov (1973) emphasizes that the two exist in a "dynamic interrelationship" (Voloshinov 1973: 119). This dynamic interrelationship exists for both direct speech (quotations) and indirect speech (paraphrases).

Nevertheless, English speakers often operate as if reported speech can be lifted from a prior context and dropped into a subsequent context unchanged. Underlying this view is the language ideology of referentialism (Silverstein 1976), which holds that language use is primarily about conveying information. As a result, words are often viewed as containers of meaning, as Reddy (1979) points out in his critique of the "conduit metaphor." This metaphor treats meaning as something that is encapsulated or "packaged" in words and "sent" from one interlocutor to another. Once the meaning has been sent by the speaker, the hearer then supposedly opens the package to retrieve the meaning as though it has passed unchanged from one end of a conduit to the other. The role of (re)contextualization in the construction of meaning is erased. Furthermore, the notion of context is reified, preserving "the premise that meaning essentially springs from context-free propositional content, which is then modified or clarified by the 'context'" (Bauman and Briggs 1990: 68). This model of meaning commits, as Voloshinov (1973) describes, "the fundamental error of virtually divorcing the reported speech from the reporting context" (119).

As Hill (2008) notes, "Referentialist ideology makes the question of whether or not statements are 'true' into a very salient issue" (39). Indeed, issues of "truth" often factor into disagreements over quotations of previously uttered words, and a prime site where issues of truth are at stake is the courtroom. In his examination of reported speech in the courtroom setting, Matoesian (2000) shows how reported speech can be taken as a transparent conveyor of truth, providing "an aura of objectivity, authority, and persuasiveness to the current moment of speech" (882). In large part, this is due to the boundary created between the reported and reporting voices in directly reported speech. Rather than being positioned as the reporter's perspective, the quoted speech is indexically anchored to the prior context and represents the point of view of the quoted speaker (Lucy 1993: 19). The role played by the reporter in contextualizing the utterance is backgrounded as the reported speech is often presented as if the "words speak for themselves." In fact, as Andrus (2011) discusses in her examination of the excited-utterance exception to hearsay in American courts, reported speech in such cases is typically presented as self-evident. As Matoesian (2000) illustrates, however, even iconic replications of prior speech events (as with tape-recorded speech) "never just speak for themselves – never interpret their significance, their meaning" (888). Rather, the reporter plays an active role in contextualizing the prior speech. In the courtroom, the attorney holds considerable power to instruct the jury on the significance of, for example, previously given testimony that is quoted or replayed during the trial (see also Bucholtz 2000; Goodwin 1994; Ehrlich 2007). Thus, as Bakhtin (1981) notes, "Given

the appropriate methods for framing, one may bring about fundamental changes even in another's utterance accurately quoted" (340).

In everyday interaction, the framing of reported speech begins with the subtle linguistic cues used to introduce another's words. Verbs of saying (*verbum dicendi*) or "quotation framing verbs" (Bauman 1986: 66; Silverstein 1976: 50) frame the reporter's stance toward the reported speech, which may vary from a more "neutral" position indicated through verbs (e.g., "said," "told," "commented upon") to more pointed framings of the quoted speech (e.g., "divulged," "blabbed," "yelled"). Nominal attributions that accompany the verb of saying – whether pronouns, proper names, or other nominal forms (e.g., "the teacher," "his sister") – work to construct the situationally relevant identity of the speaker. Adnominals linked to these expressions may further this process (e.g., "the well-respected teacher," "his younger sister"), and allow the reporter to convey positive or negative views of the speaker (e.g., "the decorated general" vs. "the disgraced general"). The reported speech frame may also include more elaborate metacommentary to characterize the reported speech in a certain light (e.g., "the lawyer said with honesty and conviction"). The effect is to filter the reported speech through the interpretive lens of the reporter. As Sclafani (2008) shows in her examination of news articles about the 1996 Oakland School Board decision on Ebonics, framing reported speech is an ideological process that introduces presuppositions, selectively capitalizes or suppresses certain voices, and variously internalizes or externalizes reported perspectives into the writer's (or speaker's) own voice.

As Irvine (1996) summarizes, "To animate another's voice gives one a marvelous opportunity to comment on it subtly – to shift its wording, exaggeratedly mimic its style, or supplement its expressive features" (149). Günther (1999), for example, examines the way prosody (i.e., loudness, duration, pitch, and pause) and voice quality (e.g., whispery, breathy, falsetto, aspirated voice) provide means by which speakers embed evaluations in reported speech. Not only are such linguistic devices used to create boundaries between different animated voices but they are also used to impute affective qualities on those voices. For example, in one instance Günther (1999) shows how the use of high pitch, increased volume, and vowel lengthening contrives a hysterical character that is frantic about a broken-down cable car (689–90). The animation of this person through reported speech signals her affective stance – at least as it is perceived, evaluated, and reported in the reporting context by the reporter. In a somewhat similar examination of conversations among friends, Holt (2000) shows how the friends build upon assessments that are implicitly embedded in reported speech as they work toward common understandings. This underscores how the recontextualization of prior words is a joint, active process achieved by all those involved in the reporting context.

Whereas the term *reported speech* presupposes historical accuracy, Tannen (2007) exposes the flaw of this presupposition. She notes that instances of direct quotation are not "clearcut" and are "primarily the creation of the speaker rather than the party quoted" (103). For this reason, Tannen (2007) prefers the term "constructed dialogue" for talking about reported speech. As is often the case, instances of constructed dialogue that imply the conveyance of historically uttered words frequently involve "hoped for speech" (Cohen 1996, cited in Buttny 1997: 486) or "typifying speech" (Parmentier 1993: 280; see also Irvine 1996). They act not as verbatim descriptions but as "demonstrations" that selectively depict their referents (Clark and Gerrig 1990). Constructed dialogue is therefore often employed to typify a voice (Agha 2005b) or to typify the

sentiment attributed to a person. Framing such typifications as reported speech works to construct an air of credibility and legitimacy around the reporter's representation of an issue. As a result, reporters are better able to provide evidence and make critical assessments of past events.

Álvarez-Cáccamo (1996) illustrates the way constructed dialogue can be used to create a believable representation of another's prior words even where there is a lack of continuity between the language used in the reported versus reporting contexts. Through what he terms "code-displacement," the language attributed to a prior speaker in the reported context (e.g., Galician) may differ from the language that was actually used in that context (e.g., Spanish). Despite the lack of continuity between the code used by the prior speaker and the code used by the reporter to represent that speaker, the representations are nevertheless positioned as faithful quotations through expectations of verisimilitude. In fact, the renditions may appear more believable when the code is displaced due to strong language ideologies that associate certain language varieties with particular types of speaker (e.g., Galician with rural, regional speakers). In this way, the typified speech may be more believable than even the most faithfully rendered prior discourse. Shoaps (1999) provides another example of typified dialogue as used by the conservative radio show host Rush Limbaugh. Instead of explicitly stating his point of view on the show, Limbaugh often conveys it by enacting various voices. As he animates those voices, he uses similar devices to those pointed out by Günther (1999) to embed evaluations and impute his own perspective on political events. Shoaps (1999) argues that this strategy of "transposition" allows Limbaugh to present his view of events as self-evident appeals to "commonsense." Thus, as Briggs (1992) suggests, "reported speech does not simply draw on experiences and events – it creates them" (345). Constructed dialogue, in effect, constructs more than dialogue; it persuasively constructs understandings.

Reported speech can also play a role in constructing identities and relationships. For example, reported speech figures centrally in Haviland's (2005) examination of the narratives told by his Tzotzil informant, Mol Maryan. In the stories told by Mol Maryan, Haviland (2005) argues that "it may be the narratives of *others* that most insistently create the textual self, as other voices, incorporated into an ongoing autobiographical story, become the central organizing features of the resulting composite text" (82). Mol Maryan's identity, therefore, constitutes itself by refracting and reanimating the words of others. Hamilton (1998) illustrates a similar function of reported speech in her study of an online discussion group on the topic of bone-marrow transplantation. Many of the list members have undergone bone-marrow transplantations themselves and contribute to the group to help others facing the same situation. Hamilton (1998) shows how the use of reported speech – both direct and indirect – in contributors' messages works to position them as strong self-advocates and as survivors rather than as victims of a potentially life-threatening medical procedure. It also provides a means by which those new to the community are socialized into these identity roles, helping them to maintain a positive outlook as they glean more information on the difficult options for medical treatment.

Another interesting example of the identity-shaping function of reported speech can be seen in the controversy over the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial in Washington, DC. The memorial, which consists of a statue of King along with several quotes from his speeches, opened to the public in August 2011. Controversy erupted, however,

over the way words were rendered from a speech, entitled the “Drum Major Instinct,” delivered by King in February 1968. In the speech, King explained to his Atlanta congregation how he would like to be remembered at his funeral, stating: “Yes, if you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice. Say that I was a drum major for peace. I was a drum major for righteousness. And all of the other shallow things will not matter.” However, due to design changes and space constraints on the statue, a shortened version was chiseled into the stone, reading “I was a drum major for justice, peace and righteousness.” An article in the *Washington Post* (Manteuffel 2011) highlighted the distinction and Maya Angelou, a consultant on the project, noted that the wording made King sound “arrogant” (Weingarten and Ruane 2011). Others, including the executive architect for the project, defended the wording as a legitimate paraphrase that still captured the gist of the sentiment conveyed by King and what he stood for – justice, peace, righteousness. Linguistically speaking, the shortened wording remains a better example of direct speech (quotation) than indirect speech (paraphrase) since it retains King at the deictic center of the utterance through the pronoun “I” – providing support for Angelou’s reading. Yet the larger point to make concerns Voloshinov’s (1973) emphasis on the dynamic interrelationship between the reported and reporting contexts. Even the most faithful wording of King’s prior speech introduces an intertextual gap. By virtue of the process of recontextualization, King’s words are necessarily transformed and reinterpreted as they are placed on the face of the monument. Especially as the spoken words are entextualized using a standard literary transcription practice, much of the nuance and rhythm of the original delivery is lost. Thus, even a direct and accurate quotation opens up prior text to new meanings. As Bakhtin (1981) writes, “The following must be kept in mind: that the speech of another, once enclosed in a context, is – no matter how accurately transmitted – always subject to certain semantic changes” (340). Incidentally, after first announcing in early 2012 that the inscription on the King Memorial would be changed, federal officials decided in late 2012 to resolve the issue by removing the inscription altogether (Ruane 2012).

#### 4 Intertextuality, Discourse, and Power

As seen in the discussion of intertextuality thus far, connections across contexts of situation create understandings, establish relations, construct identities, and generally “yield social formations” (Agha 2005a: 4). Yet, as Briggs and Bauman (1992) suggest, “questions of ideology, political economy, and power must be addressed as well if we are to grasp the nature of intertextual relations” (158). One avenue of exploration in this regard concerns the propagation of truth claims and narratives that form the basis for what are typically defined as “ideologies” – that is, systems of thoughts and ideas that represent the world from a particular perspective and provide a framework for organizing meaning, guiding actions, and legitimating positions.

The work of French poststructuralist philosopher Michel Foucault is helpful in pursuing this avenue since his notion of “discourse” merges concerns about ideology with language. For Foucault (1972), a “discourse” is similar to an ideology in that it provides a systematic way of thinking about a topic. To classify social subjects as “homosexual” or “heterosexual,” for example, requires a “discourse of sexuality” (Foucault

1978) that provides a set of assumptions, explanations, and expectations that make the terms meaningful. The discourse constitutes these objects of knowledge and governs the way the topic can be discussed. To step outside the discourse of sexuality would be to step outside the ideological system in which certain types of social subjects and forms of knowledge are made possible. A discourse, in the Foucauldian use of the term, therefore constrains what can be said about a topic and how the topic is reasoned about.

The Foucauldian notion of discourse complements the Bakhtinian perspective on language. Where Bakhtin recognizes that we live in a world pre-populated by previously uttered words, Foucault (1972) recognizes that “there can be no statement that in one way or another does not reactivate others” (98). What Foucault adds to discourse analysts’ concern with the use of language at micro-level sites of interaction is a broader concern with the macro-level forms of knowledge that appear in society during any given historical period. A focus on intertextuality is key to unraveling the way the micro feeds into the macro. “Ultimately, it is by the cumulative traces laid down across intersecting speech events that particular representations of an issue gain sufficient inertia to become reality. In other words, it is through a series of interconnected discourse encounters that isolated truth claims or representations turn into larger narratives and shared cultural understandings” (Hodges 2008: 500).

Phillips (1996), for example, examines the way key words and formulaic phrases were intertextually linked across speeches, interviews, and press reportage to propagate the discourse of Thatcherism in British society. As a discourse in the Foucauldian sense of the term, Thatcherist discourse forwarded a set of assumptions and explanations about the structuring of society, combining the classically liberal commitment to an unhindered free market with traditionally conservative commitments to law and order and a strong defense (Phillips 1996: 211). One of the key words studied by Phillips (1996) is “choice,” along with collocations such as “the freedom of choice” and “the right to choose.” Phillips (1996) claims that the “key word was used not only in ways which reproduced the discourse of Thatcherism but also in ways which transformed the discourse and in ways which resisted the discourse” (234). In this way, the natural history of a discourse is open to shifts and transformations as social actors discursively interact and carry prior text into new settings. Intertextuality in action, therefore, not only contributes to the propagation of hegemonic discourses but also holds the key to understanding processes of social change.

Central to the propagation of discourses is the notion of a “speech chain,” which Agha (2003) defines as “a historical series of speech events linked together by the permutation of individuals across speech-act roles” (247). In her discussion of language and political economy, Irvine (1989) introduces the concept of a special type of speech chain she terms a “chain of authentication,” which is involved in the valuation of material commodities. Irvine draws from Putnam’s (1975) example of how a precious metal, such as a piece of gold, relies “on a special subclass of speakers” to determine its authenticity (228). “The economic and symbolic value of gold for the wider community depends” on these “experts” to render the “usage of the term *gold* authoritative” (Irvine 1989: 257). More precisely, the process of authentication relies on more than a single authoritative pronouncement. It requires “a historical sequence by which the expert’s attestation – and the label (expression) that conventionally goes along with it – is relayed to other people” (Irvine 1989: 258). That is, it requires a series of intertextual connections to play out through a “chain of authentication” to effectively underwrite

the value of the commodity. While Irvine (1989) introduces the concept of a chain of authentication in relation to material commodities, it is equally applicable to verbal commodities: quotations, pieces of discourse, and narratives that enter into social circulation.

Chains of authentication are, for example, integral to the way truth claims were forwarded by the George W. Bush administration about putative links between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda or the supposed presence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq in 2003 (Hodges 2011). Pronouncements made by administration officials with substantial clout, such as Secretary of State Colin Powell, Vice President Dick Cheney, and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, can be compared to the valuations made by the “special subclass of speakers” in Putnam’s gold example (1975: 288). But such authoritative pronouncements in and of themselves would be insufficient to elevate the claims to the status of widely accepted truth. What is required is a chain of authentication – a historical sequence of reiterations of those claims in the “circular circulation” (Bourdieu 1996: 22) of the media and public discourse. Where sympathetic voices relay faithful reiterations of the truth claims, the narrative they support gains traction among the public as a valid explanation of the post-9/11 world. The result is what Foucault (1980) terms a “regime of truth,” a situation where knowledge is viewed and treated as the truth “even if in some absolute sense it has never been conclusively proven” to be true (Hall 1997: 49). Even as critical voices attempted to disrupt the chain of authentication, they drew from many of the sound bites and talking points associated with the administration’s position, and a “regime of truth” prevailed long enough to act as a sufficient justification for war.

As Dunmire (2009, 2011) elucidates in her “critical intertextual analysis” (Thibault 1991), part of the allure of the Bush administration’s “war on terror” (which entailed a link between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda) was the idea that “9/11 changed everything.” The events of 9/11 acted as a precipitating event for a new kind of doctrine – the Bush Doctrine – which rejected the “traditional military posture of defense and deterrence in favor of a policy of preventive intervention” (Dunmire 2009: 196). According to the Bush Doctrine, preventive war could be waged, as it was against Iraq, to eliminate a perceived threat even in the absence of hostilities against the United States. In her analysis, Dunmire examines the 2002 National Security Strategy of the United States along with policy documents outlining a neo-conservative approach to foreign policy stretching back to the early 1990s as the Cold War ended. The analysis aims to disrupt the “9/11 changed everything” narrative by illuminating the intertextual connections between the Bush administration’s national-security strategy and the previous articulations of that strategy in post-Cold War texts. Where the narrative underlying the Bush Doctrine creates a disjunction between that policy and those prior texts, Dunmire’s (2009) analysis illuminates “this disjunction by identifying the key thematic formations and transformations that underlie the Doctrine and connect it with its earlier versions” (217). As Dunmire (2009, 2011) points out, a key piece missing from the earlier documents was, as stated in the Project for the New American Century’s (2000) “Rebuilding America’s defenses: strategy, forces and resources for a new century,” “some catastrophic and catalyzing event – like a new Pearl Harbor” (51). And the events of 9/11 effectively “provided the exigency through which the Administration could simultaneously disjoin the Bush Doctrine from its prior articulations and implement the security goal of these earlier documents” (Dunmire 2009: 217). Thus, understanding subtle

erasures of the intertextual system that contributes to the production of politically powerful texts is just as important as understanding the role intertextual connections play in propagating such discourses.

## 5 Conclusion

The concept of intertextuality affords discourse analysts important insights into language and social interaction that the examination of isolated speech events does not. As Bauman (2005) summarizes, intertextuality “gives us a vantage point on social formations larger than those of the immediate interaction order, and it gives us ways of thinking of power and authority in discourse-based terms larger than those that are immediately and locally produced in the bounded speech event (interactional power)” (146). The survey of intertextuality provided in this chapter has attempted to touch on many of these issues and highlight the way intertextuality has factored into the work carried out by scholars interested in discourse. As should be evident from the discussion, there is no dearth of approaches or of potentially fruitful applications of the concept.

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# 3 Cohesion and Texture

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J. R. MARTIN

## 0 Beyond the Clause

In this chapter I will outline a modular perspective on text organization, which places cohesion analysis within a broader framework for analyzing discourse. Cohesion is one part of the study of texture, which considers the interaction of cohesion with other aspects of text organization. Texture, in turn, is one aspect of the study of coherence, which takes the social context of texture into consideration. The goal of discourse analysis in this Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) tradition is to build a model that places texts in their social contexts and looks comprehensively at the resources that both integrate and situate them.

*Cohesion* can be defined as the set of resources for constructing relations in discourse that transcend grammatical structure (Halliday 1994: 309). The term is generally associated with research inspired by Halliday (1964; see Halliday 2002) and Hasan (1968) in SFL and by Gleason (1968) in Hartford-based stratificational linguistics.<sup>1</sup> Halliday and Hasan (1976) is the canonical study in the former tradition, Gutwinski (1976) in the latter. Gutwinski in fact draws on early work by Halliday and by Hasan, and later SFL work by Martin (1992a, 2010, 2012c) was influenced by Gleason, so there has been a fruitful exchange of ideas across theories in this field. In Section 1 I will review the early work on cohesion analysis; then, in Section 2, I will consider the next generation of research in this area, from the perspective of Australian SFL (for a complementary line of development see Hoey 1983, 1991a; Jordan 1984; Winter 1982).

Cohesion is one aspect of the study of *texture*, which can be defined as the process whereby meaning is channeled into a digestible current of discourse “instead of spilling out formlessly in every possible direction” (Halliday 1994: 311). Alongside cohesion, this process involves the text forming resources of grammar and phonology<sup>2</sup> – for

example, Theme and New in English (Davies 1989, 1992; Halliday 1994; Martin and Doran 2015a). Cohesion will be reconsidered in relation to texture in Section 2.

Texture is one aspect of the study of *coherence*, which can be thought of as the process whereby a reading position is naturalized by texts for listeners and readers. Alongside texture, this process involves understandings and expectations about the social context a text dynamically construes. In SFL, social context is modeled through register and genre theory (Christie and Martin 1997; Halliday 1978; Halliday and Hasan 1985; Martin 2012a, 2012b; Martin and Doran 2015b; Martin and Rose 2008). Texture will be reconsidered in relation to social context in Section 3.

All three variables, cohesion, texture, and coherence, will be illustrated using examples from the children's story *Piggybook* by Anthony Browne (1989). Section 1 looks at traditional approaches to cohesion as non-structural resources for textual organization. Then in Section 2 a more semantic perspective on cohesion in relation to texture is presented. Subsequently, in Section 3, the social motivation of texture is considered.

## 1 Cohesion

Early work on cohesion was designed to move beyond the structural resources of grammar and consider discourse relations that transcend grammatical structure. Halliday (e.g., 1973: 141) modeled cohesion as involving non-structural relations above the sentence, within what he refers to as the "textual metafunction" (as opposed to ideational and interpersonal meaning). In Halliday and Hasan (1976) the inventory of cohesive resources was organized as:

- reference
- ellipsis
- substitution
- conjunction
- lexical cohesion.

Gutwinski (1976: 57) developed a closely related framework including these resources (and in addition grammatical parallelism).

*Reference* refers to resources for referring to a participant or circumstantial element whose identity is recoverable. In English the relevant resources include demonstratives, the definite article, pronouns, comparatives, and the phoric adverbs *here*, *there*, *now*, and *then*. *Ellipsis* refers to resources for omitting a clause, or some part of a clause or group, in contexts where the content can be assumed. In English conversation, rejoinders are often made dependent through omissions of this kind: *Did they win? – Yes, they did*. Some languages, including English, have in addition a set of place holders that can be used to signal the omission – for example, *so* and *not* for clauses, *do* for verbal groups, and *one* for nominal groups in English conversation. This resource of place holders is referred to as *substitution*.<sup>3</sup> Reference, ellipsis, and substitution involve small closed classes of items or gaps, and have accordingly been referred to as *grammatical cohesion* (e.g., Gutwinski 1976; Hasan 1968).

Also included as grammatical cohesion is the typically much larger inventory of connectors that link clauses in discourse, referred to as *conjunction*. For Halliday and Hasan

(1976), this resource comprises linkers that connect sentences to each other but excludes paratactic and hypotactic (coordinating and subordinating) linkers within sentences, which are considered structural by Halliday. Gutwinski, however, includes all connectors, whether or not they link clauses within or between sentences. This difference reflects in part a territorial dispute over how much work the grammar is expected to do in discourse analysis.

The complement of grammatical cohesion involves open system items and so is referred to as *lexical cohesion*. Here the repetition of lexical items, synonymy, or near synonymy (including hyponymy) and collocation are included. Collocation was Firth's term (e.g., 1957) for expectancy relations between lexical items (e.g., the mutual predictability of *strong* and *tea*, but not *powerful* and *tea*).

The relationship between a cohesive item and the item it presupposes in a text is referred to as a *cohesive tie*. Gutwinski (1976) contrasts the different kinds of cohesive tie that predominate in writing by Ernest Hemingway and Henry James, with Hemingway depending more on lexical cohesion than does James. Halliday and Hasan (1976) provide a detailed coding scheme for analyzing cohesive ties, which takes into account the distance between a cohesive item and the item presupposed. This framework prompted a number of researchers to ask questions about the relationship between cohesive ties and evaluations of text as coherent or not (Fine, Bartolucci, and Szatmari 1989; Rochester and Martin 1979), proficient or not (Hartnett 1986; Olsen and Johnson 1989; Yang 1989), maturing or not (Chapman 1983; Martin 1983a; Nelson and Levy 1987; Pappas 1987), context dependent or not (Hawkins 1977), and so on. In general, the interpretation of patterns of cohesive ties depended in each study on the register, as had been predicted by Halliday and Hasan (1976: 23):

The concept of cohesion can therefore be usefully supplemented by that of register, since the two together effectively define a text. A text is a passage of discourse which is coherent in these two regards: it is coherent with respect to the context of situation, and therefore consistent in register; and it is coherent with respect to itself, and therefore cohesive.

As reiterated by Halliday (1994: 339), for a text to be coherent "it must deploy the resources of cohesion in ways that are motivated by the register of which it is an instance."<sup>4</sup>

## 2 Discourse Semantics

As noted in Section 1, from the perspective of grammar, cohesion was positioned as a set of non-structural resources in the textual metafunction. Later work concentrated on the semantics of these cohesive resources and their relation to discourse structure. Martin (e.g., 1992a, 2010, 2014) worked on reformulating the notion of cohesive ties as discourse semantic structure, inspired by the text-oriented conception of semantics of the Hartford stratificationists (Gleason 1968; Gutwinski 1976) with whom he studied in Toronto. In his stratified account, cohesion was reformulated as a set of discourse

semantic systems at a more abstract level than lexicogrammar, with their own meta-functional organization. Halliday's (e.g. 1973) non-structural textual resources were thus reworked as semantic systems concerned with discourse structure, comprising:

- identification
- negotiation
- conjunction
- ideation.

*Identification* is concerned with resources for tracking participants in discourse. This system subsumes earlier work on referential cohesion in a framework that considers the ways in which participants are both introduced into a text and kept track of once introduced. In addition, the ways in which phoric items depend<sup>5</sup> on preceding or succeeding co-text, on assumed understandings, or on other relevant phenomena (images, activity, materiality, etc.) are considered. The questions addressed are similar to those pursued by Du Bois (1980) and Fox (1987).<sup>6</sup>

*Negotiation* is concerned with resources for exchanging information, goods, and services in dialogue. This system subsumes some of the earlier work on ellipsis and substitution in a framework that considers the ways in which interlocutors initiate and respond in adjacency pairs. Drawing on earlier work at Birmingham (e.g., Sinclair and Coulthard 1975) and Nottingham (e.g., Berry 1981), a framework for exchanges consisting of up to five moves was developed, alongside provision for tracking and challenging side-sequences (Ventola 1987). This work is closely related to studies in Conversation Analysis but with a stronger grammatical orientation (such as that canvassed in Ochs, Schegloff, and Thompson 1996). Eggins and Slade (1997) introduce ongoing SFL research in this area, in relation to wider questions of discourse structure and social context (Coulthard 1992 updates the Birmingham-based work).

*Conjunction* is concerned with resources for connecting messages, via addition, comparison, temporality, and causality. This system subsumes earlier work on linking between clauses in a framework that considers, in addition, the ways in which connections can be realized inside a clause through verbs, prepositions, and nouns (e.g., *result in*, *because of*, *reason*). Drawing on Gleason (1968), a framework for analyzing internal<sup>7</sup> (pragmatic/rhetorical) and external (semantic/propositional) conjunctive relations was proposed, including the possibility of connections being realized simply by the contiguity of messages (i.e., links unmarked by an explicit connector). This work is closely related to studies of relations between propositions in discourse by Longacre (e.g., 1976) and to rhetorical structure theory as developed by Mann, Matthiessen, and Thompson (e.g., 1992; see also Fox 1987).

*Ideation* is concerned with the semantics of lexical relations as they are deployed to construe<sup>8</sup> institutional activity. This system subsumes earlier work on lexical cohesion in a framework that considers the ways in which activity sequences and taxonomic relations (of classification and composition) organize the field of discourse (Benson and Greaves 1992). Drawing on Hasan (1985), a framework for a more detailed account of lexical relations was proposed – including repetition, synonymy, hyponymy, and meronymy; in addition, collocation was factored out into various kinds of “nuclear” relation, involving elaboration, extension, and enhancement (as developed by Halliday

1994 for the clause complex). This work is closely related to the detailed studies of lexical relations in discourse by Francis (1985), Hoey (e.g., 1991a), and Winter (1977) and to work on the development of an ideational semantics by Halliday and Matthiessen (1999).

The result of these reformulations is a semantic stratum of text-oriented resources dedicated to the analysis of cohesive relations as discourse structure. Once stratified with respect to lexicogrammar, these resources can be aligned with metafunctions in the following ways:

- identification and textual meaning
- negotiation and interpersonal meaning
- conjunction and logical<sup>9</sup> meaning
- ideation and experiential meaning.

In a stratified model of this kind the study of texture amounts to the study of patterns of interaction between discourse semantics, lexicogrammar, and phonology/graphology in realization. Martin and Rose (2007) and Martin and White (2005) introduce one further discourse semantic system, *appraisal*, which is concerned with attitudinal meaning; the interpersonal prosodies of evaluation afforded by appraisal resources are not usually considered as a dimension of cohesion analysis per se and so will be passed over here.

As far as this interaction is concerned, research has concentrated on discourse structure in relation to experiential grammar (cohesive harmony; Hasan 1984a, 1985) and in relation to textual grammar (method of development; Fries 1981). Some discussion of discourse in relation to information structure and intonation (point) and in relation to interpersonal grammar (modal responsibility) is presented in Martin (1992a; cf. Halliday and Martin 1993; Martin 1995). Basically Fries (1981) argues that, while patterns of Theme orient us to the topic of a text, reflecting a text's method of development, patterns of New elaborate on that topic, establishing a text's point (Martin 1992b).

Cohesive harmony and method of development will be briefly illustrated with respect to the orientation<sup>10</sup> stage of *Piggybook*. *Piggybook* is an illustrated children's book that tells the story of a mother who leaves her patriarchal husband and sons to fend for themselves for a few days rather than being served by her. The home soon degenerates into a pigsty, and images literally transform the males into pigs. Mum later returns, the males plead for her to stay, and the story ends with the father and boys returning to human form and taking on traditionally female responsibilities around the house while the mother fixes the car.

- (1) Mr Piggott lived with his two sons, Simon and Patrick, in a nice house with a nice garden, and a nice car in the nice garage. Inside the house was his wife.

"Hurry up with the breakfast, dear," he called every morning, before he went off to his very important job.

"Hurry up with the breakfast, Mum," Simon and Patrick called every morning, before they went off to their very important school.

After they left the house, Mrs Piggott washed all the breakfast things... made all the beds... vacuumed all the carpets... and then she went to work.

“Hurry up with the meal, Mum,” the boys called every evening, when they came home from their very important school.

“Hurry up with the meal, old girl,” Mr Piggott called every evening, when he came home from his very important job.

As soon as they had eaten, Mrs Piggott washed the dishes... washed the clothes... did the ironing... and then she cooked some more.

[One evening when the boys got home from school there was no one to greet them ...]

As far as identification is concerned, this orientation includes the following reference chains (in order of appearance):

Mr Piggott-his-his-he-he-his-they<sup>11</sup>-Mr Piggott-he-his-they ...  
 a nice house-the house-the nice garage<sup>12</sup>-the beds-the carpets ...  
 the breakfast-the breakfast-the breakfast things ...  
 his two sons-Simon/Patrick-Simon/Patrick-they-their-they-the boys-they-their-they ...  
 his wife-dear-Mum-Mrs Piggott-she-Mum-old girl-Mrs Piggott-she ...  
 the meal-the meal-the dishes-the clothes-the ironing ...

As far as ideation is concerned, the orientation in addition includes the following lexical strings (based on repetition, synonymy, [co]hyponymy, and [co]meronymy in this field of discourse):

Mr-sons-wife-dear-Mum-Mrs-Mum-boys-girl-Mr-Mrs ...  
 nice-nice-nice-nice ...  
 house-garden-car-garage-house-house-beds-carpets ...  
 every-every-all-all-all-every-every ...  
 morning-morning-evening-evening ...  
 important-important-important-important ...  
 hurry up with-hurry up with-hurry up with-hurry up with-cooked ...  
 breakfast-breakfast-breakfast-meal-meal ...  
 dishes-clothes-ironing ...  
 called-called-called-called ...  
 went off-went off-left-went-came home-came home ...  
 job-school-work-school-job ...  
 washed-made-vacuumed ...

In cohesive harmony analysis we are asking how strings and chains interact as far as experiential grammar is concerned (Hasan 1984a, 1985). For example, at group rank the “nice” string and the “house” string are related through nominal group structure as Epithet to Thing: *nice house, nice garden, nice car, nice garage*. Similarly, at clause rank, the “calling” string is related to the “time of day” string as Process to Circumstance: *called every morning, called every morning, called every evening, called every evening*. Hasan defines interaction as taking place when two or more members of a string or chain relate in the same way to two or more members of another string or chain. Space does

**Table 3.1** Mrs. Piggott's activities (in sequence).

<i>Agent (Actor)</i>	<i>Process (Range)</i>	<i>Medium (Goal)</i>	<i>Circumstance</i>
[Mrs. Piggott] <sup>13</sup>	hurry up with <sup>14</sup>	the breakfast	
[Mrs. Piggott]	hurry up with	the breakfast	
Mrs. Piggott	washed	all the breakfast things	
[Mrs. Piggott]	made	all the beds	
[Mrs. Piggott]	vacuumed	all the carpets	
she	went		to work
[Mrs. Piggott]	hurry up with	the meal	
[Mrs. Piggott]	hurry up with	the meal	
Mrs. Piggott	washed	the dishes	
[Mrs. Piggott]	washed	the clothes	
[Mrs. Piggott]	did the ironing		
she	cooked		some more

not permit an exhaustive analysis of cohesive harmony in text (1) here. However, since this is a feminist narrative, let's look briefly at cohesive harmony in relation to gender.

To simplify things, we'll look at what the family does. Mrs. Piggott's activity is outlined in Table 3.1.<sup>15</sup> To make this analysis work effectively it is important to lexically render the text – that is, to make explicit all of the ellipsis and substitution so that points of interaction are not missed. From this display we can see that Mrs. Piggott's identity chain interacts with two activity strings (cooking and cleaning), which in turn interact with domestic strings ("chores"). By definition, her identity chain does not *interact* with moving or work, since it relates to this activity (i.e., going to work) only once. In both Table 3.1 and Table 3.2 the columns are organized by clause rank experiential functions (Participant, Process, and Circumstance roles<sup>16</sup>) following Halliday (1994). The "Agent" and "Actor" column contains items related anaphorically as identity chains (for family members); the "Process (Range)," "Medium as Goal," and "Circumstance"

**Table 3.2** Mr. Piggott and the boys' activities (regrouped).

<i>Agent (Actor)</i>	<i>Process (Range)</i>	<i>Medium (Goal)</i>	<i>Circumstance</i>
he [Mr. P]	called		every morning
Simon and Patrick	called		every morning
the boys	called		every evening
Mr. Piggott	called		every evening
he [Mr. P]	went off		to his ... job
they [S and P]	went off		to their ... school
they [Mr. P, S, and P]	left		the house
they [Mr. P, S, and P]	came (home) <sup>17</sup>		from ... school
he [Mr. P]	came (home)		from ... job
they [Mr. P, S, and P]	had eaten		

columns contain items that are mainly related ideationally as lexical strings (for domestic activities).

The boys on the other hand interact with verbal instructions every morning and evening, and with motion to and from work and school. The only thing they don't interact with at this stage of the story is eating.

From this kind of analysis we can begin to access the construal of power relations in the story. At this stage only Mrs. Piggott is agentive, and she affects only things inside the home. The boys on the other hand are not agentive; they don't transform or create anything inside the home but simply shout, come and go, and eat. The next phase of the narrative begins with Mrs. Piggott leaving home, forcing the boys to try and act (unsuccessfully) on domestic goods; after a period of male suffering she returns (as noted above), the boys become successfully agentive inside the home, and Mrs. Piggott acts agentively outside (fixing the car).

For Hasan, the purpose of cohesive harmony analysis is to provide a measure of the coherence of a text. She defines *peripheral tokens* as meanings in the text that do not participate in identity chains or lexical strings, *relevant tokens* as meanings that do so participate, and *central tokens* as relevant tokens that interact (as illustrated above). She then suggests that:

- The lower the proportion of peripheral to relevant tokens, the more coherent a text is likely to be.
- The higher the proportion of central tokens to non-central ones (i.e., of interacting with non-interacting relevant tokens), the more coherent a text is likely to be.

She also raises the issue of breaks in the overall pattern of interaction in a text, such as that which occurs in *Piggybook* when Mrs. Piggott leaves home – obviously her identity chain does not interact much until she returns. Breaks of this kind may of course simply reflect the genre of a text as it moves from one stage to the next. As long as they are generically motivated, such breaks will not be felt to be disruptive. However, it is likely that generically unmotivated breaks in string-chain interaction will affect coherence. Hasan's technology for measuring coherence has been taken up by a number of scholars; see especially Hedberg and Fink (1996) and Pappas (1985) on children's stories, Parsons (1990, 1991) on scientific texts, and Yang (1989; cf. Hoey 1991b and Martin 1992a) on nuclear relations for closely related approaches to cohesion and coherence.<sup>18</sup> To the extent that scholars hold that readers' feeling about the coherence of a text is something that needs to be quantified, cohesive harmony is an effective, though labor-intensive, tool.

Note that cohesive harmony analysis is incomplete in various respects as an analysis of texture. For one thing it does not draw on conjunction analysis, so that temporal organization in text (1) is elided. But the point of the orientation is to establish a habitual sequence of activity, through a series of messages that are either explicitly or implicitly related to each other with respect to temporal progression (explicit connections underlined; implicit connection in square brackets):

"Hurry up with the breakfast, dear," he called every morning,  
before he went off to his very important job.

[before/after/while?<sup>19</sup>]

"Hurry up with the breakfast, Mum," Simon and Patrick called every morning, before they went off to their very important school.

[later]

After they left the house,  
Mrs Piggott washed all the breakfast things ...

[then] made all the beds ...

[then] vacuumed all the carpets ...

and then she went to work.

[later]

"Hurry up with the meal, Mum," the boys called every evening, when they came home from their very important school.

[before/after/while?]

"Hurry up with the meal, old girl," Mr Piggott called every evening, when he came home from his very important job.

[later]

As soon as they had eaten,  
Mrs Piggott washed the dishes ...

[then] washed the clothes ...

[then] did the ironing ...

and then she cooked some more.

Nor does cohesive harmony analysis consider negotiation,<sup>20</sup> which is relevant to the projected demands to hurry up in text (1) and the implied compliance by Mum. Nor are method of development, point, or modal responsibility (see Martin 1992a, chapter 6, for discussion) considered. So, while it has been proven a remarkably sensitive technique for measuring coherence, cohesive harmony analysis is not in itself a complete analysis of coherence since in performing such analysis so many relevant parameters of texture can be set aside.

Turning to the analysis of method of development, analysts are concerned with the interaction of identification and ideation with information flow in clause grammar, in particular Halliday's concept of Theme (which in English is realized via sequence, in clause initial position). The canonical study is Fries (1981), who introduced the term (for surveys of recent work inspired by his seminal paper see Ghadessy 1995; Hasan and Fries 1995; cf. Martin and Rose 2007 on periodicity). Following Halliday (1994), *Piggybook* opens with an unmarked Theme, *Mr Piggott*; the next Theme is a marked one – a circumstantial item setting the story "inside the house."

Mr Piggott lived with his two sons, Simon and Patrick, in a nice house with a nice garden, and a nice car in the nice garage. Inside the house was his wife.

As far as participants are concerned, this opening establishes the story's perspective on its field, which is overwhelmingly masculine. Mr. Piggott is selected as Theme in 21 messages and his sons in 18; Mrs. Piggott on the other hand is Theme in just eight messages. This moral tale in other words is aimed at men.<sup>21</sup>

Subsequently, the Orientation unfolds in parallel waves (see Hymes 1995). The method of development is as follows:<sup>22</sup>

“Hurry up with the breakfast, dear,”  
     he called every morning,  
         before he went off to his very important job.

“Hurry up with the breakfast, Mum,”  
     Simon and Patrick called every morning,  
         before they went off to their very important school.

After they left the house,  
     Mrs Piggott washed all the breakfast things ...  
     [ ] made all the beds ...  
     [ ] vacuumed all the carpets ...  
         and then she went to work.

“Hurry up with the meal, Mum,”  
     the boys called every evening,  
         when they came home from their very important school.

“Hurry up with the meal, old girl,”  
     Mr Piggott called every evening,  
         when he came home from his very important job.

As soon as they had eaten,  
     Mrs Piggott washed the dishes ...  
     [ ] washed the clothes ...  
     [ ] did the ironing ...  
         and then she cooked some more.

Read globally, we have a cycle of morning activity followed by one of evening activity. Both cycles consists of three further cycles, two by the boys and one by Mum. Within the boys’ cycles, Theme selection takes us from the quoted command (*Hurry up with*) to the commander (*he, Simon and Patrick, the boys, Mr Piggott*), which is temporally related to movers (*before he, before they, when they, when he*). For Mum’s cycles, Theme selection takes us through a temporal transition (*after they, as soon as they*) to Mum working (*Mrs Piggott* – three times, twice ellipsed), extended temporally to Mum working some more (*and then she*). Overall, then, the method of development in this part of the text takes us twice from the command of the boys to Mum. The angle on the field this pattern constructs is that of domestic activity, verbally instigated by boys and undertaken by Mum. Theme selections thus construe a method of development that foregrounds the division of labor in the home, which the story works to deconstruct.

We’ll have to cut off our close reading of this text here. The main point we are focusing on at this stage is the sense in which cohesion is simply one aspect of texture, which has to be understood with respect to the interaction of identification, negotiation, conjunction, and ideation with each other and with the lexico-grammatical and phonological systems through which they are realized. Space also precludes a discussion of grammatical metaphor (Halliday 1994, 1998; Halliday and Martin 1993;

Simon-Vandenberg, Taverniers, and Ravelli 2003), which is a critical resource for catalyzing this interaction. Put simply, grammatical metaphor is a resource for grammatically reconstruing meanings as alternative wordings. Note, for example, the movement from a verbal to a more nominal construal of phenomena in the following series (Halliday and Martin 1993: 56):

(the question of how) glass cracks, (the stress needed to) crack glass, (the mechanism by which) glass cracks, as a crack grows, the crack has advanced, will make slow cracks grow, speed up the rate at which cracks grow, the rate of crack growth, we can increase the crack growth rate 1,000 times. (Michalske and Bunker 1987)

What starts out as a process ends up as a participant, through an accumulating process of nominalization. Examples such as these underscore the power of grammar to construe and reconstrue participants in discourse (alongside realizing them) and show the importance of adopting dynamic perspectives on texture that complement the synoptic accounts fossilized in tables, diagrams, counting, statistical analysis, and the like (Martin 1985).

Can we have texture without cohesion? Yes, providing our examples are short enough and carefully selected enough (cf. the two-sentence constructed example and excerpts presented as evidence in Brown and Yule 1983: 196). But, in naturally occurring texts of more than a couple of clauses, some manifestation of cohesion is overwhelmingly the norm, even in discourse felt by listeners to be incoherent (cf. Rochester and Martin 1979 on thought-disordered schizophrenia).

### 3 Modeling Social Context: Register and Genre

To this point we have considered cohesive resources in relation to other aspects of text organization, and the contribution such texture makes to our sense that a text hangs together – its coherence. Can we have coherence without texture? Yes again, providing our examples are short and carefully excerpted – and providing we can access the social context of such examples. This brings us to the question of modeling social context in a functional theory that looks at what cohesion is realizing alongside the ways in which it is realized. In SFL, social context is modeled through register and genre theory. Following Halliday (e.g., 1978), a natural relation is posited between the organization of language and the organization of social context, which is built up around the notion of kinds of meaning. Interpersonal meaning is related to the enactment of social relations (social reality) – tenor; ideational meaning is related to the construal of institutional activity (naturalized reality) – field; and textual meaning is related to the composition of information flow across media (semiotic reality) – mode. A summary of these correlations is outlined in Table 3.3.

Following Martin (1992a), field is concerned with systems of activity, including descriptions of the participants, process, and circumstances these activities involve. For illustrative work see Christie and Martin (2007), Christie and Maton (2011), Halliday and Martin (1993), Martin and Veel (1998), Rose (1997), and Rose, McInnes, and Körner (1992). Tenor is concerned with social relations, as these are enacted through

**Table 3.3** Types of meaning in relation to social context.

<i>Metafunction</i>	<i>"Reality construal"</i>	<i>Contextual variable</i>	<i>"Functionality"</i>
Interpersonal	Social reality	Tenor	Enacting power and solidarity
Ideational (logical, experiential)	"Natural" reality	Field	Construing activity
Textual	Semiotic reality	Mode	Composing text

the dimensions of power and solidarity. For relevant work on tenor see Iedema (1995), Martin and White (2005), and Poynton (1985). Mode is concerned with semiotic distance, as this is affected by the various channels of communication through which we undertake activity (field) and simultaneously enact social relations (tenor). For exemplary work on mode in print and electronic media see Iedema, Feez, and White (1994); for differences between speech and writing, see Halliday (1985).

In these terms, as far as *Piggybook* is concerned, the mode is written monologue, supported by images (Painter, Martin, and Unsworth 2013); the field, broadly speaking, is domestic activity; and the tenor involves adult-to-child narration about changing tenor relations in the Piggott family. The register motivates the patterns of cohesion in the text and their realization in turn through lexicogrammar. For example, the mode is reflected in the density of the lexical strings, which are denser than speaking but not so dense as more abstract writing; the tenor is reflected in direct imperative commands, implied compliance, and patriarchal vocatives (*dear, Mum, old girl*); the field is reflected in the cohesive harmony and conjunctive sequencing analysis presented above.

Martin (1992a, 2012b) refers to system of tenor, field, and mode collectively as *register*.<sup>23</sup> Technically, the relation of texture to register is termed realization, which by definition implies that interpersonal, ideational, and textual meaning construe, are construed by, and over time reconstrue and are reconstructed by tenor, field, and mode. Realization, in other words, is a dialectical process whereby language and social context coevolve.

Following Martin (1992a) an additional level of context, above and beyond tenor, field, and mode, has been deployed – referred to as *genre*. This level is concerned with systems of social processes, where the principles for relating social processes to each other have to do with texture – the ways in which field, mode, and tenor variables are phased together in a text. In Australian educational linguistics (Rose and Martin 2012), genres have been defined as staged, goal-oriented social processes (e.g., Martin, Christie, and Rothery n.d.), a definition that flags the way in which most genres take more than a single phase to unfold, the sense of frustration or incompleteness that is felt when phases don't unfold as expected or planned, and the fact that genres are addressed (i.e., formulated with readers and listeners in mind), whether or not the intended audience is immediately present to respond. In these terms, as a level of context, genre represents the system of staged goal-oriented social processes through which social subjects in a given culture live their lives. An overview of this stratified model of context is presented in Figure 3.1; the co-tangential circles can be interpreted

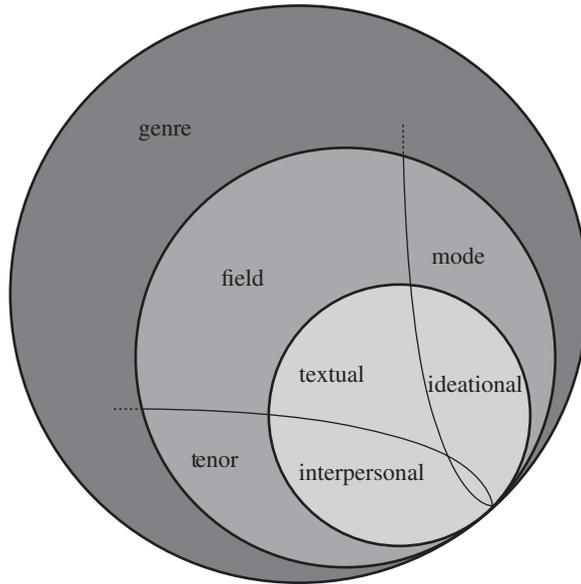


Figure 3.1 Metafunctions in relation to register and genre.

in relation to Lemke's (e.g., 1995) notion of metaredundancy, whereby more abstract levels are interpreted as patterns of less abstract ones – thus, register is a pattern of linguistic choices and genre a pattern of register choices (i.e., a pattern of a pattern of texture). For further discussion see Christie and Martin (1997), Eggins and Martin (1977), Martin (1992a, 1997, 1999, 2012a), Martin and Rose (2008), and Ventola (1987); for an alternative approach to genre structure in SFL see Hasan (1977, 1984b, 1985); for seminal work in Firthian linguistics see Mitchell (1957).

In terms of genre, *Piggybook* belongs to the narrative family of cultural practices (for relevant SFL research see Martin 1996a, 1997; Martin and Plum 1997; Martin and Rose 2008; Rothery 1994). We analyzed the first phase of the narrative, its orientation above; this is followed by two phases in which equilibrium is disturbed. In the first, Mrs. Piggott leaves home and the boys have to fend for themselves. In the second, their attempts to restore order create even more disequilibrium, to the point where they are rooting around as pigs for scraps on the floor. At this point, Mrs. Piggott arrives home (casting her shadow across the page in the relevant image). As predicted by Labov and Waletzky (1967), the two crises of disruption are signaled by strongly evaluative language – first *You are pigs* then *P-L-E-A-S-E come back*.

Beyond texture, then, we have the coherence deriving from the social context a text simultaneously realizes and construes. We read the text with respect to our expectations about the field of domestic activity, the evolving tenor of gender relations, and the nature of verbiage to image relations in children's books. And beyond this we read the text as a story, which in this case we recognize as a moral tale (related to fables, parables, exemplums, and gossip; Eggins and Slade 1997; Martin and Rose 2008). The genre phases field, tenor, and mode parameters together into a text with a message. It has been carefully designed to nudge along the redistribution of power across genders

in Western culture – to naturalize us into a reading position that interprets cohesion in relation to texture, and texture in relation to genre.

As readers, we may of course resist this positioning, or respond tactically, by refusing to read the text globally in a way that takes as many meanings as possible and their integration into account (e.g., simply snickering at the images and “piggy” lexis as the boys turn into swine: *pigsty-squealed-grunted-root around-snorted-snuffled*). But as discourse analysts we have a responsibility to build a model that accounts as fully as possible for the position that is naturalized and this means building a model that places texts in their social contexts and looks comprehensively at the discourse semantics, lexicogrammar, and phonology (or graphology) that realize them.

## 4 Cohesion, Texture, and Coherence

In this chapter I have outlined a modular perspective on text, which places cohesion analysis within a broader framework<sup>24</sup> for analyzing discourse. Following Martin (1992a), I described the ways in which cohesion can be recontextualized as discourse semantics (identification, negotiation, conjunction, ideation). Subsequently, the study of texture was briefly reviewed, drawing attention to work on patterns of interaction between discourse semantic, lexico-grammatical, and phonological systems (cohesive harmony, method of development, point, and modal responsibility). Finally, I approached coherence from the perspective of social context, suggesting that texture is motivated by tenor, field, and mode and the way in which genre phases these register variables together into a trajectory of meanings that naturalizes a reading position for readers and listeners.

From an SFL perspective (for recent surveys see Halliday and Webster 2009; Hasan, Matthiessen, and Webster 2005, 2007), I expect that in the future our understandings of cohesion, texture, and coherence will be enhanced by further work on cohesion in relation to other modules (both linguistic and social),<sup>25</sup> so that our sense of how the social motivates patterns of cohesion is improved (e.g., Bednarek and Martin 2010; Martin and Wodak 2003). I expect some of these patterns to emerge as recurrent units of discourse structure somewhere between what we currently understand as genre structure and clause structure. Early work on phase (e.g., Gregory 1995) and rhetorical units (Cloran 1995) has been encouraging in this respect; see also Martin and Rose (2008). Heeding Firth (e.g., 1957), however, it may be that a good deal of this kind of structure will turn out to be specific to particular registers and genres, and not something we will choose to generalize across social contexts.

## NOTES

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- 1 For related European perspectives, see de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981).
- 2 For related work on cohesion and intonation, see Gumperz, Kaltman, and O'Connor (1984).
- 3 Ellipsis and substitution are sometimes treated as a single resource (e.g., Halliday 1994). From the perspective of English, ellipsis is substitution by zero; more generally,

- looking across languages, it might be better to think of substitution as ellipsis (signaled) by something.
- 4 It is more than obvious from quotations such as these that Halliday and Hasan did not equate cohesion with coherence (cf. Brown and Yule 1983: 190–201).
  - 5 For definitions of “phora” terms (e.g., anaphora, cataphora, endophora, exophora, homophora), see Martin (1992a).
  - 6 For work on cohesion in languages other than English, see Aziz (1988), Callow (1974), and Martin (1983b).
  - 7 The terms *internal* and *external* are from Halliday and Hasan (1976); van Dijk (e.g., 1977) opposes pragmatic to semantic relations. The contrast is between *He came, because I just saw him* (internal = “why I’m saying he came”), and *He came because I saw him and told him to* (external = “why he came”).
  - 8 I use the term “construe” to place emphasis on the role texts play in making meaning (knowledge if you will) and thus constructing social context (reality if you must); cf. Halliday and Matthiessen (1999).
  - 9 In SFL the ideational metafunction includes two subcomponents, the experiential and the logical; experiential meaning is associated with orbital structure (mononuclear) and logical meaning with serial structure (multinuclear) (Martin 1996a).
  - 10 The term *Orientation* is taken from Labov and Waletzky (1967); the function of the Orientation is to introduce the main characters in the story and set the story in time and place.
  - 11 The father and son chains join at times through *they*, included in each chain at this stage of the analysis.
  - 12 An example of bridging (Clark and Haviland 1977; Martin 1992a): the garage, the bed, and the carpets are bridged from the house (predictable contents), as the clothes and the ironing are later on from the dishes (predictable chores).
  - 13 Ellipsed participants are rendered in square brackets.
  - 14 Treated as a phrasal verb.
  - 15 Experiential clause functions from Halliday (1994).
  - 16 Halliday’s participant roles are comparable to case relations in case grammar and thematic relations in formal linguistics, though differently motivated (Martin 1996b).
  - 17 Arguably *home* is a Circumstance of Location; but, in the absence of either deixis or a preposition, I’ve taken it as a specification of the Process here.
  - 18 Fries (1992) discusses the influence of cohesive harmony on the interpretation of words, demonstrating the dialectic between global and local features in the texturing of discourse (see also Fries 1986).
  - 19 Note that one of the advantages of implicit conjunction is that it is underspecified; we can read the connection here in various ways – as succeeding, preceding, or possibly simultaneous.
  - 20 In the framework being developed here, Brown and Yule’s (1983: 196) *There’s the doorbell. – I’m in the bath.* would be analyzed through conjunction as involving implicit internal concession (“although you’re telling me to answer the door, I can’t because I’m in the bath”) and through negotiation as involving an indirect command followed by a challenging rejoinder justifying non-compliance.
  - 21 There are of course many patterns in the text reflecting this male perspective, including for example the vocatives used to address Mrs. Piggott (*dear, Mum, old girl*).
  - 22 This text, and children’s stories in general, foreground the cohesive agency of grammatical parallelism (as suggested in Gutwinski 1976 and Hasan 1985).
  - 23 Halliday and Hasan (e.g., 1985) prefer the terms *context of culture* for these

systems and *context of situation* for their instantiation, reserving the term *register* for the pattern of linguistic choices put at risk from one context of situation to another (for discussion see Matthiessen 1993).

- 24 The value of cohesion analysis is not something that can be separated from the general model of analysis in which it is positioned, something that seems often to have been lost on critics who

take up an eclectic position as far as tools for discourse analysis are concerned – and who have been prepared to critique, say, Halliday and Hasan (1976) without taking into account the book's theoretical context as provided by SFL.

- 25 Consideration of intermodal cohesion is beyond the scope of this chapter. For discussion see Painter, Martin, and Unsworth (2013) and Royce (2007).

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# 4 Intonation and Discourse

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ELIZABETH COUPER-KUHLEN

## 0 Introduction

This chapter aims to take stock of progress in the field of intonation and discourse: Where have we come from? Where are we now? Where do we go from here? Needless to say, all of these viewings have their reference point at the moment of speaking; that is, “now.” And they are anchored deictically to one researcher in the field: that is, they represent primarily this author’s views.<sup>1</sup>

## 1 Looking Back

What was the state of the art in the field of intonation and discourse a half-century ago? Actually there was no such field. To begin with, discourse was not recognized as a subject worthy of exploration. Moreover, at that time most linguists believed that language could exist without intonation and that it was therefore possible to do linguistics without intonation. In fact, some even thought it imperative to think of intonation, like phonetics, as being outside language. Not only did we have influential articles like Bolinger’s “Around the edge of language” (1964) to remind us of this but it was also reflected institutionally in the fact that many renowned British universities had departments of “Linguistics *and* Phonetics,” the latter subsuming if at all the study of intonation.

Where did this idea come from? First, it was clearly promoted by the bias toward written language that dominated much of twentieth-century linguistic thinking (Linell 2005). The belief that writing worked perfectly well without intonation seemed to bear out the proposition that we could do without the latter, and Occam’s razor suggested

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*The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Second Edition.

Edited by Deborah Tannen, Heidi E. Hamilton, and Deborah Schiffrin.

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we should. Moreover, the idea found nourishment in the competence–performance dichotomy of the generative paradigm in linguistics. Intonation was easy to relegate to the domain of performance because it only appeared when language was spoken. Finally, despite efforts by Trager and Smith (1957), intonation did not fit very well into the structuralist mold of thinking anyway. Although Halliday (1967) tried to assemble as much evidence as possible for its distinctive function, there were simply too many occasions on which intonation appeared to be gradient rather than categorical. In fact, this was one of Bolinger’s main motivations for saying that intonation was “around the edge of language,” and it was Martinet’s (1962) justification for excluding intonation altogether from the functional system of language.

So intonation some 50 years ago appeared to lack the solid credentials needed to be considered linguistic. (Outside linguistics departments, on the other hand, it was generally acknowledged as a prime metacommunicative device in face-to-face interaction. For two early attempts to capture it on paper and describe its import, see Bateson 1971; Pittenger, Hockett, and Danehy 1960.) And certainly no one had ever thought of combining the study of intonation with that of discourse. Intonation was the difference between a sentence of written prose and that sentence read aloud. It was what you had when prose was spoken (see Abercrombie 1965). This surely had nothing to do with *discourse*, it was thought – or, if it did, the connection was trivial, since discourse was believed to be merely a concatenation of sentences and each of these could be given an intonation on independent grounds.

The change came slowly but surely. By the 1980s it was beginning to be apparent to some linguists that there might be a discourse function of intonation meriting investigation (see inter alia Couper-Kuhlen 1986). Brazil, Coulthard, and Johns’s *Discourse Intonation and Language Teaching* (1980) was instrumental in bringing about this realization. (Menn and Boyce 1982 was an early attempt to link quantified measurements of voice pitch with discourse structure.) Significantly, the impulse to look at intonation in discourse came from language teachers – or, rather, teachers of language teachers. In fact, this was the motivation for most of the early work done on English intonation: Armstrong and Ward’s *Handbook of English Intonation* (1926), O’Connor and Arnold’s *Intonation of Colloquial English* (1961), and even Halliday’s *A Course in Spoken English: Intonation* (1970) were all didacticized texts intended to supplement the teaching of English pronunciation to foreign students. Small wonder then that it was language teachers who, with the turn to communicative skills in language teaching, were among the first to put intonation in the framework of discourse.

## 2 Looking at Now

What is the state of the art today? First, there has been a major paradigm shift with respect to the role of intonation in language. Few if any linguists today would wish to deny that intonation impacts on language, even when written. It is hard to identify a single catalyst in this change of paradigm. Perhaps it is best seen as resulting from a slow accumulation of evidence that at some point reached a critical mass. But among those who waxed most persuasive the names of Bolinger, Chafe, Halliday, and Ladd should not be missing. Three strands of research in the field of intonation in discourse,

growing out of three different methodological approaches, can be identified today, in a state of more or less peaceful coexistence. (Excluded from this survey are corpus-linguistic studies of discourse, many of which take intonation into consideration without making it the focus of investigation.)

First there is the school of thought that sees intonation as a part of grammar broadly speaking, "grammar" being understood loosely enough to include speech acts. This school actually has quite a tradition. Historically some of the earliest work on intonation tried to establish a correspondence between declarative, interrogative, and exclamatory sentence types and final falling or rising intonation (Couper-Kuhlen and Selting 1996). And there may even be some linguists who still think along these lines. But, where speech act theory has been received, those who wish to see intonation as part of grammar will now usually assume that intonations are not linked to sentences but rather to utterances and that they serve as illocutionary-force-indicating devices by being paired with different illocutions. On the American scene, Pierrehumbert's model of intonation nominally belongs in this tradition (as does a fortiori Steedman 1991); it sets up a "grammar" of intonation, with an inventory of six tones or pitch accents, two phrasal tones, and two boundary tones and claims that all well-formed tunes can be generated from this inventory (Pierrehumbert 1980). Recently the intonation-as-grammar approach has addressed the "meaning of intonational contours in the interpretation of discourse" (Pierrehumbert and Hirschberg 1990). The tack taken is to treat intonational contours as specifying a relationship between propositional content and the mutual beliefs of participants in the current discourse. One representative study, for instance, attempts to show a context-independent correspondence between a fall-rise pitch accent and a propositional attitude of uncertainty (Ward and Hirschberg 1985; see also Hirschberg and Ward 1992). Here – as in general in the intonation-as-grammar approach – the term "discourse" refers to a situation in which sentences are viewed "in context," as follow-ups to prior sentences that are said to provide a "discourse context" for the interpretation in question.

In a second and no less lively tradition, intonation is thought of as related not to grammar but to information flow, the movement of ideas into and out of active, semiactive, and inactive states of consciousness. In Chafe's work (1979, 1980, 1993), for instance, intonation is said to provide a window on consciousness via the establishment of two different types of unit: the intonation unit and the accent unit. The intonation unit encompasses the information that is in the speaker's focus of consciousness at a given moment (1993: 39); the accent units are the domains of activation for new, accessible, and/or given information. Also within this tradition, Du Bois *et al.* (1992, 1993) have elaborated the notion of transitional continuity between one intonation unit and the next, marked by different sorts of terminal pitch contours. The term *transitional continuity* describes the extent to which "the discourse business at hand will be continued or has finished" (1993: 53). Thus, depending on whether some material is segmented into one or, say, two intonation units and on how these intonation units are linked transitionally to one another, claims are made about its status in consciousness and about whether it is viewed as completed or not. In contrast to the intonation-as-grammar approach, the intonation-as-information-flow approach has paid less attention to type of pitch accent and more attention to issues of unit segmentation and inter-unit continuity. Methodologically – also in marked contrast to the intonation-as-grammar school of thought – it has developed out of close observation of real discourse rather than from

introspection and constructed examples. At times, the discourse under observation in the intonation-as-information-flow tradition has been produced in a quasi-experimental setup (for instance, the Pear Story film in Chafe 1979 or an instructional task, for example in Swerts and Geluykens 1994). And it has tended to be primarily monologic as well as uniform in genre (e.g., oral narration, instructional monologue). In this sense the information-flow approach is different from the third school of thought, which takes a deliberately interactional perspective.

The third approach might be called provisionally the *intonation-as-contextualization paradigm*, to make it comparable with its contemporaries. It is complementary, rather than contrastive, to the intonation-as-information-flow approach but stands in stark contrast to the intonation-as-grammar school of thought. The idea of contextualization goes back to seminal work by the anthropologist Bateson (1956, 1972). But it was first applied specifically to language and intonation in the second half of the 1970s (Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz 1976). Contextualization refers to the fact that linguistic signs need embedding in a context in order to be fully interpretable. In this sense all linguistic signs are indexical, not just a small subset of them. Contexts are not given but are invoked, or made relevant, by participants through so-called *contextualization cues*, a term coined by Gumperz. The cues may be verbal or nonverbal in nature: they include such stylistic uses of language as code-switching as well as gestural, proxemic, paralinguistic, and prosodic phenomena that accompany linguistic forms (see Auer and di Luzio 1992). Contextualization cues function by indexing or evoking interpretive schemas or frames within which inferential understanding can be achieved (Gumperz 1982; Tannen 1993). Intonation – by its very nature non-referential, gradient, and evocative – is seen as a prime contextualization cue in this approach.

Yet intonation – in the restricted sense of “pitch configuration” – rarely functions alone to cue an interpretive frame. The same frame may be cued by timing and volume as well. In fact, frames are cued best (most reliably) when their signals are multifaceted and come in clusters (Auer 1992). Pitch, volume, and timing have in common that they are prosodic: syllable-based auditory effects produced by vocal-fold and airflow manipulations orchestrated in time (Crystal 1969). This is why in the contextualization-cue approach there has been a subtle shift away from the study of “intonation” to the study of *prosody* and discourse. The third school of thought thus actually deserves to be called *prosody-as-contextualization cue*. In this approach contextualization cues, and consequently prosodic phenomena, are not seen as accidental or fortuitous nor as automatic reflexes of cognitive and affective states. They are thought to have their own systematicity, but a systematicity that can only be accessed in a context-sensitive fashion. This is why, methodologically, the contextualization-cue approach advocates situated empirical investigation of naturally occurring spoken data. To complement the intonation-as-information-flow approach, it focuses less on monologue and more on interaction. In fact, prosodic contextualization research is grounded in verbal interaction. This has important consequences for the type of claim made and for the way in which the claims are warranted.

What do prosodic contextualization cues signal in discourse? Viewed from the perspective of interaction, prosodic phenomena can be thought of as furnishing a format or design for turns at talk. This format helps interactants meet two general sorts of requirement, which Goffman (1981) has dubbed *system requirements* and *ritual requirements*. As Kendon explains it, “system requirements” refer to “requirements that an interaction

system must have, given that the participants have certain anatomical, physiological and information-processing capacities"; "ritual requirements" involve "rules that govern interaction, given that the participants are moral beings who are governed by reciprocally held norms of good or proper conduct" (1988: 31f). In other words, prosodic contextualization cues help interactants make inferences about turn-taking and floor management, on the one hand, and about what actions or activities are being carried out, how they are being carried out, and how this might impinge upon participants' social image or face, on the other.

How does one warrant claims about prosodically cued interactional meaning? Here the groundedness of the contextualization-cue approach affords a built-in methodology. The local display that interactants provide to each other of how they have understood a prior turn and of what action is conditionally (or preferentially) relevant in a next turn can be exploited for warranting claims about prosodic signaling in interaction. That is, by viewing prosody as sequentially embedded in interaction, as occasioned by a prior action and occasioning a subsequent action, both embodied in turns with specific prosodic designs themselves, we can develop grounded hypotheses about what its function is from the interactional data and at the same time validate these hypotheses in the interactional data. This is the contextualization-cue paradigm for the study of prosody in discourse (see also Couper-Kuhlen and Selting 1996).

### 3 New Territories and Frontiers

As work in this paradigm gets under way, it is only appropriate to ask: What substantial gains can be made through the study of prosodic contextualization? The answer to this question will be influenced by the extent to which new territory is explored. Some of this new territory lies beyond the basic unit of prosody, the intonation phrase (defined as "a stretch of speech uttered under a single coherent intonation contour": Du Bois *et al.* 1992: 17), and some lies beyond intonation altogether. In the following, single-case analyses from these new territories will be used to show what kind of discovery can be expected with more systematic investigation.

#### 3.1 *Beyond the intonation phrase*

As soon as one's perspective switches from the individual intonation phrase and events within it to *sequences* of intonation phrases – which is what should naturally happen in the study of discourse – the question becomes: Are all intonation units alike, merely juxtaposed in time, or are there differences between them? If there are differences, what is their effect? Do they create *global* intonational structure?

The groundwork for studying intonational structure beyond the intonation phrase has been laid by Chafe (1988), Du Bois *et al.* (1993), and Schuetze-Coburn, Shapley, and Weber (1991). In particular, the notion of declination unit ('t Hart, Collier, and Cohen 1990) – which, as Schuetze-Coburn, Shapley, and Weber (1991) show, can be identified in naturally occurring discourse as well as in the laboratory – suggests one answer to the question of global intonational structure. Declination units create structures larger

than the intonation unit. When there are several intonation units in a declination unit, they have slightly different shapes, depending on their relative position in the larger structure. The position of a single intonation unit within the larger unit is detectable in its final pitch, but also – importantly – in its initial pitch. It is the way intonation units begin that forms one of the new territories for exploration beyond the intonation phrase. (See Wichmann 2000 for some first results based on prepared monologue.)

### 3.1.1 Onset level

The notion of structure created by intonation-phrase beginnings can be operationalized with the category of onset level (Brazil's "key"; see also Couper-Kuhlen 1986). The onset of an intonation phrase in English is defined as the first pitch accent in the phrase. If there is only one pitch accent, the onset is identical with the so-called nucleus, usually equated with the last pitch accent of the phrase. Brazil, Coulthard, and Johns (1980) suggest that at least three different onset levels can be identified in speech: high, mid, and low. These are to be thought of as pitch levels relative to that of a nucleus or onset in the prior intonation phrase. In the absence of a prior intonation phrase, they are presumably related to the speaker's default pitch range (which is itself related to that speaker's natural voice range: see Section 3.1.2). Brazil has argued that the three different onset levels or keys have distinctive functions in discourse. Yet this statement is based more on introspection and carefully chosen (often constructed) examples than on the analysis of large quantities of naturally occurring data. Whether indeed three levels are relevant in everyday conversational interaction is an empirical question that is still open at this time. Should conversationalists operate with only two, the following fragments suggest that an appropriate labeling might be high and non-high.

In interaction there are two possible domains within which an intonational or a prosodic phenomenon may be relevant: (1) the turn, or (2) a sequence of turns. In the first, a prosodic phenomenon makes itself apparent relative to surrounding prosody within a speaker's turn; in the second, a prosodic phenomenon is apparent relative to the prosody of a prior or subsequent turn – that is, across speaker turns. Onset level is deployed in both domains by conversationalists, as (1) shows. (Transcription conventions are listed at the end of this chapter.)

(1) Kilimanjaro (DAT 12a/2)

*(Ann and her boyfriend Chuck have returned for a visit to Minnesota and are having supper with Ann's high-school friend, Janet, and her husband, Steve. Prior talk has centered on nature trips in the Upper Peninsula (UP, pronounced "yew pee") of Michigan. Ann is talking here about mountain treks in Scandinavia.)*

1 Ann: there's some sort of rule though (there)  
 2 when- when you're in a cabin,  
 3 no (gh) in Sweden  
 4 when you're in a cabin and someone comes?  
 5 next day you have to leave.  
 6 but other-  
 7 if no one comes

8           you can stay there as long as you want to.  
9           (.)  
10          so]  
11          it's just (like)  
12          to get-  
13 Janet: right  
14          to keep the process-  
15 Steve: yeah  
16          (probably right)  
17 Janet: going  
18          so someone doesn't have to ski for t(h)en days,  
19          heh heh heh  
20 Ann:     oh ho [ho ho ho  
21 Janet:           [without sleep  
22          looking for the only open cabin,  
23 Ann:     ↑no you end up with a lot of people going camping.  
24          but uh  
25          (.)  
26 Janet: mhm°  
27          (.)  
28 Janet: <acc> yeah that sounds nice.  
29→        ↑there is a place like that in the UP;  
30          uhm  
31          Porcupine Mountains.  
32          but they have cabins:  
33          up the mountain  
34          and you can hike  
35          from one cabin  
36          and the next and  
37          (.)  
38 Steve: [°yeah°  
39 Janet: [perhaps this fall  
40          we'll go do that  
41 Steve: °yeah that'd be nice°  
42 Janet: °yeah°  
43 Ann:     °in the fall°  
44          °mmm°  
45 Janet: shouldn't be very crowded then at all  
46          <l> it wasn't crowded when we were there  
47 Ann:     heh heh heh  
48 Janet: no:  
49 Ann:     mmm  
50 Janet: nothing: in the UP;  
51          (.)  
52→Ann: Jane'll be hiking in the Kiliman↑jaro next week  
53 Janet: <l> wo::w  
54          (.)

55 Ann: mhm  
 56 °poor Jane  
 57 should've seen her when she went back°  
 58 (.)  
 59 °she had so: much stuff with he(h)r°  
 60 Janet: yeah,  
 61 (.)  
 62 this is a friend from college  
 63 that was teaching in Du:sseldorf  
 64 for:: how long;  
 65 four years?

Focusing on Janet's turn beginning in line 28, we notice that the first intonation phrase *yeah that sounds nice* has a fast speech rate and begins relatively low in her pitch range. The low-pitched onset becomes particularly noticeable when it is contrasted with the next intonation phrase, in line 29: *there is a place like that in the UP*. Here the first pitch accent on *place* is noticeably higher than the first accent on *yeah* in the prior intonation phrase. (The high onset is indicated in the transcript with an upwards arrows /↑/ at the beginning of the line; a line that does not begin with /↑/ consequently lacks high onset.) Line 29 is thus a case of high onset being used within the domain of a turn. We identify the high start in relation to one or more of the other intonation phrases within that same speaker's turn. In the case at hand, since there is a transition-relevance place (defined as a point in time where transfer of speakership could legitimately occur: Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974: 703) at the end of line 28, we might wish to say that lines 28 and 29 form separate turn-constructural units (units from which turns at talk are constructed: Schegloff 1996: 53). If so, we could then state that the intonational format of the second turn-constructural unit lends it a different status compared to the first one.

What is the effect of high onset here? A line-by-line analysis of this fragment reveals that the turn-constructural units in lines 28 and 29 are doing rather different things. Line 28 is responsive to the story Ann has just told about staying in mountain cabins in Sweden; its orientation is clearly backward. Line 29, on the other hand, is more forward looking. Despite its anaphoric reference with *that* to the place Ann was talking about, its primary business is to introduce a new topic, only tangentially related to the prior one. It puts this new topic *a place in the UP* on the floor and at the same time projects more talk about it. The intonational formatting of line 29 can thus be thought of as one of the ways this turn-constructural unit is designed to do its work: it cues the introduction of a new topic.

Looking somewhat further in the exchange, it is instructive now to consider line 52: *Jane'll be hiking in the Kilimanjaro next week*. Here Ann appears to be introducing a new topic – there has been no mention of either Jane or Kilimanjaro in the 40 minutes of talk preceding this fragment – and yet Ann's onset is *not* noticeably higher than the onset of the surrounding intonation phrases. Nor is Ann's onset in line 52 as high as in line 23 (*no you end up with a lot of people going camping*), where she is perceived as starting high. Is this a counterexample to the claim that new topics are cued with high onset, or is Ann strategically exploiting the contrast between high and non-high onset? The evidence suggests the latter. When examined more closely, Ann's new topic will be seen to be qualitatively rather different from Janet's. First, it has a different sort of trajectory.

Janet's turn-constructural unit (line 29) introduces an entity into the discourse via a presentative construction with *there is* and an indefinite noun phrase *a place like that in the UP*, projecting more talk on this entity in a continuation of the turn. Ann's turn-constructural unit (line 52), on the other hand, treats *Jane* as a discourse entity already introduced and accessible – that is, as common ground – and predicates something about this entity within the same unit. Ann's turn-constructural unit is constructed and executed as a complete action on its own: it does not project more talk to come within this turn.

Second, notice that Janet's new topic receives uptake from all of the participants active in the conversation, whereas Ann's information is acknowledged only by Janet. Moreover, the nature of Janet's response in line 53, *wo::w*, reveals her to be a partially knowing recipient (Goodwin 1981). Were she unknowing, we would expect a response treating the components of Ann's turn – that Jane is or will be in Tanzania, that she will be hiking, and that the hiking will be in the Kilimanjaro the following week – as news. Yet, as it happens, Janet treats none of these pieces of information as particularly new or surprising. Instead her low-keyed, lengthened *wow* is heard as registering mild appreciation of something that was (at least partially) already known. That Janet knows that Jane has recently gone back to Tanzania is, moreover, implicit in the way Ann's next turn is phrased: line 57, *should've seen her when she went back*, takes both the fact that she returned and where she returned as given. Subsequent talk confirms that Janet knows not only that Jane has recently gone back to Tanzania but also why.

Third, Ann's follow-up talk on the new topic (lines 56–9, *poor Jane (you) should've seen her when she went back (.) she had so much stuff with her*) is delivered sotto voce. And only one of the several participants, Janet, responds (line 60: *yeah*). Ann's talk is thus insider talk: it is cued for, and receipted by, only a subset of those participating actively in the conversation. Janet's next move confirms this: she unilaterally begins to fill in the unknowing participants, explaining who Jane is and why she has gone to Tanzania (lines 60–5: *this is a friend from college that was teaching in Dusseldorf for how long four years?*). The evidence thus conspires to suggest that "Jane" is not a full-fledged official topic for the general floor but an insider topic for a private floor. And the prosody of Ann's turn-constructural unit introducing this topic – specifically its format without high onset – can be reconstructed as cueing its unofficial, insider status.

On a more general level, the above fragment demonstrates how participants use high onset and its absence as a strategic resource for cueing new topics. This is not meant to imply that on other occasions high onset or its absence might not signal something different. The inferencing to which onset level contributes must be expected to be sensitive to the sequential location and the verbal content of the turn-constructural units in question.

### 3.1.2 Register

In addition to onset level, there is another aspect of intonation beyond the intonation phrase that cues inferences in interactional discourse. This is *register*, defined as the relative position of an intonation phrase within a speaker's overall voice range (Cruttenden 1986: 129). The norm for register, according to Cruttenden, is for intonation phrases to be positioned roughly in the lower third of a speaker's voice range. Marked uses of register occur when the whole range of pitch configuration within an intonation phrase is

moved to a higher, or within limits to a lower, position in the speaker's voice range. In addition, some analysts recognize the narrowing or widening of a speaker's register as significant departures from the norm (see Pittenger, Hockett, and Danehy 1960). Register is distinct from onset level because it affects all the pitches in a given intonation phrase rather than only that of the first accented syllable.

Just as with onset level, register and register shifts are deployed both within a speaker's turn and across speaker turns in interaction. Well-known uses within speaking turns include the use of register shift to mark voicing in reported speech (see, e.g., Klewitz and Couper-Kuhlen 1999) and the use of register shift to signal that a stretch of speech is parenthetical with respect to primary talk (see, e.g., Wichmann 2001). But register, and more specifically register shift, may also be deployed across speakers' turns, as the next set of examples will demonstrate. Let us begin by observing the unmarked case of two speakers using the same register in a sequence of turns. The use of register by two different speakers is easiest to compare if everything else in their turns is held constant – that is, if one speaker is actually repeating what another speaker has said. This is what happens in (2), which comes from a Radio Piccadilly phone-in program in Manchester, UK, where listeners call in with answers to a riddle:

- (2) Brain Teaser: Fenella McNally
- 1 Moderator: it is complete;  
 2                    though it seems it isn't.  
 3                    what do you reckon.  
 4 Caller:        well I think I've got this one;  
 5                    and I got it as you were reading it ou:t.  
 6→                is the answer ho:le.  
 7                    (0.6)  
 8→Moderator: is the answer ho:le.  
 9 Caller:        yes.  
 10 Moderator: er: no.  
 11 Caller:        oh!

In auditory terms, judging register here involves (1) determining how high the caller's turn *is the answer ho:le* is in relation to her voice range, (2) determining how high the moderator's repeat *is the answer ho:le* is in relation to his voice range, and (3) comparing the two relatively. Register comparison across speakers is particularly difficult when the speakers have naturally different voice ranges, as here. However, the fact that the moderator comes off in line 8 as quoting what his caller has just said in line 6 suggests that his turn-constructional unit is a good rendition of hers and consequently that the relative heights at which they are speaking are similar. An acoustic analysis of fundamental frequency ( $f_0$ ), which corresponds roughly to our perception of pitch, will back up this auditory impression.

Figure 4.1 shows the fundamental frequency curve for each turn in question, scaled logarithmically with its upper and lower boundaries represented as dotted lines. Notice that, although the moderator's range is, in absolute terms, lower than that of the caller, his contour nevertheless has a shape and width similar to that of the caller. Her pitch range (in line 6) extends from 140 to 386 Hz, equaling 17.5 semitones. His (in line 8) extends from 75 to 209 Hz, equaling 17.7 semitones. Seen this way, it is clear that the

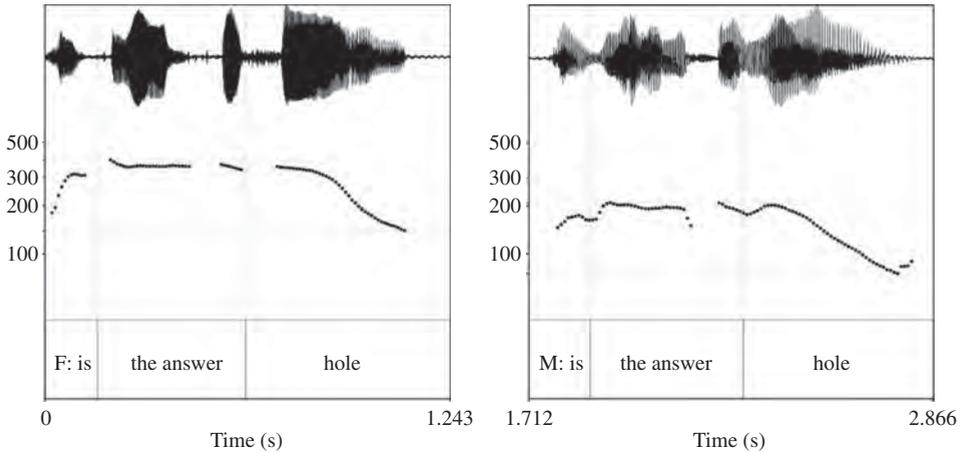


Figure 4.1 Pitch traces for lines 6 and 8 of excerpt (2).

moderator is making use of approximately the same register, relatively speaking, as the caller: both these contours are positioned in the lower third of their speaker's voice range and have approximately the same pitch extension.

Compare now a similar interactional situation from the same Radio Piccadilly phone-in program, where there is a noticeable *shift* of register in the moderator's repetition of a caller's prior turn.

```
(3) Brain Teaser: Julie Salt
1 Moderator:  h you can find reference,
2             in any Latin dictionary-
3             to a brigade.
4→Caller:   .hh ↑troops!
5           (0.5)
6→Moderator: <h> ↑troops!
7             erm
8→           <h> ↑troops!
9             is wrong.
10 Caller:   oh. hheh
```

Here the moderator shifts to an exceptionally high register on his twofold repeat of the caller's *troops*. This becomes obvious if we compare the position of his two renditions of *troops* with that of *erm* (line 7) and *is wrong* (line 9) in the same turn. The  $f_0$  curves obtained from acoustic analysis of lines 4 and 6–9 appear in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2 shows that the moderator is repeating *troops* with a contour quite similar in shape and width to that of the caller. The caller (line 4) uses a high-falling contour extending from 400 to 171 Hz, equal to a range of 14.7 semitones. The moderator's contours (lines 6 and 8) are also high-falling and extend from 416 to 99 Hz, equaling a range of 12.8 semitones. However, his contours on *troops* are located at a position that approximates, in absolute terms, the caller's, rather than being – as we might

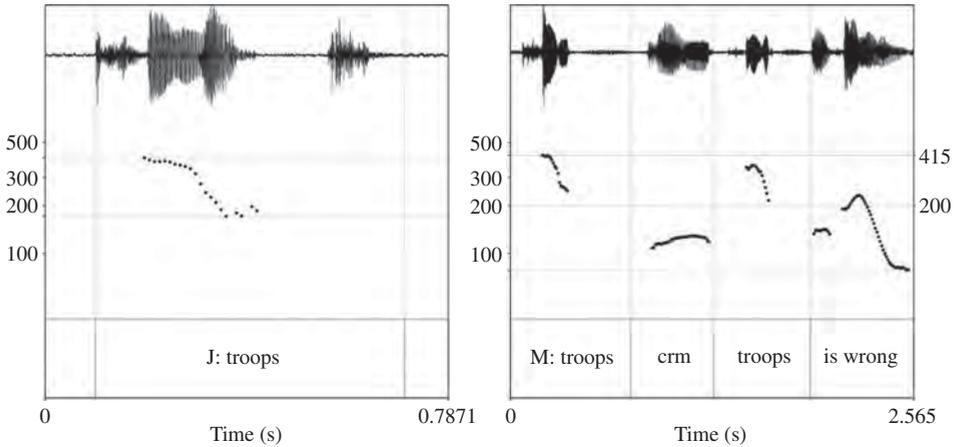


Figure 4.2 Pitch traces for lines 4 and 6–9 of excerpt (3).

expect – in his default register (as used in [2]: see Figure 4.1). By contrast with *erm* and *is wrong*, which are much lower, the moderator’s renditions of *troops* are done with a shift to high register. What does the moderator cue with his register shift on *troops*? As argued elsewhere, because he not only shifts his register higher on the repeats but also shifts it to almost the same pitch as his caller, the moderator is heard as mimicking his caller. In doing so, he seems to be subtly (or not so subtly) making a critical comment on the caller’s guess – insinuating, for example, that it is a silly guess or that it is delivered in an abnormally high voice (Couper-Kuhlen 1996). Due to the use of absolute pitch, this fragment is thus a special case of register shift. Yet it has in common with other cases of register shift that it cues special inferences about how talk is being produced and understood.

The exploitation of register across speaking turns is not restricted to guessing sequences nor to shifts to high. Here is a case from the same radio call-in show where a register shift to low is deployed by the moderator in quite a different context.

(4) Brain Teaser: Sexy Sharon  
 1 Moderator: then we go to Hardwick. (.)  
 2 and there we get-  
 3 (.) h sexy Sharon.  
 4 ↓hi!  
 5→Caller: (0.4) °hello°-  
 6→Moderator: <1> °hello°-  
 7 how are you Sharon,  
 8 Caller: °all right [thanks°  
 9 Moderator: [oh: cheer up dear,  
 10 Caller: he hh  
 11 Moderator: cheer up;  
 12 for goodness sake;  
 13 don't- don't put me in a bad mood;  
 14 at (.) one o'clock;

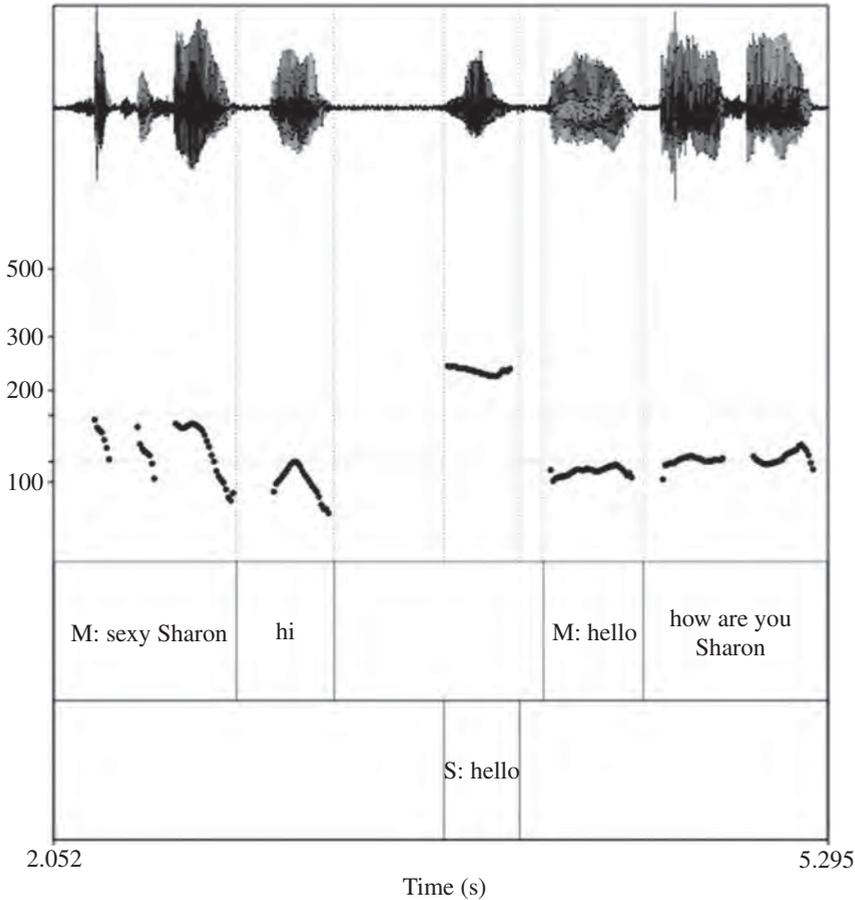


Figure 4.3 Pitch trace for lines 3–7 of excerpt (4).

Focusing on line 6, it will be observed that the pitch of the moderator’s *hello* is noticeably lower than that of his *sexy Sharon* in line 3 (see Figure 4.3).

The moderator’s version of *hello* is responsive to a low-volume *hello* by Sharon (line 5) that, although it appears “high” in absolute terms, is actually at the bottom of Sharon’s voice range. The moderator thus has shifted to a register closer, relatively speaking, to that of his caller. (The moderator also uses low pitch on *hi* in line 4 [see Figure 4.3] – perhaps to model what he takes a sexy voice to sound like.) This is a case of pitch-register shift to low that becomes noticeable across speaking turns by the same speaker.

What does the low register on *hello* in line 6 cue? Here too the moderator is heard as mimicking his caller and thereby making a critical comment on her turn. But, in contrast to the prior example – where one of the messages was “Your voice is so high!” – the message now seems to be “Your voice is so low!” This moderator has very definite expectations about his caller’s register, especially if the caller is female. The slightly higher location of his next turn-constructural unit (*how are you Sharon*), visible in

Figure 4.3, may be another, more subtle hint to the caller to “raise her voice.” If so, this would account nicely for why – when the strategy fails and Sharon continues with low pitch and soft volume on *all right* (line 8) – he becomes more explicit in subsequent talk: *cheer up dear* (line 9) and *cheer up for goodness sake* (lines 11–12).

On a more general level, this fragment provides a particularly clear demonstration of the fact that, to make sense of what participants do in interaction, it is crucial to take the prosodic design of their talk into consideration. Yet, if we try to reconstruct *why* the moderator admonishes Sharon to cheer up, we will discover that there is more than just her pitch that is amiss: the volume and timing of her turn in line 5 are also off. (See also Szczepek Reed 2009, who discusses prosodic orientation in callers’ first turns on the air following their introduction on radio phone-in programs.) This suggests that to fully understand the contextualization process the perspective must be broadened to include other prosodic phenomena, a topic to which we turn now.

### 3.2 *Beyond intonation*

A second type of new territory in the field of interactional prosody is that beyond pitch or intonation altogether. The focus here will be on timing. Needless to say, all spoken discourse unfolds in time. Our scientific tradition provides us with objective ways of dividing up time neatly and of measuring it precisely. Yet it is doubtful whether lay speakers *experience* time in interaction in terms of units measured objectively in minutes and seconds. To speak meaningfully about timing in interaction, the metric that is behind participants’ subjective judgment of time must be identified. It is this metric that enables them to determine that “now” is the right time for some word or for a turn, and that someone has deviated from this right time by pausing or by coming in too early or too late. Erickson and Shultz (1982) have proposed that subjective judgments of experienced time in social interaction are made with reference to rhythmic cycles that organize the verbal and nonverbal behavior of participants. And, as Halliday (1970), Pike (1945), and others have pointed out, the basis for rhythm in English speech is the regular recurrence of accented syllables in time. Thus the hypothesis that speech rhythm provides a metric for timing in English interaction seems rather compelling (see Couper-Kuhlen 1993).

*Rhythm* in the interactional sense refers to a regular beat that establishes itself in talk through the even placement of accented syllables in time (see Auer, Couper-Kuhlen, and Müller 1999). The distance between two, typically adjacent accented syllables creates a temporal interval. (Occasionally non-adjacent accented syllables also mark off rhythmic intervals; see [6] for an example of this.) When two or more successive temporal intervals are perceived to be approximately equal in duration, the speaker or speakers can be said to be speaking rhythmically. Isochronously timed accents create the impression of a regular rhythmic beat in speech. Observation suggests that speakers use the rhythmic delivery of within-turn talk for a variety of structural and rhetorical purposes. And it appears to be the maintenance of a common rhythmic beat *across* turns at talk that counts as the well-timed option for turn transition in English conversation. Consider the case of smooth interactional timing; that is, where turn transition is wholly

unremarkable. Here is an example from the opening of the Radio Piccadilly phone-in call seen in (2) above.

(5) Brain Teaser: Fenella McNally  
 1 Moderator: let's see how we do in Staleybridge,  
 2 Fenella McNally;  
 3 hi.  
 4→Caller: hello!  
 5→Moderator: hello: Fenella,  
 6→Caller: hello;  
 7 we spoke last night.  
 8 hehn

The first thing to notice about this opening is the fact that the moderator places accents on *see*, *Staleybridge*, *Fenella*, and *hi* and times these accents regularly at the end of his first turn. The rhythmic beat that accent-timing establishes can be represented notationally as shown below. Left-hand slashes are placed before the accented syllables creating a rhythmic beat and are aligned underneath one another to indicate regular timing. Right-hand slashes give a rough indication of tempo: that is, how close together or far apart the beats come in time.

(5') Rhythmic analysis of Fenella McNally opening  
 1 Moderator: let's /'see how we do in /  
 1-2 /'Staleybridge, Fe-/  
 2 /'nella McNally; /  
 3 /'hi.

Fenella picks up the moderator's rhythmic beat in the next turn by timing her accent on *hello* accordingly. Moreover, the moderator adjusts the timing of his next turn to synchronize with this beat.

(5'') Rhythmic analysis of Fenella McNally opening  
 1 Moderator: let's /'see how we do in /  
 1-2 /'Staleybridge, Fe-/  
 2 /'nella McNally; /  
 3 /'hi.  
 4 Caller: hel-/  
 4 /'lo!  
 5 Moderator: hel-/  
 5 /'lo:

Moderator and caller thus collaborate here in the production of a common rhythm that they maintain across speaking turns by picking up in each new turn the beat established in the prior turn.

Now observe what happens in the continuation of line 5 in the orthographic transcript of (5). The moderator shifts the rhythm slightly by placing an accent on *Fenella* that comes sooner than the expected beat. This creates a number of rhythmic options

for what happens next. For instance, the next speaker could simply ignore the synco-pation and continue according to prior timing. Or the next speaker could miss the next beat altogether, perhaps causing the rhythm to break down. What this caller opts for, however, is to create a new, faster rhythmic pattern based on the timing of the moder-ator's accents on *hello* and *Fenella* by placing her next accents on *hello*, *spoke*, and *night* accordingly. In rhythmic notation this can be shown as follows.

(5''') Rhythmic analysis of Fenella McNally opening

```

1 Moderator: let's /'see how we do in /
1-2           /'Staleybridge, Fe-/
2           /'nella McNally; /
3           /'hi.
4 Caller:           hel-/
4           /'lo!
5 Moderator:           hel-/
5           /'lo: Fe- / (faster tempo)
5           /'nella,
6 Caller:           hel-/
6-7           /'lo; we /
7           /'spoke last/
7-8           /'night. hehn

```

The transitions in this exchange can thus be reconstructed as smooth due to the fact that each turn onset is rhythmically well timed with respect to the prior turn. Rhythmic coordination of this sort requires a fine sense of timing on the part of participants. Unaccented syllables before the first accent of a new turn must be timed so that the first accent falls on the beat. Sometimes just a fraction of a second of delay is necessary between turns in order to make the synchronization work. In fact, there are tiny micro-pauses at each of the transitions here, suggesting that speakers are timing their turn onsets rhythmically. In other words, they are not coming in at the earliest possible moment in time but at the appropriate *rhythmic* moment in time. The micro-pauses are scarcely noticeable because they help maintain the regular rhythm rather than destroy it.

Now examine a case where transition timing is less successful (this example involves a different caller on the same radio show).

(6) Brain Teaser: Sexy Nora

```

1 Moderator: so I think we'll kick off;
2           with er -
3           sexy Nora;
4           who lives in Heaton Chapel.
5           hi!
6→Caller:  (0.7) hi.
7 Moderator: hi!
8           how are you Nora?
9 Caller:  oh hello. heh
10 Moderator: he- hello,

```

11 Caller: hello!  
 12 Moderator: hello!  
 13 you're on the radio!  
 14 Caller: well that was a surprise.  
 15 Moderator: surprise surprise.

In this opening the moderator also provides his caller with a clear rhythmic beat at the end of his first turn by timing his accents on *sexy*, *lives*, and *hi* regularly. (Notice that the accents on *Heaton Chapel* are disregarded in the interest of this higher-level rhythmic pattern.) But Nora misses his cue. Her *hi* in line 6 is too late to coincide with the beat he has established.

(6') Rhythmic analysis of Sexy Nora opening  
 1 Moderator: so I 'think we'll kick off;  
 2 with er -  
 3-4 /'sexy Nora; who /  
 4 /'lives in Heaton Chapel./  
 5 /'hi!  
 6 Caller: (0.7) 'hi. (late)

As the subsequent development of talk here shows, the fact that Nora misses the moderator's cue creates a minor interactional "incident": the greeting sequence gets recycled twice, and accounts are offered on both sides for what has happened – *you're on the radio* (line 13) and *well that was a surprise* (line 14). Thus the hitch in turn transition in (6) can be reconstructed as rhythmic ill-timing: the caller's return of greeting is late with respect to the rhythm and timing established in prior talk. It is true that Nora was probably on hold, waiting for her call to be put through, and that unpreparedness may account for why she missed the moderator's cue. Yet, since presumably all callers to the show are put on hold, this fails to explain why the large majority of them have no trouble at all following the moderator's cue. In most calls a regular rhythm is established across speaking turns from the very beginning.

Returning now to example (4), we can begin to appreciate how crucial timing mishaps in turn transition can be for the interactional order.

A rhythmic analysis of this opening reveals that Sharon too misses the timing cues in the moderator's first turn. He sets up a well-defined rhythm with accents on *sexy*, *Sharon*, and *hi*, but she comes in too late.

(4') Rhythmic analysis of Sexy Sharon opening  
 2 Moderator: and there we get -  
 3 (.) h /'sexy /  
 3 /'Sharon./  
 4 /'↓hi!  
 5 Caller: (0.4) °hel'lo° - (late)

In sum, it is the fact that transition timing is off, as much as the fact that Sharon's pitch and volume are perceived as low, that cues the moderator's inference that Sharon is not

cheerful. This fragment thus provides a concrete example of how prosodic contextualization cues cluster and jointly make interpretive frames relevant.

What provisional conclusions can be drawn about the way prosodic contextualization cues – here: onset, register, and rhythm – work in discourse? Onset and register have in common that they contribute to the creation of rudimentary hierarchical structure in talk: both are ways to format a turn-constructive unit such that it will be heard as either prosodically similar to or prosodically contrasting with surrounding turn-constructive units. If similar, this may be interpretable structurally as, roughly speaking, continuing something that has already been started; if contrasting, it may be interpretable as doing something that is unconnected to what has gone before. Where the shift is to high, the structural inference may be that something new is beginning; where it is to low, that something is being subordinated. (On occasion, when sequential location and verbal content make a particular register or onset formatting expected for a given turn-constructive unit, the strategic avoidance of that format will cue the opposite interpretation.) Rhythm, on the other hand, is more of an equalizer: it pulls together units of different size and scope in an integrative fashion and sets them off from parts of surrounding talk that are rhythmically non-integrated or are patterned differently. What all three prosodic contextualization cues appear to have in common, however, is that they can have a structural (i.e., “system”-related) or an actional (i.e., “ritual”-related) interpretation, depending on the sequential context in which they occur and the syntactic–semantic content of the turn-constructive units they serve as designs for.

## 4 Looking Ahead

To conclude, what are some of the directions prosodic research might take in the future? First, as the analysis of fragment (4) suggests, volume needs to be looked at more closely. It will very likely turn out to be a prosodic contextualization cue like intonation and timing that is locally invoked and strategically deployed both within and across speaking turns. Just as with pitch, where the declination unit defines upper and lower gridlines within which pitch events are located, so a loudness declination unit will arguably need to be postulated within which loudness events are located (see Laver 1994; Pittenger, Hockett, and Danehy 1960). Whether loudness declination is co-extensive with pitch declination is an open question. Moreover, how loudness declination is handled across turns requires investigation: Goldberg (1978) suggests that amplitude may shift or reset at structural points in discourse organization just as pitch has been shown to do.

Second and more significantly, paralinguistic voice-quality effects require investigation (see Pike 1945; Pittenger, Hockett, and Danehy 1960; Trager 1958). This step, of course, goes not only beyond the intonation phrase and beyond intonation but also beyond prosody altogether. (See, however, Szczepek Reed 2011, who treats voice-quality modifications as belonging to prosody.) Yet it is a logical step if one’s goal is to reconstruct the vocal cues that contextualize language. Just as the same interpretive frame can be cued by pitch and timing at once, so it can also be cued by paralinguistic voice-quality effects. Voice quality has often been thought of as resulting from the

natural or habitual setting of laryngeal and supralaryngeal musculature in the vocal tract (Laver 1980). Yet speakers can and do assume different voice qualities at will. Some of those that appear to be deployed strategically in everyday English conversation are nasal voice, breathy voice, creaky voice, “smile” voice, whispery voice, and falsetto. Others can and surely will be found on closer investigation. Here too the question must be: What resources do speakers have at their disposal? And how are these resources deployed in cueing interaction? The answers must be sensitive to possible sociolinguistic and sociocultural variation but, above all, grounded in conversational interaction.

Finally, the variable phonetic – that is, articulatory and phonatory – dimensions of talk deserve attention within a framework similar to that proposed here for prosody (see, e.g., Ogden 2006). Local and Walker (2005) make concrete proposals for how this can be done. This is a step that has already begun to yield fruitful insights, as the papers collected in Ogden (2012) testify. In the final analysis, it is through a combination of prosodic *and* phonetic cues, in addition to other purely visual cues (gesture, facial expression, body position, and movement), that participants’ use of language is made interpretable in social interaction (Couper-Kuhlen 2011). To appreciate the intricacies of this process is a central task for discourse analysis.

## 5 Transcription Conventions

Adapted from Couper-Kuhlen and Barth-Weingarten (2011).

One line	One intonation phrase
[Line	
]Line	Overlapped utterances
Line=	
=Line	Latched utterances
Line.	Final pitch falling to low
Line!	Final pitch falling from high to low
Line;	Final pitch falling slightly
Line—	Final level pitch
Line,	Final pitch rising slightly
Line?	Final pitch rising to high
↑Line	High onset (= full declination reset)
<l> Line	Low register
<h> Line	High register
<acc> Line	Accelerando
<dec> Line	Decelerando
↑Word	Noticeable step-up in pitch
↓Word	Noticeable step-down in pitch

Wo::rd	Lengthened sound or syllable
Word-	Cut-off sound or syllable
WORD	Loud volume
°word°	Soft volume
'word	Accent or stress
/'word /	
/'word /	
/'word	Rhythmic patterning of accents
(word)	Unsure transcription
(h)	Breathy
(gh)	Guttural
.hhh	Inbreath
hhh	Outbreath
(.)	Micro-pause
(1.0)	Measured pause

## NOTES

- 1 I am grateful to Wally Chafe, Jack Du Bois, and Sandy Thompson for listening to an early version of this contribution at the Linguistics Colloquium, University of California at Santa Barbara, and for talking through these ideas with me. I bear full responsibility for not taking their advice when I should have.

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# 5 Voice Registers

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MARK A. SICOLI

## 0 Introduction

Voice registers are linguistic registers in which the primary marker is an acoustic quality of the voice layered on a stretch of talk and used in speech situations to predictably define participant roles, stances, and activities. These qualities can include phonational (laryngeal) settings of falsetto, creak, whisper, breathy voice, and other (non-phonational) prosodic means of framing speech such as nasality and stylized pitch levels, pitch ranges, and intonational melodies. This chapter focuses mainly on voice registers that use phonational settings though I note at times where the phonations are part of more dynamic intonational melodies.

There have been calls for a discourse analysis of voice qualities for several years. Couper-Kuhlen, in the first edition of *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (2003: 30), wrote:

Voice quality has often been thought of as resulting from the natural or habitual setting of laryngeal and supralaryngeal musculature in the vocal tract ... [y]et speakers can and do assume different voice qualities at will. Some of those which appear to be deployed strategically in everyday English conversation are nasal voice, breathy voice, creaky voice, "smiley" voice, whisper, and falsetto.

However, systematic work in this area has only recently begun to gain serious scholarly attention. There are at least four reasons for the slow development. First, there have been technical and economic barriers to discourse analysts conducting acoustic analysis, though now the free availability of acoustic-analysis software allows more researchers to attend to voice qualities. Second, this area has been constrained by disciplinary resistances to topics that lie in the gaps and intersections of disciplinary

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*The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Second Edition.

Edited by Deborah Tannen, Heidi E. Hamilton, and Deborah Schiffrin.

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boundaries. Pittam (1994) discussed the voice in social interaction as mandating an interdisciplinary perspective, training that is rarely part of the cannon of any single academic discipline. A third impediment has been the historical written bias in linguistics, which has tended to theorize language through a focus on the stripped-down aspects of speech that came to be represented in writing practice – representational habits that breached our own conventions for producing transcripts that too often ignore voice qualities. A fourth challenge to building momentum for a discourse analysis of the voice, as pointed to in Couper-Kuhlen’s statement, is the assumption that the “background” voice qualities of our utterances belong to a psychological rather than a sociolinguistic domain and thus can be left to the concerns of a different discipline.

This chapter presents the analytical concept of *voice registers* as a social and discursive phenomenon, presenting several recent case studies that include examples from English and indigenous languages of Meso-America to argue for the importance of examining voice registers in discourse analysis. Researchers working on different languages and in different cultural settings can contribute toward building a cross-cultural perspective on voice registers that will help us understand both their universal semi-otic properties and the range of local discursive values that vary across sociocultural contexts. Such studies have value in helping us to understand the social and linguistic functions of the many voices we take up in our interactions, as well as the role that the framing of speech and social actions with voice qualities may have in the evolution of human language.

## 1 At the Intersection of Two Concepts of Register

I developed the concept of *voice register* at the intersection of *linguistic register* and *prosodic register*, which had been established in two separate literatures (Sicoli 2010). Agha (2004: 34) describes a linguistic register as a “linguistic repertoire that is associated, culture-internally, with particular social practices and with persons who engage in such practices.” They “formulate signs of social identity by linking features of utterance-form with social categories of persons” grounded in stereotypes of both speech forms and persons, which “personify speech itself” (Agha 1998: 152; for additional background on linguistic registers see Biber and Conrad 2003). Laver (1980) described prosodic registers as pitch levels and phonational settings of the larynx. A phrase, utterance, or other information unit can be set with higher or lower mean pitch and can be cast in one of the several settings the human larynx is capable of achieving, including falsetto, whisper, creak (vocal fry), breathy, and harsh voice, as well as combinations of these (I use Laver’s 1980 descriptions of phonational voice qualities throughout this chapter; for additional background on phonation types see Gordon and Ladefoged 2001). *Voice register* as the intersection of these two concepts of register allows us to “gain a more nuanced understanding of the human voice in culture and society” (Sicoli 2010: 522). Phrases, utterances, and other information-bearing linguistic units are framed by the voice to take on social personae mobilizing what Woolard (2004: 87) described as the “social intention with which a given echoic linguistic form-in-use, or ‘word,’ is infused”. Through their co-occurrence with speech situations and the participation roles inhabited for specific social activities, voice

qualities become enregistered and maintained as consistent frames for voicing social intentions across interactions – what Tannen (2009) has called “the taking on of voices” (see also Tannen 1993). In selecting the term *voice register*, I intend it to be polyvocal, invoking at once the qualitative voice shifts achieved by prosodic means and Bakhtin’s (1981) concept of heteroglossic voicing, involving what Keane (2011: 166) described as “[linking] evanescent moments of stylistic variation and stance to more stable figures that can be recognized across interactions.” Through heteroglossic voicing, social actors navigate among a diversity of social positions and moral stances available in a sociocultural field and grounded in its social history.

The term *voice registers* encompasses more than phonations. It also applies to a number of prosodic features (or composites of prosodic features) that are stylized in ways that can be recognized across social interactions and that include intonations, pitch ranges, rhythms, nasality, and loudness or softness. Most of these features have traditionally fallen outside linguistic analysis in the so-called domain of “paralanguage” (an unfortunate term that is another factor partly to blame for these features not receiving systematic study in “core” linguistics). In Sicoli (2007: 211) I argued against a pre-analytical characterization of features as “linguistic” or “paralinguistic” and in favor of a semiotic approach to analyzing voice qualities where any vocal feature “contrastive at any level of representation is then formally described in its linguistic context [its alignment with other linguistic features] ... and also for its contextualized functions [its interpretation in interaction].” This move recapitulated Gumperz’s (1982) rejection of the notion of “core” and “peripheral” linguistic features introduced by Saussure (1916), since we cannot a priori define what the connections are between surface linguistic signs and interpretations. To discover sound–meaning relationships in context-bound conversational phenomena, Gumperz suggested we “start with differences in interpretation and seek to determine whether these are systematically related to automatic discriminations at the level of form” (1982: 32). For Gumperz this opened up the systematic analysis of prosody in discourse through his concept of “contextualization cues” (1992), which are signs that function to indicate how an utterance should be interpreted. Their meanings are relational and not referential and thus were considered outside the scope of linguistic analysis for structuralists and generativists. Like contextualization cues, *voice registers*, grounded in indexicality and intertextuality, contrast with the referentiality of *lexical registers*, which cue levels of speech primarily through vocabulary choice. Some well-known examples of lexical (substitution) registers include *Dyalḡuy*, the mother-in-law speech of Australian Dyirbal, which Dixon (1971: 437) described as being obligatorily used when a man was in hearing distance of his mother-in-law; another is the *Pandanus* register of Papua New Guinea, described by Pawley (1992) as an avoidance vocabulary used ritually when collecting pandanus nuts. While neither lexical registers nor voice registers exclude the possibility of having contextual signs that can include prosody or vocabulary respectively (such as optional honorific address terms supplementing falsetto voice in the Lachixío Zapotec respect register), it is important to contrast the two because lexical registers must use necessarily referential vocabulary in syntactic formations while voice registers use specifically non-referential features of the voice in configurations that are suprasegmental, supralexical, or supraphrasal, framing speech without changing its propositional content. The affordances of voice registers then involve the use of semiotic modalities particularly well suited, and perhaps evolutionarily fitted, to double voicing – the heteroglossic, layered

speech that Bakhtin (1981: 324) described as simultaneously expressing two different intentions: a direct intention and a refracted intention.

A shift in voice quality can function similarly to a lexical shift but differs crucially in analysis because non-referential/non-lexical components of language are being mobilized as semiotic resources. For example, Lachixío Zapotec does not use second-person pronouns to differentiate between formal and familiar address. Lachixío speakers use falsetto voice quality where we might find formal pronouns marking a respect register in some other languages. As such, in language socialization the voice quality of the register is not referred to or named in the way that a pronoun may be cited to define a high lexical register. One simply says to *speak respectfully* or *beautifully*, or demonstrates the respectful way to speak by example.

Voice registers may be used to frame social actions, such as using creaky voice in complaints, or a child's whining in requests. These voices achieve actions by association with recognizable stances and identities. Like reported speech, which brings situations from other speech events into the current speech events, voice registers bring person stereotypes learned from experiences in other speech events.

The sociolinguistic analysis of voice registers links phonetics with the pragmatics of social action to examine what the mobilization of voices does in an interaction. As analysts we ask: What are the indexical values of voice shifts at their moments of discursive emergence? How are they associated with social roles of participation and how do they contrast with other voices in the heteroglossia of social life? How are they circulated and reproduced? And what does the nature of their non-lexicalized semiotic form do for speakers that differentiates them from lexical registers in the same speech communities?

## 2 Background

The recent blossoming of studies on the sociolinguistics of the voice has had to work against the ideological assumption of the psychological and biological transparency of such "background" features, where a person's voice is taken as directly linked to personality or sex. Voices pattern systematically across social groups in ways that make it clear that the analysis of voice must be decoupled from psychology and biology. Pittam (1994) in *Voice in Social Interaction* sketched a taxonomy of vocal functions in communication including the expression of identities associated with social groups (e.g., national identities). While there are biological factors such as a commonly larger laryngeal morphology contributing to male voices having lower average pitch than females, this cannot explain the variation found cross-culturally. In a recent study, Sicoli *et al.* (2014) found systematic variation of median pitch and pitch range in a cross-linguistic sample of natural conversations. The biological sex difference was minimized in some groups (Lao) and maximized in others (Tzeltal) for the construction of gender norms. Tzeltal and Japanese women made more use of the higher end of their pitch range while Danish, Dutch, and Korean women used substantially lower pitch. This is also supported in van Bezooijen's perceptual study (1995) that contrasted gender norms in Japanese and Dutch women, showing Japanese

femininity to be perceived through higher pitched voices while Dutch women were not rated unfeminine because of their use of the lower end of their pitch range.

The earliest uptake of voice qualities in discourse analysis was focused on the psychology of the voice. In the mid-twentieth century a line of research developed following Sapir's observation that the voice "may express on one level of patterning, what one will not or cannot express on another" (1949: 543). The voice and other embodied communication considered to be "lower" on a scale of conscious awareness received interest and funding from the US State Department in a Cold War effort to research the signs people display under interrogation. These interests directly supported scholars who worked at the Foreign Service Institute between 1948 and 1953 on what was to be called paralinguistics and kinesics (Birdwhistell 1961: 51). Paralinguistics was described as phenomena that are found in "systematic association with language" including *vocal qualities*, *vocal qualifiers*, and *vocalizations* (Birdwhistell 1961: 52).

For English, Trager (1958) defined eight categories of *voice qualities*, used over segments of speech. These are pitch range, vocalic control (e.g., hoarseness to openness), glottis control (e.g., breathiness), pitch control (sharp or smooth transition), articulation control (precise, relaxed), rhythm control (smooth to jerky), resonance, and tempo. *Vocalizations* include laughing, crying, yelling, whispering, moaning, and yawning, to name a few. *Vocal qualifiers* are degrees of intensity, pitch height, and uttering rate. Each of these was divided into levels above and below a "baseline" of unmarked speech.

The concept of paralinguistics was problematic from the beginning since what was deemed "outside" or "in association with" language in one language could fall fully within language in another. Catford (1964) worked to overcome unexamined categorical assignments of speech features by using "contrastive function" as the criterion to distinguish phonological function from what he called paraphonological and non-phonological functions. *Phonological* functions contrast grammatical or lexical forms; *paraphonological* functions contrast linguistic contexts (such as junctures); and *non-phonological* functions contrast features of the speech situation and social categories such as sex, age, health, class, and origin. Catford's schema shows some parallels to one based on semiotic properties developed in part through the work of Jakobson (1960) and Silverstein (1976), who define sign activity at *linguistic*, *metalinguistic*, and *metapragmatic* levels. Both take a holistic view of language that requires a framework, which, like Gumperz (1982), rejects predefining what is "core" and what is "peripheral" and rather determining the function of an element by how it is used as a sign in the active engagement that Becker (1991) has called "linguaging."

Thus one of the challenges for the analysis of voice qualities in discourse is that voice qualities are themselves active across numerous linguistic levels that include sub-phonemic feature contrasts, words, phrases, utterances, and larger sequences. Rather than privilege any one of these levels as the linguistic use of voice quality and push the others off into the realm of the paralinguistic, I have argued that

the idea of paralinguistics has not been productive as it has excluded many potential objects of linguistic inquiry from study within linguistics. It can also have a pejorative tone, with the pragmatic effect of placing anything called paralinguistics outside of the linguist's concern. However, it is not a stable category. What is sometimes considered paralinguistics in one language, e.g. a phonational voice quality, is accepted

as language in another because there it plays a role in phonemic contrast. However, contrastive function also defines many other levels of linguistic representation. My approach is semiotic, where any vocalization found to be contrastive at any level of representation is then formally described in its linguistic context (such as its place within the prosodic nesting of phrases known as the prosodic hierarchy) and also for its contextualized functions as a communicative sign. (Sicoli 2007: 211)

Gumperz saw voice qualities as important contextualization cues (1992: 232) that function to frame discourse for participants. Gumperz and Tannen (1979: 308) described contextualization cues as “the means by which speakers signal and listeners interpret how semantic content is to be understood and how each sentence relates to what precedes or follows.” Such an approach is illustrated by Straehle (1993), who attends to voice qualities and other prosodies “as inviting particular frames for the interpretation of turns at talk” (215). She presents an example of an interjection used for teasing framed by non-phonemically contrastive features of English prosody: lengthened vowels, high-pitched voice, and nasality. Tannen (2009) importantly links phenomena that I have defined as voice registers to those of reported speech as the voice can function for what Voloshinov (1973) termed *quasi-direct discourse*, which uses direct citation of another’s speech with only an implicature indexing the source. Tannen’s concept of the “taking on of voices” can include shifts in prosody that frame utterances as constructed dialogue and may or may not be marked explicitly as reported speech through morpho-syntax. A related finding is presented in Klewitz and Couper-Kuhlen (1999), who discuss the use of pitch register to mark turns of reported speech. These aspects of voice registers are best approached through case studies, which I turn to now.

### 3 Falsetto Voice

Falsetto voice is a phonation achieved through high tension in laryngeal structures thinning and stretching the vocal folds (Laver 1980: 118). Vocalists can use falsetto to achieve high pitches beyond their modal range. Stross (2013: 141) contends that “*most* meanings associated with falsetto voice ... are motivated rather than arbitrary” and are related through what he calls “observational logic,” the use of inferences and assumptions acquired through individual observations and that come to be shared by common experiences. In his review of functions for falsetto, Stross shows that falsetto voice can signal expressive or pragmatic meanings and “also serve more general stereotyped cultural functions” (142).

The sociolinguistics of falsetto has been explored primarily by Podesva (2007) in English and my work on Zapotec (Sicoli 2007, 2010). Podesva examined falsetto phonation as a stylistic variable. He pointed out that prior examinations of voice quality had focused on interspeaker variation but not intraspeaker variation, a primary concern at the intersection of sociolinguistic variation and discourse analysis (2007: 479–80).

Defining sociolinguistic variables as “resources for the construction of social meaning” rather than “markers of pre-defined social categories,” Podesva examined the speech of Heath, a single gay medical student, across speech situations (2007: 482). The student was openly gay but his gay identity was not a relevant aspect of his

professional identity (2007: 483). Podesva coded recordings from different speech situations for falsetto and creaky phonations. Example (1) shows a brief example of Heath's use of falsetto in a casual speech situation among friends at a barbecue (Podesva 2007: 494). I have marked the falsetto-voiced stretch "Ahh! Stop" between the upward-pointing arrows.

(1)

- 1 Jack: For that, I'm gonna mess up your crunchy hair today.  
 2 Heath: No-o [no o] you so can't. ↑↑Ahh! Stop↑↑ it!

Podesva found variation across speech situations and participation frameworks. Heath used falsetto phonation most frequently and freely in informal social gatherings, in a more limited distribution in questions when talking on the phone with family, and least frequently when meeting with patients, where falsetto occurred nearly exclusively on the discourse markers "okay" and "alright" when responding to patients and preceding a directive (e.g., "↑↑Okay↑↑, touch your nose") (2007: 486).

In examining the social meaning of falsetto phonation, Podesva argues that the use of falsetto for yelling, expressing surprise, evaluation, enlivening a quotation, and engaging an audience all point toward a social meaning of "expressiveness" (2007: 490). Going further, he contextualizes expressiveness in the construction and performance of a diva persona for Heath, who "likes everything to be just so, and does not shy from expressing even his most negative opinions" (2007: 492). Podesva's analysis also shows that, for the social meaning of expressiveness, falsetto voice can interact with creaky voice, involving two extremes in pitch range. The voice register itself involves a complex orchestration of dynamic pitch range, transgressing the physical limits of modal voice by shifting to falsetto at the high end and creak at the low end (2007: 489).

I also describe falsetto as a way of going beyond the physical limitations of modal voice in the respectful voice register of Lachixío Zapotec (Sicoli 2007: 2010). High pitch characterizes the voice of respect such that an iconic gradient exists where more respect is shown with yet higher pitches. A superlative of respect is shown by going beyond the limit of modal pitch to the higher pitch of the falsetto phonation. Plural address, while grammatically possible in Lachixío, is statistically rare. After a meal each individual is thanked one by one because of the honorific constraints that require one to show a proper level of respect to specific individuals. Relative pitch differences can characterize speech to separate individuals. Lachixío speakers use falsetto voice to address God in prayer and when addressing deceased relatives. Falsetto is also used when addressing one's godparent and it is used reciprocally between *compadres* (co-parents because one is godparent to the other's child).

One of the interesting linguistic questions about voice registers regards their cross-generational reproduction. As I mentioned before, the respectful falsetto voice is not discussed through metapragmatic reference. The socialization to falsetto voice uses the depiction of the register by the performance of the voice. In example (2), a grandmother corrects a social gaffe of a three-year-old who fails to use the falsetto voice register with an elder. Grandma's shifts to falsetto are marked with upward arrows, and significant drops in pitch are marked by downward arrows.

(2)

1 Grandma Xaa nii lô loo xoo Sikko  
 what say 2s face uncle Frank  
*What do you say to uncle Frank?*

2 (0.37)

3 Grandma ↑↑Máalóné xeyy:o↑↑ ellò: ↓↓>te Sikko zxa'nna<↓↓  
 greetings uncle where DIM Frank dwarf  
 ↑↑Greetings Uncle.↑↑ Where(you say)↓↓Frankie the midget.↓↓

4 [Group Laughter (0.92)]

5 Grandma [eskye=kalla nii xhee  
 like.this say then  
*That's what he said then.*

6 (1.41)

7 Grandma ↑↑Máalò[né xeyy:o]↑↑ nii a loo xoo Sikko zxa'nna nii  
 greetings uncle say 1s face uncle Frank dwarf say  
 ↑↑Greetings Uncle↑↑ I say to Uncle Frank the midget, say.

8 Father [Xhii eskie Manito] ?  
 how like.this NICKNAME]  
*Is that how it was little guy?*

9 (2.84)

10 Grandma (to mother) ↓↓°xoo Sikko zxa'nna↓↓ jlèé nze'e nii i°  
 Uncle Frank dwarf name there say 3s  
 ↓↓Uncle Frank the midget↓↓ he called him there

In line 3 of this sequence the grandmother both animates the correct way of speaking in falsetto voice with honorific kin terms and portrays impolite speech using low pitch and a derogatory nickname instead of the honorific kin term. The diminutized *te Sikko* and derogatory term *zxa'nna* both put into words the implications of the boy not speaking in the proper respect register. The “socially big” elder is depicted as small whereas the high-pitched voice of respect does the opposite, depicting the respectful speaker as smaller than the respected addressee.

The use of the falsetto voice register, like several other voice registers of Lachixío, has a function in Meso-America far beyond the Lachixío community (Sicoli 2010). There are enough instances in unrelated families to consider it one of the discourse features that defines the Meso-American linguistic area argued for by Campbell, Kaufman, and Smith-Stark (1986) on structural linguistic grounds. Describing a similar voice quality in another Zapotec community, Selby (1974) characterizes a “high-pitched

tone of voice" used in petitioning (a formal request enacting a reciprocal exchange of generally non-monetary goods). Selby explains: "the use of high-pitched voice means that this is a formal visit – a favor is to be asked" (1974: 23–5).<sup>1</sup> Similar functions of falsetto have also been observed in the distant Nahuatl area of Tlaxcala, and in the highland Maya region of Chiapas and Guatemala. Hill (2007) describes respectful greetings and directives issued in falsetto. Furbee (1988) describes falsetto voice in the respectful social action of petitioning in Tojolabal Maya, where, like in Selby's description, "the petitioner pitches his voice in a falsetto" (1988: 44). Pye (1986) alludes to high-pitched voice as a deference register in Quiché Maya and argues that because of this function high pitch is avoided in speech to children. The absence in much of indigenous Meso-America of the high pitch of the "motherese" register characteristic of Euro-American white middle-class child socialization is grounded in the use of high pitch and falsetto for respect. Its use toward babies would work against the age-grade-based social hierarchy. This is a parallel claim to that made by Ochs and Schieffelin (1984), who noted that motherese speech features such as high pitch, exaggerated intonations, and morpho-syntactic simplification were absent from child socialization of the Samoan and Kaluli populations among which they conducted fieldwork and argued that such child-accommodating register features would be mis-fitted to the local ideologies of social structure and language acquisition.

Falsetto voice, while little studied from sociolinguistic perspectives only a few years ago, has become a particularly iconic example for the function and distribution of voice registers. Podesva clearly showed through attending to frequency that its use varies with social events, participation frameworks, and social actions. Sicoli demonstrated its register qualities, showing variation with participation frameworks, an iconic gradient between relative degrees of respect indicated by high pitch and falsetto, and that the falsetto voice register has distribution as a discourse-level feature of multiple languages of the Meso-American linguistic area.

## 4 Creaky Voice

Creaky voice (vocal fry) has laryngeal features of strong adductive tension, medial compression, and low airflow, resulting in a low-frequency irregular tapping sound (Laver 1980: 126). It is identifiable on spectrograms in widely spaced irregular pulses of fundamental frequency. As early as the mid-1960s, Catford (1964) and Hollien and Michel (1968) described creaky voice as a phonational register. The social function of creaky voice for what Tannen calls the "taking on of voices" has been noted since Brown and Levinson (1987: 119, 267), who describe creaky voice among Tzeltal Maya speakers when seeking commiseration – a voice of complaining to seek sympathy. I have also described the same function for this voice quality in Lachixío, showing a similar geographic distribution as falsetto (Sicoli 2010: 542). In addition to seeking commiseration, in Lachixío creaky voice can be used reciprocally as a way of showing sympathy by mirroring a sympathy seeker's voice in response. The commiserating voice register is achieved through more prosodic features than phonation. In analyzing Tzeltal data provided by Brown I described it as "a voice with intonations falling repeatedly to

creaky voice" (Sicoli 2010: 543). A rhythmic periodicity of intonations falling to creaky voice also characterizes the voice register in Lachixío. This stylized intonation falling to creak is present in some varieties of Meso-American Spanish as well, particularly in a speech situation one finds common in urban tourist cities. The voice register is used by children begging for money or selling small crafts and also by some adult pedestrian vendors when attempting a sale.

In the United States creaky voice has been described with a range of functions in various ethnic communities. Mendoza-Denton (1997) describes creaky voice as a sign of a hardcore gang-girl persona in a California high school. She also shows creaky voice taken up in what Rampton (1995) calls "crossing" to mock this persona by someone who would not claim it as her own using the sentence ~*Yo soy del ba:RRio*:~ "I'm from the *barrio*" uttered in the low-pitched creaky voice (marked by tildes) stereotypical of someone from the *barrio* (Mendoza-Denton 1999: 279–80). Mendoza-Denton (2011) addresses the enregisterment of creaky voice, which as a voice feature is acquired and spread through a community of practice without conscious awareness of the feature. The situation is similar to how Gumperz (1992) described contextualization cues and to what I described above concerning the socialization to falsetto voice in Lachixío, where the voice is modeled for a child but never named as a referential object. Mendoza-Denton writes:

It is possible that the creaky voice identified as occurring in hardcore gangster personae is a type of generic contextualization cue across contexts of usage. By itself, it does not suffice to regiment a whole genre, especially since it is covert (as in some of Hill's examples of Mock Spanish, speakers have no awareness of the feature). On the other hand, it is robust enough that, in combination with other features such as discourse markers and codeswitching, it cues the occurrence and emerges in performances – though not descriptions – of hardcore Chicano gangster personae. (2011: 263)

Mendoza-Denton argues that creaky voice for Chicanas mobilizes a "hardcore persona" corresponding to "[managing] one's affect," which "includes not showing emotion," and is importantly not an index of masculinity (as has been argued in some other analyses of creaky voice in varieties of American, Australian, and British English). "Creaky voice participates in a local economy of affect centered around being silent, being hard of heart (hardcore), and being toughened through experience" (Mendoza-Denton 2011: 269). In this way the enregisterment of creaky voice among Chicanas is fundamentally different from the enregisterment of creaky voice observed among white upwardly mobile urban American women as represented in the work of Lefkowitz and Sicoli (2007) and Yuasa (2010).

The popular press has in the past few years been full of podcasts and news articles on creaky voice in American English with titles such as "Are 'creaking' pop stars changing how young women speak?" (Jaslow 2011), "Do you have 'annoying' girl voice?" (Weiss 2013), "Get your creak on: is 'vocal fry' a female fad?" (Steinmetz 2011), "'Vocal fry' creeping into US speech" (Fessenden 2011), and "Why old men find young women's voices so annoying" (Hess 2013). Commenters have been critical of women who use creaky voice, calling it annoying, irritating, or a fashion fad and relating it to

“uptalk,” a pattern of speech described by McLemore (1991) where a rising-final pitch contour is used in statements. The articles were prompted by a couple of recent studies on creaky voice/vocal fry in upwardly mobile, urban woman (Wolk, Abdelli-Beruh, and Slavin 2012; Yuasa 2010). Yuasa examined the indexicality of creaky voice among American women in naturalistic conversations recorded in California and conducted a matched-guise perception survey with subjects from California and Iowa who rated speakers with creaky voice to be “hesitant” and “not so confident” and also “urban” and “upwardly mobile” (2010: 330). Yuasa finds creaky voice to be rated as masculine or hyper-masculine, similarly to ratings reported by Henton and Bladon (1988) and Watt and Burns (2012) in Britain and Pittam (1987) in Australia.

In Lefkowitz and Sicoli (2007) we frame our discussion of creaky voice differently by considering creaky voice for its register function. In a study of recorded focus-group conversations between college students at a mid-Atlantic university, we found that, in addition to individual variation in which some youth (male and female) creaked more than others, and gender variation where women used creaky voice more than men, the use of creaky voice showed intraspeaker variation as a register feature that could be turned on or off. These findings are similar to those of Mendoza-Denton (1997), who reported that creak was used at times when a gang-girl persona was relevant but could be absent in interactions with parents, for example. In our data in Lefkowitz and Sicoli (2007), we related “getting your creak on” to assuming a position of power that goes against stereotypical norms of gender or rank, with the hyper-low pitch being a trope of masculinity and its cultural association with authority.

A conversation between three graduate students and one undergrad provides a clear example of the register function of creaky voice (example [3]). In this interaction the rank hierarchy was topicalized when the students introduced themselves. The most talkative grad student began the interaction by initiating a question sequence, “Now ↑~you’re~ an undergrad?” displaying creaky voice on “you’re” to which the undergrad replied in modal voice “yes.” The first speaker took third position with “~O.K~,” also in creaky voice, and another graduate student expanded, saying, “↑We’re all ~actually grad stu[udents so~,” with the two other grad students agreeing in overlap. The hierarchy well established in the first interactional moves, the graduate students dominated the conversation with the undergrad contributing minimally with responses and agreements without showing any creaky voice. However, when the topic of conversation shifted into an area where it became clear that the grad student who held the floor knew less than the undergrad, the undergrad took the floor and began to display the creaky voice register. In example (3), G1, G2, and G3 represent the graduate students and UG the undergraduate. The students are talking about a university honor code and the single sanction of expulsion for any violation. G1 is the most talkative, with G2 and G3 positioning themselves as knowing less about the subject in lines 2 “I don’t know what that is” and 3 “What’s that?” In 4, G1 directly addresses UG, asking, “Do you know, about single sanction?” to which UG responds, “A little bit,” a statement that also positions herself with less right to talk. After a group chuckle G1 then goes on to provide a trivially funny hypothetical example in 7–9, though by the end of 9 it is clear she is pushing the limits of her knowledge, becoming non-specific and hedging: “I think or something.” The UG gives a supportive response in 10: “I think that IS how it works.” It turns out (we later learn) that UG served on a university committee

on the honor code. This relative knowledge difference (affording a right/obligation to speak) ultimately became clear as the graduate student became more disfluent in 11–18. By 19 UG had shifted her footing and took the floor to speak authoritatively on the subject. At this moment she also began to creak heavily.

(3)

- 1 G1: but I mean the only thing that I really know about it is  
the single sanction *~thing~*, like people be*~ing~*, so  
*~passionate about it~*.
- 2 G2: I don't know [what that is].
- 3 G3: [What's that?]
- 4 G1: It's the only thing that really distinguishes, *~this~*  
honor code from, every other *~place's honor code~*. So  
like, um, and correct– ((to UG)) Do you know, about single  
sanction?
- 5 UG: little bit. A little bit
- 6 All: ((laughter))
- 7 G1: Yeah it's like if I: You know so its– I maliciously steal.  
h. h. like, Anna's pencil,
- 8 ALL: ((laughter))
- 9 G1: and, you know she's like n she was being malicious, you  
know, whatever it doesn't even matter the *~intent~*, if  
she:, brings it up as a charge, to the honor *~council~*,  
then, that, kind of like gets the same, penal*~ty as~* (.)  
something else I think or [something,
- 10 UG: I think that IS how it works
- 11 G1: I mean it's, it's, it's a little bit
- 12 G2: so: like students can:, bring *~other~* students *~up on~*,  
[charges
- 13 UG: [you usually can too, right?
- 14 G1: *~yes~*
- 15 UG: yeah.

- 16 G1: yeah that's ~true~ and that's,
- 17 G2: OK.
- 18 G1: and I don't know if [that's something
- 19 UG: [ >like if you write a bad check<  
was I think the example they  
~gave us~,
- 20 G3: [Really:
- 21 UG: [theoretically they ~could~, charge you with an  
~honor violation~, cuz it's lying cheating, ~or  
stealing~, everything else is student ~code of  
conduct~, so that would be: ~lying~, I ~guess~,  
(if you) purpose~ly write a bad check~, ...

A parallel example we present analyzes a recording of a female scientist interviewed by a man on NPR. The woman creaks more when assuming an authoritative stance, which in the cross-gender interaction goes against the common indexical associations of gender and power (an inversion of authority). While more common in women, this pattern of creaky voice also occurs with some men when stepping up as an authority in dialogic contexts. In Lefkowitz and Sicoli (2007) we also found this use of the creaky voice register to be lesser or absent in African American women and proposed the hypothesis that it also has a dimension of whiteness. Perhaps this pattern is based on a similar dynamic to the hyper-correction that Labov (1972) observed among lower-middle-class New Yorkers (more proximal to upper-middle-class norms) but not among the working-class populations (more distal). The single index of power and authority afforded by the ultra-low pitch of creaky voice may appear more effective where the index of whiteness positions a woman closer to the axis of white, male authority.

A dimension of race for creaky voice is something that I think has been overlooked in the recent news trends and scholarship on creaky voice in “American women” (as if a homogeneous group). Studies by Wolk, Abdelli-Beruh, and Slavin (2012) and Yuasa (2010) do not take into account Mendoza-Denton’s (1997, 1999, 2011) work on creaky voice among Chicana gang girls in California involving other Americans for whom creaky voice functions differently. Missing such variation reproduces a common ideology in which whiteness is hidden in the unmodified term *American*, which Hill (1998) showed to not be neutral when in a semantic field with terms such as *African American*, *Asian American*, *Mexican American*, and *Native American*. Describing a pattern of “American English” is an erasure of the marked nature of the actual (often white, middle-class) subject pools of psychology, an erasure that has slanted much study in this area to be rather about particular social groups than about the psychological universals they are

claimed to indicate. Chicanas have different social motivations for the situated use of creaky voice (hardcore, toughness, lack of emotion).

In sum, the constellation of sociocultural constructs (Du Bois 2014) associated with creaky voice in these studies include *commiseration* involving the seeking of sympathy (Brown and Levinson 1987; Sicoli 2010) and responding to someone seeking sympathy (Sicoli 2010), *toughness/hardness* (Mendoza-Denton 1997, 2011), *upward mobility* (Yuasa 2010), and *insecure or inverted authority* (Lefkowitz and Sicoli 2007). In different social groups, creaky voice has been enregistered with different clusters of indexes, showing us (like falsetto) that, while some meanings cluster, the range of possible associations of voice registers is wide. Rather than search for abstract “social meanings” of phonations it would be more fruitful to ground analysis in the affordances of situated social relations for enregisterment.

## 5 Whisper Voice

Whisper voice (whispering) is a phonation characterized by a triangular opening of the glottis with low adductive tension and moderate to high medial compression (Laver 1980: 120). The “meaning” of whisper has in the literature often been mapped onto the single function of “conspiratorial voice,” as Watt and Burns (2012) found some British English speakers labeled the voice. While whisper may be used for secrecy between participants to reduce the potential for unratified overhearers, the most interesting uses of whisper occur when it is deployed as a public sign – for both addressees and overhearers to hear you whispering.

In many regions of Meso-America whisper functions in intimate talk, such as talk to babies and instructions to children. Pye (1986) describes such uses in Guatemala, Furbee described a breathy whispery voice used with children in Tojolabal (pers. comm. 2009), Brown reported the use of whisper for soft imperatives to babies in Tzeltal Maya of Tenejapa Chiapas (pers. comm. 2009), and I described its use with children among Zapotec speakers in Oaxaca (Sicoli 2010). In Lachixío there is a public whisper that combines with gaze to restrict a participation frame by singling out one person and excluding others. To achieve this the whisper is clearly intended for others to hear, as example (4) illustrates.

This short transcript is taken from my fieldwork in Lachixío. A longer transcript can be found in Sicoli (2010). Here a woman with the pseudonym Mary is seated facing and about a meter from an elder woman whom she and her husband are visiting and with whom she has been using the respectful falsetto voice register. Her husband is seated over two meters to her right. She selects only her husband as addressee by using the whispered voice (marked between percent signs % ... %) and shifts her gaze to negotiate with him when they will leave to run errands before the stores close.

(4)

1     **Mary (gaze on husband):**  
           %Ixxhole'e lò txonno txa'a%  
           advise       2s when    POT.GO.1PL  
           %Tell me when we're going.%

- 2     **Husband:**     **Kaa**  
                           where  
                           *Where?*
- 3     **Mary:**            %Ni'i Speránza tzalò beè ndxò é%  
                           house NAME            close PL 3F 3o  
                           %*Hope's store, she's going to close it early.*%
- 4     **Husband:**     **Steme'e            tzyáà en chí'ño'   tzyáà minútto'**  
                           another.bit   only   in 15            only minute  
                           *Just 15 minutes longer.*

By publically whispering, Mary explicitly marks the participant roles of the speech event to importantly exclude the elder female with whom she has been using falsetto voice. The elder is constructed as what Goffman (1981) called an *unratified overhearer* rather than an addressee, relieving Mary's social obligation to use the respectful falsetto voice with her.

Outside the accounts presented here from different areas of Meso-America, very little is known about the social uses of whispered voice registers.

## 6 Breathy Voice

Breathy voice is a phonation characterized by a looseness and aperiodic vibration of the vocal folds, often with slight audible friction (Laver 1980: 132). This section briefly summarizes sociolinguistic perspectives on breathy voice by Hall (1995), Starr (2007), and Sicoli (2007, 2010).

Hall considers the construction of persona through the medium of fantasy phone 900-number services. The telephone medium is particularly appropriate to examine voice quality because, "in the absence of a visual link, the ideal [woman] is created solely through language" (Hall 1995: 193). Hall describes dynamic uses of the voice including whisper voice and also voices "moving from high-pitched, gasping expressions of pleasure to low-pitched, breathy-voice innuendoes" (1995: 193). A familiar example for some may be the stereotypical femininity of Marilyn Monroe.

Starr (2007) explores the voice qualities that characterize a feminine style in Japanese *anime* voice-overs including breathy voice. She asserts that Japanese "sweet voice" is more complicated than only involving continuous breathy phonation and analyzes a dynamic breathiness occurring most frequently at the ends of segments, even adding a breath to the end of a segment. Starr considers the use of voice quality because it is often considered beyond conscious control, yet its use gives authenticity to the use of other features of Japanese women's language (Starr 2007: 19).

I have described breathy voice in Lachixío in strongly asserted repeats functioning as confirmation requests. Example (5) is from a conversation between David from Lachixío and Mariano of neighboring San Miguel Mixtepec at Mariano's house (Sicoli



## 7 Discussion

Voice registers are pervasive and yet understudied features of human discourse in which the metacommunicative framing of speech by voice quality is a prosodically explicit realization of what Bakhtin described as *double voicing*. Since Bateson (1955) proposed the metacommunicative framing of all acts of communication to be a functional link between the structure of animal communication and human communication, the framing of the voice in interaction has deserved the critical attention of discourse analysts as this focus may allow us to gain a better understanding of some fundamental levels of organization in human language. Particularly it may be important for understanding two important milestones in language evolution: the development of voluntary laryngeal control and the emergence of predicate–argument structure in coded propositions.

The neurobiologist Deacon (1997) as well as evolutionary speech anatomists Fitch (2010) and Lieberman (2005) all suggest that the major differences between the speech-related neurology of humans and that of our closest relatives the chimpanzees and bonobos are not primarily in the supralaryngeal control of the oral tract (lips, jaw, and tongue) but rather that the great apes do not have the developed neurological pathways associated with voluntary laryngeal control. The talents great apes have shown for communicating involve sign language and lexigrams, using tactile/visual modalities that are flexible and voluntary for apes, and not with vocalizations, which Fitch (2010) and Tomasello (2008) argue to be rather fixed and limited to expressing emotional states. In contrast the human larynx is responsible for the microsecond-by-microsecond shifts associated with the voicing, voicelessness, and non-modal phonations of consonants and vowels. The voice registers that have been the topic of this chapter show great laryngeal control and time-alignment between a laryngeal frame and words or phrases. As humans we can turn on or turn off phonations as well as raise and lower our pitch across entire phrases in meaningful ways. Prelinguistic children can be heard playing with their phonational settings, and these laryngeal qualities are key features in both the conscious and unconscious communication of emotions, as observed by Reno (2012) in a non-speaking child with autism and cross-culturally in nonverbal utterances by Sauter *et al.* (2010).

The semiotic configuration where voice quality frames a word or phrase is a simple syntax that creates propositions through a semiotic simultaneity with a similar effect to what emotional predications such as “I’m happy you came” do sequentially. Children at the one-word stage can actually communicate a range of propositions by the layering of voice qualities on a single word. As such, the one-word stage should not be taken to mean a one-sign stage. We can instantly tell whether a child saying a word like *dog* is feeling joyful or threatened/frightened or whether an object of focus is desired or despised. From a multimodal perspective many so-called one-word utterances are rather propositions in which predicate and argument are distributed across modalities (Sicoli 2013). Thus voice quality can also be used with a pointing gesture. A point to a referent with a falsetto shriek indexes a different emotional predication than a point with a harsh-breathy voice or than it does with a whining nasal voice.

In the evolution from the lack of voluntary laryngeal control to the orchestrated coordination between the laryngeal and supralaryngeal micro-articulations of the vocal

tract, the larger domain of alignment found in voice registers involves behaviors on which natural selection could act that would have paved the way for articulated language. Such multimodal configurations productive at the origins of human communication are still an important part of every human language today, with insights into their biocultural evolution available to us through analysis of their functions in discourse. While we are only beginning to study voice qualities today, understanding their practice in social discourse is fundamental to better understanding human language.

## NOTES

- 1 Thanks to Brian Stross who pointed me to Selby's work. This chapter is dedicated to Brian's memory and work with falsetto voice.

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# 6 Computer-Mediated Discourse 2.0

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## 0 Introduction

*Computer-mediated discourse* (CMD) is the communication produced when human beings interact with one another by transmitting messages via networked or mobile computers, where “computers” are defined broadly to include any digital communication device.<sup>1</sup> The study of CMD is a specialization within the broader interdisciplinary study of computer-mediated communication (CMC), distinguished by its focus on *language and language use* and by its use of methods of *discourse analysis* to address that focus.

The nature of CMD varies depending on the technical properties of the CMC system used and the social and cultural context embedding particular instances of use. Originally, most CMC was *text based* – that is, messages were typed on a computer keyboard and read as text on a computer screen – and accessed through stand-alone clients. Text-based CMC modes include email, discussion forums, newsgroups, chat, MUDs (multiuser dimensions or multiuser dungeons) and MOOs (MUDs, object oriented), blogs, microblogs, and wikis. Increasingly, however, textual CMC has been supplemented by graphical, audio, and/or video channels of communication, and multiple modes of CMC are available on Web 2.0 platforms and smartphones. All of these environments provide rich contexts in which to observe verbal interaction and the relationship between discourse and social practice.

The first research on computer-mediated language was conducted in the 1980s (Murray 1985, 1988; Severinson Eklundh 1986), but language scholars did not begin to take serious notice of CMD until 1991, with the publication of Ferrara, Brunner, and Whittemore’s “Interactive written discourse as an emergent genre.” Since then, linguists have been researching CMD at an accelerating rate, broadening the scope of inquiry and generating an ever-growing list of published resources. Indeed, CMD

research has expanded so dramatically since the first version of this chapter was published that it is no longer possible to summarize its findings in a single chapter. The earlier version included structure below the level of the utterance – typography, orthography, and word-formation processes in CMC. In order to keep the scope manageable while bringing the coverage up to date, the present chapter focuses on discourse more narrowly defined – language use at the level of the utterance and above – as described in research published since 1999, when the original chapter was written. Like the earlier version, this chapter is concerned primarily with discourse in interactive (as opposed to monologue or broadcast) CMC.<sup>2</sup>

The remainder of the chapter is organized into six broad sections, each of them representing an active area of CMD research. Section 1 addresses the nature of CMD in relation to written and spoken language, and identifies technologically, culturally, and historically based CMC types. Section 2 discusses CMD structure at the utterance, message, exchange, and conversation levels. Section 3 considers meaning as it is expressed through discourse usage: of words, utterances, messages, and genres. Section 4 considers how participants in CMD negotiate turn-taking and maintain cross-turn coherence despite constraints on interaction management imposed by CMC systems. Section 5 discusses CMD in the service of social goals ranging from self-presentation to interpersonal interaction to engagement with mass-media discourses. Section 6 addresses recent developments in multimodal CMD, including decorated text, graphical icons, audio, video, and text embedded in graphics. The chapter concludes by identifying trends in CMD that are likely to grow in importance in the future.

## **1 Classification of Computer-Mediated Discourse**

Starting in the late 1980s and continuing through the present time, language scholars have classified CMD according to various principles. Four approaches are discussed below, roughly in chronological order: CMD as a modality, CMD as individual modes/genres, CMD as sets of characteristics that cross-cut modes, and CMD in relation to its offline and online antecedents. Each of these approaches illuminates different aspects of CMD and facilitates identifying questions, choosing methods, and interpreting results in CMD research, as well as enabling comparison with other types of discourse.

### **1.1 Modality**

In the early days of CMC systems, some scholars characterized CMD as a single language variety (e.g., Ferrara, Brunner, and Whittemore 1991; see also Crystal 2001 on “Netspeak”). Relatedly, a number of scholars attempted to classify CMD as either writing or (typed) speech (e.g., Hård af Segerstad 2002; Maynor 1994). However, CMD does not fit easily into either modality: while the means of production are similar in textual CMD and other forms of writing, CMD exhibits features of orality as well as characteristics unique to itself.

Nor is CMD a single language variety. Other scholars, noting that speech and writing are not dichotomous but rather are situated along a continuum (see Biber 1988), have distinguished between synchronous and asynchronous CMD, situating asynchronous modes such as email closer to the written end of the written–spoken continuum than synchronous modes such as chat, which tend to exhibit more “oral” features (e.g., Condon and Čech 2010; Herring 2001). That is, as CMC on the Internet became more diversified, there was a growing recognition that language was used differently in different kinds of CMC.

## 1.2 Modes, genres, and discourse types

A more differentiated approach to classification focuses on emic (culturally recognized) categories of CMC, such as modes, genres, and discourse types. Common *modes* such as private email, electronic mailing lists, Web forums, chat, instant messaging, and blogs are socially as well as technologically defined, each having their own unique affordances, histories, and cultures of use. The term “mode” was first used in this sense by Murray (1988).

CMD also manifests different *discourse types* and *genres*, which often recall those in offline communication. CMC is *conversational* in chat rooms, instant messaging, Web forums, and the like, as well as in online environments that are not primarily intended for conversation such as photo- and video-sharing sites (e.g., Bou-Franch, Lorenzo-Dus, and Blitvich 2012). *Narrative* is salient in multiuser role-playing games, and people often produce fragments of narrative, or “small stories” (Georgakopoulou 2013), in online environments – fragments that may be expanded through interaction with other participants. Even *expository* text such as encyclopedia entries on Wikipedia are collaboratively constructed and discussed on the “Talk” pages that accompany each entry.

Some genres that at first blush appear unique to CMC can also be classified in familiar terms, particularly when these are viewed not so much as fixed sets of features than as responses to common communicative exigencies, as suggested by Giltrow (2013). For example, the blog (sub)genres of filter blog and personal journal recall the offline genres of journalistic commentary and diary, respectively (Herring *et al.* 2004). And the online genre of the Nigerian scam letter, as described by Blommaert and Omoniyi (2006) and Gill (2013), is a type of “appeals letter” of the *hortatory* discourse type (in the terms of Longacre 1992), adapted to the scammers’ desire to appear legitimate and trustworthy and to appeal to the recipients’ greed so that they send their private banking details in response to promises of large sums of money.

Mode- and genre-based analyses provide a convenient shorthand for categorizing CMD types. At the same time, CMD is shaped by a variety of technical and situational factors, making it variable within as well as across modes. For example, Herring (2007) observed that personal-journal blogs on the open-access blog-hosting platform LiveJournal differ in many respects from a privately developed, limited-access educational blog for children, even though both fall within the blog mode and the personal-journal blog genre, and these differences have consequences for language use.

### 1.3 *Faceted classification*

A third approach involves classifying CMD data according to a pre-defined set of factors. Several early studies invoked Hymes's (1974) SPEAKING taxonomy to characterize samples of CMD (e.g., Murray 1988). In a taxonomy more tailored to CMD, Baym (1995) identified five factors that condition behavior and language use in Internet discussion groups: the external contexts – physical, cultural, and subcultural – in which CMC use is situated; the temporal structure of the group; the computer system infrastructure; the purpose of communication; and the characteristics of the group and its members.

A more fine-grained classification scheme was developed by Herring (2007). In this scheme, multiple categories or “facets” cut across the boundaries of sociotechnical modes and combine to allow for the identification of a nuanced set of CMD types. The scheme comprises two sets of facets: medium and situation.

The medium facets posited to influence CMD include available channels of communication, synchronicity, one-way versus two-way message transmission, message persistence, message format, and size of message buffer. While the case for the deterministic influence of the computer medium on language use is often overstated, properties of computer-messaging systems sometimes do shape CMD, especially interaction management, as discussed in Section 4. The situation facets posited by Herring (2007) include group size, participant characteristics, purpose of communication, topic or theme, norms of social appropriateness, and code or language variety used. Situational shaping is especially pronounced in self-presentation and social dynamics in online discourse.

The facets in this scheme are open sets that can be expanded as CMD evolves. For example, recent social media call for the addition of social networking affordances to the set of medium facets, such as friending and linking, including “like” links. Moreover, the traditional distinction between synchronous and asynchronous CMD is breaking down in CMC systems that enable real-time chat but also preserve a record of the interaction that can be accessed later, as in Facebook's current private-messaging feature, which combines chat and asynchronous messages.

### 1.4 *Classification of “Discourse 2.0”*

The term *Web 2.0* refers to Web-based platforms that incorporate user-generated content and social interaction, often alongside or in response to structures and/or (multimedia) content provided by the sites themselves; such platforms have been ascendant since the turn of the millennium. A common characteristic of Web 2.0 environments is the co-occurrence or convergence of different modes of communication on a single platform.

The discourse in these new environments – or “Discourse 2.0” – introduces new types of *content*, such as status updates, text annotations on video, tags on social bookmarking sites, and edits on wikis. New *contexts* must also be considered – for example, social network sites based on geographic location – as well as new (mass-media) audiences. Discourse 2.0 manifests new *usage patterns*, as well, such as media co-activity (near-simultaneous multiple activities on a single platform [e.g., Herring *et al.* 2009]) and

multi-authorship, and joint discourse production (e.g., Androutsopoulos 2011). These reflect, in part, new *affordances* made available by new communication technologies: text chat in multi-player online games (MOGs); collaboratively editable environments such as wikis; and “friending” and social tagging/recommending on social network sites. Furthermore, Discourse 2.0 includes *user adaptations* to circumvent the constraints of Web 2.0 environments, such as interactive uses of @, #, and retweeting on Twitter (e.g., boyd, Golder, and Lotan 2010; Honeycutt and Herring 2009; Page 2012).

Discourse phenomena in Web 2.0 environments can be classified in relation to their antecedents (or lack of antecedents) as *familiar*, *reconfigured*, or *emergent* (Herring 2013a). Phenomena *familiar* from older CMD modes such as email and chat appear to carry over into Web 2.0 environments with minimal differences; examples include non-standard typography and orthography, code-switching, gender differences, and email hoaxes. CMD phenomena that adapt to and are *reconfigured* by Web 2.0 environments include personal status updates and quoting/retweeting, which have traceable online antecedents. Finally, new or *emergent* phenomena that did not exist prior to the era of Web 2.0 include the dynamic collaborative discourse that takes place on wikis, along with conversational video exchanges and multimodal conversation more generally.

The following sections summarize key findings of CMD research, with an emphasis on the 15 years since the earlier version of this chapter was written. The sections are ordered according to the levels of CMD analysis as described in Herring (2004, 2013a): structure, meaning, interaction, social practice, and multimodality. This is a heuristic for organizational purposes; several phenomena could be described at more than one level.

## 2 Discourse Structure

Some of the most iconic properties of computer-mediated language are structural features at the sentence level and below: creative and non-standard typography, spelling, word-formation processes, and syntax. A recent overview of such features can be found in Herring (2012). The focus in this section is on structure at the utterance level and above: messages, exchanges, and threads or conversations.

People often produce grammatically correct sentences in textual CMD, especially in asynchronous modes such as email (which allow more time for editing) when the writers are well educated, the purpose of the communication is professional, and the tone is serious. Yet deviations from standard sentence structure also occur often – elided elements, missing or incorrect capitalization and punctuation, sentence fragments, and so on. Thus it makes sense to consider “utterances,” rather than “sentences,” as the basic units that constitute and combine to form messages in CMD, where utterance is defined as a sequence of one or more words that is preceded and followed by silence (space) or a change in communicator. Note that punctuation is not part of this definition, as it is not uncommon for utterances in CMD to lack final punctuation.

Utterances can constitute micro-messages in and of themselves. This occurs most often in synchronous chat, and in text messaging and status updates on social media

services such as Twitter that impose technical limits on message length. (At the time of this writing, the limits are 160 characters for text messages and 140 characters for tweets.) Each of the following utterances is a message – in this case, a Facebook status update (from Lee 2011).

- (1) Amy<sup>3</sup> is in a good mood.  
Snow is “I’ve seen you in the shadow”.  
Kenneth quitting facebook.  
Katy: ?

As these examples illustrate, single-utterance messages are often considerably shorter than the maximum allowed. Moreover, users sometimes break utterances into multiple messages (posting units), even when there is no need to do so to avoid message length constraints, as in the following IM example (Baron 2010):

- (2) Joan: that must be nice  
Joan: to be in love  
Joan: in the spring

Baron suggests that such breaks reflect intonation units in speech. Posting messages in short bursts in synchronous CMD can also be a strategy to approximate a faster, more “speech-like” pace and/or to hold the floor by not leaving time for another participant’s message to intervene while one composes a complex utterance.

Asynchronous messages, in contrast, tend to be made up of more than one utterance, and thus they have more possibilities for internal structure. Herring (1996) identified a basic three-move schema in messages posted to academic mailing lists: (1) *link to an earlier message*, (2) *express views*, and (3) *appeal to other participants*. Condon and Čech (2010) found that email messages displayed a similar three-move structure in a task where subjects had to recommend musicians for awards in various categories, as in the following example.

- (3) Hello! [1] Sorry it took so long for me to respond to your letter..I haven’t been at school lately. Vacation was great..but it never seems to last long enough! [2] I think for best female vocalist we should choose Alanis..seems like she has gotten really hot lately. I think your idea of going from easy listening to heavy is great. I don’t have my paper with me right now that has all of our choices on it so there isn’t much more I can think of.. [3] so I will close here and check in probably on wednesday.. talk to you later

Structure was also evident in Condon and Čech’s study in the decision schema that the participants followed in order to complete the music awards task, consisting of repeated cycles of the moves *orientation – suggestion – agreement*. The asynchronous messages sometimes combined more than one move from the decision schema – in the above example, an orientation and a suggestion followed by an agreement

with a previous suggestion by the addressee – whereas the synchronous exchanges tended to express the moves of the sequence in separate messages by alternating participants.

As this example suggests, the more structured the communicative task, the more predictable is the sequence of moves. And the more predictable the move sequence, the more it is possible to leave moves unexpressed in CMD, increasing the efficiency of task-focused exchanges. Condon and Čech (2010) found that, when communicating via either synchronous or asynchronous CMC, subjects in their study tended to abbreviate the moves of the decision schema more than when communicating face to face, omitting certain moves (such as agreement) that were assumed to be understood. Similarly, Ford (2002) found synchronous chat reference interactions to be more routinized than face-to-face interactions with reference librarians: the former were shorter (13 vs. 63 turns, on average), expressed a narrower range of information needs, and followed more predictable move sequences, especially during openings.

Structure can also be discerned in casual chat exchanges, despite a tendency in synchronous CMD for adjacency pairs – moves that should logically be adjacent – to be interrupted by unrelated messages. Some evidence suggests that participants in dyadic social chat tend to follow a global schematic structure. Goutsos (2005) proposed that two-party IRC (Internet Relay Chat) exchanges between Greek–English bilinguals are oriented toward an ideal schema consisting of three phases (*opening – body – closing*) and characteristic speech acts, such as self-identification, introduction, development, pre-closing, and greeting (closing). Similarly, Herring (2006) proposed a jointly constructed, seven-move schema for dyadic instant messaging conversations between previously acquainted chatters in English:

- 1 Greeting – greeting
- 2 Formulaic inquiry – reply
- 3 Question/topic initiation 1 – response 1
- 4 Question/topic initiation 2 ... n – response 2 ... n
- 5 Closing initiation – (response)
- 6 Arrange to talk later – (response)
- 7 Leave-taking – leave-taking

Informal observation suggests that adherence to this schema is more evident in text chat than in face-to-face conversation, perhaps to compensate for the relative lack of feedback and cues in textual CMC and to make it easier to follow. The nature of turns and turn-taking in CMD is discussed further in Section 4.

### 3 Meaning

In CMD, meaning is constituted and negotiated almost entirely through verbal discourse. This is especially true in textual CMD, in which context cues are reduced relative to face-to-face communication. This section discusses how discourse and

pragmatic meanings are conveyed through words, utterances, emoticons, (violations of) genre conventions, performativity, and intertextuality in textual CMD.

The choice, frequency, and distribution of *words* can indicate what a segment of discourse is about (topicality), as well as communicators' attitudes and affective states. For example, Cohn, Mehl, and Pennebaker (2004) compared LiveJournal bloggers' affective and psychological states before and after the events of 9/11 using the LIWC (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count) data-analysis tool. They found a sharp decrease in emotional-positivity words starting on 9/11, accompanied by sharp increases in words reflecting cognitive processes, social processes, and psychological distancing, with psychological distancing words taking the longest to return to pre-9/11 levels. Automated tools such as LIWC enable large samples of text to be mined for meaning at minimum cost.

In the Cohn, Mehl, and Pennebaker study, meaning was given off unconsciously, through cumulative word choices over time. People interacting via CMD also produce meaning intentionally, via utterances that aim to convey a particular illocutionary force (see Searle 1975). A number of CMD studies have analyzed the use of individual *speech acts*: apologies in mailing lists (Harrison and Allton 2013), advice in a community blog for mothers and mothers-to-be (Kouper 2010), and rejections of date requests in an online dating service (Tong and Walther 2011), for example. Nastri, Peña, and Hancock (2006) analyzed the acts found in IM "away" messages using Searle's (1975) taxonomy of assertives, directives, commissives, and expressives; the "away" messages in their corpus mainly used assertive acts (e.g., "at the library") followed by expressives (e.g., "I love Fridays") and commissives (e.g., "be back at 5").

With the goal of creating an act taxonomy that could be used to analyze all types of CMD, Herring, Das, and Penumarthy (2005) proposed a coding scheme consisting of 16 "CMC acts." Each act – roughly the semantic equivalent of a structural utterance – is further classified according to whether it expresses the utterer directly or the speech/thought of someone else, and whether the act is bona fide or non-bona fide (e.g., humorous, ironic, sarcastic, deceptive). The act taxonomy was applied to messages in five teen chat sites by Kapidzic and Herring (2011), who found that the frequency of most acts varied according to the topic of discussion. Overall, however, boys produced more manipulative (invite, direct) and girls produced more reactive (react, reject) acts, in keeping with the complementary roles they tended to assume in flirtatious interaction, a frequent activity on the sites. Thus in CMD, as in speech, illocutionary acts mirror the message producers' communicative goals.

*Emoticons* – the most common of which are variations on the smile, the wink, and the frown – express meaning iconically (happiness, sadness, etc.). Dresner and Herring (2010) argue that emoticons can also be used to modify the illocutionary force of computer-mediated utterances. Following a complaint with a smiling or winking emoticon can shift its pragmatic meaning to an ironic observation, for example. More generally, the use of any emoticon imparts a metamessage of playfulness or non-seriousness, and it may function as a signal that the act it is associated with is non-bona fide.

Intentionally *deceptive messages* constitute another category of non-bona-fide communication. Hancock (2007) found that people lie less in CMC than in synchronous, record-less media such as telephone and face-to-face communication. Moreover, when typing deceptive messages, CMC users tend to employ more words and avoid first-person

references, presumably to deflect attention from themselves, although it is unclear how conscious this strategy is.

The harder a cue is to access through conscious reflection and control, the more reliable an indicator of authenticity it is (Donath 1999). *Identity or category deception*, where people present themselves as a different gender, age, or race (for example), offers good illustrations of this. Identity deception typically involves making explicit identity claims, including adopting category-specific user IDs, and invoking stereotypical features of communication of the category claimed – that is, via cues that are easy to manipulate. Herring and Martinson (2004) found that participants in an online gender-deception game manipulated stereotypical content cues while retaining features of their offline gendered discourse styles, which were presumably less available for conscious manipulation. Moreover, other participants tended to focus on the stereotyped cues more than on discourse styles when assessing gender authenticity, often leading to mistaken judgments.

Online frauds, scams, and hoaxes represent other *deceptive genres* of CMD. “Nigerian letters” are for the most part easy to spot as deceptive, in that they violate numerous pragmatic norms, including of the letter genre itself (Blommaert and Omoniyi 2006; Gill 2013). Hoax chain letters (“Forward this message to everyone you know ...”) employ a variety of persuasive and interactional tactics and are more successful in their uptake (Heyd 2013). Heyd draws a parallel between email hoaxes and trolling – disingenuously posting provocative message content with the goal of embroiling others in fruitless argument. Both are intended for the amusement of the originator and others “in the know” at the expense of those gullible enough to fall for the ruse. These examples show that deceptive meanings reside not only in words and utterances but also at the generic level. As Heyd puts it, certain genres have “an in-built insincerity” (2013: 389).

The power of language to create meaning in CMD is nowhere more evident than in *performative utterances* and sequences that “do by saying.” These range from fixed expressions such as *LOL* (“laughing out loud”) to more creative variants such as \*wipes away a tear\* to extended playful sequences such as the thread in example 5 below, from a Web forum about cosmetics (adapted from Virtanen 2013).

- (4) On a break with SO [significant other] I deserve a mini-haul ... right?? :-)
- User1
  - [...]
    - The very best medicine there is! Who needs men when theres makeup? :P User2
      - o Ok. I, User3, hereby do declare that any and all problems, breakups, breaks, r/o arguments, or any other “situations” with any SO be it man or woman, totally warrant, deserve, and indeed require splurges, hauls and indulgences of any kind. User3
        - I second the motion! User4
          - o thirded. Motion passes. User5
        - here, here! :D User6
        - SO HELP ME GOD. User7

User3’s formal performative (“I hereby declare”) and legalistic lexicon (e.g., “any and all,” “warrant”) cue a play frame that subsequent posters elaborate upon with

further performatives; together the users perform the roles of participants in a courthouse or town hall meeting. These non-bona-fide utterances incorporate two subject positions – that of a participant on the cosmetics forum and that of an imagined legal authority.

*Intertextuality* is manifested through implicit cultural references, as in the performativity example above. CMD users also incorporate outside context to create meaning by paraphrasing, quoting, retweeting, or linking to other texts elsewhere on the Web. Hodsdon Champeon (2010) found that participants in a racially antagonistic online discussion also conveyed meaning through their choice of intertextual reference strategy. They tended to use indirect reference strategies for ideas they felt were valid or true and direct quotations (which are easier to discredit) for those they considered invalid or false. However, the type of intertextual reference used had no correlation with the participants' ideologies about race, which were expressed mainly through the stances they adopted toward racially sensitive issues.

## 4 Interaction Management

In Hodsdon Champeon's (2010) study, newsgroup participants sometimes alternated between positive and negative stances to create the impression of a back-and-forth debate within a single message. *Quoting* part of another user's message and then responding to it in the same message is another way to create the illusion of a conversational exchange (Severinson Eklundh 2010). Similarly, a retweeted message on Twitter may simultaneously report what someone else tweeted and provide context for the retweeter's response to it. Such strategies are useful in multiparticipant asynchronous CMD, where the logical adjacency of turns is disrupted by other unrelated messages and/or when considerable time has elapsed between the original message and the response.

The interactional aspect of CMD is more explicitly evident in message exchanges involving multiple participants. As in spoken discourse, these exchanges raise issues of interaction management that include coherence, relevance, turn-taking, topic development, non-response, floor, and repair. A "turn" is understood here as the smallest interactionally relevant complete linguistic unit in a given context. In CMD, most *turn units* are also message units (Condon and Čech 2001), with the exception of single turns that are broken up across multiple messages, as in example (2) – for example, to hold the floor and/or to simulate a spoken pace of conversation.

Perhaps more than any other aspect of CMD, interaction management is shaped by the medium characteristics of CMC systems. In particular, one-way message transmission, in which the recipient does not see the message until it is transmitted in its entirety, affects the *coherence* of exchanges. Disrupted adjacency occurs when logically related turns are separated by unrelated turns posted by the same or other participants (Garcia and Jacobs 1999; Herring 1999). The interactional difficulties caused by disrupted adjacency should not be exaggerated, however. Several studies have found that even when many adjacent messages appear unrelated, chat participants are able to read the different threads and reconstruct the adjacency of each message (Örnberg Berglund 2009; Schönfeldt and Golato 2003; Simpson 2005). In environments such as

multiparticipant chat rooms, where disrupted adjacency is common, communicators may even come to accept tenuous or “loose” relatedness of adjacent turns as normal (Herring 2013b).

More profound disruptions of traditional turn-taking norms occur in two-way message transmission systems, which display messages keystroke by keystroke as they are typed. For example, in the synchronous VAX “phone” application studied by Anderson, Beard, and Walther (2010), three participants in a problem-solving task tended to alternate between typing at the same time and then pausing at the same time to read what the others had written. This strategy, which violates the “no gap, no overlap” principle posited by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) for turn-taking in speech, makes more efficient use of participants’ time than alternating turns. Anecdotal evidence suggests that participants in one-way CMC sometimes employ a simultaneous type-and-pause strategy as well.

Medium characteristics also affect *turn allocation* in multiparticipant CMD. Absent the traditional face-to-face signals through which a speaker selects a next speaker – for example, body orientation, gaze, intonation, pausing – a current “speaker” in textual CMD will often employ explicit addressivity – naming a next speaker – or next speakers will self-select. However, there is some evidence that participants who self-select are less likely to receive a subsequent response (Panyametheekul and Herring 2007). Turn allocation is less relevant in two-way CMC, since participation tends not to be based on turn alternation.

Multiple responders who are unaware of what others are typing can generate redundant responses or fragment the topic of discussion by moving it in different directions. This contributes to the tendency for discussions in one-way CMD to digress away from their starting points. Digression is especially common in unstructured, unguided discussions in public forums and in playful exchanges, as well as toward the end of a discussion, when topic fatigue sets in. In contrast, “on-topic” discussions tend to progress in a gradual stepwise fashion (Herring 2003), as Sacks (1987) described for casual face-to-face conversation. In recent years, however, this common pattern has been reconfigured in Web 2.0 environments that provide a visual prompt (e.g., a video or static image) or a textual prompt (e.g., a status update or a news story). In those environments, commenters tend to respond to the prompt rather than responding to other commenters, resulting in a different pattern of *topic development* (Androutsopoulos 2013c; Bou-Franch, Lorenzo-Dus, and Blitvich 2012).

*Pauses* are normally not evident in logs of one-way CMD, unless the writer adds explicit pause indicators, such as ellipses (...).<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, the amount of time between when a message is sent and when it is responded to is interactionally significant. Kalman *et al.* (2006) found that responses to computer-mediated messages follow a power-law distribution, with at least 70 percent occurring within the “quick-to-average zone” while long silences are a “negligible minority.” What constitutes “quick” and a “long silence” varies in absolute terms across CMC contexts.

Delayed responses and *non-response* may signal relational problems, technical problems, or that the responder is overwhelmed with messages. In a study of non-response to email in a Norwegian workplace, Skovholt and Svennevig (2013) observed that employees looked for institutional or technical reasons before they assumed that there was an interpersonal problem. Messages directed at particular individuals and that normatively call for a response (e.g., questions) are more likely to receive responses than

undirected messages and other kinds of speech acts. Moreover, Joyce and Kraut (2006) found that participants in online forums whose first message received a response were more likely to post again. In both the workplace email and the online forums, however, non-responses were common. Similarly, Herring (2010) found that only 53 percent of men and 39 percent of women in three academic discussion lists received a response to their first message, although the response rate increased to 100 percent for participants of both genders who persisted in posting three messages.

Responses play a crucial role in ratifying *conversational floors* in textual CMD. In the absence of nonverbal feedback, the only way to know that others have attended to one's message is if other messages subsequently ratify it by referencing its content. Thus floor in CMD necessarily involves multiple participants. Following this principle, Simpson (2005) identified three floor types in synchronous chat among ESL learners: a "speaker-and-supporter" floor, a "collaborative" floor, and a "multiple conversational" floor. In addition, Cherny (1999) identified a "nonpropositional" floor type (self-centered floors of speakers preoccupied with their own thoughts) in a social MUD. In asynchronous academic mailing lists, Herring (2010), building on Edelsky's (1981) observations about floor and participant gender, found that mostly male environments favored an F1 (one speaker at a time; like the speaker-and-supporter type) floor, whereas mostly female environments sometimes had F2 (collaborative) floors and sometimes F1 floors, which could be dominated by either men or women. Herring proposed that the mapping of gender onto floor is mediated by conventional power associations that grant males a greater entitlement to "speak" and to hold the floor. However, in online contexts where women are empowered (by their status, by their role, or by being numerically predominant), they may employ F1 strategies, and they may receive more responses to their messages than men do.

## 5 Social Practice

Research on CMD as social practice started with exploratory work on computer-mediated interaction and community in the 1990s (e.g., Baym 1995; Cherny 1999) and was consolidated in the 2000s as a "second wave" in linguistic Internet studies (Androutsopoulos 2006), which coincided with the broader turn to language practices in socially oriented linguistics. The social aspects of CMD are shaped by the progressive digitization of society and the embedding of digital communication technologies in everyday life, along with the medium and situation factors described in Section 1.3. The very distinction between offline and online communication is now increasingly fuzzy, as people are "always on" (Baron 2008). One impact of these changes on CMD research has been a turn from discourse in virtual communities as separate social entities to digital language practices that mediate between offline and online practices by individuals and communities. For example, Jones (2009) draws on the concept of entextualization to study how a community of young people creates photo and video representations of social activities, which are disseminated and interactively negotiated via social media. Androutsopoulos (2014) draws on the same concept to study practices of sharing in social networking and their impact on the deployment and change of linguistic repertoires. Practices of this kind have largely replaced, in popular imagination and academic interest, earlier interest in virtual communities of users who come together,

often with no shared geographical space, and establish power hierarchies and norms of social conduct exclusively by linguistic means.

### **5.1 Variation and linguistic diversity**

The abundant evidence of sociolinguistic variation in CMD argues against early claims that Internet language constitutes a homogenous register. Structural features of CMD have been found to vary across modes (e.g., Cherny 1999), across languages (e.g., Bieswanger 2007), and according to the characteristics of the participants and the situation. Paolillo (2001) found that language use on the IRC channel #india varied systematically according to the participants' status: insiders used more profanity and switched more often from English into Hindi, while "newbies" (inexperienced users) used more "Netspeak" abbreviations. Research from Flanders (Vandekerckhove and Nobels 2010), southern Germany (Androutsopoulos and Ziegler 2004), and German-speaking Switzerland (Siebenhaar 2006) suggests that IRC channels from certain regions show regular occurrence of typical features from the respective regional dialects, with socially meaningful deployment in style-shifting between standard and dialect. Variation according to participant gender is also well attested, including at the lowest level of linguistic structure. For example, Waseleski (2006) found that women use more exclamation marks than men in library and information science discussion groups, and Squires (2012) found that women use more apostrophes than men in instant messaging.<sup>5</sup>

Code-switching and multilingual practices have also attracted considerable interest, covering postcolonial and diaspora communities, professional groups, and youth-culture settings.<sup>6</sup> Regarding the role of English as a global linguistic resource in CMD, some findings suggest that English is largely limited to formulaic and emblematic usage (Androutsopoulos 2013a, 2013b), whereas others, such as Sharma's (2012) study of English used among Nepali first-language speakers on Facebook, show regular alternation between English and a local national language. A study of Facebook interactions among female Thai speakers who live in Anglophone countries found that the group's online talk displayed "a great complexity of code-switching into English," even though no English would be expected in their face-to-face conversational exchanges (Sergeant, Tagg, and Ngampramuan 2012: 514). Androutsopoulos (2013b) coined the term "networked multilingualism" to describe how multilingual practices by Greek-German youth are framed by three affordances of social network sites: that is, focus on written linguistic signs as a main resource for meaning-making, orientation of contributions to a semi-public networked audience, and recontextualization of online resources.

### **5.2 Interaction and identity**

Written language constitutes the primary resource for creating social reality in text-based CMC. Early ethnographic work on public virtual communities examined a range of genres that constitute virtual life, as participants negotiate, intimidate, joke, tease, and flirt (and in some cases have sex and get married) on the Internet, often without having ever met their interlocutors face to face. The accomplishment of virtual interaction is facilitated by both technological affordances (e.g., a special command to describe

actions or states in synchronous modes such as MUDs and IRC; Cherny 1999) and linguistic innovations by which participants attempt to compensate for social cues normally conveyed by other channels in face-to-face interaction, such as the textual representation of emotions and physical actions with emoticons and expressions such as <grin> and \*yawn\* in English. These affordances are often deployed creatively and playfully (Danet 2001).

The performance of playfully framed social identities is also pervasive in CMD. A case in point is the display and negotiation of gender and sexual identities. Del-Teso-Craviotto (2008) examined linguistic strategies for the negotiation of sexual desire in Spanish and English dating chats and argued that maintaining a play frame balances the tension between the expression of private erotic pleasures and the public character of the chat environment. Rellstab (2007) examined playful performances of gender in a Swiss IRC channel, emphasizing how chatters' practices destabilize normative conceptions of masculinity and femininity. Recent work has also seen a resurgence of interest in (im)politeness in CMD (Locher 2010). For example, Planchenault (2010) studied a French-speaking online community of transvestites and reported a widespread use of gender-marked politeness there to construct feminine identity, consistent with earlier research that found a strong association between online politeness and female identity.<sup>7</sup> Planchenault's study illustrates that the performance of social identities can simultaneously index online group or subcultural membership.

Humorous language play can also define social groupings. For example, an entire online subculture has arisen around sharing LOLcat images and communicating in LOLspeak, the fractured variety of written English that is imagined to be how cats would type (if they could type).<sup>8</sup> Linguistically defined social groupings can also be local and transitory, as in the case of participants on the DailyKos political blog who created an ad hoc ingroup around play with the passive-voice construction (Lazaraton 2014).

The locus of research on individual self-presentation in CMD has shifted since the 1990s from personal homepages to blogs to social network sites. Blogs commonly present an individual blogger's thoughts and feelings and adopt a first-person perspective (Herring *et al.* 2004), although Puschmann (2013), contrasting what he terms the "author-centric" and the "topic-centric" styles, shows that the purposes of blogging influence audience design, style, and content. To a greater extent than blogs, social network sites enable the construction of semi-public audiences of friends and intimates. Bolander and Locher (2010) classified status updates by members of a personal network on Facebook and found that participants offered both direct and indirect cues to personal identity. Lee (2011) content-analyzed Facebook status updates by several participants, with a focus on a young woman who posted about her pregnancy and giving birth. The scarcity of language-focused social network research to date is related in part to the practical and ethical issues connected to the elicitation of non-public CMD data.

### 5.3 *Discourse and engagement*

Contemporary CMD shows a high degree of interpenetration with mass-media representations and discourses, and orients to practices of media engagement as people use online text and talk to comment on and follow media spectacles. Twitter, in particular,

is rapidly becoming a favorite venue of media engagement. Page (2012) discusses the ad hoc formation of audience communities during the reception of a media event; these communities engage in the recontextualization of tweets by celebrities. Zappavigna (2011) coined the term “ambient affiliation” to describe how microbloggers engage with other virtually co-present members of an ad hoc community of interest that bonds around evolving topics of interest. *YouTube* has also been known to serve as a site for media engagement, for example when commenters recontextualize advertising slogans (Jones and Schieffelin 2009) or engage with representations of a capital city and its vernacular speech forms (Androutsopoulos 2013c).

CMD is also an increasingly important site of civic participation in political discourses, as attested, for example, by the widespread use of Twitter during recent events in the Middle East. Zappavigna (2011) shows how tweets produced during a political rally communicate stances toward the political actors. Georgakopoulou (2013) describes how Greek citizens mobilized various CMD platforms to retell and recontextualize controversial media events in the context of the recent Greek financial crisis. Moreover, computer-mediated language itself is often politicized. Online discourses on language debate the risks and opportunities of the Internet for various languages and speech communities. For example, Barton and Lee (2013) observe that members of the user-generated photography website Flickr produce discourse on Internet-specific language and self-deprecating metalanguage in which they deplore not being able to address their international audience in English, or apologize for their English if they do. These examples illustrate how the Internet offers space to engage in language-in-society issues with reference to other events, media, or domains of language.

Finally, representations of computer-mediated language are a frequent subject of language ideological debates that share striking interlinguistic similarities (e.g., Brommer 2007 for German; Thurlow 2006 for English). Squires (2010) describes popular perceptions of Internet language as evidenced in forum discussions sparked by newspaper reports and finds them to be shaped by conceptions of both standard language ideology and technological determinism. Popular and academic views on CMD thus coincide in part, although the assumption of technological determinism is stronger in popular discourses.

## 6 Multimodal Computer-Mediated Discourse

The view that the properties of the medium shape certain discourse outcomes has recently received additional support from studies of multimodal CMD. For the purposes of this chapter, CMD is considered to be multimodal when its production and reception involve channels of communication other than, or in addition to, plain text. Although most multimodal CMD phenomena can be described in terms of their structure, meaning, interactional characteristics, and/or social functions, multimodality raises additional considerations. For that reason, multimodal CMD is discussed separately here.

Typed CMC has always lent itself to manipulation for graphical effects, starting with emoticons composed of basic keyboard characters. Emoticons have evolved over time from text to cartoonish icons to emoji (animated icons) to animated gifs (short video

clips that loop endlessly); emoji are popular on cellphones, and gifs are a popular way to show reactions on media-sharing sites. These graphics often depict human faces and express emotion in a humorous or ironic way. Plain text may also be replaced by or decorated with special characters, including non-alphanumeric symbols and letters from other writing systems, to express individual and social identities, as described for instance by Vaisman (2013) for pre-teen girls blogging in Hebrew.

Text inserted in images constitutes another format of multimodal communication. Text-in-images can function as turns in conversational interaction on image blogs (as described by McDonald 2007), on image boards such as 4chan, and in exchanges of animated gifs on Tumblr. Some text-in-image composites become *memes* that are repeated across Internet sites as jokes or political commentary, their communicative force deriving from the popular culture or Internet subculture context(s) that they reference. LOL-cat memes, which feature pictures of cats with superimposed text that is misspelled and ungrammatical, are a popular example.

Collaborative video annotation (CVA) is a dynamic variant of text-in-image communication. On video-sharing sites such as YouTube, certain videos allow viewers to insert text annotations; the annotations appear at the points of insertion when the video is played back. In principle, users can interact with other commenters through such annotations, although Howard (2012) found more user-to-video interaction than user-to-user interaction in a study of CVA in an instructional technology course. Similarly, a study of text comments inserted in spectrograms of songs on the music-sharing site SoundCloud.com found that most comments interacted with the song or its creator rather than with other commenters (Ishizaki and Herring 2013). These patterns are reminiscent of the prompt-focused topic development pattern described in Section 4.

Other interactive Web platforms give users the option to comment in more than one mode. There is growing evidence to suggest that mode choice on such platforms affects the nature of discourse. In her study of the multi-player online game *World of Warcraft*, Newon (2011) found that voice chat was dominated by a few individuals whereas text chat favored more democratic participation. Pihlaja's (2011) study of video responses to video prompts on YouTube showed them to be longer, more developed, and more interactive than text responses to the same prompts. Sindoni (2014) noted that interlocutors are more self-conscious in video chat than in written exchanges, and that observing themselves in the feedback image "produces psychological effects influencing the verbal and nonverbal features of the online exchange" (333). Relatedly, in discussions on Voicethread.com, a website that supports asynchronous commenting in text, audio, and video, Herring and Demarest (unpublished) found that audio and video comments were more ego-focused than text comments. Moreover, audio and video comments were more positive in tone. Similarly, Bourlai and Herring (2014) found that emotions expressed in animated gifs on Tumblr were more positive than emotions expressed in text comments. They attribute the greater negativity of text, in part, to the lack of paralinguistic cues in text compared to other modes, which can create a distancing effect.

The multiple activities that take place on interactive multimodal platforms make competing demands on users' attention, especially when the activities transpire quickly in real time. In first-person shooter games where players' avatars are continuously being shot at, for example, players wanting to chat must attend to more than one channel simultaneously: text and game play. Media co-activity of this sort can adversely

impact the grammatical complexity, clarity of reference, and coherence of the chat (Herring *et al.* 2009). As with textual CMD, however, experienced users tend to adapt to the properties of the system and carry on effective (if sometimes truncated) exchanges.

Perhaps surprisingly, studies of multimodal CMD show that text remains popular, even as communication in other modes increases. As part of the ongoing trend toward media convergence in Web 2.0, text options are provided on most platforms, even when their primary purpose is something other than chatting, such as game play, television-viewing, or media-sharing. In support of this trend, audio-only chat, which was popular between roughly 1995 and 2005 and exhibited many of the interactive features of traditional telephony (Jenks and Firth 2013), is now rare, having been replaced by multimodal clients that offer video chat, screen-sharing, and instant messaging options in addition to voice. At the same time, text-only CMD is on the decline.

## 7 Conclusions

As the above discussion shows, we have come far from the view that properties of CMD follow inevitably from properties of computer technology and result in a single variety of Internet language. Social, contextual, and cultural factors – carried over from offline communication as well as generated within computer-mediated environments – contribute to the variability and complexity of CMD. Meanwhile, multimodal CMD reminds us that technological shaping should not be dismissed. The question is not “Does the technology shape the nature of discourse?” but rather “What aspects of discourse does it shape, how strongly, in what ways, and under what circumstances?”

The wide variety of activities that take place in CMD and the range of human experiences they evoke invite multiple approaches to analysis, including approaches drawn from different academic disciplines as well as different subfields of discourse analysis. This richness and diversity of CMD, combined with its relatively persistent nature, is its strength. CMD study can reveal interconnections between micro- and macro-levels of interaction that might otherwise not emerge by observing traditional spoken or written communication, and potentially lead language scholars to forge more comprehensive theories of discourse and social action as a result. In addition, given that CMC is rapidly becoming an indispensable part of all social institutions, CMD analysis can play a valuable role in exploring and explaining new forms of political, religious, and organizational communication as they evolve.

Meanwhile, CMC technology continues to innovate at a rapid pace, and new and up-to-the-minute research is needed to document its appropriation and consequences for discourse. For example, we can anticipate structural and cultural changes in online communication as smartphones and other portable devices enable ubiquitous mobile access to the Web. We can also look forward to new understandings (and new analytical challenges) as CMD enhanced by graphical elements comes into more popular use, and as developments in telepresence robotics enable human communication mediated by robots – an extension of avatar-mediated communication into physical space. For as long as CMC involves language in any form, there will be a need for CMD analysis.

## NOTES

- 1 Other terms that have been used to describe this phenomenon include *computer-mediated conversation*, *digital conversation*, *digital discourse*, *digital language*, *electronic discourse*, *electronic language*, *Internet language*, and *new media language*; most recently, Jucker and Dürscheid (2012) coined the term *keyboard-to-screen communication*. We prefer the term *computer-mediated discourse* because it makes transparent the connection to computer-mediated communication, and because it is neither overly broad nor overly restrictive in its scope.
- 2 For a survey of CMD research up to 1999, see Herring (2001). For an overview of the computer-mediated discourse analysis methodological toolkit, see Herring (2004).
- 3 At the time Lee's data were collected, the user's ID was appended automatically to the front of Facebook status updates. Facebook has since changed its interface several times.
- 4 Screen captures and video recordings of CMC users can reveal pauses in production along with other nonverbal ergonomic, expressive, and interactional kinesic behaviors, and can be a useful supplement to analysis of textual logs (Beißwenger 2008; Marcoccia, Atifi, and Gauducheau 2008).
- 5 For a recent overview of research on gender differences in CMD, see Herring and Stoerger (2014).
- 6 For a recent overview of code-switching in CMD, see Androutsopoulos (2013a).
- 7 See Kapidzic and Herring (2011) for a review of research on gender and politeness online.
- 8 According to Lefler (2011), LOLspeak is characterized by phoneme/grapheme correspondences such as the diphthong /ay/ spelled "ai" in the words "hi" and "bye," and recurring syntactic constructions such as {subject} can has {object}.

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# 7 Discourse Analysis and Narrative

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## 0 Introduction

Narrative has been one of the major themes in humanistic and social-scientific thought since the mid-twentieth century. The essence of humanness, long characterized as the tendency to make sense of the world through rationality, has come increasingly to be described as the tendency to tell stories, to make sense of the world through narrative. In linguistics, narrative was one of the first discourse genres to be analyzed, and it has continued to be among the most intensively studied.

We begin in Section 1 by discussing research on narrative in the structuralist tradition. After a brief description of structuralist narratology, which was the immediate context for discourse analysts' work on the syntactic and semantic structures of narrative, we turn to some of the most influential work on the linguistics of narrative, that of Labov and Waletzky (1967, 1997; Labov 1972: 354–96). We then sketch work on the structure of narrative by linguistic anthropologists and scholars interested in information-processing for computational purposes. Section 2 turns to research on narrative in its interactional context, asking how narrative is shaped by, and helps to shape, the particular interactions in which it arises. After briefly describing earlier research that suggested the need to study narrative in its conversational context, we turn to recent work in the tradition of Conversation Analysis, research on “small stories,” and research on narrative and identity.

In Section 3 we explore how narrative is embedded in and constitutive of more durable, replicable sociocultural practices. We touch on how children are socialized as narrators and how shared narratives and shared uses of narrative create and reinforce communities. An overview of research on narrative in institutional settings and in the media highlights the connections between narrative practices and power. We end the section by arguing for research that attends to the details of narrative as social

practice in particular communities and activities. The final sections of the chapter discuss the current state of narrative study across the humanities and social sciences and sketch some directions in which new work is going, with a particular focus on multimodality and issues of identity and ownership.

## 1 Structural Approaches to Narrative

Two related but somewhat different approaches to the structure of narrative became known in the West beginning in the mid-1950s. One was that of the Russian Vladimir Propp (1968). Propp's fundamental claim, originally proposed in the 1920s, is that all folktales have the same deep-structure sequence of "functions" or meaningful actions by characters. Similarly, French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1955, 1964, 1966) claimed that traditional narrative around the world, though superficially varied, all deals with a limited number of basic themes. Several French philosophers and literary theorists adapted Propp's and Lévi-Strauss's ideas to the analysis of literary narrative. Among the best known are Barthes (1966), Genette (1966), Greimas (1966), and Todorov (1967). (See Culler 1975: ch. 9 for an overview of structuralist theory about literary narrative.) These structuralist approaches to myth and literature all shared two assumptions. One was that there are abstract levels on which structures and meanings that seem different superficially are really the same. The other was that narrative analysts should distinguish between the story as a series of events (the *fabula*) and the story as told by the author (the *syuzhet*). Both these ideas were current in American linguistics and literary theory of the 1960s (the former most obviously in transformational/generative grammar), and, as Hopper (1997) points out, both were taken into the first American work on narrative discourse.

In "Narrative analysis: oral versions of personal experience" Labov and Waletzky (1967, 1997) proposed a "formal" approach to personal experience narrative. Their goal was to describe the invariable semantic deep structure of personal experience narratives, with an eye to correlating surface differences with "social characteristics" of narrators. According to Labov and Waletzky, a clause in a personal experience narrative can serve one of two functions: referential or evaluative. Referential clauses have to do with what the story is about: events, characters, setting. Evaluative clauses (and evaluative aspects of referential clauses) have to do with why the narrator is telling the story and why the audience should listen to it. In other words, evaluative material states or highlights the point of the story. Any narrative, by definition, includes at least two "narrative clauses." A narrative clause is a clause that cannot be moved without changing the order in which events must be taken to have occurred. If two narrative clauses are reversed, they represent a different chronology: "I punched this boy / and he punched me" implies a different sequence of events from "This boy punched me / and I punched him." For Labov, "narrative" is not any talk about the past, nor any talk about events; it is specifically talk in which a sequence of clauses is matched to a sequence of "events which (it is inferred) actually occurred" (Labov 1972: 360).

A "fully developed" narrative may include clauses or sets of clauses with a number of functions. Each of these elements of a personal experience narrative serves a double purpose, making reference to events, characters, feelings, and so on that are

understood to have happened or existed outside the ongoing interaction, and at the same time structuring the interaction in which the story is being told by guiding the teller and the audience through the related events and ensuring that they are comprehensible and worth recounting.

The *abstract* consists of a clause or two at the beginning of a narrative summarizing the story to come. The abstract announces that the narrator has a story to tell and makes a claim to the right to tell it, a claim supported by the suggestion that it will be a good story, worth the audience's time and the speaking rights the audience will temporarily relinquish. *Orientation* in a narrative introduces characters, temporal and physical setting, and situation. Orientation often occurs near the beginning but may be interjected at other points when needed. *Complicating action* clauses are narrative clauses that recapitulate a sequence of events leading up to their climax, the point at which the suspense is resolved. These clauses refer to events in the world of the story and, in the world of the telling, they create tension that keeps auditors listening. The *result or resolution* releases the tension and tells what finally happened. Often just before the result or resolution, but also throughout the narrative, are elements that serve as *evaluation*, stating or underscoring what is interesting or unusual about the story and why the audience should keep listening and allow the teller to keep talking. Evaluation may occur in free clauses that comment on the story from outside ("and it was the strangest feeling") or in clauses that attribute evaluative commentary to characters in the story ("I said, 'O my God, here it is!'"). Or evaluation can be embedded in the narrative, in the form of extra detail about characters, suspension of the action via paraphrase or repetition, "intensifiers" such as gesture or quantifiers, elements that compare what did happen with what didn't happen or could have happened or might happen, "correlatives" that tell what was occurring simultaneously, and "explicatives" that are appended to narrative or evaluative clauses. At the end of the story, the teller may announce via a *coda* that the story is over, sometimes providing a short summary of it or connecting the world of the story with the present.

Labov's illustration that reference is not the only function of talk, that a great deal of what speakers and audiences do serves to create rapport and show how their talk is to be understood, was part of the move during the 1960s away from the Bloomfieldians' completely referential view of language, a move that is reflected in almost every chapter in this volume, and it contributed to a conception of discourse and narrative capable of incorporating their emotive, subjective, and experiential aspects. However, Labov's model of the structure of narrative also generated a great deal of criticism, and dissatisfaction with his formal approach laid the foundations for more interactionally and communicatively oriented theoretical and methodological trends.

Although Labov's work on narrative has been particularly influential in discourse analysis, Labov was by no means alone in his interest in exploring the underlying formal and semantic structure of narratives and stories. Around the same time as Labov and Waletzky's analysis was conducted, anthropologically oriented linguists began comparing narrative syntax and semantics across languages. In his work on "text-building" in Southeast Asia, Becker (1979) shows, for example, that Javanese shadow-theater plots are made coherent through spatial co-occurrence, as characters in different substories set in different eras come together in the same place, rather than chronologically, via rising tension leading to a cathartic climax. In a set of studies that involved

showing a short, wordless film, Chafe (1980b) examined how people from various places, speaking various languages, put what they had seen into words. Clancy (1980), for example, found differences between Japanese speakers and English speakers in how nominals were used in the introduction of characters. Tannen (1980) found that Greeks tended to narrate the film in a more dramatic, storylike way than Americans, who tended to aim for referential completeness and accuracy in their retellings.

Hymes's work on Native American "ethnopoetics" (collected and re-published in Hymes 1981) was aimed at recovering the structure of the myths and folktales that earlier ethnographers had written down in Western-style paragraphs. Since many of these narratives could no longer be experienced in actual performance, Hymes used close reading, attuned to iterations of words, sounds, and structures, to uncover the patterns that made visible the normally implicit, presupposed cultural categories and relationships that had circulated through performances of the stories. Other analyses of the structure of oral narrative as it is actually performed were proposed by Chafe (1980a), Sherzer (1982), Tedlock (1983), and Woodbury (1987). Line-based transcription systems arising from these scholars' observation that oral discourse is not produced in paragraphs have been widely adopted in narrative research.

Other research in the 1970s and 1980s aimed to produce completely explicit models for how people (and other information processors, such as computers) produce and comprehend stories. This included, for example, work by van Dijk and Kintsch (Kintsch and van Dijk 1978; van Dijk 1977, 1980) describing semantic "macrostructures" and the "macrorules" that model how stories are understood, as well as work on "story grammar" by de Beaugrande (1982), Fillmore (1982), Rumelhart (1980), and others. Another set of questions that has been asked about the structure of stories has had to do with linguistic features characteristic of this discourse genre. The use of the English simple present tense in narrative in place of the past, traditionally referred to as the historical present, is the focus of analysis by Johnstone (1987), Schiffrin (1981), Wolfson (1982), and others, who connected this usage with the marking of evaluative high points and the characterization of social relations. Other narrative framing devices, strategies by which narrators and audiences negotiate transitions between the "storyworld" of the ongoing interaction and the "talerealm" in which the narrated events are located, are discussed by Young (1987) and others.

## **2 Interactional Approaches to Narrative**

The most widespread criticism of Labov's model has come from scholars who attend to narratives as they actually occur in everyday contexts. Labov's model of the structural components of personal experience narrative has to do exclusively with clauses produced by the storyteller. Although the basic idea underlying the model is that personal experience narratives are designed for audiences, in interactions, Labov's analyses do not consider actual contributions by the audience and other participants or details about the interactional context in which the narratives were performed. Labov and Waletzky's work was about relatively monologic narratives collected in

sociolinguistic interviews, and they did not claim that the model would be equally useful for all narrative genres. Subsequent applications of the model did, however, tend to privilege a view of narratives as “texts” without contexts.

Research in the interactional framework examines how the structure of stories reflects the fact that stories perform social actions (Schiffrin 1984, 1996) and how audiences are involved, directly or indirectly, in their construction (Norrick 1997; Ochs, Smith, and Taylor 1996). Polanyi (1985: 63–74) shows, for example, how in one case the responses of a story’s audience made the teller completely change the point of her story. Watson (1973) articulates Labov’s work with Burkean (Burke 1945, 1950) rhetorical theory to suggest a way of describing how the structure of stories is affected by the social contexts in which they are performed.

In particular, work in Conversation Analysis has provided an alternative view of narrative as highly embedded in surrounding talk and deeply sensitive to different participation roles. According to a famous description by Sacks, “stories routinely take more than one turn to tell” (1992: 222). Indeed, everyday and conversational stories usually need to be introduced, closed, and generally tailored to the context of talk and its participants; thus, they require conversational work. Therefore, conversation analysts have emphasized the importance of end points – that is, story prefaces and closings (Jefferson 1978) – and of sequential embedding in the analysis of stories, showing how narratives display links with both preceding and following talk. Another point to which conversation analysts have drawn attention is the pivotal role of participation frameworks in the design, management, and reception of stories. As Goodwin (1984) illustrated, storytellers design their stories with their audiences in mind and may privilege certain conversational participants over others. Thus, interactionally oriented analyses of storytelling have illustrated how participants may influence the telling of a story in fundamental ways, for example by acting as co-tellers (Lerner 1992), by negotiating evaluations (Ochs and Capps 2001), or by demonstrating appreciation (Mandelbaum 1987).

Interactionally oriented narrative analyses have also pointed to the reductive nature of models of storytelling that focus exclusively on monologic narratives told in interview contexts, without considering the richness and complexity of narrative genres and of telling formats both in everyday and institutional contexts. Ochs and Capps (2001), for example, proposed a flexible framework for analyzing stories that takes into account different parameters contributing to narrative form and function. These parameters, which include tellership, tellability, linearity, embeddedness, and moral stance, account for differences between types of narrative. And indeed, post-Labovian research has demonstrated that there is a great variety of narrative genres both in everyday conversation and in more formal contexts. For example, Schiffrin (1990) discussed argumentative narratives – that is, recounts of experiences used to back up positions in argumentative sequences. Carranza (1998) described habitual narratives, which are characterized by the absence of punctual events, illustrating how they can serve the purpose of making a point about the significance of past experiences. Baynham (2003) pointed to the existence of generic narratives, or tales describing prototypical sequences of events with no specific protagonist, showing how they contribute to strengthening stereotypical gender roles in migration accounts. Holmes (2006) discussed anecdotes, illustrating how they contributed to workplace interaction, while De Fina (2009) described accounts as narratives told in response to interviewers’ questions. Finally, a

great deal of attention has also been devoted to various forms of retellings (Norricks 1997; Schiffrin 2006).

Another interactionally oriented alternative to the Labovian approach that emerged in the 2000s is the so-called “small-stories” paradigm (see Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008; Georgakopoulou 2007). Proponents have chosen the term *small stories* to describe a gamut of under-represented narrative activities, such as tellings of ongoing events, future or hypothetical events, and shared (known) events, but also allusions to (previous) tellings, deferrals of tellings, retellings, and refusals to tell. Thus, the focus is on storytelling as an activity that can take different forms, some of them involving minimal actual storytelling if compared with prototypical instances. Examples of small stories are “breaking news” – that is, tellings of very recent events like those that Georgakopoulou (2007) found in a study of adolescents in school during class time. These stories concerned small incidents, for instance seeing a boy on a webcam, that were constructed around descriptive and affective elements rather than around sequences of events, and represented quick breaks from current business (i.e., classroom activities) while at the same time being highly embedded within the frame of classroom talk. The focus on smallness is meant to emphasize the need for narrative analysts to sharpen their tools in order to be able to capture the variety of forms and functions that narratives display in different social-interactional contexts.

Interactionally oriented approaches have also greatly contributed to our understanding of the interconnections between telling stories and building social identities (see De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2011 for a thorough discussion). Identities in narrative have been studied, for example, through the analysis of self-presentation and self-expression. Schiffrin (1996) showed how storytellers created and negotiated different presentations of self, depending on whether they reported actions or feelings and beliefs, and how their identities emerged from the interactions between these selves. Johnstone (1996) discussed self-expressive reasons for individuals’ storytelling styles. De Fina (2003) analyzed differences between collectively and individually oriented self-presentations in narrative.

Many studies have also looked at how narratives contribute to the construction of gender identities (see Talbot 1999: ch. 4 for an overview). Scholars have found differences in plots, strategies, and participation structures in narratives told by women and men. For example, Johnstone (1993) found that men and women construct different worlds in their stories via different plot types and different use of constructed dialogue and detail. Coates (1996), among others, showed that women have a tendency to tell self-deprecating narratives. Work on peer groups in schools also pointed to differences between girls and boys in storytelling style and content (Kyratzis 1999). A great deal of research has also described narratives as the occasion for the performance of gendered identities through the reproduction of roles that are socially sanctioned (see, e.g., Kiesling 2006; Menard-Warwick 2007; Ochs and Taylor 1992).

Some scholars claim that personal narrative is the outcome of an “autobiographical impulse” (Rosen 1988), the urge to make our lives coherent by telling about them. According to Linde (1993), “in order to exist in the social world with a comfortable sense of being a good, socially proper, and stable person, an individual needs to have a coherent, acceptable, and constantly revised life story” (3). But social constructionists (see De Fina, Schiffrin, and Bamberg 2006) argue that there is no “true self” emerging through storytelling and that coherent and stable personae are the fruit of interactional

presentation. They point to identity as a process rather than a product that is always negotiated in concrete social occasions and to identities as plural and often contradictory and fragmented. The construct of positioning (Bamberg 1997; Wortham 2001; see also Gordon, this volume) has emerged as one of the most popular tools for studying identity construction in narrative. Michael Bamberg (1997) has proposed to look at three levels of positioning in order to account for the way identities are communicated. The first level involves positioning in the tale-world – that is, it examines how the narrator is positioned as a character in a story world vis-à-vis other characters. The second level looks at positioning as an interactional process in which the narrator positions him- or herself toward interlocutors and is in turn positioned by them in an ongoing dialogue. The way identity emerges in this context is therefore related to the negotiations going on in the here and now of the storytelling. Finally, the third level seeks to provide an answer to the question of “Who am I?,” attempting to define the teller’s self as a more or less stable entity holding above and beyond the current storytelling situation.

In sum, the work reviewed in this section has in common an emphasis on interaction as a fundamental locus for the study of narratives and a focus on the dialogic and positional nature of storytelling.

### **3 Narrative in Sociocultural Practice**

Narrative is embedded in social activity both on the level of interaction and on the level of discursive and social practice. Stories arise in the context of repeatable activities such as chat, courtship, and the socialization of newcomers, among many other things, and narrative serves different functions in different sociocultural settings. As they acquire cognitive and linguistic abilities, children are socialized into the forms and functions of narrative in their communities. Among the best known studies of this process is Heath’s (1982, 1983) work with families in two working-class communities in the southern United States. Working-class white children in “Roadville” were taught to tell “factual” stories that ended with morals about what they had learned; working-class African American children in “Trackton” were encouraged to entertain others with fantastic tales. This and other differences in preschool socialization have implications for children’s success in school, where, for example, white children may already know to tell “sharing time” stories the way teachers expect but African American children may not (Michaels and Collins 1984; see also McCabe and Peterson 1991).

Scollon and Scollon (1981) claimed that, for Athabaskans, experiences and stories about them are the primary source of knowledge, as reality is socially constructed through narrative. This claim has been made more generally about “oral” cultures by scholars such as Goody and Watt (1968) and Ong (1982). Blum-Kulka (1993) compared dinner-table storytelling in American and Israeli families, finding that middle-class American families tended to ritualize the telling of stories about the day, particularly by the children, while in the Israeli families storytelling was more collaborative and more evenly distributed among family members. Etter-Lewis (1991) described the specificities of personal storytelling by African American women, and Riessman (1988) compared narratives by an Anglo-American woman and a Puerto Rican, pointing out

that social class as well as ethnicity is a factor in the women's different experiences and different recountings.

Shared stories, as well as shared ways of telling stories, constitute an integral part of the life of communities, contributing to their cohesion. Among the earliest work by ethnographers of communication were studies of the functions of narrative and speech events in which narrative was central. For example, Kirschenblatt-Gimblett (1974) described the functions of narrative in Eastern European Jewish society, and Darnell (1974) showed how a traditional Cree (Native North American) narrative performance was structured and what it accomplished. Ethnographers have continued to explore the uses of narrative in various parts of the world. Basso (1986), for example, talked about the functions of quoted dialogue in Kalapalo (Native South American) narrative. Patrick and Payne-Jackson (1996) described how "Rasta talk" functions in Jamaican Creole healing narrative. Bauman (1986) showed how stories and storytelling events contribute to the negotiation of social relations in a community of dog traders in Texas. Johnstone (1990) explored how storytelling creates community and a shared sense of place in a city in the American Midwest. Shuman (1986) examined how stories contribute toward structuring the social life of urban adolescents.

This work on the uses of narratives in the lives of particular groups has contributed to a recent shift away from the project of linking narrative structures and functions to pre-defined demographic differences such as gender, nationality, or ethnicity, and toward a more nuanced view of storytelling as a type of practice embedded within other practices that define particular communities describable only through ethnography (see De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2011: 73–5).

Narratives are also embedded in and accomplish a variety of functions in contexts such as institutional encounters, the mass media, and online social networks. Attention to contexts like these highlights the connections between storytelling and power. Indeed, as shown by work on narratives in court (Trinch and Berk-Seligson 2002), police interviews (Johnson 2008), asylum-seeking procedures (Maryns and Blommaert 2001), and even interviews (papers in De Fina and Perrino 2011), telling rights are often institutionally regulated and the content and form of narratives tightly controlled. For example, Walker (1982) shows that witnesses in court proceedings, bringing with them their knowledge about the necessity of evaluation in everyday storytelling, find themselves repeatedly cut off and corrected for interpreting as they narrate. Discourse analysts who study news stories (Jacobs 2000; van Dijk 1991) demonstrate that the way events are emplotted and the emphasis given by newscasters to certain descriptions of protagonists may contribute to the reproduction of prejudice and stereotypes.

## **4 The Narrative Turn across Disciplines**

Narrative has come to seem important to people throughout the humanities and social sciences. Beginning in the late 1970s, new, narrative ways of understanding history and humanity and doing research have become more and more prominent, leading to the so-called "narrative turn." Theorists who have contributed to this approach have underscored the centrality of narrative as a mode of thought and apprehension of reality (Bruner 1986; MacIntyre 1981). For example, the observation made by Hayden

White (1981) and others that history can only be selective storytelling about the past helped give rise to a way of imagining the historical enterprise that is sometimes called the “New Historicism” (Cox and Reynolds 1993). As Miller (1990) pointed out, each contemporary theoretical framework for literary and cultural studies – deconstruction, feminism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, reception theory, Bakhtinian dialogism, and so on – makes significant claims about narrative.

Many “narrative turn” analysts have also asserted the fundamental role of narrative in the constitution of the human self, seeing the telling of life stories as the locus for the creation of coherent identities (McAdams 1993; Polkinghorne 1988). The “narrative study of lives” (Josselson 1996) also challenged the methodological hegemony of quantitative research paradigms in psychology, and narrative-based studies have flourished in all fields of the social sciences, including sociology (Riessman 1991), psychology (Oatley 1999), anthropology (Rosaldo 1993), education (Cortazzi 1993), and social research in general (Elliott 2005).

Critics of the “narrative turn” have noted that using narrative analysis as a tool to investigate how people construct themselves and their experiences is not the same as proposing that narrative is a mode of knowledge that is fundamental to human beings. They have also complained about what they see as an excessive glorification of narrative experience (Strawson 2004). Analysts of the narrative turn have also been criticized for equating identity with self-disclosure (Atkinson and Delamont 2006). However, the impact of narrative research on the social sciences has been generally positive, as it has opened the door to more in-depth, qualitative-oriented analyses of social issues.

## 5 Current State of the Field

As scholars across disciplines have become more and more interested in narrative, the study of narrative has become more and more interdisciplinary and the field is experiencing exponential growth. Volumes and articles devoted to narrative continue to appear not only within discourse analysis but also within fields such as English, rhetoric, communication, education, comparative literature, psychology, nursing, political science, sociology and social work, history, art, philosophy, marketing, and organizational behavior. The journal *Narrative Inquiry* is entirely devoted to the study of narrative, and other scholarly journals in linguistics, linguistic anthropology, and discourse studies also regularly feature articles on narrative or publish special issues on the topic. All of this illustrates the continuing and growing interest in this field of studies (see also the forthcoming *Handbook of Narrative Analysis* edited by De Fina and Georgakopoulou).

Current research suggests several ways in which work on narrative may continue to develop. Although there still is a great deal of interest in trying to understand and develop models of narrative structure, there is also a heightened sense of the need to place structure and function within contexts and practices. Thus, much work is presently devoted, and will very likely continue to be devoted, to studying how narratives are embedded within different kinds of practices, how they are shaped by but also shape those practices, and what kinds of new narrative genres emerge in them.

Central to such developments is research on multimodality. Multimodal narrative analysis captures the need to account for new forms of communication and the affordances of different types of media and technologies. Thus, multimodal narrative analysts have extended the study of narrative to a variety of media (such as television and the Internet) and to the interaction of different semiotic resources (such as sound, print, image, animation) in mediated storytelling contexts. They have explored an entirely new set of narrative texts and contexts: from hypertext fiction (Laccetti 2011) to fan fiction (Thomas 2011) to comics (Herman 2008) to narratives in social media (Page 2011). Multimodal narrative analysis seems destined to grow in importance (as does multimodal discourse analysis in general) because of the central place occupied by new media in contemporary life. Multimodal narrative analysis poses new challenges to narrative analysts: for example, it brings to light the impossibility of ignoring fundamental methodological issues such as the question of transcription and representation of text, talk, and other semiotic systems. It also poses essential questions about definitions of narratives, authorship, and participation. As noted by Page (2011), "The perceived monomodality of existing narrative theory, and specifically the dominance of verbal resources, is challenged profoundly by multimodality's persistent investigation of the multiple semiotic tracks at work in storytelling" (11).

Indeed, multimodal analysis shows the limitations and affordances that different media and contexts impose on the structure and content of narratives, but it also problematizes the notion of narrative as produced by a single author, illustrating participative modes in which different people can contribute to a story and stories are not owned by any of their tellers. Multimodal analysis also critically interrogates the relation between storytelling, time, and space, showing how space gets incorporated and modified in and through narrative but also how not only story internal but also story external time affect the way narratives are processed and understood.

Issues of identity will most likely continue to occupy center stage in narrative analysis, as shown in the heated debates among "big" and "small story" theorists (for a discussion see Gregg 2011) but also in the increasing number of articles focused on the analysis of strategies used in narratives to construct personal, social, and collective identities and on the interactions between local and more portable identities. Questions of identity go hand in hand with issues related to authorship and responsibility, and discourse analysts have started reflecting on the implications of story ownership, asking questions such as, "Who has the right to tell which stories to whom?" or "Who controls story ownership?" (on this point see Shuman 2005). As the borders between private and public become more and more blurred in late modern societies, the importance of these issues cannot be underestimated.

As we continue to think about the uses of narrative in human life, we are paying increasing attention to the political effects of narrative, seeing storytelling not only as a way of creating community but also as a resource for dominating others, for expressing solidarity, and for resistance and conflict; a resource, that is, in the continuing negotiation through which humans create language, society, and self as they talk and act. We see narrative more and more as a way of constructing "events" and giving them meaning, as we pick out bits of the stream of experience and give them boundaries and significance by labeling them. Like all talk and all action, narrative is socially and epistemologically constructive: through telling, we make ourselves and our experiential worlds.

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# 8 Humor and Laughter

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SALVATORE ATTARDO

## 0 Introduction

Within discourse analysis, humor and laughter have both been a topic of research and interest, but historically they were treated marginally until the number of books and articles being published about humor and laughter increased significantly beginning in the second half of the 1990s. Some of this flourishing may be explained by the existence of an expanding interdisciplinary field of humor studies, which has influenced and stimulated some aspects of the research presented here. Until now, there has been no up-to-date synthesis of the various strands of research in discourse analysis of humor and laughter. The first and foremost goal of this chapter is to provide such a synthesis.

I have chosen to organize this chapter around a roughly historical perspective to emphasize the growth and maturation of the field. Three periods in the development of the research on humor and laughter in discourse analysis will be presented: (1) the precursors (1974–85), (2) the functionalist phase (1985–2000), and (3) the corpus-synthesis phase (2000–present). The time spans indicated are purely orientative: the distinction is made more for pedagogical reasons than because such periodization corresponds rigidly to the developments of the research. Rather than indicating historical development, the three “periods” should be considered primarily as research emphases on some aspects of the analysis of humor and laughter. To put it differently, functionalist and corpus-based approaches are not completely absent from the earlier period; they are just not the central foci of their respective periods. Even more significantly, functionalist concerns have not disappeared in the corpus period, but they have been reinterpreted through the corpus methodology. It remains the case, however, as will be shown, that there was a shift in focus both conceptually and methodologically and that this shift is one of the issues that centrally informs current scholarship.

The final section of the chapter is concerned precisely with these methodological issues, which are shaping the most creative and forward-looking strands of research, in my opinion. Because these methodological issues are foundational for the analysis of humorous discourse and because they are inextricably tied to each other (e.g., how can the question of failed humor even be posed without considering the co-construction of humor?) these issues form a nexus of ideas that all scholars interested in humor and laughter in discourse must confront if the field is to go forward.

## 1 The Precursors

We begin then with the first phase of the history of discourse analysis and humor, which took place within Conversation Analysis with the work of Harvey Sacks.

There is no question that the seminal and most influential analyses of jokes in conversational settings are due to Sacks. He describes the “sequential organization” (1989: 337) of the conversational context of the occurrence of a joke as a three-part sequence. The “preface” introduces the joke. The “telling” of the joke is the second step. Finally the “reactions” to the text conclude the conversation sequence.

Example (1) illustrates Sacks’s division. The parts of the sequence are indicated on the left. The discussion will be exemplified throughout the chapter, as much as is practical, with data from a small corpus of dyadic conversations between college students, described in Attardo, Pickering, and Baker (2011). The students were asked to tell each other a joke, provided by the researcher, in pairs and then to continue talking for a few minutes. The transcription follows usual conventions except that pause length is indicated in seconds (in parentheses) and given its turn number when shared. An asterisk (\*) indicates the humorous turn(s) in multi-turn excerpts.

(1) Dyadic conversation (Attardo, Pickering, and Baker 2011)

Preface	1 M: Do you want me to say the joke or do you want to say the joke?
	2 (0.34)
	3 C: It doesn't matter.
	4 (1.84)
	5 M: OK
	6 (0.25)
Telling	7 M: Uhm (0.99) so (0.45) there was a car accident in the street (0.52) and the reporter wanted to go (1.28) see what happened (0.36) so he goes runs through the crowd (0.12) tryin to get through (1.38) a::nd he can't make it so he says let me through let me through (0.81) the victim is my father (1.67) so: (1.57) he gets up to the front (0.32) and (0.18) the victim (0.57) was a donkey *
Response	8 (1.90)
	9 C: u::m (0.49) ha ha ha HA:: hee hee ((ironic laugh)) *
	10 (0.38)
	11 M: ((laughs))
	12 (0.94)

## 1.1 *Jokes as narratives within discourse*

Since they are narratives, jokes share stories' sequential organization into three parts (Sacks 1989: 337). Storytelling requires that all participants in the conversation relinquish the floor to one speaker, the narrator, at least initially. This is accomplished in the preface, which has three main functions: securing the acceptance of joke-telling from the audience, negotiating the acceptability of the jokes and of the joke-telling situation, and orienting the audience to the correct mode of interpretation of the text to follow.

Components of the preface may include "an offer to tell or a request for a chance to tell the joke or story; an initial characterization of it; some reference to the time of the story events' occurrence or of the joke reception; and ... a reference to whom it was received from if its prior teller is known or known by the recipients" (Sacks 1989: 340). The preface is the appropriate time for the audience to turn down the telling of the joke. Some jokes in conversation lack a preface entirely.

The telling of the joke consists of an extended turn in which the joke teller holds preferentially the floor that was secured in the preface. Speech by the audience will be considered either interruptive, for example to ask for elucidations, or back-channeling. This does not apply to interactive jokes, such as knock-knock jokes, which require the audience's participation.

Sacks claims that the joke itself consists of an "understanding test" (Sacks 1989: 346). The joke analyzed by Sacks is told by teenagers and revolves around oral sex. While it is conceivable that teenagers in the early 1970s might not necessarily have known about oral sex and that "getting the joke" would have signaled that they did (hence, being a test of their knowledge about sexual practices), most jokes revolve around stereotyped shared knowledge and puns revolve around shared knowledge of the linguistic system, which hardly lend themselves to testing.

The third part of the sequence identified by Sacks can be divided in three "systematic possibilities" of response: laughter, delayed laughter, and silence (Sacks 1989: 348). We therefore turn to short discussions of laughter and of delayed laughter and silence. The discussion of the response is completed by a final discussion dealing with other responses not contemplated in Sacks's original list.

### 1.1.1 *Laughter*

Laughter has been by far the object of more research than humor, both within and outside the conversation or discourse analysis paradigm. Laughter and humor are not co-extensive. Laughter is not a physical manifestation of humor. Laughter may be spontaneous and uncontrolled, but it may also be voluntary. These two kinds of laughter are acoustically indistinguishable. Laughter does not always follow jokes: laughter, far from being exclusively a *reaction* to humor, is used by speakers to signal a variety of meanings. Laughter may be caused by non-humorous stimuli (tickling, laughing gas, embarrassment, anxiety, etc.) and can be triggered by imitation (i.e., by observing other people laugh). In short, there can be laughter without humor and humor without laughter. See Attardo (1994: 10–13) for more extensive discussion. This point is also supported by corpus studies (Günther 2003: 203). For a broad view of the work on laughter see Chafe (2007) and Trouvain and Campbell (2007).

Gail Jefferson, best known for developing the notational system of Conversation Analysis, dedicated significant attention to laughter. Laughter consists of small conversational units (ultimately, as small as a laughter pulse, or syllable “ha,” for example). Speakers can join the laughter or take a regular conversational turn. Jefferson (1972) argues that laughter can show appreciation of the humor but also that occurrences of laughter are “regularly associated with termination of talk” (300) and can be used to end a conversation. Sacks (1989: 347) noted that laughter may overlap with other turns (and is exceptional in this sense). Jefferson, Sacks, and Schegloff (1977) analyzed multiparty laughter and its combinations: synchronous (“unisons”) and turn-taking (“relay”). The use of laughter is further observed as part of “repairs” (i.e., in the “offense-remedial cycle”). Jefferson (1979) is focused on a specific technique of how speakers may “invite” laughter from the hearer (i.e., with a “post-utterance completion laugh particle”), or, in other words, laughter by the joke tellers at the end of what they say. By showing that laughter is an appropriate response to what he or she has just said, the speaker implicitly validates that response. Another technique involves “within speech laughter,” which is the delivery of the utterance interspersed with laughter. Recently, these results have come under criticism, witness the claim that “most laughter is not a response to jokes or other formal attempts at humor” (Provine 2000: 42), but Provine’s objections, based on an exclusive focus on involuntary laughter, have been refuted (e.g., O’Connell and Kowal 2005, 2006).

Jefferson (1985) shows that laughter can be used for a variety of communicative functions, from “covering” delicate passages in conversation to demonstrating understanding. O’Donnell-Trujillo and Adams (1983) note the functions of laughter as turn-taking, cueing on the humorous intention of the speaker, cueing on the interpretation of the utterance, a request for more information, and finally as an affiliative resource. It has been shown (by Haakana 2002 and references therein, and by Vettin and Todt 2004) that laughter is most frequently not followed by laughter – that is, that speakers “mostly laugh alone” (Haakana 2002: 207).

Jefferson’s view is that of an active speaker negotiating the humorous interpretation of his or her utterance with the hearer and actively prompting a “humorous” decoding of the utterance. It is interesting to note that in the literature on humor research the speaker of a humorous text is seen as passive upon completion of the humorous utterance. Thus Jefferson’s analyses imposed a serious revision of accepted opinions.

### 1.1.2 *Delayed laughter and silence*

Delayed laughter, the second response envisaged by Sacks, is motivated by the presence of two conflicting desires in the audience: display understanding of the text and check the rest of the audience’s reactions. The former needs to happen as soon as possible, whereas the latter requires checking of the rest of the audience’s reactions to see whether laughter is appropriate (e.g., laughter is inappropriate in some formal situations). Delayed laughter is a compromise between these two desires, which allows the hearer to display understanding while avoiding the risks of a social faux-pas.

Silence is the last type of response in Sacks’s model. It can manifest the audience’s disapproval of the materials in the telling or can be used by the joke teller to “keep in character” with the narrative convention whereby a narrator should believe what he or she tells. In other words, the teller is giving his or her audience time to get the joke.

### 1.1.3 *Other responses*

More recent research on the response to humor has broadened Sacks's original list. Serious responses are in fact common. Drew (1987) emphasized that often speakers react seriously (what he called "po-faced" reaction) to humorous turns. Since he analyzed teases, this was perhaps not surprising. However, studies by Hay (1994) on playful insults and by Eisterhold, Attardo, and Boxer (2006), Gibbs (2000), and Kotthoff (2003) on irony, for example, show significant percentages of speakers reacting seriously to a humorous turn. The term "mode adoption" has been proposed by Attardo (2001b; see also Whalen and Pexman 2010) for the choice to respond "in kind" (i.e., with humor to humor, irony to irony, etc.). It is a matter of contention exactly how frequent mode adoption is: Gibbs's data show a relatively high percentage, whereas Eisterhold, Attardo, and Boxer (2006) show strikingly lower levels. Contextual factors such as familiarity and aggression determine the choices of the speakers.

## 1.2 *Differences between canned and conversational joking*

It should be noted that Sacks's work focused on canned jokes in conversation. A canned joke is a generally short narrative ending in a punch line, which temporally precedes the situation in which the joke is told (i.e., a canned joke is re-created from a pre-existing model the speaker has memorized). Canned jokes are opposed to spontaneous or improvised jokes, often also called "conversational" jokes.

A rigid distinction between canned and conversational jokes cannot be maintained, however, since canned jokes may be "recycled" (Zajdman 1991) – that is, contextually adapted to the point that a canned joke may be presented in a manner indistinguishable from a spontaneous joke. Moreover, canned jokes may in some cases originate from conversational jokes that have been decontextualized. Nonetheless, most of the work in the functionalist phase (see Section 2) has focused on conversational humor. An example of a recycled joke can be found in example (2), line 4, which recycles the punch line of the joke in example 3.

(2) Dyadic conversation (Attardo, Pickering, and Baker 2011)

- 1 A: Do you speak any other languages besides English?  
2 (1.11)  
3 B: Nope. (0.42) nothin' fluently (0.12) a little bit a this 'n' that  
'n' (1.26) other thing (0.66) you know  
4 A: You're American \*

(3) What do you call someone who speaks three languages: trilingual. What do you call someone who speaks two languages: bilingual. How about someone who speaks only one language? An American.

Note how speaker A recontextualizes (recycles) the punch line of joke (3) in the conversational situation. Turn 3, by speaker B, is functionally equivalent to the setup of joke (3): the speaker is monolingual, hence the punch line of (3) may follow.

Sacks's and Jefferson's work was taken up by many scholars, whose work cannot be reviewed for reasons of space, but, more significantly, it set the stage for the functionalist period of research on humor in discourse.

## 2 The Functionalist Phase

The area of the discourse analysis of humor that has generated the greatest number of publications is without question the investigation of the functions of humor – that is, the goals for which speakers engage in humor and laughter. The primary functions explored in the literature are affiliative (ingroup, solidarity-building) and less frequently disaffiliative (aggressive).

Norrick (1993), the first book-length study on the subject, notes that humor occurs in many forms and conversational settings and that its function is “smoothing the course of interaction” (129) even though there are various instances and degrees of aggression in conversational humor. Some relationships may involve “customary joking.” Norrick's affiliative view of humor is supported, among others, by Kotthoff's (1998, 2000, 2006) work on the uses of humor in conversations among friends and especially in relation to gender issues.

Glenn (2003) focuses on laughter. He introduces the concept of “laughable” to describe “any referent that draws laughter” (49). This is problematic, for several reasons (Attardo 2005; Günther 2003: 116). The most obvious one is that it ignores failed humor (see Section 4.6) and that access to the speakers' intentionality is ultimately necessary to know whether something was meant as humorous or not. Ultimately, the idea of laughables, with a one-to-one correspondence to laughter, inevitably falls short of accounting for humor or for laughter itself (since some laughter is not “drawn” by any referent but is inserted by the speaker to communicate something – embarrassment, for example).

Glenn follows Jefferson's social/communicative theory of laughter. He sees laughter as controlled, at least in part, by the speaker and exploited for communicative purposes. For example, shared laughter is initiated via an “invitation-acceptance” sequence. The speaker may place laughter particles within or after his or her turn. The hearer, in turn, can accept or decline the invitation to laugh. Shared laughter tends to be short lived and speakers need to “renew” shared laughter. Methods for doing so include laughter, repeating the cause of laughter, or saying something else funny. This is consonant both with Hay's concept of “humor support” (see Section 3.3) and with the “least disruption” principle (see Section 4.3). Glenn's (2003) overall view of humor is also affiliative, however; Glenn notes also that laughter can be used to resist affiliation (i.e., to reject the implicit offer of ingroup membership extended by the joker).

The generally positive view of humor in discourse has been rightfully critiqued (Billig 2005: 124–5). There exist some works that take into account the “negative side” of humor: Priego-Valverde's treatment (2003) includes the negative functions of humor, as does some of the Workplace Project corpus work (see Section 3.2). Boxer and Cortés-Conde (1997) introduced the successful metaphor of humor being used for “bonding and biting” (i.e., affiliative and disaffiliative functions, or ingroup and outgroup definition). Habib (2008), Rees and Monrouxe (2010), and Schnurr (2009) follow this

approach. Other functions of humor in various kinds of interaction cannot be reviewed in this context, but see Attardo (2008) and references therein.

Finally, to conclude the discussion of the functionalist approaches to humor, we will consider an example of disaffiliative humor, since it is less frequent. Disaffiliative humor can be found in example (4), which repeats part of example (1), line 9, in which C's ironic laughter signals her distaste for the joke she had been assigned and, by extension, for the person responsible for it (the researcher). Whereas M by her laughter (line 11) ratifies 9 as affiliative between C and M, 11 also serves the function of disaffiliating the researcher (to put it simply: the students make fun of their teacher).

(4) Dyadic conversation; response phase of example (1) (Attardo, Pickering, and Baker 2011)

8           (1.90)  
 9    C:    u::m (0.49) ha ha ha HA:: hee hee ((ironic laugh)) \*  
 10           (0.38)  
 11    M:    ((laughs))  
 12           (0.94)

### 3 Corpus-Based Synthesis

The third period and most recent development in the discourse analysis of humor is certainly defined by the influence of corpus-based research. Historically, the study of humor using corpora has been hindered by the fact that corpora have not been annotated for the purposes of humor research. Thus, as Chafe (2007) remarks, the indication [laughter] is uninformative if one is researching the types of laughter occurrence. Moreover, in a corpus there is the problem of identifying humor, since few or no corpora exist with the humor turns conveniently labeled as such. Despite these problems, a few corpus-based studies have appeared. Günther (2003) is based on the British National Corpus and on a corpus of teenage conversations. Partington (2006) is based on a corpus of White House press conferences of more than one million words. Partington (2007) uses, among others, a corpus of one hundred million words of newspaper stories. Chafe (2001, 2007), which is based on the Santa Barbara corpus (23 hours of speech), is focused on laughter.

Some of these studies have used ingenious approaches to circumvent the problem of identifying humor. Thus, for example, Partington (2006) limits his study to "laughter talk" (i.e., speech that occurs before and after laughter) because in his corpus laughter is annotated as "[laughter]" and thus "laughter talk" is easily identified as anything that precedes or follows the tag "[laughter]." Similarly, Partington (2007) is concerned with irony explicitly labeled as such. Chafe (2007) limits his research to laughter, thus sidestepping the issue of identifying humor. Further discussion of these issues will be found below.

The following sections will examine five groups of corpus-based studies, organized either around a theme (humor styles, humor support, timing) or around corpora (the

Language in the Workplace corpus, the Corpus of American and British Office Talk, the British National Corpus, and the Bergen Corpus of London Teenage Language).

### 3.1 *Humor styles*

An important foundational study, anticipating the corpus-based approaches, was Tannen (1984), which analyzed all the humorous occurrences in the conversations held at a Thanksgiving dinner. Humor was not the sole focus of the study and this may explain the relative lack of influence on the field, until recently. Tannen (1984) shows that “one of the most distinctive aspects of any person’s style is the use of humor” (130) and that “humor makes one’s presence felt” (132). Tannen provides a detailed analysis of the style of humor of each of the dinner guests. The idea that speakers had different “styles” of humor was further expanded to include “family” styles (Everts 2003). A further expansion includes any sorts of situation where speakers know one another (i.e., interact repeatedly enough to establish a persona), including most notably workplace situations (Holmes 1998, 2000, 2006; Holmes and Marra 2002; Holmes, Marra, and Burns 2001). See also Mullany (2004), who uses a “community of practice” approach.

The most significant aspect of Tannen’s study was the use of quantitative analysis, which showed that humor has a larger role than expected in some conversation. Overall, about 10 percent of the turns were humorous, ranging from two speakers with 11 percent of humorous turns to one speaker with 2 percent. This figure of roughly 10 percent of humorous turns in conversations has repeatedly been confirmed in unrelated studies (e.g., Gibbs 2000). Different contexts (such as institutional contexts as opposed to everyday conversations) prescribe different frequencies. For example, Mulkey (1988: 158–65) found that Nobel prize ceremonies had an average of three humorous occurrences per event. Partington (2007: 1552) shows radically different frequencies of explicit irony in a corpus of White House briefings and one of interviews. In fact, even within the same type of activity (workplace conversation), Holmes and Marra (2002: 69) and Holmes and Schnurr (2005: 147) report significant variation in the quantity of humor in relation to different settings. Di Ferrante (2013) reports more humor in multiparty exchanges.

### 3.2 *The Language in the Workplace Project corpus studies*

The most significant development in corpus-based studies is the Language in the Workplace Project, started in 1996 at the Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand, under the direction of Janet Holmes. The corpus consists of about 1,500 interactions involving 450 different people in 20 different workplace locations and comprises about 150 hours of recordings. The project is not exclusively focused on humor (see Holmes and Stubbe 2003 for an overview) but I will only address its impact on humor research.

Methodologically, while still interested in functional questions and working off transcriptions, the Language in the Workplace Project is very much concerned with quantitative generalizations and uses video for facial expression (Holmes and Marra 2002:

69), and, hence, heeding Schegloff's (1993) warning about premature quantification, the project may be argued to represent a different theoretical paradigm from those described in the precursors and functionalist phases.

Among the main findings of the Workplace Project is that workplace humor can be both supportive (i.e., affiliative) and contestive (i.e., disaffiliative), or, to put it differently, it can build ingroup or outgroup membership, or even express collegiality or assert power (e.g., Holmes 2000; Holmes and Marra 2002; Holmes and Stubbe 2003; Koester 2010). Similar findings concern social status: "the chair [of a meeting] makes a disproportionately high contribution to the humour in most meetings" (Holmes 2001: 96) (32 percent of instances, overall). This is also true of multi-turn humor and is regardless of gender.

Holmes concludes that "in work contexts humour can be used by subordinates as a subtle (or not so subtle) license to challenge the power structure, as well as by those in power to achieve the speaker's goal while apparently de-emphasizing the power differential" (2000: 176). The same "subversive" function of humor, along with the more conventional expression of friendly feelings and positive politeness, is found in another study (Holmes and Marra 2002). However, because of the quantitative focus Holmes can make extremely significant generalizations: "the overall amount of humour produced by the women is greater than that produced by the men" (2001: 93). This finding flatly contradicts folk-humor theorists and two decades of feminist research that both contended that women produce less humor: the point famously (and polemically) summarized by Lakoff's (1975: 43) dictum that women "have no sense of humor." The results of Günther (2003) and Holmes, Marra, and Burns (2001) also question the common assumption that women produce less humor. Other factors beyond gender and setting, such as class, have not been researched extensively, but see Attardo (2008) for some discussion.

### 3.3 *Humor support*

Hay's work (1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001), which is related to Holmes's, is also a very significant contribution to corpus-based research. Hay has primarily investigated "humor support" – that is, conversational strategies used to acknowledge and support humorous utterances, among which figures prominently the production of more humor and/or laughter. Humor support (Hay 1996: 2001) by its strict definition encompasses only verbal support, excluding smiles, laughter, exaggerated facial expressions, and so on. However, there seems to be no theoretical reason to exclude nonverbal support. Among the strategies Hay lists the following:

- contribute more humor (see Section 4.3)
- echo (repeat part of the previous turn)
- offer sympathy or contradict self-deprecating humor
- overlap and heighten involvement in conversation.

Humor support is not needed for irony and does not need to follow humor that is used as humor support. Finally, Hay also lists non-supportive reactions such as

“withhold appreciation” (while showing understanding) and “lack of reaction” (cf. Sacks’s silence). In example (5), both turns 7 and 12, by speaker B, are examples of support (agreeing and echoing).

Hay also introduces a very significant analytical tool, namely the fact that the “experience of humor” should in fact be analyzed as a set of distinct reactions: the recognition of the intention to produce humor, the understanding of the humor stimulus, the appreciation, and the reaction (Hay 2001). Each is in a condition of presupposition in relation to the ones that follow it (so, e.g., appreciating humor presupposes understanding it). This figures crucially in Bell’s analysis of failed humor (see Section 4.6).

### 3.4 *Other corpus-based studies*

The conclusions reached by Holmes and her associates have been confirmed externally by some recent corpus-based research. For example, the Corpus of American and British Office Talk (Koester 2006) consists of 34,000 words of transcriptions of 30 hours of recordings of (white-collar) workplace conversations. The data are American and British English. Koester (2010) considers a sample of 60 instances of humor. She finds five general functions: “building a positive identity; ... defending [one’s] own positive face; ... showing convergence ...; negative politeness ...[and] showing divergence” (112), which do not differ significantly from previous studies and are consistent with the hypothesis that humor can have any function (divergence and convergence; positive and negative face). Koester’s work is strongly influenced by Boxer and Cortés-Conde (1997). Koester finds no difference in frequencies across nationality (2010: 115). Men used more teasing humor while women used more situational and self-deprecating humor, as Boxer and Cortés-Conde (1997) found as well. Managers and subordinates initiate the same amount of humor and both use it equally frequently to criticize (Koester 2010: 116).

Günther’s (2003) analyses are based on the British National Corpus (4.2 million words) and the Bergen Corpus of London Teenage Language (500,000 words). Günther uses explicit quantitative and statistical methods. Her work focuses both on canned and conversational humor as well as laughter. Some of her more interesting results are that females laugh significantly more but do not support humor more (2003: 200), as claimed in the literature. Günther finds that laughter and humor occur most frequently in single-sex interactions and that females produce more humor in single-sex multi-party settings (181).

### 3.5 *Timing and the prosody of humor*

The use of corpora has also ushered in a different methodology based on comparing the humorous turns or parts of a text to the non-humorous ones, to avoid “cherry-picking” the interesting data and instead basing any generalizations on statistical evidence when possible. Methodologically speaking, in other words, corpus analysts are very far from Sacks’s Conversation Analysis approach. Another strand of research based on a corpus but using instrumental phonetic analysis has focused on prosody and timing.

Studies by Attardo and Pickering and their associates have focused on timing in humor. Timing has long been considered a crucial issue in the delivery of humor (Attardo and Pickering 2011). Pickering *et al.* (2009) examine such factors as volume, pitch, pauses, speech rate, laughter, and smiling in canned joke-telling. They find that, contrary to folk beliefs, speakers do not mark punch lines prosodically, although they do speak more slowly in punch lines. Humor in jokes does not reveal a one-to-one mapping with laughter or smiling. In Attardo, Pickering, and Baker (2011) and Attardo, Wagner, and Urios-Aparisi (2013), these results are duplicated for conversational humor, including irony. Attardo, Wagner, and Urios-Aparisi (2013) includes several other papers relevant to the subject. There exists a significant body of literature on the prosody of irony (see, e.g., Attardo *et al.* 2003; Bryant 2011; Bryant and Fox Tree 2005). These studies are all based on detailed instrumental acoustic analysis of small corpora, use statistical validation when possible, and are open to the use of visual clues as well: smiling, for example, but see also the concept of “blank face” (Attardo *et al.* 2003). A small example of detailed analysis can be seen in example (1), in which pauses as short as one tenth of a second are quantified.

## 4 Paradigmatic Shifts in the Study of Humorous Discourse

The periodization used in this chapter corresponds to methodological shifts in the research. Thus the focus on canned, narrative jokes by Sacks is replaced by a focus on conversational, discursive humor. The shift to corpus-based research involves the use of quantitative methods and in some cases the use of acoustic and video recording replacing or supplementing the transcriptions traditionally used in Conversation Analysis and Discourse Analysis. However, other issues beyond methodology affect and shape the field. This final section will review six of the central ones.

### 4.1 *Discourse analysis and cognitivist approaches*

Discourse approaches to humor and laughter are largely unaffected by, or outright hostile to, the major cognitive approaches to humor. Exceptions to this neglect are Günther’s (2003) and Norrick’s (2003) discussions of whether discourse analysis approaches can be blended with cognitive approaches such as Giora’s (2003) “salience” theory or the script-based General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) (Attardo and Raskin 1991). The applicability of the GTVH to conversational data was exemplified in Attardo (2001a: 66–8). Antonopoulou and Sifianou (2003) and Archakis and Tsakona (2005, 2006) aim at bridging the gap between the GTVH and discourse analysis in the analysis of spontaneous humor in Greek conversations.

It is impossible to present the GTVH in this context, but suffice it to say that it is based on “knowledge resources,” which include the target of the humor; the narrative strategy (the “genre” of the humor – for example, a question-and-answer format

as opposed to a narrative joke); and the “script opposition” and “logical mechanism,” which embody respectively the incongruity and resolution that most modern theories of humor assume constitute the fundamental psychological mechanisms at work in humor. It is clear that integrating discourse analyses with such cognitive resources as those presented by the GTVH or Giora’s salience theory can only enrich the analyses. For example, cognitive approaches solve the problem of the validation of the identification of the humor (see Section 4.5).

## 4.2 *The multi-functionality of humor*

A core paradox exists at the center of functionalist analyses. Holmes (2000) argues that “all utterances are multifunctional ... Hence, a humorous utterance may, and typically does, serve several functions at once” (166). Moreover, humorous utterances are indeterminate (Attardo 2002a; Gibbs 2012; Priego-Valverde 2003). These conclusions inevitably mean that, since humor and irony are indeterminate, they can be interpreted differently by different participants in a conversation, with the logical conclusion that affiliative moves by one speaker, for example, can always be interpreted as disaffiliative by another speaker. This lends support to the idea that humor in conversation may have both functions.

In addition, Holmes (2000: 166) notes a theoretically challenging infinite regress: “the most general or basic function of humor is to amuse. But one can ask *why* does the speaker wish to amuse the audience” (166). Her answer is to study humor as a form of politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987), which provides the theoretical framework and constrains the regression problem. However, it is obvious that politeness is only one of many functions of humor.

The main limitation of the functionalist studies is that they merely document the existence of one or several functions of humor in conversation. While this is a useful task, it is of limited theoretical value, since none of the functions described in these studies goes beyond the four general primary functions of humor listed in Attardo (1994: 323): social management, decommitment, mediation, and defunctionalization.

Furthermore, it should be noted that it has been claimed (Attardo 2002b; Priego-Valverde 2003) that humor may have any function (or more precisely that all linguistically possible functions can be performed by humorous means, except of course when prohibited by context). If that is the case, the functionalist studies would end up merely confirming the presence of a given function already predicted by the fact that all functions are possible.

## 4.3 *The co-construction of humor*

Davies (1984) introduced, in a seminal paper, the idea that humor in conversation is co-constructed – that is, both participants jointly produce and elaborate the joking exchange – in a significant difference from the model implicit in the narrative-and-reaction structure analyzed by Sacks.

(5) Dyadic conversation; continuation of example (3) (Attardo, Pickering, and Baker 2011)

- 1 A: Do you speak any other languages besides English?  
 2 (1.11)  
 3 B: Nope. (0.42) nothin' fluently (0.12) a little bit a this 'n'  
 that 'n' (1.26) other thing (0.66) you know  
 4 A: You're American \*  
 5 (1.03)  
 6 ((joint laughter))  
 7 B: No kiddin'  
 8 (0.42)  
 9 A: Yeah]  
 10 B: ((overlapping laughter))]  
 11 (1.48)  
 12 B: Damn Americans \*  
 13 (0.09)  
 14 A: Yes::  
 15 (3.1)

Speaker A interrupts B with the recycled joke punch line “You’re American.” Speaker B supports (see Section 3.3) the joke by laughing and agreeing, and then provides her own humorous turn on the same topic by pretending to be bashing Americans in line 12 (both speakers were American). Thus the exchange (lines 4–14), which starts with an instance of delayed laughter in line 6, constitutes a co-constructed “Americans as monolinguals” humor sequence, clearly ending with the overlong three-second pause that follows in line 15. The idea of co-construction was taken up in later work focused on the affiliative aspects of humor. For example, Kotthoff (2007, 2009) describes “joint fantasizing,” in which speakers sustain a co-constructed humorous improvisation of 13 turns.

Not *all* humor is co-constructed: some humor is aggressive and disruptive (Priego-Valverde 2003) and hence disaffiliative and obviously staged by one participant only (or at least excluding some participant). Moreover, failed humor (see Section 4.6) is obviously not taken up and hence not jointly constructed.

The issue is further complicated by factors such as familiarity, the formality of the situation, and the presence of an audience, which all affect the type and quantity of humor. Presumably, humor among friends and in other intimate contexts may take the form of elaborate multi-turn sequences in which the speakers play upon one another’s jokes to realize long stretches of humorous conversation (cf. “joint fantasizing”: Kotthoff 2007). However, once more, much humor also consists of single-turn humorous utterances that are not taken up or even acknowledged by the audience. Eisterhold, Attardo, and Boxer (2006) have shown that this fact is usefully seen in the context of a wider theory of pragmatics and that presumably it is the different degrees of intimacy in the situations that account, at least in part, for the differences between long and short stretches of humor.

Eisterhold, Attardo, and Boxer (2006) claim that there exists a “principle of least disruption” that enjoins speakers to return to a serious mode as soon as possible. Long

stretches of humorous banter notwithstanding, humor is a marked form of communication that needs to be marked off (“keyed”) as such and, in many cases, negotiated. Recent results corroborating the idea that speakers return to the serious mode as soon as needed include Tsakona (2011), who found that the ironical turns in a Greek parliament discussion did not exceed three utterances, and only two instances were cases of mode adoption (i.e., the hearer continuing the speaker’s irony), and Ruiz-Gurillo (2009), who found that 48.5 percent of her corpus of ironical conversational exchanges consisted of single turns and 68.5 percent consisted of three or fewer turns. Holmes and Marra (2002) report that single-turn humor in workplace conversations never accounted for less than about 40 percent of humorous turns and that in one setting (factory floor) single-turn humor outnumbered two-or-more-turns humor.

#### 4.4 *Finding the boundaries of humor*

Several authors (e.g., Coates 2007; Hay 2000; Kotthoff 2007, Norrick 1993, 2003) use, more or less interchangeably, the idea that a situation or exchange is framed (Goffman 1974: 43–4) or keyed (Hymes 1972: 62) for humor. “Keying” will here be used as an umbrella term for marking or setting apart humor in conversations.

Keying is obviously a dynamic phenomenon: a situation may start out keyed for humor or may change its keying to humor. This shows that keying and humor are not causally connected, since either can exist without the other: obviously, we can have unkeyed humor – that is, humor that occurs without warning or signaling in an otherwise serious situation (this is known as deadpan humor); similarly, we can have serious content keyed to playfulness – for example, the Schoolhouse Rock videos in the United States presented serious academic material using songs and playful cartoons. Naturally, when humor is recognized, its presence keys a posteriori any situation as “funny” in the intentions of the speaker who produced the humor (the audience may refuse the keying, for example using the formula “That’s not funny.”).

The issue of keying/framing of humor is probably hopelessly tangled, since most aspects of the notion seem to be unclear. The direction of the causality is not determined: if a situation is keyed to humor after a speaker spots an instance of humor, the detection and recognition of the humor are not helped by the keying. Conversely, if the keying leads the speaker to identify humor, the mechanisms of the keying itself are entirely unexplained. Another issue that has not received enough attention is the scope of the keying. Authors speak variously of interactions, exchanges, and turns being keyed to humor. However, it is clear that the occurrence of one humorous remark in a 30-minute conversation, for example, cannot be said to key the entire exchange to humor. Within-turn shifts in key are also attested, such as the example below, in which a doctor switches mid-turn from a humorous key to a serious one, right after the second short pause.

(6) Rees and Monrouxe (2010: 3392)

142 MD2: No they told me beforehand ahu huh huh (.) we've been discussing  
you in secret you see ((says playfully)) (.) are you tender on this side  
at all?

So, assuming that humor keys a segment of discourse for “non-seriousness,” where does the non-seriousness begin and end? Finally, the indeterminacy of humor and the facts that speakers can shift at will between humorous and serious keys, or are simply comfortable with being both humorous and serious at the same time, have led to the conclusion that the phenomena are beyond the reach of the analysis (Kotthoff 2007: 287).

Another approach is the idea that humor is accompanied by (mostly non-lexical) markers such as prosody, smiling, and laughter, in spoken discourse (see Section 3.5) and by typographical and other markers in written discourse (Adams 2012). The idea of keying stretches of discourse for humor is obviously related to the issue of the identification of humor, since both the participants in the conversation and the external observer face essentially the same problem: How does one know that the speaker is being funny?

#### 4.5 *Identification of humor*

The issue of identification of humor has also undergone a paradigm shift. It did not present itself significantly for traditional Discourse/Conversation Analysis, which involved more often than not participant observers, who were therefore “in the know” and hence capable of more or less reliably identifying the humorous episodes. However, when using large-scale corpora that have not been personally collected by the analyst, the issue becomes relevant. Most scholars have used laughter as the de facto exclusive criterion to determine whether a given passage is humorous or not (e.g., Günther 2003: 215). Some scholars (Glenn 2003; Holmes 2000; Partington 2006) acknowledge the potential problems but essentially set them aside or limit their study to the occurrences of laughter, introducing problematic and theoretically untenable notions such as “laughable” (Glenn 2003; see also Glenn and Holt 2013) or “laughter talk” (Partington 2006).

The issue is, however, significant. As seen above, laughter is not a reliable marker of humor. It can result in false positives (laughter that occurs when no humor is present) and in false negatives (no laughter when humor is present). In other words, a scholar relying on laughter will potentially *both* over and underreport the presence of humor in his/her corpus. Moreover, if one considers the issue of failed humor (see Section 4.6), which could be defined pre-theoretically precisely as humor to which no one reacts with laughter or smiling, it becomes evident that relying on laughter alone will miss most failed humor.

Attardo (2012) has advocated a triangulation method that considers several factors, such as: (1) markers including laughter and smiling and other markers such as orthographic ones in written text, graphic ones (e.g., smiley faces), acoustic ones (laugh tracks), and so on; (2) a full semantic/pragmatic analysis of the text, along the lines of the cognitive theories of humor, to uncover the incongruity of the potential humor; and (3) any metalinguistic indications of the humorous intention of the speakers. In other words, any given instance of humor is given an evaluation based on all the available evidence, both theoretical and circumstantial. To put it differently, if someone laughs after a given turn, there is a good chance that the turn was humorous,

but this needs to be checked and confirmed by a semantic and/or pragmatic analysis. However, the semantic and/or pragmatic analysis may reveal instances of unmarked humor.

The triangulation method has a distinct advantage over Holmes's (2000) definition of humor, worth quoting, incidentally, because of its pellucid nature but also in view of its significance in corpus research. Holmes defines humor as "utterances which are identified by the analyst, on the basis of paralinguistic, prosodic and discursual clues, as intended by the speaker(s) to be amusing and perceived to be amusing by at least some participants" (163). Holmes acknowledges that this definition excludes failed and unintentional humor (i.e., asymmetrical humor, in which one of the parties disagrees on the humor value or intent). Clearly, the adoption of semantic and/or pragmatic analysis allows one to include failed and asymmetrical humor.

#### 4.6 Failed humor

The topic of failed humor has not been a significant part of the discussion in discourse analysis, even though it should have been very important since most discourse analysis research in humor assumes, implicitly or explicitly, as we have seen above, that laughter correlates with humor. It is obvious that in failed humor there will be instances of humor in which no laughter follows or precedes the humor. Therefore, if laughter or another external expression of mirth is the criterion for identifying humor, identifying failed humor becomes difficult, if not impossible.

Exceptions to the neglect of the topic are Bell (2009a, 2009b), Bell and Attardo (2010), Hay (1994), and Priego-Valverde (2009). Numerous reasons for failures of humor, both on the speaker and on the hearer's side, have been identified, from lack of comprehension of the utterance, or of its implicatures, to failure to recognize the humorous keying, to failure to appreciate or join in the joking.

### 5 Conclusion

The role and presence of humor in conversation are both greater and more complex than they appear. After an early phase of research that focused on the telling of canned jokes (hence narratives) and on the function of laughter in conversation, the field focused on the functions performed by humor of any kind in conversation, with an emphasis on the affiliative aspect of the phenomenon, thus moving away from the original emphasis in Sacks's and Jefferson's work. The most recent phase of research has brought to bear several significant innovations, further broadening the scope of the analysis of humorous discourse:

- *methodologies from corpus-based studies*: working from large-scale corpora using quantitative techniques, in particular a focus away from significant but isolated examples ("cherry-picking") and instead reliance on statistical comparison between humorous and non-humorous parts of the corpus;
- *methodologies from multimodality*, in particular attention to the interplay between gesture, facial expression, and the vocal and suprasegmental "tracks" of speech;

- the previous item has required the introduction of new tools such as *audio and video recording*, a departure from the tradition of working from transcripts of conversations (admittedly this is not unique to the discourse analysis of humor).

Functional considerations are still part of the agenda and so are the differences between narrative and conversational humor. It is always difficult to make predictions, but it seems reasonable that the trend toward corpus-based studies will continue, as will the expansion toward multimodal analyses. However, some of the issues discussed in the second part of this chapter will need to be settled, or at the very least discussed in depth, for the field to move forward. For example, the problem of finding the boundaries and identifying humor, including failed humor, far from being a marginal issue, is a crucial problem that needs to be resolved before a truly representative and inclusive discussion of humor in conversation is possible.

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# 9 Discourse Markers

## *Language, Meaning, and Context*

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Yael Maschler and  
Deborah Schiffrin

### 0 Introduction

The production of coherent discourse is an interactive process that requires speakers to draw upon several different types of communicative knowledge that complement grammatical knowledge of sound, form, and meaning per se. Two aspects of communicative knowledge closely related to one another are *expressive* and *social*: the ability to use language to display personal and social identities, to convey attitudes and perform actions, and to negotiate relationships between self and other. Others include a *cognitive* ability to represent concepts and ideas through language and a *textual* ability to organize forms, and convey meanings, within units of language longer than a single sentence.

*Discourse markers* – expressions such as *oh*, *well*, *y'know*, and *but* – are one set of linguistic items that function in cognitive, expressive, social, and textual domains.<sup>1</sup> Although there were scattered studies of discourse markers in the early 1980s, their study since then has abounded in various branches of linguistics and allied fields. Markers have been studied in a variety of languages besides English, including Catalan (Cuenca and Marin 2012), Chinese (Biq 1990; Ljungqvist 2010; Miracle 1989; Wang, Tsai, and Ya-Ting 2010), Croatian (Dedaic 2005), Danish (Emmertsen and Heinemann 2010), Dutch (Mazeland and Huiskes 2001; van Bergen *et al.* 2011), Estonian (Keevalik 2003, 2006, 2012, in press), Finnish (Hakulinen 1998, in press; Laakso and Sorjonen 2010; Sorjonen 2001), French (Cadiot *et al.* 1985; Degand and Fagard 2011; Hansen 1998), German (W. Abraham 1991; Barske and Golato 2010; Golato 2010, forthcoming; Imo 2010), Hebrew (Ariel 1998, 2010; Livnat and Yatsiv 2003; Maschler 1997a, 2009, 2012; Miller Shapiro 2012; Ziv 1998, 2008), Hungarian (Der and Marko 2010; Vasko 2000), Icelandic (Hilmisdóttir 2011, in press), Indonesian (Wouk 1998, 2001), Italian (Bazzanella 1990, 2006; Bruti 1999; Mauri and Giacalone Ramat 2012; Visconti 2005,

2009), Japanese (Cook 1992; Fuji 2000; Matsumoto 1988; McGloin and Konishi 2010; Onodera 2004), Korean (Ahn 2009; Park 1998), Latin (Kroon 1998; Ochoa 2003), Mayan (Brody 1987, 1989; Zavala 2001), Portuguese (da Silva 2006; Macario Lopes 2011), Russian (Bolden 2003, 2008, in press; Grenoble 2004), Spanish (Koike 1996; Roggia 2012; Schwenter 1996; Torres 2002), Swedish (Lindström in press; Lindström and Wide 2005), Taiwanese (Chang and Su 2012), and Yiddish (Matras and Reershemius forthcoming) as well as in sign languages (McKee and Wallingford 2011; Perez Hernandez 2006). They have been examined in a variety of genres and interactive contexts, for example narratives (Koike 1996; Norrick 2001a; Perez Hernandez 2006; Segal, Duchan, and Scott 1991), political discourse (Dedaic 2005; Wilson 1993), healthcare consultations (Heritage and Sorjonen 1994), courtroom discourse (Innes 2010), games (Greaseley 1994; Hoyle 1994), computer-generated tutorial sessions (Moser and Moore 1995), newspapers (Cotter 1996a), radio talk (Cotter 1996b; Maschler and Dori-Hacohen 2012), classrooms (Chen and He 2001; De Fina 1997; Tyler, Jefferies, and Davies 1988), and service encounters (Merritt 1984) as well as in a multitude of different language contact situations (see Section 2). Synchronic studies have been supplemented by diachronic analyses of first (Andersen 1996; Andersen *et al.* 1999; Choi 2010; Gallagher and Craig 1987; Jisa 1987; Kyratzis and Ervin-Tripp 1999; Kyratzis, Guo, and Ervin-Tripp 1990; Sprott 1992, 1994) and second language acquisition (Aijmer 2011; Flowerdew and Tauroza 1995; Fung and Carter 2007) as well as in the field of language change (see Section 2).

The studies just mentioned have approached discourse markers from a number of different perspectives. After reviewing and comparing three influential perspectives (Section 1), we summarize a subset of recent studies that have provided a rich and varied empirical base that reveals a great deal about how discourse markers work and what they do (Section 2). Our conclusion revisits one of the central dilemmas still facing discourse-marker research (Section 3).

## 1 Discourse Markers: Three Perspectives

Perspectives on markers differ in terms of their basic starting point, their definition of discourse markers, and their method of analysis. Here we describe Schiffrin's discourse perspective (Schiffrin 1987a, 1994a, 1997, 2001, 2006) (Section 1.1); Fraser's pragmatic approach (1990, 1998, 2006, 2009a) (Section 1.2); and Maschler's interactional linguistics perspective (1994, 1997a, 2009, 2012) (Section 1.3).<sup>2</sup> We have chosen these approaches not only because they have been influential but also because their differences (Section 1.4) continue to resonate in current research.

### 1.1 *Markers and discourse*

Schiffrin's analysis of discourse markers (1987a) was motivated by several concerns. From a sociolinguistic perspective, Schiffrin was interested in using methods for analyzing language that had been developed by variation theory to account for the use and distribution of forms in discourse. This interest, however, was embedded within a view of discourse not only as a unit of language but also as a process of social interaction (see Heller 2001; Schegloff, this volume). The analysis thus tried to reconcile both methodology (using both quantitative and qualitative methods) and

underlying models (combining those inherited from both linguistics and sociology). Unifying the analysis was the desire to account for the distribution of markers (which markers occurred where? why?) in spoken discourse in a way that attended to both the importance of language (what was the form? its meaning?) and interaction (what was going on – at the moment of use – in the social interaction?).

Schiffrin's initial work defined discourse markers as "sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk" (1987a: 31) – that is, non-obligatory utterance-initial items that function in relation to ongoing talk and text. She proposed that discourse markers could be considered as a set of linguistic expressions comprising members of word classes as varied as conjunctions (e.g., *and*, *but*, *or*), interjections (e.g., *oh*), adverbs (e.g., *now*, *then*), and lexicalized phrases (e.g., *y'know*, *I mean*). Also proposed was a discourse model with different planes: a participation framework, information state, ideational structure, action structure, and exchange structure. The specific analyses showed that markers could work at different levels of discourse to connect utterances on either a single plane (1) or across different planes (2). In (1a) and (1b), for example, *because* connects actions and ideas respectively. In (1a), *because* connects a request (to complete a task) and the justification for the request:

(1a) Yeh, let's get back, because she'll never get home.

In (1b), *because* connects two idea units or representations of events:

(1b) And they holler Henry!!! Cause they really don't know!<sup>3</sup>

In (2), however, *but* connects an utterance defined on several different planes simultaneously, and hence relates the different planes to one another:

(2) Jack: [The rabbis preach, ["Don't intermarry"  
 Freda: [But I did- [But I *did* say those intermarriages  
 that we have in this country are healthy.

Freda's *but* prefaces an idea unit ("intermarriages are healthy"), displays a participation framework (non-aligned with Jack), realizes an action (a rebuttal during an argument), and seeks to establish Freda as a current speaker in an exchange (open a turn at talk). *But* in (2) thus has four functions that locate an utterance at the intersection of four planes of talk.

Another aspect of the analysis showed that markers display relationships that are local (between adjacent utterances) and/or global (across wider spans and/or structures of discourse; cf. Lenk 1998). In (3), for example, *because* (in d) has both local and global functions.

(3) From Schiffrin (1994b: 34); also discussed in Schiffrin (1997)  
 Debby: a Well some people before they go to the doctor, they talk to a  
 friend, or a neighbor.  
 b Is there anybody that uh ...  
 Henry: c Sometimes it works!  
 d Because there's this guy Louie Gelman.  
 e he went to a big specialist,

- f and the guy...analyzed it wrong.  
 [narrative not included]  
 o So doctors are - well they're not God either!

In (3), *because* has a local function: it opens a justification (that takes the form of a brief [three-clause] narrative about a friend's experience) through which Henry supports his claim to a general truth (going to someone other than a doctor *works* – i.e., can help a medical problem). But notice that Henry then follows this justification with a longer (eight-clause) narrative detailing his friend's experience. Thus, *because* also has a global function: *because* links *Sometimes it works* (defined retrospectively as an abstract) with a narrative (whose coda is initiated with the complementary discourse marker *so* also functioning at a global level).

Also considered in Schiffrin's analysis was the degree to which markers themselves add a meaning to discourse (i.e., as when *oh* displays information as "new" or "unexpected" to a recipient) or reflect a meaning that is already semantically accessible (e.g., as when *but* reflects a semantically transparent contrastive meaning). Markers can also occupy intermediate positions between these two extremes: *because* and *so*, for example, partially maintain their core meanings as cause/result conjunctions even when they establish metaphorical relationships on non-propositional planes of discourse (cf. Schwenter 1996; Sweetser 1990).

Although the analysis was initiated with an "operational definition" of markers (as mentioned above, "sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk"), it concluded with more theoretical definitions of markers. First, Schiffrin attempted a specification of the conditions that would allow a word to be used as a discourse marker: syntactically detachable, initial position, range of prosodic contours, operate at both local and global levels, operate on different planes of discourse (Schiffrin 1987a: 328). Second, she suggested that discourse markers were comparable to indexicals (Schiffrin 1987a: 322–5; cf. Levinson's 1983: ch. 2 notion of discourse deictics), or, in a broader sociolinguistic framework, contextualization cues (Schiffrin 1987b). This view "provides a way of breaking down two of the key barriers in the definitional divide between markers and particles [in the field of discourse-marker research]" (Schiffrin 2006: 336): the barriers (1) between the view of *displaying* meaning (markers) and *creating* it (particles) and (2) whether markers/particles can also portray speaker stance and attitude. Viewing markers as indexicals allows for both the displaying and the creating functions, as well as for anchoring the center of deixis on the speaker, therefore including speaker stance functions. Finally, Schiffrin proposed that, although markers have primary functions (e.g., the primary function of *and* is on an ideational plane and the primary function of *well* in the participation framework), their use is multi-functional. It is this multifunctionality on different planes of discourse that helps to integrate the many different simultaneous processes underlying the construction of discourse, and thus helps to create coherence.

## 1.2 Markers and pragmatics

Like Schiffrin's approach, Fraser's (1990, 1998, 2006, 2009a) perspective on discourse markers is embedded within a larger framework that impacts upon the analysis of markers. Fraser's theoretical framework concerns the meaning of sentences, specifically how one type of pragmatic marker in a sentence may relate the message conveyed by

that sentence to the message of a prior sentence. And, in contrast to Schiffrin's (1987a) approach – whose starting point was to account for the use and distribution of markers in everyday discourse – Fraser's starting point is the classification of types of pragmatic meaning, and, within that classification, the description of how some pragmatic commentary markers (discourse markers) “signal a relation between the discourse segment which hosts them and the prior discourse segment” (Fraser 2009a: 296).

Fraser's framework depends upon a differentiation between content and pragmatic meaning. Content meaning is referential meaning: “a more or less explicit representation of some state of the world that the speaker intends to bring to the hearer's attention by means of the literal interpretation of the sentence” (1990: 385). Pragmatic meaning concerns the speaker's communicative intention, the direct (not implied) “message the speaker intends to convey in uttering the sentence” (1990: 386). It is conveyed by three different sets of pragmatic markers: basic pragmatic markers (signals of illocutionary force, e.g., *please*), commentary pragmatic markers (encoding of another message that comments on the basic message, e.g., *frankly*), and parallel pragmatic markers (encoding of another message separate from the basic and/or commentary message, e.g., *damn*, vocatives). In a later work, Fraser proposed a fourth type of pragmatic marker – discourse management markers – “which signal a metacomment on the structure of the discourse” (2009b: 893). Discourse markers are one type of commentary pragmatic marker: they are “a class of expressions, each of which signals how the speaker intends the basic message that follows to relate to the prior discourse” (1990: 387), and they all fall into only one of three functional classes: contrastive (prototypically, *but*), elaborative (prototypically, *and*), and inferential (prototypically, *so*) (2009a: 300–1). Fraser (1998) builds upon the sequential function of discourse markers such that discourse markers necessarily specify (i.e., provide commentary on) a relationship between two segments of discourse: this specification is not conceptual but procedural (it provides information on the interpretation of messages; see also Ariel 1998).

As suggested earlier, Fraser's framework presumes a strict separation between semantics (his content meaning) and pragmatics (his pragmatic meaning): speakers' use of commentary pragmatic markers – including, critically, discourse markers – has nothing to do with the content meaning of the words (cf. Halliday and Hasan 1976; Schiffrin 1987a; see also Norrick 2001b). Similarly, although discourse markers may be homophonous with, as well as historically related to, other forms, they do not function in sentential and textual roles simultaneously: “when an expression functions as a discourse marker, that is its exclusive function in the sentence” (1990: 189).

One consequence of these disjunctive relationships is that multiple functions of markers – including, critically, social-interactive functions – are downplayed (if noted at all) and not open to linguistic explanation. What some scholars (e.g., Ariel 1998, 2010; Halliday and Hasan 1976; Maschler 2002b, 2009, 2012; Pons Bordería 2008; Schiffrin 1987a, 1992; Schwenter 1996) suggest is an interdependence (sometimes clear, sometimes subtle) between content and pragmatic meaning – explained by well-known processes such as semantic bleaching (Bolinger 1977) or metaphorical extensions from a “source domain” (Sweetser 1990) – becomes, instead, a matter of chance (e.g., homophony). Likewise, what scholars working on grammaticization (Brinton, this volume; Traugott 1995a) and particularly grammaticization of discourse markers (see Section 2) have found to be gradual changes in form–function relationships would have to be viewed, instead, as a series of categorical and functional leaps across mutually exclusive classes of form and meaning.

Fraser's classification of types of pragmatic meaning also has the important effect of redefining the set of expressions often considered as markers. Different markers are excluded for different reasons: whereas *oh*, for example, is considered akin to a separate sentence, *because* is viewed as a content formative or an interjection, *y'know* is identified as a parallel pragmatic marker, and *anyway* is regarded as a discourse management marker. These classifications create sets that end up containing tremendous internal variation. The large and varied group of interjections (Fraser 1990: 391), for example, includes not only *oh* but also *ah, aha, ouch, yuk* (what Goffman 1978 has called response cries); *uh-huh, yeah* (what Yngve 1970 calls back channels and Schegloff 1981 calls turn-continuers); *hey* (a summons; see DuBois 1989); and *because* (which is an interjection when it stands alone as an answer [Fraser 1990: 392] and elsewhere is a content formative [but see Sanders and Stukker 2012; Schlepegrell 1991; Stenström 1998]).

### 1.3 Markers and interactional linguistics

Maschler takes a functional interactional linguistics (Selting and Couper-Kuhlen 2001) perspective, which, like Schiffrin's approach, always begins with the text rather than with a theory and asks what a particular discourse marker is doing in the particular contexts in which it is employed. This has led to a focus on the process of *metalinguaging*. The term builds on Bateson's concept of metacommunication (1972) and on Becker's (1988) distinction between *language* and *linguaging* – a move from an idea of language as something accomplished to the idea of linguaging as an ongoing process. Linguaging is always performed at two levels of discourse: one can use language to look through language at a world one perceives to exist beyond language, but one can also employ language in order to communicate about the process of using language itself. Discourse markers accomplish linguaging about the interaction as opposed to linguaging about the extralingual world. Thus, for an utterance to be considered a discourse marker, first and foremost, it must have a *metalingual interpretation* in the context in which it occurs (Maschler 1994).<sup>4</sup> Rather than referring to the extralingual realm, discourse markers refer to the realm of the *text*, to the *interpersonal* relations between its participants (or between speaker and text), and/or to their *cognitive* processes.

One of the things human beings metalanguage about are the frame shifts (Goffman 1981) in which they are about to engage during interaction. And they tend to do so with constructions that over time are repeated and may eventually grammaticize (Hopper 1987) into discourse markers.<sup>5</sup> Participants thus employ discourse markers at conversational action (Ford and Thompson 1996) boundaries, in order to construct the frame shifts taking place throughout their interaction (Maschler 1997a; cf. Grenoble 2004), often by *projecting* (Auer 2005) the nature of these shifts (Maschler 2009, 2012). Metalanguaging is thus argued to be the semantic-pragmatic process found at the heart of both employment and grammaticization of discourse markers.

Examine, for example, the following excerpt from an interaction between two young colleagues at work.

(4) "Doctor's order" (recorded in 2010)<sup>6</sup>

1 Orit: ...xayevet lesaper lax,  
           must     tell     you  
           [I] gotta tell you,





taking place during frame-shifting; these processes are often verbalized in spoken discourse (Chafe 1994) (e.g., *'ah* ["oh," line 21] realizing new information; *'e-m* ["uhm," line 4] processing information).<sup>8</sup>

As in Schiffrin's approach, a particular marker need not operate in only a single realm – for example, *rega* ("one sec," line 14) functions both in the textual realm to stop the ongoing conversational action (here, for requesting clarification) as well as in the interpersonal realm, interrupting the interlocutor producing the current action. A marker generally has several different functions, which must be discovered through careful analysis considering the actions leading up to its use in various contexts. Indeed, it is this multi-functionality, often across realms, that may eventually bring about the grammaticization of discourse markers – a topic Maschler explores from a synchronic perspective (see Section 2).

Non-stand-alone discourse markers *project* (Auer 2005) the nature of the upcoming frame shift. Thus, when the narrator hears *rega* ("wait a sec," lit. "moment") at line 14, she knows that her talk is about to be interrupted, most likely with some request. Discourse markers carry very weak grammatical projection: unlike a preposition, for example, which strongly projects a noun phrase in Hebrew, any syntactic category may follow a discourse marker. At the same time, synchronic grammaticization studies show that discourse markers carry very strong interactional projection: the nature of the particular upcoming frame shift is projected by the metalingual utterance, be it a full-fledged one (e.g., *'im lomar bekitsur* [lit. "if to say succinctly"]) or a crystallized version (e.g., *bekitsur* [lit. "in short," "anyway"]; Maschler 2009).

Maschler (2009) shows that, from the emic perspective of participants, discourse markers, besides sharing the overarching functional property described above, also form a distinct syntactic category no different in categorial status from "more established" categories, such as noun, verb, or adjective. Like other syntactic categories, discourse markers form a system, and they exhibit three types of patterning: distributional (when in interaction are discourse markers employed?), functional (what types of function, besides the overarching one, do they fulfill?), and structural (what structural properties do they exhibit?).

As for distribution, there is a general tendency in Maschler's data of casual conversations in Hebrew to employ more discourse markers, and particularly more discourse-marker clusters, the more prominent the frame shift between two conversational actions (Maschler 1997a, 1998b; cf. Clover 1982; Enkvist and Wårvik 1987).<sup>9</sup> As for structure, discourse markers often exhibit morphophonological reduction phenomena characteristic of other grammaticized elements (Hopper 1991). More importantly, they share structural properties in terms of prosody and sequential positioning. This observation has led to an *operational definition*.

A *prototypical discourse marker* is defined as an utterance fulfilling two requirements: *semantically*, the utterance must have a metalingual interpretation in the context in which it occurs (see above); *structurally*, "the utterance must occur at intonation-unit [Chafe 1994] initial position, either at a point of speaker change, or, in same-speaker talk, immediately following any intonation contour *other than continuing intonation* [unless it follows another marker in a cluster]" (Maschler 1998b: 31, 2009: 17).<sup>10</sup> For instance, in our example above, all discourse markers fulfill both requirements and thus constitute prototypical discourse markers,<sup>11</sup> as is the case with 94 percent of the 613 discourse markers throughout Maschler's (1997a) database (excluding stance

discourse markers<sup>12</sup>). Non-prototypical discourse markers (i.e., those not fulfilling the structural requirement) often construct lower-order frame shifts, such as those between constructed dialogue (Tannen 1989) and the utterance presenting it into the discourse (Maschler 2002a). The system of discourse markers permeating interaction can thus be seen to constitute part of a larger, iconic system of grammatical and prosodic (and kinesic: Kendon 1995) features, aiding participants in distinguishing prominent frame shifts from those that are more subtle in nature.

### 1.4 Comparison of approaches

Along with the specific differences between approaches noted in interim comparisons above, we can also compare the approaches in relation to six recurrent themes.

First, the source of discourse markers: although the three perspectives agree that markers have various sources, they differ on the contribution of word meaning and grammatical class to discourse-marker meaning and function (Fraser positing the least contribution).

Second, the relationship between discourse markers and contexts: although all agree that markers can gain their function through discourse, different conceptualizations of discourse produce different kinds of discourse functions. Fraser's focus is primarily how markers indicate relationships between messages (propositions); Schiffrin and Maschler explicitly include various aspects of the communicative situation within their discourse models (Maschler including also the display of cognitive processes involved in frame-shifting), such that indexing propositional relations is only one possible function of discourse markers.

Third, metalanguage: Fraser does not consider discourse markers metalingual. Rather, he refers to metacomments on the structure of the emerging discourse when exploring discourse-managing markers, a fourth type of pragmatic marker in his approach (2009b). According to Schiffrin (1980, 1987a: 328), meta-talk expressions such as *this is the point* and *what I mean is* can function as discourse markers. By contrast, in Maschler's approach, all discourse markers are metalingual – this is their basic defining feature.

Fourth, prosody: the first two decades of discourse-marker research saw very little attention to their prosody (Aijmer 2002: 262). More recently, however, there have been some studies of the correlation of various functions of a discourse marker with particular intonation contours and durational features (e.g., Aijmer 2002; Dehé and Wichmann 2010a, 2010b; Ferrara 1997; Kärkkäinen 2003; Lam 2009; Tabor and Traugott 1998; Wichmann, Simon-Vandenberg, and Aijmer 2010; Yang 2006). Whereas Schiffrin and Fraser do not relate much to prosodic properties of discourse markers, these features figure prominently in Maschler's definition of a prototypical discourse marker. Furthermore, prosodic properties of a particular marker are then correlated with its different functions (e.g., Maschler and Dori-Hacohen 2012; the collection of articles in Auer and Maschler in press).

Fifth, category boundaries: while Fraser views the distinction between conjunction and discourse marker as clear cut, Schiffrin (1994a, 2001, 2006) has argued that non-intonation-unit medial tokens of the conjunction *and* in lists (for example) simultaneously constitute discourse markers. Maschler argues that, to the extent that

metalinguality is scalar, with utterances ranging from less (conjunction) to more (discourse marker) metalingual, so discourse markerhood is scalar, exhibiting prototypical and non-prototypical members of the category (cf. Ramat and Rica 1994 for adverbs). Indeed, clause- and phrase-level conjunctions in same-speaker talk will generally follow continuing intonation.<sup>13</sup>

Sixth, the integration of discourse-marker analysis into the study of language: Fraser's approach rests upon a pragmatic theory of meaning applied both within and across sentences, Schiffrin's approach combines interactional and variationist approaches to discourse to analyze the role of markers in co-constructed discourse, and Maschler takes a functional interactional linguistics perspective, which leads to a reconsideration of our theories of grammar.

## 2 Markers across Contexts, across Languages, and over Time

Discourse-marker research uses a variety of data sources that allow analysts to focus on markers across contexts, across languages, and/or over time. These three focal areas address many different specific issues that are part of several general themes of discourse-marker research: What lexical items are used as discourse markers? Are words with comparable meanings used for comparable functions? What is the influence of syntactic structure, and semantic meaning, on the use of markers? How do cultural, social, situational, and textual norms have an effect on the distribution and function of markers? What do discourse markers teach us about grammar? We begin with a review of some studies of the discourse marker *and* as an entry point to several of these issues.

In a later study, Schiffrin (1986, 1987a) revisited her original study of *and*, restricting herself to the context of lists, and showed that the additive meaning of *and* combines with its status as a coordinating conjunction to have the basic function of "continue the cumulative set" (2006: 322), where the "set" can be an idea, turn, or act. The coordinating function of *and* at both grammatical and discourse levels over a range of contexts has also been noted in studies of language development and child discourse (see also Meng and Sromqvist 1999; Kyratzis and Ervin-Tripp 1999; Kyratzis and Cook-Gumperz, this volume). Peterson and McCabe (1991) show that *and* has a textual use in children's (three years six months to nine years six months) narratives: *and* links similar units (i.e., narrative events) more frequently than information tangential to narrative plot (cf. Segal, Duchan, and Scott 1991 for adults). Gallagher and Craig (1987) show how *and* connects speech acts during the dramatic role-play of four-year-olds. Sprott (1992) shows that the earliest appearance of *and* (as well as *but*, *because*, and *well*) during children's (two years seven months to three years six months) disputes marks exchange structures; this function continues as action, and ideational (first local, then global) functions are added on at later ages.

A conversation-analytic study of *and* (Heritage and Sorjonen 1994) studied its use as a preface to questions in clinical consultations. The primary use of *and* was to preface agenda-based questions either locally between adjacent turns or globally across turns, and thus to orient participants to the main phases of the activity. An additional, more

strategic, use of *and* was to normalize contingent questions or problematic issues (1994: 19–22). Whereas the former use of *and* was coordinating in both a metaphorical and structural sense (i.e., the questions were the “same” level in the question agenda), the latter use amplifies Halliday and Hasan’s idea of external meaning: the additive meaning of *and* normalizes the problematic content and/or placement of a question.<sup>14</sup> A later conversation-analytic study (Turk 2004) showed that *and* is frequently used in order to smooth over certain discontinuities in the discourse that may arise from interactional or grammatical disjunctures.<sup>15</sup> A more recent study (Bolden 2010) delineates itself to one specific environment in which *and* is found – preceding a formulation of another speaker’s talk. Bolden shows that *and* in this position accomplishes the distinct action of “articulating the unsaid.” It does so by constituting an assertion about the addressee’s domain of knowledge. In this way, the speaker performs a repair operation in the form of a request for confirmation, offering an “unarticulated” element of the preceding talk performed on the addressee’s behalf. As in other conversation-analytic studies of discourse markers (e.g., Barske and Golato 2010; Bolden 2003, 2008, in press; Emmertsen and Heinemann 2010; Golato 2010, in press; Heritage 1984, 1998; Laakso and Sorjonen 2010; Lindström in press; Mazeland in press; Mazeland and Huiskes 2001; Sorjonen 2001), we see that very close attention is paid both to the position of the discourse marker in the turn and to the sequence of actions underway.

Studies of bilingual discourse – in which speakers either borrow or code-switch across two different languages – also add to our understanding of the linguistic and contextual junctures at which markers work. These studies show that bilinguals very often switch languages when verbalizing discourse markers (e.g., Brody 1987, 1989; Cotter 1996b; De Fina 2000; De Rooij 2000; Goss and Salmons 2000; Gupta 1992; Heisler 1996; Maschler 1988, 1994, 1997b, 1998a, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c; Matras 2000; Opsahl 2009; Said-Mohand 2008; Sankoff *et al.* 1997). Investigating this strategy allows us to observe both their very early emergence from interaction and what these switched elements share from a functional perspective (Maschler 1998a, 2000b). Some of these studies show that the motivation to alternate languages at discourse markers has to do with highlighting contrast and thus maximizing the saliency of markers as contextualization cues (De Rooij 2000; Maschler 1997b). Matras (2000), on the other hand, argues for a cognitive motivation of reducing the heavier cognitive load involved in the processes of “monitoring and directing” performed by markers, by eliminating the choice between the two languages in performing this operation. Finally, in bilingual conversation, a discourse marker is very often immediately followed by its “equivalent” in the other language, illuminating such functional “equivalences” across languages from the bilingual’s perspective.

Studies of bilingual discourse also focus on the linguistic consequences of markers being borrowed across – and then coexisting within – different languages. Brody (1989) suggests that the general lexical meanings and structuring effects of Spanish conjunctions (including *bueno*; see below) reappear in Mayan use but are sometimes used together with native particles that have comparable uses. Zavala’s (2001) analysis of the restructuring of the standard Spanish (causal or consecutive) conjunction *pues* by Quechua–Andean Spanish bilinguals shows that *pues* has lost its meaning at the sentence level and acquired meaning at the discourse level: *pues* is used to mark changes in information status as well as commitment to the truth of information, in ways that reflect some of the functions of Quechua evidentials. Goss and Salmons (2000) traces

back the stages of the borrowing by one language of the discourse-marker system of another, to an initial stage in which code-switching plays a significant role. This shows how pivotal the study of discourse markers is to the field of language contact. Finally, a recent study of pragmatics in language contact (Auer and Maschler in press) attempts to follow the path of a particular discourse marker (Russian and Yiddish *nu* going back to the proto-Indo-European adverb \**nũ* ["now"]) as it was borrowed into 15 different languages in Europe and beyond, by examining its various functions in these languages.

Comparative studies of markers in monolingual speech situations also add to our understanding of the different junctures at which markers work. For example, studies of Spanish markers that are in some, but not all, contexts roughly comparable to English *well* suggest the importance of both context and lexical/semantic source. De Fina's (1997) analysis of *bien* (an adverb, glossed semantically as "well") in classroom talk shows that teachers use *bien* for both organizational functions (to redefine a situation, to move to another activity) and evaluative functions (as the feedback "move" in the three-part classroom exchange of question–answer–feedback). The organizational function of *bien* is most comparable to English *okay* (Beach 1993; Condon 2001; Merritt 1984). Like *okay*, the positive connotation (i.e., "I accept this") of *bien* has been semantically bleached (Bolinger 1977) in transitional (but not evaluative) environments.<sup>16</sup> Travis's (1998) analysis of *bueno* (an adjective, glossed semantically as "good") in conversation in Colombian Spanish differentiates two functions. Although the first (mark acceptance) is comparable to the evaluative function of *bien* and English *okay*, the second (mark a partial response) is more comparable to uses of English *well*. Chodorowska-Pilch's (1999) research on Peninsular Spanish suggests still another lexical source (*vamos*, literally "we go") for yet another function (mitigation) partially comparable to that of *well*. An analysis of *vamos* during service encounters in a travel agency suggests that *vamos* mitigates face-threatening speech acts by metaphorically moving the speaker away from the content of an utterance and thus metonymically creating interpersonal distance.

The studies on *bien*, *bueno*, and *vamos* suggest that discourse functions can be divided very differently across languages. English *well*, for example, is used very generally with responses that are not fully consonant with prior expectations (Greaseley 1994; Lakoff 1973; Schiffrin 1987a: ch. 5; Svartvik 1980): hence its use in indirect and/or lengthy answers and self-repairs. But, in Spanish, it is only *bueno* that is used this way (Travis 1998): *bien* has the transitional function associated with *well* as a frame shift (Jucker 1993) and *vamos* the mitigating function associated with *well* in dispreferred responses (e.g., turning down a request). Thus, the functions of a marker in one language can be distributed between a variety of lexically based discourse markers in other languages.<sup>17</sup>

The importance of comparative studies for our understanding of grammaticization is highlighted by Fleischman and Yaguello's (2004) analysis of markers comparable to English *like*. They find that a variety of discourse/pragmatic functions associated with English *like* (e.g., focus, hedge) is replicated in languages as varied as Finnish, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Lahu, Portuguese, Russian, and Swedish. Although the words share neither etymologies nor a single lexical/semantic source, the processes that they undergo as they move toward their similar functions are strikingly similar.<sup>18</sup>

Studies of grammaticization within a single language also provide valuable insights into both the sources and developmental paths of markers. The majority of these studies are diachronic, tracing a particular discourse marker throughout its history in

written documents from various periods; for example, Aijmer (2002), Brinton (1996), Ferrara (1997), Finell (1989), Jucker (1997), Schwenter and Traugott (2000), Tabor and Traugott (1998), Traugott (1995a, 1995b, 2003, 2010, 2012), and Wårvik (1995) (all investigating English discourse markers); Traugott and Dasher (2002: ch. 4) (English and Japanese); Onodera (2004), Onodera and Suzuki (2007), Shinzato (2014), and Suzuki (1999) (Japanese); Abraham (1991) (German); Vincent (2005) (French); Lindström and Wide (2005) (Swedish); Visconti (2005, 2009) (Italian); and Pons Bordería and Schwenter (2005) (Spanish). Jucker (1997), for example, suggests that *well* underwent a process of continuous diversification whereby new functions were added to old ones (cf. Finell 1989). Wårvik's (1995) analysis of two Middle English adverbials/conjunctions (glossed as "when" and "then") shows that, when these words were supplanted by Middle English *then*, what was altered was not only a formal distinction (two forms shifted to one) but also a genre-based (narrative vs. non-narrative) distribution. Many of these diachronic studies are based on a series of much-quoted work by Traugott (1995a, 1995b, 2003, 2010, 2012) showing that, as utterances become grammaticized, they become increasingly subjective, intersubjective, and metatextual. They move from focusing on the "world out there" to the world of the interaction, with its metatextual structure, procedures for organizing that structure, and interactional aspects such as subjectivity and intersubjectivity. In correlation with these changes, Traugott finds an increase in the scope of the grammatical element from an element whose scope is within the clause, to one whose scope is over the entire clause, and finally to one whose scope is over a discourse segment. Beeching *et al.* (2009) investigate the position of markers in relation to the clause/intonation unit cross-linguistically, proposing that left periphery markers are subjective while right periphery ones are intersubjective (but see Maschler and Miller Shapiro forthcoming; Traugott 2012). Fewer studies combine grammaticization studies with interactional linguistics and approach grammaticization of discourse markers synchronically; see, for example, Auer (1996, 2005) and Günthner (2000) (German); Kärkkäinen (2003), Thompson (2002), and Thompson and Mulac (1991) (English); Maschler (2002b, 2003, 2009, 2012), Maschler and Dori-Hacohen (2012), Maschler and Estlein (2008), and Maschler and Nir (2014) (Hebrew); Keevallik (2003, 2006) (Estonian); and McGloin and Konishi (2010) (Japanese). Such synchronic study is possible because a discourse-marker token may function in a particular context in more than one way *simultaneously*. Close examination of the specific interactional contingencies leading up to this particular situation sheds light on the functional itinerary followed by the particular marker. Grammaticized discourse markers are shown to exhibit many of the properties characterizing grammaticized elements: semantic loss, phonological reduction, de-categorialization, bonding within the phrase, generalization of meaning, pragmatic strengthening, (inter)subjectification, and retention/persistence (Hopper 1991; Hopper and Traugott 2003). However, linguists regarding grammaticization as a formal, rather than functional, change have argued that the functional itineraries followed by discourse markers constitute cases of pragmaticalization rather than grammaticization (e.g., Aijmer 1996; Erman and Kostinas 1993).

Research on a variety of words and expressions in contemporary English that have gained – or are gaining – pragmatic roles as discourse markers suggests a range of formal and functional relationships not just with those words and expressions' historical sources but also with their contemporary lexical sources. Whereas syntactic position,

pronunciation, and meaning all differentiate the adverbial and discourse-marker uses of *anyway* (Ferrera 1997), for example, it is pronunciation and meaning that differentiate the marker *cos* from its source *because* (Stenström 1998), and meaning and sequential distribution that differentiate the use of *yeh* as a “reaction” marker from its use as either agreement or turn-continuer (Jucker and Smith 1998; see also DuBois 1989 on *hey*, Sebba and Tate 1986 on *y’know what I mean*, and Scheibmann 2000 and Tsui 1991 on *I don’t know*). Finally, Swerts’s (1998) analysis of filled pauses in Dutch monologues suggests that even vocalizations that are themselves semantically empty can provide an option within a set of paradigmatic choices that includes semantically meaningful markers (i.e., Dutch *nou* [cf. “now,” “well”] [cf. Mazeland in press] or *effe kijken* [cf. “let’s see”]). Thus, vocalizations that have no inherent meaning at all, and that occur elsewhere for very different reasons (see, e.g., Fromkin 1973 on the role of filled pauses, and other “speech errors” in language production), can also provide markers through which to structure discourse (for a parallel argument about gestures, see Kendon 1995).

In sum, research on discourse markers has spread into many areas of linguistic inquiry, drawing scholars from many different theoretical and empirical orientations.<sup>19</sup> Although this welcome diversity has led to an abundance of information about discourse markers, it has also led to knowledge that is not always either linear or cumulative. The result is that it is difficult to synthesize the conclusions of past research into a set of coherent and consistent findings and, thus, to integrate scholarly findings into an empirically grounded theory. Our conclusion in the next section thus returns to a very basic issue still confronting discourse-marker analysis: What are discourse markers?

### 3 Conclusion: Markers, Discourse Analysis, and Grammar

Discourse markers are elements of language that scholars wish to study, even if they do not always agree on what particular elements they are studying or what to call the object of their interest. Not only have discourse markers been called by various names but also, like the definition of discourse itself (see Introduction, this volume), what often opens books and articles about markers is a discussion of definitional issues. Rather than try to resolve these issues, we here take a more modest approach that addresses the definitional problem from the outside in: we suggest that the way one identifies markers is a direct consequence of one’s general approach to language. We do so by considering the status of four words that are often, but not always, viewed as markers: *and*, *y’know*, and their Hebrew “equivalents”: *ve-* and *taydea*, respectively. Although the four markers present different definitional questions, resolving their status touches on broader discourse analytic issues of data, method, and theory.

Questions about the status of *and/ve-* revolve around the difference between sentences and texts, between grammar and meaning, and around different approaches to the structural features of discourse markers. *And/ve-* have a grammatical role as a coordinating conjunction that seems to be (at least partially) paralleled in their discourse role. But can all tokens of *and* and *ve-* – even those that are intersentential and thus might seem to have a purely grammatical role – work as discourse markers?

Because of their comparable function, Schiffrin (2001, 2006) has argued (contra Fraser, e.g.) that all the tokens of *and* in a list are discourse markers. Her decision about the marker status of *and* was based not on an a priori theory but on an analysis of the function of *and* in the data. Maschler, on the other hand, noticed that, in her data, metalingual *ve-* tokens (discourse markers) tend to fulfill the structural requirement for prototypical discourse markerhood whereas non-metalingual *ve-* tokens (conjunctions) do not (see Section 1.3 and note 13). Paying attention not only to function but also to structural features (prosody and sequential positioning) has led her therefore *not* to consider all instances of *ve-* in her data discourse markers. Considering both function and structure is likely to bring about new results. In any event, basing decisions about marker status on data analysis has an important consequence: there may very well be different decisions about the marker status of an expression depending upon the data. This should be neither surprising nor problematic. If discourse markers are, indeed, indices of the underlying cognitive, expressive, textual, and social organization of a discourse, it is ultimately properties of the discourse itself (which stem, of course, from factors as various as the speaker's goals, the social situation, and so on) that provide the need for (and hence the slots in which) markers appear.

Of course data never exist in a vacuum. We all come to our data, and begin their analysis, with assumptions about what is important and principles that help us organize our thinking (theory), as well as sets of tools through which to first discover and then explain what we have perceived as a "problem" in the data (methodology). Although data and methodology both bear on the status of *y'know* and its Hebrew "equivalent" *taydea* (and its feminine form *tyodat*) as markers, it is the role of underlying assumptions and principles about discourse and grammar that we want to stress in relation to decisions about *y'know/taydea*.

Disagreement about the status of *y'know/taydea* centers on the relationship between meaning and discourse. *Y'know* and *taydea* present a set of distributional and functional puzzles: they are not always utterance-initial, they do not always satisfy Maschler's structural requirement for discourse markerhood, and they carry the original semantic meaning to varying extents. Despite general agreement that *y'know* and *taydea* are markers of some kind, they are not always considered *discourse* markers per se. Fraser (1990: 390), for example, excludes *y'know* from his discourse-marker group because he claims that, rather than signal a discourse relationship, it signals a speaker's attitude of solidarity (cf. Holmes 1986).

To try to resolve the disagreement about *y'know* and *taydea*, let us take a closer look, first, at where they occur and, next, at the different views of discourse that underlie different analyses of markers. *Y'know* is often found in specific discourse environments: concluding an argument, introducing a story preface, evoking a new referent (Schiffrin 1987a: 267–95). Likewise, Hebrew *taydea* is often found in these environments as well as opening disagreement, introducing evaluative episodes in narrative, and at frame shifts involving self-repair (Maschler 2012: 809–17). These environments all mark transitions from one phase of discourse to another, and, thus, they all relate (possibly large) discourse segments. In fact, one might argue that it is precisely in transitional locations such as these – where interlocutors are jointly engaged in productive and interpretive tasks centered on establishing the relationship between somewhat abstract and complex discourse segments – that speakers may want to create, or reinforce, solidarity with their hearers.

What underlies decisions about expressions such as *y'know* and *taydea* are different conceptions of discourse itself. Sociolinguistic, interactional, and conversation-analytic studies of markers begin with a view that language reflects (and realizes) rich and multifaceted contexts. This view leads such analysts to search for the varied functions of markers – and thus to incorporate into their analyses and theories the multifunctionality that is one of the central defining features of discourse markers. But many current analysts who begin from semantic and pragmatic perspectives privilege the “message” level of discourse, thus restricting analysis of markers to the signaling of message-based relationships across sentences.<sup>20</sup> Also differently conceived is the notion of communicative meaning. Sociolinguistic approaches to discourse (Schiffrin 1994b: ch. 11) assume that communicative meaning is co-constructed by speaker–hearer interaction and emergent from jointly recognized sequential expectations and contingencies of talk in interaction. But many semantic and pragmatic analyses of markers are wed to a Gricean view of communicative meaning as speaker intention (and subsequent hearer recognition of intention). If the assignment of meaning is completely divorced from the study of the sequential and interactional contingencies of actual language use, however, then so are decisions about the functions of markers, and, even more basically, decisions about the status of expressions as markers.

Different approaches reflect profoundly different views of what “grammar” is. In some approaches, “grammar” is reserved for the core fields of linguistics, but, in others, “grammar” includes communicative and cognitive aspects. The study of discourse markers is of particular significance in this respect, because it has allowed us to rethink the question of what constitutes “grammatical structure.” In Traugott’s words, “discourse markers have helped us rethink the nature of the relationship of use to structure, and of communicative to cognitive aspects of language” (2007: 151).

To conclude: we noted initially that the production of coherent discourse is an interactive process that requires speakers to draw upon several different types of communicative knowledge – cognitive, expressive, social, textual – that complement more code-based grammatical knowledge of sound, form, and meaning. Discourse markers tell us not only about the linguistic properties (e.g., semantic and pragmatic meanings, source, functions) of a set of frequently used expressions, and the organization of social interactions and situations in which they are used, but also about the cognitive, expressive, social, and textual competence of those who use them. Because the functions of markers are so broad, any and all analyses of markers – even those focusing on only a relatively narrow aspect of their meaning or a small portion of their uses – can teach us something about their role in discourse.

## NOTES

1 The names given to words such as *oh*, *well*, *y'know*, and *but* have varied greatly over the years: e.g., parenthetical phrase (Corum 1975), mystery particle (Longacre 1976), pragmatic particle (Östman 1981), pragmatic connective (Even-Zohar 1982; van Dijk 1979),

discourse-signaling device (Polanyi and Scha 1983), semantic conjunct (Quirk *et al.* 1985), discourse particle (Aijmer 2002; Fischer 2006; Schourup 1985), pragmatic expression (Erman 1987), discourse marker (Jucker and Ziv 1998; Schiffrin 1987a, 1987b),

- discourse connective (Blakemore 1987), marker of discourse structure (Redeker 1990), pragmatic operator (Ariel 1993), pragmatic marker (Brinton 1996), cue phrase (Moser and Moore 1995), procedural parenthetical (Grenoble 2004). More crucial than this development of labels, however, is the variety of definitions, for this has an impact on the items included within theories and analyses of discourse markers. We discuss this issue below.
- 2 For Halliday and Hasan's (1976) semantic perspective on cohesion, see Schiffrin (2001). Halliday and Hasan do not deal directly with discourse markers, but their analysis of cohesion (based primarily on written texts) included words that have since been called markers.
  - 3 Compare Stenström (1998), who argues that *cos* (the phonologically reduced *because*, transcribed in [1b] as *cause*) is not used ideationally. For a range of research on *because*, see E. Abraham (1991), Degand (1999), Ford (1994), Sanders and Stukker (2012), and Schlepegrell (1991).
  - 4 Importantly, the final stage of grammaticization of discourse markers arrived at through diachronic study (see Section 2) – the “metatextual,” which relates to the speaker's organization of the world being talked about in the act of speaking (Traugott and Dasher 2002) – correlates precisely with this most essential property of discourse markers: their metalingual nature, arrived at synchronically in Maschler's approach.
  - 5 For a specific example of this process within the framework of dialogic syntax (Du Bois 2007), see Maschler and Nir (2014).
  - 6 Transcription conventions generally follow Du Bois (manuscript).
  - 7 Of these textual discourse markers, only *and*, *so*, and *but* are considered discourse markers in Fraser's approach. His “discourse structure markers,” a subcategory of his fourth type of pragmatic marker (“discourse management marker”) (2009b: 893), are reminiscent of Maschler's structural discourse markers.
  - 8 The cognitive realm is different from Schiffrin's “information state,” which refers not to the cognitive processes throughout verbalization but rather to “the organization and management of knowledge and meta-knowledge” of speaker and hearer (Schiffrin 2006: 317). Many previous approaches to discourse markers explore their textual and interpersonal functions as well as the ways textual and interactive functions relate to each other (e.g., Aijmer 2002; Östman 1982; Schiffrin 1987a; Traugott 1995a). Far fewer approaches relate to their cognitive functions (but see Zwicky 1985 and, more recently, Bazzanella 2006; Yang 2006).
  - 9 For the most prominent frame shifts, however, often a longer metalingual utterance is employed: e.g., *rotse lishmoa keta?* (“wanna hear something weird/funny [lit. ‘a segment’]?”) or “*ani 'asaper lexa mashehu 'al ...* [‘let me tell you something about ...’]. It is argued that such longer metalingual utterances are not sufficiently crystallized (for instance, in terms of their still inflecting for person, number, and gender or their ability to take a variety of verbal complements and nominal modifiers) in order to be considered discourse markers (Maschler 1998b, 2009).
  - 10 This definition is based on studies of Hebrew and English discourse – both SVO languages. More research is needed on the structural properties of discourse markers in other languages, particularly verb-final languages.
  - 11 The only two discourse markers that follow continuing intonation in same-speaker talk (marked by a comma at the end of the previous intonation unit) in this excerpt occur in a discourse-marker cluster (*ken*, *'e-h*

- [lines 9–10] and *'a-h, 'okey* [lines 21–2]), therefore constituting prototypical discourse markers.
- 12 For stance discourse markers, later studies found that the percentage of non-prototypical markers is often greater than 6 percent (Maschler 2012; Maschler and Estlein 2008; Miller Shapiro 2012). For instance, the epistemic element *harey* (“as you know”) (Ariel 1998), which occurs intonation-unit medially at line 18, has not yet gravitated toward prototypical discourse markerhood since it does not satisfy the structural requirement. There is often, then, also a structural difference between discourse markers pertaining to relations of speaker to text and other discourse markers.
- 13 See, e.g., the two tokens of *ve-* (“and”) (excerpt [4], lines 19–20) coordinating phrases rather than larger discourse segments, each following continuing intonation.
- 14 See also Matsumoto (1999), whose linguistic analysis of questions in institutional discourse suggests that *and*-prefaced questions are also used to seek confirmation of previously known information for an overhearing audience; Schiffrin’s discussion (1998) of *well-* and *okay-*prefaced questions during interviews; and various analyses of *and* in a variety of texts and contexts (Cotter 1996a; Skories 1998; Wilson 1993).
- 15 This function seems to capture particularly well the *ve-* (“and”) of excerpt (4), line 23.
- 16 Cf. Maschler’s study of Hebrew *tov* (lit. “good”), which, very much like English *okay*, has both interpersonal (e.g., acceptance) and a textual (transition into an expected course of action) functions. Maschler (2009: ch. 5) traces this grammaticization from the interpersonal to the textual to the need to reach agreement between participants concerning the state of things thus far in the discourse before moving on to the next activity. Cf. also Miracle (1989) for the “equivalent” discourse marker in Chinese, Auer (1996) for Bavarian German *fei* (lit. “fine”), and Sherzer (1991) for the Brazilian thumbs-up gesture, which carries the acceptance meaning and also serves as an interactional link between moves, units, and moments in interaction.
- 17 These analyses also show that the use of markers is sensitive to social situation (e.g., classroom, service encounters) and to cultural norms of politeness. Compare, for example, the absence of a *well-*like marker in Hebrew among Israelis (Maschler 1994), speakers whose culture is said to value direct requests, direct statements of opinion, and open disagreement (Katriel 1986). See also studies on contrastive markers (noted in Fraser 1998; also Foolen 1991) as well as Takahara (1998) on Japanese markers comparable to *anyway*.
- 18 For comparisons of both forms and discourse functions across languages, see Altenberg (2010), Evers-Vermeul *et al.* 2011, Park (1998), and Takahara (1998).
- 19 Markers have been studied by scholars interested in relevance theory (see Ariel 1998; Blakemore 1987, 2001, 2002; Choi 2010; Ljungqvist 2010; Rouchota 1998; Schourup 2011; Ziv 1998), computational linguistics (Elhadad and McKeown 1990; Hirschberg and Litman 1993; Louwerse and Mitchell 2003; Moser and Moore 1995; Popescu-Belis and Zufferey 2011), variation analysis (Vincent and Sankoff 1993; Sankoff *et al.* 1997), formal linguistics (Unger 1996), and language attitudes (Dailey-O’Cain 2000; Watts 1989).
- 20 Although discourse *is* often defined by linguists as “language beyond the sentence,” the analysis of discourse as a set of connected sentences *per se* has evolved to become only a relatively small part of discourse analysis. Some scholars have argued that the sentence

is not necessarily the unit to which speakers orient in constructing talk in interaction, suggesting, instead, a variety of alternatives (e.g., intonation/idea units; see Chafe 1994, this volume) and pointing out ways in which sentences are contingent outcomes of speaker–hearer interaction (Ochs, Schegloff, and Thompson 1996; Thompson and Couper-Kuhlen 2005). This is not to

suggest, however, that analyses of different coherence relations, even within one particular semantic/pragmatic domain (e.g., Fraser's 1998 analysis of contrastive markers, and references within to comparative studies of contrast), cannot teach us a great deal about the complex network of meanings indexed (and perhaps realized) through markers.

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# 10 Historical Discourse Analysis

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LAUREL J. BRINTON

## 0 Introduction

In 1992, Clara Calvo issued the following challenge:

For over twenty years the study of discourse has been almost exclusively concerned with synchronic analysis and ... since we can no longer resort to the excuse that discourse studies are young and immature, we might find it necessary very soon to turn our minds to diachronic studies of discourse as well. (26)

Since Calvo made this statement, however, there have been remarkable changes. Beginning with the pioneering work of Brinton (1996) and Jucker (1995), the field of “historical discourse analysis” was born. With the inauguration of the *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* in 2000 and culminating with the publication of the comprehensive *Handbook of Historical Pragmatics* (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2010), the field has come to maturity. The name for this area of study has varied: labels such as “diachronic textlinguistics” (Fries 1983), “historical discourse analysis” or “historical text linguistics” (Enkvist and Wårvik 1987: 222), “new philology” (Fleischman 1990), “post-/interdisciplinary philology” (Sell 1994), and “pragmatic stylistics” (Sell 1985) have been suggested. But it is one of the earliest names, “historical pragmatics” (Jucker 1994; Stein 1985), that is most commonly used today.<sup>1</sup> Historical pragmatics has been defined as “the study of pragmatic aspects in the history of specific languages” (Jucker 2006: 329).

While it is not possible in this chapter to define the range of topics included in the field of discourse analysis (these will be suggested by this *Handbook* in its entirety), it is useful to understand the field broadly as being concerned with the level above that of the individual sentence: with intersentential connections and with global rather

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*The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Second Edition.

Edited by Deborah Tannen, Heidi E. Hamilton, and Deborah Schiffrin.

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than local links. As the names given above suggest, however, the distinction between discourse analysis and pragmatics is problematic, particularly in the historical context. In theory it might be possible to distinguish discourse analysis as more text centered, more static, more interested in product (the text) and pragmatics as more user centered, more dynamic, and more interested in the process of text production, but in practice it is often difficult to distinguish the two. For example, discourse markers have both “textual” functions in organizing discourse (i.e., functions falling more under the rubric of discourse analysis) and subjective and intersubjective “expressive” functions (i.e., functions falling more under the rubric of pragmatics) (see Brinton 1996: 36–40).<sup>2</sup>

No attempt will be made here to differentiate with any exactness between discourse analysis and pragmatics, though – primarily for the purposes of space – the emphasis will be on the narrower aspects of text structure such as discourse markers, information structure, and implicit meaning rather than on the wider, more social and cultural, aspects of language use, which include, for example, (im)politeness (see, e.g., Bax and Kádár 2011; Nevala 2010) and speech acts (see, e.g., Archer 2010; Jucker and Taavitsainen 2008).<sup>3</sup> Certain aspects of historical pragmatics, especially those relating to diachronic changes in the realm of interactional pragmatics, or what has become known as “historical sociopragmatics,”<sup>4</sup> will not be treated in depth here.

## 0.1 *The rise of historical discourse analysis*

The coming to maturity of the field can be attributed to three factors. The first enabling factor is the (partial) solution to the “data problem” (see Jucker 2006: 329; Jucker 2008: 895–7; Taavitsainen and Jucker 2010: 7–11). Since discourse analysis has typically been concerned with naturally occurring conversations and oral narratives, the lack of oral texts from earlier periods would appear to be a major stumbling block for historical study. In large part because of the advent of more – and more specialized – electronic corpora, with their (comparatively) easy means of data retrieval, we now have access to “speech-based” and colloquial written genres from earlier periods, which more closely approximate oral language.<sup>5</sup> For example, the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence* and its extensions include letters from around 1410 to 1800. *A Corpus of English Dialogues 1560–1760* is divided into “authentic dialogue” (trial records and witness depositions) and what the compilers call “constructed dialogue” (drama, didactic works, prose fiction). The records of nearly 200,000 criminal trials, *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey – London’s Central Criminal Court, 1674–1913*, have recently become freely available and searchable online. The Chadwyck-Healey *English Drama* database gives access (through subscription) to the dialogues of 3,900 plays dating from the thirteenth to the early nineteenth centuries.<sup>6</sup> Most recently, over 900 court depositions from the period 1560–1760 have been published in electronic form (Kytö, Grund, and Walker 2011). In fact, the study of speech or speech-like discourse has proceeded to the point where a subfield of “historical dialogue analysis” is now recognized (see Jucker, Fritz, and Lebsanft 1999).

The second and third enabling factors involve the expansions of the fields out of which historical discourse arises. On one hand, in discourse analysis, it has increasingly

been recognized that the techniques of discourse analysis can legitimately be applied to written language and that written texts constitute “communicative acts in their own right” (Jucker 2008: 896). On the other hand, historical linguistics has come to focus more on usage, including everyday and ephemeral usage, to recognize varieties and genre-specific conventions, to evoke pragmatic and inferential explanations of change, and to acknowledge the importance of context.

## 0.2 *The subcategories of historical discourse analysis*

As a cross-disciplinary field, historical discourse analysis may be approached from two directions: that is, by taking a discourse-pragmatic perspective on historical linguistics or by taking a historical perspective on discourse/pragmatics (see Jacobs and Jucker 1995: 5). This results in three possible subdivisions.

The first involves an application of discourse analysis to language history, with the attention of the analyst typically focused on a particular historical stage of a language. This approach may be termed *historical discourse analysis proper*. The advantage of such an approach is that it may more satisfactorily explain the functions of many features of older texts than traditional approaches. Note, however, that this approach is essentially synchronic, since it involves an analysis of (the forms of) a language at one stage in its development.

The second subcategory involves a synthesis of discourse and diachrony. It encompasses a study of the changes in discourse forms, functions, and structures over time. That is, discourse structure is treated on a par with phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics as something that changes and develops over time. This approach may be termed *diachronic(ally oriented) discourse analysis*.

Within both of these subcategories, two mappings are possible: (1) from form to function, namely, the explication of the discourse functions of particular historical forms (over time) and (2) from function to form, namely the identification of historical forms that are exponents of particular discourse functions (over time) (cf. Jacobs and Jucker 1995: 13–25). These represent semasiological versus onomasiological approaches (Lewis 2012: 903). Both subcategories may also involve analysis on either the micro-level (e.g., discourse markers, terms of address, performative verbs) or the macro-level (e.g., discourse genres, speech acts, politeness). Jucker (2008: 898–902) proposes that there are in fact four possible levels of unit to be investigated: (1) “expressions” (interjections, discourse markers, address terms), (2) “utterances” (speech acts), (3) “discourses” or genres (language of fiction, of medical handbooks, of personal letters, dialogues), and (4) “discourse domains” (“a particular, socially defined domain of interaction” [Jucker 2008: 901] such as the discourse of science or of mass media).

The third subcategory constitutes an application of discourse analysis to historical linguistics. It is the study of discourse-pragmatic factors in language change, or of the discourse motivations behind diachronic changes on all levels. Such an approach has the advantage of providing elucidation of certain changes and a fuller understanding of diachronic processes of change. It may be termed *discourse-oriented historical linguistics*.

The three subcategories, as set out here and originally in Jacobs and Jucker (1995), are compared in Table 10.1.

**Table 10.1** The structure of historical discourse analysis/historical pragmatics (adapted from Jucker 2008: 898; cf. Lewis 2012: 903 for quite a different categorization).

<i>This chapter</i>	<i>Jacobs and Jucker (1995)</i>	<i>Characterization</i>	<i>Examples</i>
historical discourse analysis proper	pragmaphilology <sup>7</sup>	study of the discourse-pragmatic features in one particular historical period	terms of address in Shakespeare; politeness in the Early Modern English courtroom; insults in Old English
diachronic(ally oriented) discourse analysis	diachronic pragmatics	study of the development of discourse-pragmatic features over time	history of compliments or apologies; history of interjections
discourse-oriented diachronic linguistics	pragma-historical linguistics (see Culpeper 2010: 189)	study of the discourse-pragmatic factors motivating language change	grammaticalization; word order change; topic/focus marking

## 1 Historical Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis has proved a fruitful means for studying certain linguistic features of older texts, such as words, phrases, and clauses of high frequency but low semantic content (i.e., discourse markers and comment clauses); inflectional forms used in apparently unconventional ways (including both tense–aspect morphology and pronominal forms); and distinctive word order patterns. As much historical discourse analytic work has been carried out on English, in this section I present an overview of a number of such studies of micro-level features in earlier English.

### 1.1 *Discourse markers and comment clauses*

In historical discourse analysis, perhaps the most attention has been paid to what in contemporary discourse analysis are termed *discourse markers* (see Maschler and Schiffrin, this volume) or *pragmatic markers* (Brinton 1996: 29–30, 40). These are forms such as *well*, *oh*, *y'know*, and *I mean*, which exist outside the syntactic structure of the clause, are of high frequency, and may be stylistically stigmatized. They have little or no propositional meaning but they have a global function: a textual/procedural

function (e.g., marking topic or participant change, narrative segmentation, discourse type, saliency, or fore/background) and/or an interpersonal function (e.g., internal and external evaluation, attention-getting, and “negative” or “positive” politeness). Discourse markers have been studied in the histories of a variety of languages including French (Defour *et al.* 2010; Fleischman 1990, 1992; Hansen 2005), Italian (Bazzanella 2003; Bazzanella and Miecznikowski 2009; Waltereit 2002), Japanese (Onodera 2004), Latin (Kroon 1995), Malay (Hopper 1979), Spanish (Detges and Waltereit 2009; Estellés 2009), Swedish (Lindström and Wide 2005), and – most especially – English.

Here, space permits only a sampling of scholarship discussing particles from Old to Early Modern English.<sup>8</sup> Several early studies focus on the ubiquitous Old English form *þa* “then,” analyzing it as a foregrounder, a foreground “dramatizer,” a sequencer of events, a marker of colloquial speech, a peak marker, and a narrative segmenter (Enkvist 1972, 1986; Enkvist and Wårvik 1987; also Hopper 1979).<sup>9</sup> Comparing the Old English adverbs *witodlice* “certainly” and *soplice* “truly” with *þa* and with their most common Latin counterpart, *autum*, Lenker (2000) argues that they serve as highlighting devices and as markers of episode boundaries or shifts in the narrative. Old English *hwæt* “what” serves as a different kind of discourse marker, namely, as an attention-getter and as a marker of shared knowledge (Brinton 1996: ch. 7). Similar arguments have been adduced for forms in Middle English. For example, *anon* “at once, immediately” has been interpreted as a discourse marker signaling salient actions, underscoring narrative sequence, and expressing internal evaluation (Brinton 1996: ch. 4; Fludernik 1995). Defour (2008) analyzes Middle English *nu*, especially in the construction *nu ... þonne* “now ... then,” as a topic changer and marker of textual progression that also has interpersonal functions in denoting contrast and epistemic evaluation. Early Modern English sees the rise of a number of new discourse markers. A study of *why* and *what* in a corpus of English drama (Lutzky 2012) found that both express speaker surprise, signal that additional information is to be shared, and may be used for attention-getting purposes. Jucker (2002) is a corpus comparison of five discourse markers in Early Modern English: *oh* (used for information management), *why* (used for surprise and protest), *well* (used as a frame and for face-threat mitigation), *pray/prithee* (used for polite requests), and *marry* (used to preface responses, sometimes with emotional coloring). Moore (2006) describes the use of *videlicet* “that is to say, namely, to wit” (lit. “it is permitted to see”) in slander depositions of the period as a code-switching device used to introduce reported speech.

Closely aligned, and often overlapping in function, with discourse markers are interjections (see Gehweiler 2010). The primary interjection *o/oh* (Person 2009) and the secondary interjections *marry* (< [*by the Virgin*] *Mary*) (Fischer 1998; Lutzky 2012) and *jee* (< *Jesus*) (Gehweiler 2008) are among the interjections in older stages of English that have well recognized discourse-structuring functions.

In addition to one-word forms, there exist phrasal discourse markers and reduced clausal discourse markers – what are known as “comment clauses” – in earlier periods of English. As discussed in Brinton (1996), Old English *þa gelamp hit þæt* (> Middle English *then bifel it that*) “then it happened that” serves as a metacommentary marking an episode boundary marker and expressing the instigating event of an episode; in Middle English, the first-person comment clauses (*as*) *I gesse/trowe/deme/suppose/thynke* come to serve purposes of intimacy and positive politeness in addition to their function as “epistemic parentheticals.” Similarly, *methinks/methinketh* is widely used as a

parenthetical denoting evidentiality, opinion, and subjective truth in both Middle and Early Modern English (see López-Couso 1996; Palander-Collin 1999). Brinton (2008) examines a variety of comment clauses based on *say*, *look*, *see*, *mean*, *gather*, and *find* primarily arising in the Early and Late Modern English periods; for example, *(I) say* is first used to evoke the hearer's attention and later to express emotional response, *(as) you say* has focusing and interactive functions, and *(as) I gather* expresses subjective uncertainty or caution, often in reference to hearsay knowledge.

What makes discourse markers especially worthy of study from a historical perspective is their ephemerality (Stein 1985). Over time, discourse markers die out and are replaced by new forms, although some – such as *I guess*, *you know*, *that is to say*, *as it were* – have been preserved over an extended period. Moreover, despite the ephemerality of particular discourse forms, there would nonetheless seem to be a continuity of discourse *functions* over time, with the forms expressing particular discourse functions continually being replaced. In the history of English, for example, *y'know* replaces *hwæt* as a marker of common knowledge, and *that is (to say)* replaces *to wit* as a marker of apposition. This process of “renewal” is characteristic of grammaticalization (see Section 3.2; Hopper 1991).

## 1.2 Inflectional forms

### 1.2.1 Verbal morphology

Tense–aspect morphology, because of its function in conceptualizing and placing events in time, plays a special role in discourse-structuring.

For the student of medieval literature, the “historic(al) present” – the use of the present tense in a past-tense narrative, often with rapid and seemingly inexplicable alternations between past and present – offers an obvious phenomenon calling for a discourse analytic approach.<sup>10</sup> Traditional explanations of the historical present as an intensifying, vivifying, or emphatic device or as a metrical expedient have frequently proved unsatisfactory. Extrapolating from work on the historical present in modern oral narratives, which has pointed to its role in narrative segmentation, foregrounding, and internal evaluation, scholars have argued that the historical present in medieval texts (from various traditions) serves discourse roles: for example, in Old French it marks foregrounded events of “highest saliency,” is a device for internal evaluation, and is characteristic of oral performed narrative (Fleischman 1986), while in Middle English it denotes main events, introduces central characters, and highlights key descriptive details (Richardson 1991).

Discourse studies have also focused on the function of aspectual forms. Consonant with general principles of grounding, Hopper (1979: 219–26) concludes that in Old English narrative the foreground is characterized by verbs in the perfective aspect, denoting single dynamic, punctual, telic events, whereas the background is characterized by verbs in the imperfective aspect, denoting states or durative/iterative/habitual atelic processes. Looking at other aspectual forms in the period, Richardson (1994) argues that “nonperfective” forms, including motion, perception, and ingressive verbs, with accompanying infinitive, signal new episodes, accelerate actions for dramatic effect, and establish point of view; likewise, the perfect in Middle English serves to

mark narrative boundaries. At the same time, inchoative *gan* “began” serves a demarcating function and slows the narrative down, while perfective *anon* “at once, immediately” marks salient action and speeds a narrative up (Brinton 1996).

Fleischman (1990: 36) concludes that tense–aspect forms serve a variety of important roles in discourse: they may have textual functions (e.g., grounding, creating cohesion, marking boundaries, or modulating pace), expressive functions (e.g., expressing evaluation or point of view), and metalinguistic functions (e.g., signaling text type).

### 1.2.2 *Pronominal forms*

The role of second-person-singular and -plural forms of the personal pronoun for familiar and formal uses (the so-called T/V forms) have been extensively studied in the context of politeness theory and discourse structure. For example, in an early study, Calvo (1992) argues that, in addition to negotiating social identities and expressing attitudinal features, *thou* and *you* may denote a change in conversational topic and mark discourse boundaries. More recent work includes Busse’s (2002) study of T/V forms using the entire corpus of Shakespeare’s works (see Busse 2002: 9) and Walker’s (2007) use of a more varied corpus of Early Modern English speech-based texts. T/V forms also play an important role in address formulae (see Mazzon 2010; Taavitsainen and Jucker 2003).

Other pronominal forms have also received the attention of historical discourse analysts. For example, it has been suggested that the demonstrative pronoun *this* in Middle English (as in “this Pandarus”) functions as a foregrounder (Fludernik 1995; Sell 1985). Wales (1995) also sees a discourse role for the generalizing *your* (i.e., “not your average person”) in Early Modern English; in addition to its generic or gnomic meaning, it has a deictic, focusing function, denotes a second-person discourse awareness, and expresses a generally dismissive tone.

### 1.2.3 *Word order*

The well-known connection between discourse factors, especially those related to information-structuring (topic/comment, theme, and focus) and word order patterns, has been well studied in the historical stages of languages and is beyond the scope of this chapter.<sup>11</sup> A somewhat different view is taken by Hopper (1979), who accounts for the word order in Old English using a theory of grounding. He argues that the foreground is characterized by (S)OV (subject, object, verb) or VS(O) (“verb peripheral”) word order, while the background is characterized by (S)VO word order. In respect to verb peripheral order, (S)OV is used internal to episodes with topical subjects and VS(O) is used at the beginning of minor episodes and with a change in subject or topic. (S)VO is reserved for the beginning of main episodes and for global backgrounding.

## 2 Diachronically Oriented Discourse Analysis

The second type of historical discourse analysis examines the evolution of discourse and pragmatic categories over time. While both broader and narrower foci are

possible, here I will examine the evolution of discourse-marking over time, focusing on the development of individual discourse markers, on changes in systems of discourse-marking, and on changes in text types and genre conventions.

## 2.1 *The origin and development of discourse markers*

Here, two main strands of research can be identified: first, studies of the processes of change accounting for the development of discourse markers, with a focus on grammaticalization and competing approaches (see Onodera 2011), and, second, studies of the syntactic origins of discourse markers, especially comment clauses.

### 2.1.1 *Grammaticalization/pragmaticalization of discourse markers*

Many scholars have argued that questions concerning the semantic/pragmatic development of discourse markers can most fruitfully be answered by understanding discourse markers as having undergone the changes encompassed by grammaticalization (see, e.g., Brinton 2008: 49–61; Brinton 2010: 302–3; Traugott 1995).<sup>12</sup>

In their development, discourse markers are subject to many of the morphosyntactic and semantic changes characteristic of grammaticalization, though never, of course, being fully “grammaticalized” in the sense of being incorporated into a recognized grammatical paradigm nor generally undergoing phonological reduction or morphological bonding.<sup>13</sup> Discourse markers typically begin with words of general meaning, but also words that exhibit “semantic aptness,” or appropriateness, for the type of discourse marker that they become. As they develop, they become fixed and (partially) fossilized in form, losing referential meaning and developing more abstract non-referential meanings (e.g., procedural, pragmatic, and politeness meanings). The acquisition of these meanings proceeds via the conventionalization of invited inferences and often involves subjectification and/or intersubjectification (see Section 3.2). Importantly, the development of discourse markers conforms to Hopper’s (1991) principles of grammaticalization:

- decategorialization: loss of the morphological and syntactic characteristics of the source words’ original word class, with change from open to closed class membership;
- persistence: the retention of some traces of the source words’ original meaning;
- divergence or split: the retention of full lexical characteristics in some contexts alongside grammaticalization in other contexts; and
- layering: the continuation of older, more highly grammaticalized forms next to newer, less grammaticalized forms.

It has been observed that discourse markers do not show two characteristics of grammaticalization: they do not necessarily become fixed in position but may come to exhibit syntactic variability (Traugott 1995) and they do not undergo loss of syntactic scope, since in their discourse function they relate not to individual words or even clauses but to larger stretches of discourse.

For example, Lenker (2000) describes the grammaticalization of Old English *witodlice* and *soplice* from truth-intensifying, speaker-oriented adverbs with sentential scope to discourse markers serving as highlighters and markers of discourse discontinuity. In the process of decategorialization from pronoun to complementizer to discourse marker, Old English *hwæt* assumes a fixed, initial position and is fossilized, always occurring with a first- or second-person pronoun, and it acquires non-referential meaning as a marker questioning common knowledge, expressing surprise, and focusing attention (Brinton 1996). Traugott (1995: 7–9) traces the grammaticalization of *in deed* from a full prepositional phrase with lexical noun (“in action”) to a fixed adverbial phrase with epistemic meaning (“certainly”) to a sentential adverb in initial position and sentential scope to a discourse marker that expresses elaboration or clarification of the discourse content. Using evidence such as its increasing fixedness in the first person, its occurrence sentence initially without *that* or parenthetically, and even its orthography, Palander-Collin (1999) sees the grammaticalization of the impersonal verbal phrase *methinks* as a sentence adverbial indicating evidentiality, opinion, or subjective truth. Finally, the comment clause *I mean* evolves from a complement-taking verb to a discourse marker, in the process becoming frozen in the first-person singular, present tense, showing some degree or coalescence or attrition and losing the ability to be modified. By a process of invited inferencing from its original meaning of intentionality, it acquires non-referential discourse meanings (Brinton 2008: 130–1).

The view of discourse markers as grammaticalized has not gone unchallenged, however, because they are, in a sense, “agrammatical”: they belong to no identifiable grammatical class, they typically occupy an extra-sentential position, they are not truth-conditional, and they function pragmatically. An alternative account for the development of discourse markers is to see them as undergoing “pragmaticalization,”<sup>14</sup> a “process by which a lexico-grammatical sequence or word form, in a given context, loses its propositional meaning in favour of an essentially metacommunicative, discourse interactional meaning” (Claridge and Arnovick 2010: 187). The characteristics of pragmaticalization (see Claridge and Arnovick 2010: 179–82), however, strongly resemble those of grammaticalization: the development of textual-/discourse-oriented and/or interpersonal meaning from fully propositional meaning; the conventionalization of pragmatic meaning; and the persistence of original lexico-grammatical meaning, subjectification, scope expansion (scope over whole proposition or utterance), decategorialization, and divergence (in Hopper’s sense) (also specialization, layering, and renewal: see Aijmer 1997: 2–3, 6). The differentiation of the two processes would seem to hinge on what constitutes “grammar,” the nature of the output of the process (Claridge and Arnovick 2010: 87). In fact, there are good grounds for arguing that grammar should not be restricted to the morphosyntactic and truth-conditional domain and to what is obligatory, but must be defined much more broadly to include linguistic means that are involved in “speaker–addressee negotiation” and “abilities central to the linguistic pragmatics of focusing, topicalization, deixis, and discourse coherence” (Traugott 2003a). If pragmatic functions are “genuine grammatical functions which are indispensable for the organization and structuring” of discourse (Diewald 2006: 405; Diewald 2010), the two processes are conflated. It will not be possible, as has been suggested, to distinguish pragmaticalization by the non-truth-conditionality and optionality of pragmaticalized as opposed to grammaticalized forms (cf. Aijmer 1997: 2–3, 6) or the centrality of (inter)subjectivity and pragmatic strengthening to

pragmaticalization and its secondary importance to grammaticalization (Claridge and Arnovick 2010: 186).<sup>15</sup>

### 2.1.2 Syntactic origins and paths of change in discourse markers

In an early study, Traugott (1982) discussed the development of discourse markers from adverbs and prepositions, often through an intermediate conjunctive stage. For example, *why* begins as an interrogative adverb, assumes complementizer function (introducing indirect questions), and ultimately becomes a “hearer-engaging” discourse marker. In 1995, Traugott argued for the development from clause-internal adverb to clause-external adverb (sentential adverb) to discourse marker in the case of forms such as *indeed*, *in fact*, and *besides*.

A synchronic study of the development of *I guess* and *I think* by Thompson and Mulac (1991) has influenced much work on the syntactic development of comment clauses. They argue that these “epistemic parentheticals” begin life as main clauses with *that* complements. Following loss of the complementizer, the structures become ambiguous and the original main clause can be reanalyzed as parenthetical, thereby being free to move to medial and final position. I argue that this so-called “matrix clause” hypothesis, while explaining the origin and development of some comment clauses (e.g., *I pray thee/you* > *pray/prithee*), is not consistent with the historical data in many cases (see Brinton 2008, 2010). Alternative sources of comment clauses include second-person imperatives (e.g., *see*, *say*, *list*, *look/lookee*, *hear/hear ye*), relative/adverbial clauses (e.g., *as you see/say*, *if you please* > *please*, *as I think* > *I think*, *if you will*, *as it were*), and main clauses followed by phrasal complements (e.g., *I mean*).

## 2.2 Changes in discourse-marking

Some attention has also been paid to changes in larger patterns, or systems, of discourse-structuring. For example, Wårvik (1990) sees a “typological” shift in the history of English from the explicit foreground-marking system of Old English using *þa* to the “fuzzy” backgrounding system of Modern English, which depends on the tense–aspect system (simple vs. expanded tenses) and the syntactic status of clauses (main vs. subordinate, finite vs. nonfinite); she relates this shift to a change from oral to literate techniques of grounding. In the transitional period, a number of other foregrounding discourse markers are temporarily called into service, including *þonne* (*thenne*) “then,” *þis* noun phrase (NP), *so* (*that*), *thus*, *and*, *also*, and *anon* (Fludernik 1995; Wårvik 1990, 1995). The oral-to-literate shift may also account for the replacement of foregrounded metacommentaries such as *þa gelamp hit þæt* (denoting episode boundaries in Old English) with backgrounded, preposed *whan*-clauses in Middle English (Brinton 1996; also Fludernik 1995).

The loss of particular discourse markers has also been attributed to large-scale grammatical changes in a language.<sup>16</sup> Fleischman (1992), for instance, attributes the demise of Old French *si* to the elimination of verb-second and the evolution of subject-verb order with obligatory subject pronouns, while Fujii (1991) argues that the rise of explicit post-positional subject markers (*wa*, *ga*) in Japanese, where Old Japanese subjects were

generally unmarked, results from the loss of implicit subject markers such as honorifics as well as from language contact.

### 2.3 Changes in text types/genres

Scholars have long recognized that the discourse conventions of different genres or text types have not been consistent over time but have varied from period to period; Fries asserts, for example, that “it must not be taken for granted that text-linguistic rules for present-day English are also valid for the older periods of the language” (1983: 1013). Typologies accounting for current texts and the enumeration of features characteristic of different text types may not be adequate for a classification of texts from the past, since genre conventions are defined by a variety of factors, including forms of the language, topic, situation, and medium (see Görlach 1992: 736–44). Early studies in this area focused on the changes in discourse conventions entailed by the shift from the oral to the written medium, but in recent decades there has been an expansion of research into changes in the text conventions and language in specialized genres and domains of discourse, including scientific and medical discourse, newspapers, religious discourse, courtroom discourse, literary discourse, and public and private correspondence. This research has, in part, been facilitated by the development of specialized corpora in several of these areas.<sup>17</sup>

Biber and Finegan (1989, 1992) examine changes in a variety of written and speech-based genres in English in respect to a number of grammatical features. They find that in aggregate there is a “drift” across genres from features that can be described as more “literate” to characteristics that can be described as more “oral” – that is, to features that they describe as more “involved” (e.g., private verbs, first- and second-person pronouns, contractions, *that*-deletion) rather than “informational” (e.g., nouns, prepositional phrases, “long” words); more “situation-dependent” (e.g., time and place adverbials) rather than “elaborated” (e.g., pied-piping [fronting of the preposition together with the relative pronoun in relative clauses, as in *the store to which I went*], *wh*-relatives, nominalizations); and more concrete rather than abstract (e.g., passives, adverbial subordinators, past participles). In scientific and medical writing, however, there is a consistent trend toward more “informational” features, less narration, more explicit reference, and less overt expression of persuasion – that is, the more literate norms of academic prose (Atkinson 1999). Thus, the evolution of text conventions is likely much more complex than suggested by the oral–written dichotomy, with possible movement back and forth on the scale of “involved” and “informational” over time. Genres are shaped in important ways by extralinguistic forces (e.g., the development of the modern newspaper form), and text genres all include a variety of subgenres, which are ruled by varying discourse and pragmatic conventions. It also seems likely that different genres are more appropriately approached in different ways, with courtroom discourse more fruitfully analyzed according to theories of speech acts, politeness, and social interaction (i.e., from a more historical sociopragmatic perspective; see note 4) and medical or scientific discourse from a more micro-level, formal perspective.<sup>18</sup> All of these factors contribute to a complex picture of the pragmatics of discourse conventions over time. It seems clear that this area needs – and is currently receiving – much fuller study (see Jucker and Taavitsainen 2010: sec. VII).

### 3 Discourse-Oriented Historical Linguistics

One way in which discourse shapes grammar is expressed by Talmy Givón in this widely cited cycle (1979: 209):

discourse > syntax > morphology > morphophonemics > zero

In the strongest interpretation, this progression asserts that all grammar results from the fossilization of original discourse forms, that morpho-syntax is the product of discourse. A weaker interpretation – that what begins as a discourse strategy may sometimes be reanalyzed as grammar – has provided fruitful means of approaching some historical developments.<sup>19</sup>

An even more attenuated version of the effects of discourse on grammar is one that seeks to find the motivations of diachronic change in discourse-pragmatic factors. In fact, it has now become almost standard practice in diachronic research to place some importance on such factors. Given the scope of such research, therefore, the following section can only hint at areas in which discourse factors have been seen as particularly strong motivating factors. These include word order change and grammaticalization.

#### 3.1 *Word order change*

As there exists an essential link between word order and discourse, we would expect to find discourse considerations to be a strong motivating factor in changes in word order. In the Germanic languages, the loss of object-verb (OV) and verb-second (V2) word orders have been associated with principles of information-structuring. Using the concept of “pragmatic syntax,” whose goal is to account for the choice between syntactically synonymous forms in terms of factors such as theme, focus, and dominance, Faarlund (1985: 366–8, 386) discusses the change from OV to VO word order in Germanic; he argues that the rightward movement of the object should not be explained as a rare and highly marked afterthought but by a universal pragmatic principle of focusing. Seoane (2006) shows that the increasing use of the passive construction in English that accompanies the loss of V2 is the result of pragmatic, not semantic, factors; that is, it is associated with the distribution of given/new information and definite/indefinite information as well as the principle of “end weight.” Most recently, Los and van Kemenade (2012) have argued that the more flexible word order of Old English allows for two positions for the subject, before or after *ða/donne*. The position to the left is “earmarked for discourse-linking” (1481) and is correlated with given information (definite, specific NPs with a discourse antecedent). Likewise, the possibility of OV and VO word order in Old English allows for given objects to precede and new subjects to follow the verb. However, “when the syntactic SVO pattern became more and more canonical (as the result of the loss of OV orders in Early ME [Middle English] and the decline of verb-second in Late ME), the subject appears to have become increasingly reserved for Given information and the object for New information” (1486). At the same time, the needs of information-structuring remain

and lead to the development of, or increased use of, certain less common syntactic structures, including left dislocation, topicalization, *there*-insertion, passive, and clefts.

### 3.2 Grammaticalization

It is now widely accepted that grammaticalization is motivated by pragmatic and discourse factors, including invited inferences, context-induced reinterpretation, relevance, and (inter)subjectification (see Hopper and Traugott 2003: 71–98; Nicolle 2011; Traugott 2010).

Focusing on the first of these pragmatic factors, we see that, in the process of grammaticalization, ad hoc invited inferences arising in certain local discourse contexts may spread to other contexts and become generalized; ultimately, these generalized inferences become conventionalized, or “semanticized,” and constitute the new coded meaning of the word (see Traugott and Dasher 2003: 34–40). One classic example is the shift from temporal to causal meaning in the grammaticalization of English *since* (< *sipþan*) from adverb to conjunction. Shift in the coded meaning of “from the time that” to “because” results from conventionalization of the invited inference of cause that arises in certain contexts (see Hopper and Traugott 2003: 82–3). A second widely cited example is the development of “future” meaning in the grammaticalization of the *be going to* construction, where futurity is an inference from the original meanings of purposiveness, progressivity, and motion (see Hopper and Traugott 2003: 2–3). Numerous studies of the role of invited inferencing in grammaticalization have been carried out. Here I mention only a few. Burridge (1995: 73–4) cites a number of examples from Pennsylvania German where increased pragmatic meaning seems to motivate grammaticalization: the change of *als* from an adverb to a habitual aspectualizer to a discourse particle; the development of futures with *geh* “to go” and *zehle* “to count”; the development of a progressive from the locative construction *sei* “to be” + *am/draa* “on, at”; and the change of *duh* “to go” from habitual to present. The development of evidential (“be said to be”), epistemic (“can be”), and deontic (“must be”) meanings in the *be supposed to X* construction arising from the passive of *suppose* “take for granted, assume” is motivated by pragmatic inferences based on discourse function, properties of human subjects, and expectations concerning genre (Berkenfield 2006). In the grammaticalization of *I mean* as a comment clause with a variety of pragmatic functions (repair, reformulation, exemplification, evaluation, emphasis, veracity, causation), invited inferencing is at work as hearers make the inference that the same information is not simply being restated but that some additional information is being presented (following Grice’s Maxim of Manner) (Brinton 2008: 129–30).

Research in grammaticalization theory over the past 20 years has also focused on the role of subjectification (the acquisition of meanings increasingly focused on the speaker’s attitude toward what is said or toward the relationship between what precedes and what follows in the discourse structure) and, to a lesser extent, intersubjectification (the acquisition of meanings increasingly focused on the speaker’s attention to the cognitive states and social identities of the addressee) as motivating forces (see Traugott 2003b). For example, Carey (1995) describes the grammaticalization of the English perfect as originating in a resultative construction in which the meaning

is completely dependent on the semantics of the participle, with progression toward increasingly subjective meanings of “current relevance”; in its final “hot news” stage (e.g., *The king has just abdicated*), “the relation of relevance between the event and the present moment is entirely a matter of speaker judgment” (1995: 97). Discussing the development of a set of stance markers, Fitzmaurice (2004) argues that there is a shift in main clauses from subjective meanings (*I know, I see, you say*) to intersubjective meanings (*you know, you see, you say*) and then to “discourse-specific interactive” and procedural meanings in the discourse markers/comment clauses (*you know, you see/see, as you say/say*). Defour (2010) shows that, in the history of English, *well*, beginning with its inherently positive meaning, increasingly acquires (inter)subjective meaning as a discourse marker; it serves “to acknowledge the addressee and ... [to be] positioned in the speaker’s subjective perspective and in a personal discourse dialectic” (166). When used with cognitive verbs, with first- and second-person subjects, and with epistemic *may, well* also strengthens the positioning of the speaker and establishes common ground.

## 4 Conclusion

Historical discourse analysis, or “historical pragmatics,” consists of a variety of strands, depending on whether larger or smaller discourse-pragmatic units are analyzed, on whether the approach is semasiological or onomasiological, on whether the scope of the study is synchronic or diachronic, and on whether the focus is more on the formal features of the text or on features of social interaction. What unifies the different strands – apart from the obvious focus on discourse and pragmatic phenomena – is the usage-based and historical nature of the studies undertaken; as described by Taavitsainen and Fitzmaurice (2007: 13), this field of inquiry “focuses on language use in past contexts and examines how meaning is made. It is an empirical branch of linguistic study, with focus on authentic language use in the past.” Historical discourse analysis is corpus-based, and increasingly, as electronic historical corpora of speech or speech-like data from the past become available (such as the *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey* or *A Corpus of English Dialogues 1560–1760*), the collection of data has been facilitated (though searching for functional categories with a variety of formal manifestations, such as speech acts or politeness phenomena, remains a challenge).

The next 30 years of work in historical discourse analysis will undoubtedly see its expansion into a greater variety of languages and an expanded set of phenomena. To date, while a wide range of synchronic discourse analytic approaches have been used (e.g., politeness theory, speech act theory, conversational analysis, relevance theory, conversational implicatures, information-structuring), theoretical frameworks in the diachronic dimension have been more limited. Many studies have been underpinned by theories of grammaticalization (or pragmaticalization). New approaches to historical linguistics, such as construction grammar (see, e.g., Bergs and Diewald 2008) may offer insightful approaches to discourse-pragmatic phenomena. A further avenue of theoretical expansion might be the application of synchronic work in “contrastive pragmatics” (see, e.g., Aijmer 2011) to different stages of the same language.

## NOTES

- 1 Following the first edition, I use the term “historical discourse analysis” in this chapter. Differing from the usage adopted here, Lewis (2012) argues for a distinction between the two terms, preferring “historical pragmatics” as the term referring to “highly context-bound ‘pragmatic’ expressions such as discourse markers and idioms, discourse connectives, politeness markers, terms of address, and so on” (904).
- 2 “Textual” refers to devices for achieving intersentential connections and more global structuring of texts, while “interpersonal/expressive” is the expression of speaker attitude or judgment and aspects of the social exchange (see Brinton 1996: 38–9).
- 3 That is, I will be taking an Anglo-American rather than a continental European view toward pragmatics (see Taavitsainen and Jucker 2010: 5).
- 4 Historical sociopragmatics is the study of “any interaction between specific aspects of social context and particular historical language use that leads to pragmatic meaning” (Culpeper 2009: 182).
- 5 We can now speak of the field of “historical corpus pragmatics” (see Kohonen 2009; cf. Jucker 2008: 902–3).
- 6 More information on each of these resources can be found on the following websites: [www.helsinki.fi/varieng/CoRD/corpora/CEEC](http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/CoRD/corpora/CEEC), [www.engelska.uu.se/Research/English\\_Language/Research\\_Areas/Electronic\\_Resource\\_Projects/A\\_Corpus\\_of\\_English\\_Dialogues](http://www.engelska.uu.se/Research/English_Language/Research_Areas/Electronic_Resource_Projects/A_Corpus_of_English_Dialogues), [www.oldbaileyonline.org](http://www.oldbaileyonline.org), and <http://collections.chadwyck.com/home/home.ed.jsp>. See Kytö (2010) for a full description of all of these resources.
- 7 Lewis (2012: 903) describes “pragmaphilology” as synchronic or “historical pragmatics.” Somewhat confusingly, she associates the treatment of language and genres with discourse-oriented historical linguistics and of expression types and pragmatic functions with diachronic discourse analysis.
- 8 For a review of the literature on historical discourse markers, see Brinton (2010).
- 9 On the connection of *ba* with information-structuring, see Los and van Kemenade (2012).
- 10 Pioneering work on the historical present in contemporary narrative from a discourse analytic perspective includes Schiffrin (1981) and Wolfson (1978).
- 11 For work on this topic in English, see, for example, van Kemenade and Los (2006) or van Kemenade and Milićev (2011).
- 12 Grammaticalization is “the change whereby lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions and, once grammaticalized, continue to develop new grammatical functions” (Hopper and Traugott 2003: xv).
- 13 Some discourse markers and comment clauses do in fact undergo phonological reduction or ellipsis of phonological content, such as *God woot* > *Goddot(h)* (Brinton 1996), *indeed, in fact* /ndid, nfækt, fæk/ (Traugott 1995), *in faith* > *faith* (Jucker 2002), *you know* > *y’know*, *I dare say* > *I dessey*, *look ye* > *lookee*, and *hark you* > *harky* (Brinton 2008).
- 14 Further on pragmaticalization, see Brinton (2008: 61–3, 2010: 303–5). While not using the term “pragmaticalization,” Waltereit (2006) describes a similar process in which speakers recognize the rhetorical potential inherent in certain forms for expressing textual and interpersonal

- meanings and use (“abuse”) them in contexts that are not justified by their primary meaning. Such forms are then reanalyzed as pragmatic markers and spread to other contexts.
- 15 Most recently, Kaltenböck, Heine, and Kuteva (2011) have argued that neither grammaticalization nor “cooptation” from sentence grammar to “thetical” grammar explains the development of discourse markers.
- 16 The loss of discourse forms might also be attributable to a number of other causes: to the form’s cooptation as a metrical expedient, to its stylistic stigmatization (perhaps because of its affiliation with oral discourse), or to its overextension of meaning.
- 17 For information on electronic corpora, including the *Zurich English Newspaper Corpus*, *A Corpus of English Religious Prose*, and the *Corpus of Early English Medical Writing* (Middle English, Early Modern English, Late Modern English), see [www.helsinki.fi/varieng/CoRD/corpora/corpusfinder/index.html](http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/CoRD/corpora/corpusfinder/index.html).
- 18 Kohnen (2010) shows that, within religious discourse, prayers are most fruitfully analyzed in respect to pronominal forms, patterns of address, and their performative nature; sermons lend themselves to an analysis of directive speech acts and connective profiles revealing their oral and literate nature, while religious treatises, as typically written documents, can be analyzed into the structure and function of their subparts.
- 19 For example, Burridge (1995) argues that, in Pennsylvania German, the dative of possession, which begins as a rhetorical device for promoting personal involvement, develops into the regular syntactic marker of possession, displacing the original possessive genitive; furthermore, the semantic shift involves a conversational implicature from close relationship to possession. Faarlund (1985) sees the rise of an obligatory subject with specific syntactic properties from Old Norse to Modern Norwegian as the result of the topicalization rule moving the NP, which is not the most highly ranked semantically (but which is the most highly ranked thematically), to the left; the moved NP then acquires the grammatical function of subject. König (1992) suggests that disjunctive (*whether*), quantificational (*what/where/however*), and scalar (*even*) conditionals in English and German still show evidence of deriving from a juxtaposed or loosely connected clause.

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# 11 Discourse, Space, and Place

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ELIZABETH KEATING

## 0 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The aesthetic and moral arrangement of people, structures, and objects in space has become an increasingly important topic in understanding social life, social change, and cultural diversity. From Bourdieu's early (1973) structural analysis of the allocation of space in a Kabyle family's tent as a set of orderly gendered oppositions to Foucault's analysis of the history of space as a history of power (1980) and the work of cultural geographers, sociolinguists, and anthropologists, space has proven to be a rich site for analyzing discourse and culture. Goffman (1963) convincingly showed the role of space in making sense of interaction, for example how space produces profoundly different interactional behaviors, such as the "civil inattention" he observed in people jostling past each other in public space. Space influences identities and subjectivities; once perceived as localized, these are dispersed and amalgamated across an ever wider range of regions both human and mechanical (Deleuze and Guattari 2004); the relationship of language to territory is increasingly fragmented and ad hoc (Auer and Schmidt 2010). Mobile connectivity has disrupted customary spatial boundaries and given rise to discourses about boundaries of "moralism and mobile sociability," and opened "spaces" in traditional practices for new forms of sociability (Maroon 2006: 199).

It is well recognized that the spatial organization of society and of its people, objects, and built forms is fundamental to understanding discourse and its role in the orderly production of social life (Massey 1994). Cultural categorization of space influences people as they arrange themselves (who can participate and how, and restrictions and enhancements of possibilities for interaction). It influences choice of communication genre and style, play, and work behaviors. Space is a social instrument of great creative power (though perhaps not on the level of language). It serves as "a tool of thought

and of action" that is a means of both production and control (hence of domination), but its meaning also "partly escapes" from those who make use of it to control others (Lefebvre 1991: 26); landscapes of urban activity can be productively analyzed as discursive terrains characterized by struggles between different and at times hostile views of meaning construction (Daniels and Cosgrove 1993). The interpretation of a speaker's words uttered in space is understood to be both located in particular coordinates and at the same time constitutive of a sociocultural organization that transcends the present moment in space and may be located some distance away, even on a remote island in the case of transnational communities. In these cases, speaking about space bridges physically distant but emotionally and ethically close worlds (Duranti 1997).

There are several ways I will focus on how analyzing discourse, space, and place has contributed to and is productive in understanding symbolic behavior. These include space as a tool for expression, built space, private versus public space, space and identity, space and place, space and access, space and language structure, space and cognition, and space and technology. These nine areas encompass many interesting ways space, place, and discourse are integrated in everyday life, such as how physical space is used analogously to represent and share ineffable aspects of human experience; how space is used to represent and instantiate social inequality; how space impacts language change and speakers of languages; relations between space and identity; relationships between structures of institutions, the environment, and human agency; sign language and spoken language structure; the contribution of bodies in space and their surrounding context to communication; relationships between semiotic modalities; the authorization of history and access to knowledge through spatialized memory processes; using space to make tangible the sacred or visible the invisible; influences of technology on space; and how spatial terms used in language influence cognitive processing.

## 1 Space as a Tool for Expression

Space is widely used by speakers in ways that enable them to give form and even agency to abstract concepts and states of feeling (he's "spaced out" or inattentive, she has an "expansive" personality). Analogies from space, for example, are used to represent characteristics of time (I'm falling "behind" schedule), in general contrasts in perception (low notes and high notes in music), in invisible processes in biology and physics, in human emotions (a happy person is "on top of the world"), and to relate a single individual, such as a "distant" cousin, within a complex scheme of kinship (Enfield 2003; Lakoff 1993). Not all languages construe these relationships in similar ways – for example, the future as in front (or uphill: see Brown 2012). In Aymara, an Amerindian language used in areas of Bolivia, Chile, and Peru the basic word for *front* is used to mean *past*, while the word for *back* is the basic expression for the *future* (Núñez and Sweetzer 2006).

Space is a tool for expression in systems of writing, graphs, and navigational charts that impress views on space – for example, when visitors put their names and origins on the surfaces of a visitor book at a tourist site (Noy 2011). Graphs and navigational charts express aspects of understanding a terrain or seascape in ways that influence and are influenced by thought and imagination. Renaissance artists represented the

city “as seen in a perspective that no eye had yet enjoyed” (de Certeau 1984: 92). Pacific Islanders’ sailing charts represent the vast ocean with a simple frame of shells and sticks, and navigators learn to accurately make landfall through complex instructions while viewing the placement of tiny objects and symbols in the sand, representing wind, stars, wave forms, and sea life. The first view of the earth from space became a symbol to generate support for a paradigm shift – environmentalism – as viewing earth as a whole reminded people of their relatedness and the planet’s seemingly fragile existence. On a smaller scale, family spaces in Pacific island houses and Berber houses (Bourdieu 1973) become tablets for “writing” and “reading” intimacy, distance, gender, and status differentiation. These expressions create a logic of power relations between different groups. Those who “occupied” Wall Street sought to disrupt culturally accepted forms of spatial segregation and used space to express and demand wider participation in global spaces of financial policy-making. Protesters camped in a public park in the Wall Street financial district in New York City to visibly represent “the other 99 percent,” those becoming poorer due to growing disparities in wealth as financial assets are increasingly unequally concentrated among 1 percent of the population.

### 1.1 *Space and social distinctions*

Space is used throughout societies worldwide to maintain and legitimize arbitrary social distinctions that are not intrinsically spatial but that gain solidarity when expressed through physical space. Lateral relations and vertical relations are used as vectors of difference to distinguish categories of people and to police boundaries between them. A common use of up and down is to indicate superior versus inferior social status. In the “naive model of physics that underlies superiority,” lower objects sustain and support higher objects, and imply contact between the two (Frawley 1992: 266). People describe and imagine societies and the people in them in terms of centers, elevated and lowered spaces, peripheries, and borders. In the chiefs’ feasthouses in Pohnpei, Micronesia, there is a superior–inferior distinction in facing relationships between high status and low status. High-status leaders, men and women, are referred to by a term meaning “those who face downwards” (as lower status people face upwards), *sohpeidi* (Keating 2000). Front versus back is another spatial indicator for status relations. Using space to develop hierarchies of value is also shown in the use of east as higher in symbolic value than west. Right and left areas of the body are commonly viewed in a hierarchical relation. As described by Hertz (1973: 3): “What resemblance more perfect than that between our two hands! And yet what a striking inequality there is!” The possibility of seeing unequal relationships or “visual ideologies” (Cosgrove 1985: 47) is shared through discourse. Social relations are made visible in spatially realized, segregated workplaces. The rank and file work in cubicles or in groups; the managers have private offices. Space and how it is allocated offers a more detailed guide to status relations than speech in many societies.

Spatial analogies are used to distinguish levels of intimacy when societies see some human relations as inside and others outside, as in the *uchi-soto* distinction in Japan (Bachnik 1992; Sukle 1994). Regular reversals show the manipulability and expressiveness that are possible. In Timor, for the Atoni, inside space is more highly valued than outside, yet, when hosting outsiders in formal occasions, this is reversed and the

outer becomes more privileged while the center becomes subordinate to the periphery (Cunningham 1973). This redefinition of space to pay respect to guests is simultaneously achieved through discourse and grammaticalized politeness (Wolfowitz 1991). Hall (1959) identified four ranges of distances in the spatial expression of intimacy (in American society) that key the nature of the relationship between individuals: 0–18 inches is intimate distance, 18 inches to four feet is personal distance, 4–12 feet is social distance, and 12–25 feet is public distance. Different cultures and contexts involve different conventions, which makes cross-cultural communication challenging when signals conflict.

## 1.2 *Space and the invisible*

Physical space is creatively used to instantiate the invisible. In Sumatra the Batak, for example, use space to differentiate between the visible mundane and the invisible divine. The spirit world is materially the same as earth, but activities in that world are reversed, so that when spirits go down steps they climb head first (Needham 1973: 307). In Pohnpeian feasthouses, the deities are allocated their own sitting space, which makes them material, as people avoid passing through the place where they are. Physicists and other scientists use blackboard space to represent the invisible and populate it with human-like actors despite the fact they are discussing the activities of subatomic particles (Ochs, Jacoby, and Gonzales 1994). Through space people make tangible sacred realms or mysteries of the invisible-to-us processes of the universe. Humans are tied to the sacred or invisible by manipulating their visibility too, as in Pohnpei, where fires in former times were customarily built at the entrance to the feasthouse so that smoke would obscure the visibility of the chiefs, or where the paramount chief sat behind a screen. Cross-linguistically the semantics of superiority often imply covering (Bennett 1975), such as the terms “undersecretary” or “overlord.”

## 2 Built Space

Human intervention in space in the form of buildings and structures celebrates human ingenuity, and structures are used by archaeologists as a record by which to investigate the evolution of cultural forms. In Maori culture the spatial coordinates of a house are linked to coordinates of time, too (van Meijl 1993). A building or house is a “memory palace” or mnemonic key for the remembrance of the past (Fox 1993: 4) as told through the present. Legacies of human mediation on the environment impact the future action of people in that space. The arrangement of spaces forms important cues for behavior and expectations. Buildings and sites become social objects reflecting social values (Markus and Cameron 2002). The built environment (Lawrence and Low 1990) organizes systems of relations, and is organized by them.

Some of the most spectacular built forms, skyscrapers in large cities, were made possible not only through engineering and materials-science advances but also through transformations in space by communications technology, when the telephone replaced couriers climbing stairs to deliver messages. The computer is a kind of built space. People use computer platforms to interrelate multiple fields of action and of

representation (Wasson 2006). Computer interfaces present users with differently structured spaces, conventions, and potentials. Socializing children into interpreting technologically mediated spaces, such as how to have a conversation with a person who can seem to have no lower body due to the spatial constraints of a computer's camera lens, are important aspects of the incorporation of computer-mediated spaces into the communicative practices of a community.

### 3 Private versus Public Space

Dichotomies of public and private space, while they have been critiqued for being over-general as categories, are still a part of most people's sense-making procedures. That people are continually reminded, for example, that an email sent privately can become public, using the example of emails that end up in a newspaper for public readership, re-creates the salience of a public-private dichotomy.

Public space is a useful construct for establishing dominance by showing which group's rules prevail. The elite, powerful groups' language forms become "invisibly normal," while forms associated with other groups are scrutinized, judged, and publicly mocked (Hill 1998). Hill shows how in the United States, for example, white public space is territorialized through a dual process whereby white people mock the sounds and signs of what they describe as linguistic disorder in, for example, the way populations such as African Americans, Chicanos, and Latinos speak. Yet the very usages they highlight and make fun of are ignored when used in the speech of the white population. A spokesperson during the Clinton administration described a draft of the administration's healthcare plan as "not an el cheapo" (Hill 1995: 207). This use of public space indirectly indexes whiteness as an unmarked and unproblematic category, and others as out of place. Public spaces are theaters for performing racial and political hierarchies, creating authorized and unauthorized ways of speaking, which are maintained by how the use of language in public space is treated and viewed (Gal 2009). Not complying with expectations of behavior in public space can result in attributions of insanity and deviance (Goffman 1969). Public media outlets influence attitudes about what is proper speech, and they are often used to comment negatively about language change, though people are constantly influenced by contact with other languages and experiment with forms that create new displays of language and identity (Blommaert 2010; Jacquemet 2005).

Public space boundaries have recently been challenged by communication technologies, and most people have stories of feeling uneasy overhearing intimate, private topics through the merging of private and public participation frameworks. Discussions that take place in private spaces of the home, when taken public, are usually rekeyed (Goffman 1982) and reframed in ways that clearly show people's attention to public space. Private and public are related through this reframing and rekeying of what were initially private conversations now reproduced through retellings in more public settings (Tannen 2006). Children can be famously unaware of this rekeying and be a source of embarrassment for adults.

The private space in which the American or Italian family meal takes place has been shown to be a critical space of socialization of gender, politeness, conflict

mediation, and hierarchical relations (Ochs, Pontecorvo and Fasulo 1996; Tannen, Kendall and Gordon 2007). Bourdieu describes the private space of the house as a book that children are socialized into through their bodies, and where they learn a particular vision of the world read by and performed by the body specifically for certain places (Bourdieu 1977: 90). With the introduction of personal computers into private homes, the placement of computer Internet terminals in either shared, common family spaces such as the living room or more private, unshared children's rooms has had an impact on socialization to appropriate behavior in Internet spaces; on the integration of family and Internet spaces; on interaction, activities, and collaboration; and on the supervision of these spaces by adults (Aarsand and Aronsson 2009).

A hierarchy of language varieties, registers, and languages is made socially meaningful through practices that construct some language sounds as appropriate for certain public versus private spaces. The technology of the radio and other media contributes to this, creating unique shared space. In the case of the Navajo, the radio is a public space of Navajo language and functions toward language preservation (Peterson and Klein 2000). The radio is an important public space in many countries, where access to it can be contentious in situations of considerable linguistic diversity. New forms of "small media" challenge the dominance of radio, with authors who are not always locatable, and function as alternative public spaces, building communities and solidarities (Spitulnik 2002).

## 4 Space and Identity

Space and location influence the discursive production of identity, including local identity and other forms of identity. People create a sense of localness through certain forms of speech (Johnstone 2004; Modan 2007) and ways of speaking dialects or language varieties (Johnstone, Andrus, and Danielson 2006). People judge language variety as a marker of place of origin, and in local settings judge the use of the local variety to be a sign of authenticity or genuineness (Bucholtz 2001; Bucholtz and Hall 2008). It can be used as a sign representing joint enterprise and a shared repertoire of knowledge. Reliance on a direct link between dialect and a geographical location in space and community is collapsing, however, due to increased mobility and the influence of media in shaping and interpreting the sounds of language. Language as a link to geography is also problematized by multilingualism and globalization, where maintenance of linguistic variation within the same locale is central to new forms of social organization (see, e.g., Heller 2008). The strength of the "geographical signal" in European countries has changed, as regional languages are disappearing (Auer 2011). Younger speakers in these areas typically only choose some distinctive dialectal features or words to indicate their broad regional affiliation or identity, rather than speaking the traditional dialects their parents or grandparents used. In Germany, for example, a slightly accented standard German signals regional identity. This implies that people no longer identify in some countries with distinct regional localities, while in others (e.g., Switzerland and Norway, notably not members of the European Union) dialects and locality are still important distinctions and have prestige (Auer and Schmidt 2010).

Being able to identify with a particular language is in some places not only still a matter of geographical location or birthplace but also a social achievement. In the case

of Coast Tsimshian in northwest Canada, being a speaker of Tsimshian is considered to mean not only having lived in a particular place where the language is still spoken but also having the right to display that knowledge (Stebbins 2002). Relations between language and identity are influenced by globalization and urbanization processes, and seeing a more flexible link between space and identity has led to a better understanding of language-change agents and the multiple identities and creativity of speakers (Johnstone 2010).

Graffiti has a role in connecting identities with space and place and in contesting the boundaries and meaning of localness and group membership. This usually illegal writing on walls and buildings has been described for American contexts as essentially about individual identity: the purpose is “to saturate the city with your name and any writer who does this will get fame and respect regardless of style, race, gender, class, age, nationality or sexuality” (Snyder 2009: 5). In other communities, graffiti makes visible political identities and positions that counter prevailing ideas and values (Petee 1996), particularly among the disempowered.

Bilingual speakers must sometimes navigate a difficult space of identity contradiction caught between racialized societal discourses that devalue their indigenous local identities based on language and global projects to resist language loss (Messing 2006). Efforts to revitalize endangered languages involve linking the languages not only to speakers but also to specific forms of place and space identity. Endangerment becomes part of the way a certain community presents its identity (Jaffe 2007) as unique. Relationships between indigenous identities and national identities become complex in terms of language policy when endangered languages do not occupy neat borders of nation-states (Walsh 2005).

In computer-mediated spaces, where communication between strangers occurs, the aspects of identity participants make relevant in interacting and interpreting include name, age, and gender, and new acts of identity are possible. Location of origin is less important. In Internet domains one seems to be able to even maintain an “ambiguous ethnic identity” despite, for example, being known to be white (Sebba 2007), suggesting the degree to which it is possible to be autonomous from a specifically located body in space. Similarly, people use their cellphones in creative ways as spaces for identity work. The phone is used as a tool for projecting an identity as popular, even used in off mode to pretend to be talking with someone rather than be seen as someone with no one to talk to, or when used to stage a fake call to interrupt a meeting or interaction. People describe these as ways for dealing with “feeling out of place,” and the phone is a tool to manipulate space.

## 5 Space and Place

The cultural use of space or appropriation of space for symbolic purposes is characterized as a transformation from space to “place” (Lawrence and Low 1990), through discourse (Scollon and Scollon 2003). A conscious distinction between space and place, reserving the term *place* for those areas of space that are culturally significant, conveys well the cultural aspects of space but raises the question of whether it is possible to abstract space from human activity (Auer and Schmidt 2010). An example of the

cultural composition of “place” through stories about places is shown by Basso, using elements of Apache culture, where wisdom, which is like water that never dries up, “sits in places.” Wisdom is analogous to water, sustaining the body:

You need to drink water to stay alive, don't you? Well, you also need to drink from places. You must remember everything about them. You must learn their names. You must remember what happened at them long ago. You must think about it and keep on thinking about it. Then your mind will become smoother and smoother. Then you will see danger before it happens. You will walk a long way and live a long time. You will be wise. People will respect you. (Basso 1996: 70)

Apache place names are spoken about and celebrated in songs, where singers invite individual reflection on wisdom by reminding listeners of correct behavior through stories about what has happened at certain places when wisdom has been absent. These place names not only evoke a particularly Apache meaning of wisdom but also teach behavior and its cultural logic. In many societies narratives of place create authorized versions of history within present space and use place to transmit moral ideas (e.g., Feld and Basso 1996; Hoem 1993; Johnstone 2004; Rumsey and Weiner 2001). Stories about places convey structures of feeling and simulate experience.

Those working in technologically mediated spaces characterize space as a “placeless place” (Poster 1990: 6). This is meant to reflect experiences of not being limited to a single position in time and space, or limited to local meanings, and therefore being able to occupy multiple positions and locations at once through the transmission of text and images. Bauman (1998: 8) has called this the “Great War of Independence from space.” This independence pertains only to those affluent enough to afford technologies. Studies of virtual shared offices linked by video and audio over periods of years show, however, that a particular kind of place-oriented behavior emerges (Adler and Henderson 1994; Dourish *et al.* 1996), and peripheral participants are socialized into this behavior. Even those workers not participating directly in conversations across spaces begin to orient to a shared space, digital and real, reimagining themselves as a group located in the same (technologically produced) proximity.

Conversation analysts have shown how place is formulated in a collaborative way between conversationalists moment by moment in interaction (Schegloff 1972), and how choices about how to formulate place have consequences for what happens next in conversations. Practices of formulating place necessitate an attention to granularity and specificity, since answers to the question “where are you?” are chosen for relevancy in terms of wide scope or narrow scope. Formulating place is contingent on various interactional variables – for example, being thought relevant to the particular interactional setting and being recognized by hearers as being selected for a reason related to a particular setting.

## 6 Space and Access

Space is central to the production and valuation of knowledge. Actual and perceived boundaries affect how people and organizations create and share knowledge. Allen

(1984) demonstrated that the probability of two people communicating in an organization is a function of the distance separating them (i.e., rapidly decreasing past the first 30 meters of physical desk separation). In virtual work teams, this separation can cause challenges to collaborating successfully; for example, in a study of engineers (Keating and Jarvenpaa 2011) from several countries collaborating virtually in designing a processing facility, differences in the local cultural forms of office layout caused problems in knowledge- and information-sharing practices for the virtual teams. The teams had problems in developing accurate expectations in order to know who knew what or to whom to address a particular question requesting clarification. The group of engineers in Romania had an office with open desks and no cubicles where they regularly attended to and overheard each other's conversations, while the US group was organized into isolated cubicles with limited access to what was happening in other spaces and different implications for access to and the sharing of information.

Access can be limited not only for the cultural reasons mentioned above but also for physical reasons in the case of disabled populations. Discourses about equal access for all relate space to other societal values (see, e.g., Rodman and Cooper 2009). Blind people gain new accessibility to space using cellphones equipped with global positioning software, because their phone can then vocalize spatial coordinates and describe surrounding locations. This changes their relationship to space, since without a means to gain moment-by-moment information about the world before them many blind people resort to unchanging, predictable routes of action and exploration of space, which limits their lives and contributes to social isolation. Technologies for transforming visual space to discursive or hearable space enable more independent movement through space. This affords a break from routines and a change in lifestyle, increasing potentials for interaction, activities, and information (see Slatin and Rush 2003). Using a cellphone camera to send pictures of landmarks, street signs, or storefront signs or using the phone as a prosthetic pair of eyes means that blind people may recruit the help of people outside the immediate spatial environment. They can send a picture to someone sighted in order to communicate visually where they are to coordinate a meeting place. For the blind, the questions "where am I?" in space and "what are the features of the space I am in?" can be answered in new ways: on earth, in the GSM (Global System for Mobile communications) network, or with respect to what types of technologies I am connected to (Keating and Hadder 2010).

Increased access to new digital spaces and types of interaction include illegitimate activities – for example, school children have been found cheating on exams with text messaging, and they can now be victims of cyberbullying. Populations previously kept apart and limited by constraints on physical space can be joined. One can easily form private communities and friendships out of the range of the gaze of superiors and significant others such that someone can remark "your family doesn't know anything about your life in the mobile" (Keating 2009), though parents and other people can reach you anywhere you go. This has given women unprecedented mobility, a "virtual" sexual emancipation. Others report being able to lead "double lives" in terms of roles, simultaneously having an SMS chat with a lover while having breakfast with their spouse and family. People are accountable for new forms of accessibility and spatial representations through their ability to replicate spaces through ubiquitous cellphone cameras.

## 7 Space and Language Structure

Space is integral to the grammar of sign languages, where space represents time relations, events, actors, point of view, size and shape of objects, and so on. Manual hand shapes combine with gaze, facial expression, head and body orientation, motion, and in some instances touch. Signs can be seen across large spaces, making it both difficult to have a private conversation and easier to communicate across a room. A conventionalized sign-space in front of the body, encompassing the head and torso, focuses sign production, a space that historical images of sign language show has become smaller over time (Frishberg 1975). In both signed and spoken languages, gestures in space link ideas in language, recruit hearers' attention to what is said, emphasize, and display understanding and attitude. Technologically mediated space introduces interesting properties for sign language; for example, the use of the webcam in sign language communication has led to innovations in sign language production and participant frameworks, and the transmission of particular types of visual information across locales (Keating and Mirus 2003). Adaptations of language and spatial environment can be seen in modifications to sign language within technologically mediated environments and in spaces that are not optimal spaces for signing, such as cars or in the dark, where signers cannot easily see each other's signs (Keating and Mirus 2012). Impacts of space on language structure can be as specific as deictic references or as complex as reimagining a space-and-time relationship in computer-mediated sign language.

Space influences discourse structure as children learn how to view space for communicative purposes differently across languages (Bowerman 2000), not only as they become expert at using forms such as directionals and locatives but also as they learn to tell stories linking people, activities, space, and time (Hickmann 2003). Space influences the expression of politeness since polite forms are often related to spatial relationships, such as lower status persons bowing to make themselves lower in space, or someone being addressed as "Your Highness." The space in which language is used contributes information necessary to understanding linguistic meaning. Space has often been part of the "bucket theory" (Heritage and Clayman 2010: 21) of context, a constellation of non-linguistic signs and dynamic processes not well defined that shape meaning and are intrinsic to speakers' and hearers' interpretive processes. In the dynamic process of emergent figure-ground relations, deictic forms get their meaning from the immediate context (e.g., the words "now" or "here"). Context provides other relations, such as the sense data that are interpreted as signals of stance, emotional state, or attitude (Auer 2009; Duranti and Goodwin 1992). The interpretation of deictic forms such as "here" and "there" depends not only on their links to spatial coordinates but also on local practices that enculturate physical spaces with social meanings (Hanks 1990). The relevance of surrounding context for understanding the linguistic structures produced by speakers and signers goes beyond spatial, temporal, or person deixis (Gumperz 1982). People who are interacting collaborate on producing contingent understandings of their space of interaction (Mondada 2011). The linguistic content of an utterance or text itself creates a particular context, such as the way politeness formulae or the use of titles rather than first names can (in certain cultures) create a formal context and predictions about what type of interaction might follow. Signers, for example, create a formal, institutional,

or informal context through more English-like or more American Sign Language-like signing (Lucas and Valli 2001). Utterances create a context that makes it possible for only certain utterances to follow (Schegloff 1968).

## 8 Space and Cognition

Spatial conception is influential in aspects of thinking and reasoning. Correlations have been found between how space is expressed linguistically by language and its speakers and how people perform other non-linguistic cognitive operations, such as solving spatial puzzles or creating spatial arrays (Levinson 1996). The positioning of people in space is important in basic understandings of others (Bennardo 2009). Spatial reference systems of languages either favor a relative (ego-oriented) system or an absolute (non-ego-oriented) system. An example of a relative system is one that uses concepts such as right and left based on the body in space. An example of an absolute system is one that relies on cardinal points of the landscape such as north and west, not dependent on the body. Ego-oriented and non-ego-oriented system users talk about space differently (“sit on the left side of the table” or “sit on the north side of the table”) and remember spatial representations in order to re-create them differently (Levinson and Wilkins 2006).

Work with architects designing buildings (LeBaron and Streeck 2000; Murphy 2005) shows how complex spatial relations are thought about and invented. The shape of a building, for example, shown by a client with two hands in a gesture, can become an emblem or iconically represent a structural design idea over multiple discussions with multiple participants. These gestures in space reflect mental representations but they are also fascinating because they originate in “the tactile contact that mindful bodies have with the physical world” and surrounding space (LeBaron and Streeck 2000).

Complex technologically mediated spaces challenge cognitive processing when multi-tasking across spaces occurs. Situational awareness is affected. In a study by the US Navy to measure the situational awareness of people controlling missiles (Cummings 2004), the chat box on the missile controllers’ computer screen could be more compelling to the controllers than other more vital tasking information in their surroundings such as information about missile deployment or defense strategies.

## 9 Space and Technology

Technological innovations for transcending previously known boundaries of space and time have ignited new interest in the properties of space and making sense of experience in space. Technologies engender different forms of “presence and absence” (Gergen 2002; Giddens 1990; Harvey 1989), which influence language practices (see Cook 2004). Technologically mediated presence and absence impact ritual forms, public and private distinctions, and even kinship obligations. One can remain close to elderly parents with a cellphone, and diasporic families can maintain duties of filial piety through Skype calls (Sunakawa 2012). Text messages can be sent simultaneously during

Ramadan to alert Muslims around the world to pray (Thomson 2005). Technologically enhanced mobility generates new behaviors and accountabilities (Haddington, Nevile, and Keisanen 2012; Hutchby 2001; McIlvenny, Broth, and Haddington 2009).

An example of different experiences in space is how computer-mediated gaze is experienced differently from face-to-face gaze. It is not as effective in gaining attention and monitoring the behavior of the other (Heath and Luff 1993). In face-to-face communication, bodies orient to each other and affect each other, but the perception of an image provided by the computer screen is not similarly affected when a person moves his or her own body. Managing these challenges of technologically mediated forms of co-presence, people invent ways of more explicitly managing attention-getting and turn-taking (Örnberg Berglund 2009). People develop new conventions to share space in various channels, types of mechanism, speeds of transmission, timings and genres of messages (Yates 1989), and modalities (LeVine and Scollon 2004). Signers, for example, effectively exploit properties of webcam technology, such as the magnification capabilities of the lens, when they position their hand closer to the camera lens, which enlarges it for their addressee. Online gamers also exploit parameters of vision when they control multiple views through proficient tactile manipulation of keyboard and mouse, rapidly transitioning from space to space, making machine-powered gaze shift as they manipulate multiple perspectives.

In the case of technology, the effects of one's actions in space are mediated through the imaginations of programmers, developers, and designers. Computer games enable actions in completely novel spaces with avatars. Complex perspective shifts are possible, including manipulating the computer's perspective (Keating and Sunakawa 2010). By moving a mouse, point of view or perspective on the onscreen interactional space can be manipulated. Players can use "illusion control," control gravity, or walk and fly through space. Players can change the representation of events in space (represented or "mapped" spaces) and orient to events occurring in off-screen space (Wolf 1997: 67). Actions can be contiguous across vast spaces. Interacting in virtual spaces is addictive for many players; they are thrilled by gaining mastery at manipulating visuospatial coordinates and actors with enhanced capabilities, and managing the actions of the "self" in other-than-ego-based sight.

## 10 Conclusion

Space and place are rich sites for analyzing discourse and culture, and for understanding the adaptability and creativity of human symbolic behavior. Space is an important resource in the maintenance of cultural systems. It influences identities and subjectivities, and provides a ground for accepted and contested positions. Phenomenal changes in the experience of space for interaction result in challenges to societal and personal limits and offer various opportunities for sociality.

Cultural categorization of space and how to behave there is interdependent with language and other semiotic modalities. The interpretation of a speaker's words uttered in space relates to multiple sets of coordinates, including a relation to multiple sociocultural structures that both transcend the present space and influence it. In this chapter I have focused on how space is used as a creative tool for expression, the role of built

space and place in communicating important cultural values, conceptions of private versus public space, how space contributes to identity, the distinction between space and place, space as a powerful tool for controlling access to resources and opportunities, the influence of space on language structure and consequently its influence on cognition, and technologically mediated space. Through language, physical space is used metaphorically to represent ineffable aspects of human experience; space is used to naturalize and visualize social inequality; space is related to certain speakers of languages and becomes an important aspect of identity work; and space and place are used to create authorized histories.

There are several important directions for future research on discourse, place, and space. Researchers are beginning to develop a clearer understanding of how technologies influence cultural ideas about space, and details about the role of space in organizing everyday life. This has fostered interesting discussions about how to characterize, categorize, or theorize space, and what meaningful differences might be most salient across the multiple types of spaces people share. More research is needed to better understand the communicative properties of space and place, including how space contributes to our notions of context and human agency. The relocation or displacement of individuals and groups across space due to processes such as migration and conflict raises important questions about location, identity, and community. Technological innovations that impact people's experience of space offer rich sites for observing the creation and re-creation of human work and play, and studying these sites has great potential to contribute to theories about the persistence of certain forms of practice and the emergence of new forms of shared behavior.

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## NOTES

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- 1 Support from the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies in Germany gave me a rich environment in which to work, including not only space but also time to write, including this chapter. I am very appreciative to FRIAS. Many thanks to Peter Auer for his comments on this chapter and on language and space, language and identity, and many other topics. Thanks also to the editors of this volume for their valuable input. Gwendolyn Kirk and Chiho Sunakawa provided bibliographic help and other contributions for which I am grateful.

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# 12 Gesture in Discourse

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Inside the utterance, we will find information, and if we know how to unpack the utterance, we will find discourse.

(anonymous reviewer of Levy and McNeill 1992)

## 0 Introduction

Our thesis is that speech-synchronized gestures are major sources of discourse cohesion. The gesture-to-cohesion relationship is more than an empirical correlation, although it is that also. The gestures we mean are actual components of speech, not accompaniments or “add-ons” (Kendon’s 2008 term), but integral parts of it. They are the opposite of “body language”; not a separate “language of gesture” but gestures that are actually part of language, of speech. Much evidence supports this idea, but its full implications are not always recognized. The speaker in Figure 12.1 had just watched a cartoon and was describing one of the events to a naive listener. A character climbed a drainpipe on the inside and the gesture depicts this event. The gesture also carries discourse information. In its form and motion it highlights the interiority of the ascent, presenting this as not predictable, as newsworthy, and as contrasting to exteriority (and indeed, the immediately preceding cartoon event showed the character climbing the same pipe on the outside). This one gesture thus has both denotative and discourse content. For the producer of the gesture, the “equivalence principle” (Jakobson 1960) of a contrast within an equivalence (which we will call a field of meaningful oppositions) drives the story forward, generating a trail of cohesive links as it goes. And for us, the analysts, this same principle enables us to find the discourse structure the speaker has created. Such a discourse contribution is hidden from view in orthographic



**Figure 12.1** “Rising-hollowness” gesture with “he goe[ss **up thrOUGH** the pipe] this time.”  
 McNeill 2005: 23. Used with permission of University of Chicago Press. Computer drawing by Fey Parrill, now on the faculty of Case Western University.

transcripts. A gesture-based and a text-based analysis are both needed to uncover the discourse structure of a given corpus.

What are gestures? Adam Kendon (2004: 12) defined gestures as “actions that have the features of manifest deliberate expressiveness.” We adopt his definition with one qualification and one proviso. The qualification is that gesture cannot be deliberate. As we regard them, “gestures” are unwitting and automatic, anything but deliberate (Kendon may have meant by “deliberate” non-accidental, and with this we agree; but the word also conveys “done for a purpose,” and with that we do not agree: gestures are unwitting, inadvertent, un-self-conscious, parts of thinking itself). The proviso concerns “action.” We regard gestures as movements orchestrated by significances other than pragmatic actions, created by the speaker him- or herself to embody significant imagery, not to attain goals, social or physical. To see the difference the proviso makes, the Figure 12.1 gesture looks like the action of lifting something in the hand, but it is not lifting at all. It is an image of the character rising, of the interior of the pipe through which he rose, and of the direction of his motion upward, all in a single symbolic form, in none of which a lifting hand plays a part.

So our definition is this:

A gesture is an unwitting, non-accidental, non-goal-directed action, orchestrated by speaker-created significances, having features of manifest expressiveness, that enacts imagery (not necessarily by the hands or hands alone), and is generated as part of speaking.

These gestures are not exotic or special. They are everyday occurrences. In conversations, route directions, narrations, and so on, speech-synchronized gestures are by far the most frequent kind. They are so much a part of speaking that one is often unaware of them, but, if you look around and watch someone talking in informal terms, you are likely to see the hands and arms in motion. These are the gestures we mean.

## 0.1 Chapter plan

A thread running through our examples is metaphoricity. Gestures that convey discourse units are presenting themselves as something else, a definition of metaphor close to Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) – the hand as “rising-hollowness,” the hand in space as a story line, as an opposition, as a shared topic, a surprise, a denouement, and so on. These metaphoric gestures create an opening for text-focused discourse analysis to seek linguistic form indexes that correlate with the gesture-based cohesive devices. We know of some such already, and we mention a sample here as a kind of down payment. The correlation of gesture-based discourse segments, or catchments, with prosody and purpose level is done in order to give the correlation a locus in space, not the space of an action but a metaphoric space. Another example is when a speaker refers to a new unit of discourse, for example when new episodes are introduced into narratives. Then gestures tend to occur, pointing with each repeated attempt to define a mutual topic of conversation. Another theme, in storytelling, is illustrated in example (1), which shows that the gestures (indicated by brackets) occur both with a reference to the character within a scene-changing device (1.1) and with the first reference within the episode proper (1.2).

(1.1) so the next main scene you see with [Sebastian] is

(1.2) um [Sebastian] and some of his friends are carousing in a courtyard ...

This distribution of gestures supports the conjecture that gestures participate in the creation of discourse units. Gestures help mark elements as high in communicative dynamism and thus as the presupposable units of discourse that follow.

We see a rich line of study arising from the joint consideration of these gestures and the correlated linguistic form indicators of discourse cohesion.

In what follows, we first introduce and discuss our notions of communicative dynamism and the psychological predicate, then move on to our notion of space as discourse. Next, we introduce and define catchments and prosody, then beats, and then take a new look at viewpoints and subjectivity. Following that, we discuss pointing, and then mimicry and social-interactive discourse. Finally, we examine the use of gestures by children before moving on to our conclusion.

## 1 Communicative Dynamism and the Psychological Predicate

As noted, the Figure 12.1 gesture does not denote just “rising-hollowness.” The speaker was also differentiating what she felt was significant and newsworthy in the immediate context of speaking. The gesture and the synchronous speech jointly formed a peak of communicative dynamism. “Communicative dynamism” is the extent to which a given spoken or gestured form pushes the communication forward (Firbas 1971). Not only does the material form of reference register existing degrees of communicative

Most continuous/predictable		Least continuous/predictable		
<b>Less materialization</b>		→ <b>Linguistic form continuum</b>		→ <b>More materialization</b>
∅	Unstressed pronoun	Noun phrase	Modified noun phrase	Clause or verb phrase
<b>Less materialization</b>		→ <b>Gesture form continuum</b>		→ <b>More materialization</b>
Referring term included in ongoing iconic that covers full clause	Referring term excluded from adjacent iconics	Iconics that cover the clause or VP	OVPT iconic with an NP	Four deictics with clause or VP Three OVPT iconics (one handed) Three OVPT iconics (2DHs) Three CVPT iconics

**Figure 12.2** Communicative dynamism. 2DH = two different hands; CVPT = character viewpoint; NP = noun phrase; OVPT = observer viewpoint; VP = verb phrase. McNeill 2005: 55. Linguistic continuum based on Givón 1985. Used with permission of University of Chicago Press.

dynamism but also each form is an active signal – signaling that the degree of communicative dynamism at that moment is being maintained or changed. With respect to the second, in the narration in (1), the speaker’s use of gesture – her use of “more coding material” – *serves as a signal* that the existing degree of communicative dynamism is being changed, and this is one possible discourse analytic cue.

Gesture and speech, melding into single discourse units, relate to communicative dynamism in the same direction (Figure 12.2). It is not that gesture expands as speech shrinks. The most elaborate linguistic units are accompanied by the most developed gestures, the least with the least. The use of gestures to mark elements as high in communicative dynamism is not restricted to plot-line narratives. A similar phenomenon occurs at responding-to-interlocutor points in conversation. As Figure 12.2 shows, the more discontinuous an utterance is from the previous context, the more probable a gesture, the more internally complex it will be, the more complex the synchronous speech, and the greater the communicative dynamism. In keeping with this positive relationship, both speech and gesture in the Figure 12.1 utterance had extra coding material – the gesture had an interiority feature in the open hand, and speech, co-expressively, prosodic emphasis on “through.”

The gesture, with its synchronous speech, also formed what Vygotsky (1987) termed a *psychological predicate*. In a psychological (as opposed to a grammatical) predicate, newsworthy content is differentiated from a field of meaningful oppositions.<sup>1</sup> One of Vygotsky’s examples is a crashing clock (1987: 250): there is a crash in the next room – someone asks, “What fell?” (the answer: “The clock”), or, “What happened to the clock?” (“It fell”). Depending on the context – here crystallized in the questions – the newsworthy reply (the psychological predicate) highlights different elements. The same logic applies to gesture and speech as they differentiate newsworthy content in the immediate context of speaking.

A psychological predicate:

- marks a significant departure in the immediate context and
- implies this context as background.

Combining gesture-speech into a psychological predicate implies that *every synchronous, co-expressive gesture-speech unit is equally a discourse unit*. It has absorbed a meaningful context as a matter of its formation (see McNeill 2005, 2012).

Communicative dynamism and the psychological predicate are connected. From the latter flows a causal force creating the former. A psychological predicate, with more (or less) discontinuity from the preceding context, summons greater (or lesser) effort, realized as more (or less) complex linguistic forms and gestures, providing the positive relationships with communicative dynamism in Figure 12.2.

A natural experiment shows this correlation. In our cartoon stimulus, as we mentioned in passing earlier, the character Sylvester (an ever-pursuing cat) uses the drainpipe to reach Tweety (his preternaturally protected canary prey) twice. His first attempt is to climb it on the outside, like a ladder. The result, obligatory in the genre, is catastrophe. His second, as in Figure 12.1, is on the inside, a stealth approach. Describing the first attempt, the field of meaningful oppositions or “equivalents” would be something like *ways of using the drainpipe* (this being the first mention of the pipe) and the psychological predicate differentiation something like *climb it*. With the second attempt, climbing itself is no longer newsworthy. It has become background and the field of meaningful oppositions updated to something like *ways of climbing the drainpipe*. In this field interiority is newsworthy: *on the inside*.

If a speaker recalls both attempts in the correct outside–inside order, the psychological predicate relating to the second attempt should thus focus on interiority. This follows from the psychological predicate concept; in the updated field of meaningful oppositions, interiority has become the newsworthy feature.

However, if a speaker recalls only the inside attempt and fails to recall the outside attempt, or recalls both attempts but reverses their order, interiority should not be newsworthy when the second ascent is described. It lacks an equivalent to which it can contrast. The discourse context for such a speaker is not *ways of climbing* but *ways of using a drainpipe*. This also follows from the psychological predicate concept. Interiority, lacking a field of meaningful oppositions, should thus not be included in either gesture or speech, even though the speaker has perceptually registered it and knows that Sylvester did indeed climb the pipe on the inside. This is so because interiority does not contrast with exteriority in an inside-only or inside–outside context. The field of meaningful oppositions would be about climbing, and interiority would be just another detail without discourse significance (no one in any experiment has ever recalled only the outside attempt).

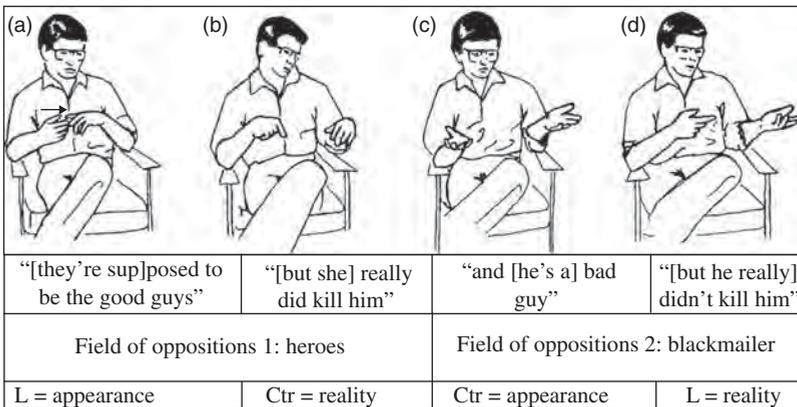
Of the six original subjects in McNeill and Levy (1982), two recalled only the inside attempt. For them, interiority had no newsworthy significance and their gestures did not contain it, even though they went on to describe how Tweety dropped a bowling ball into the pipe and its aftermath (Sylvester swallowed it), demonstrating that they had in fact registered that Sylvester was inside the pipe. Three speakers recalled both attempts in the correct order. In each case, their second gestures highlighted interiority but their preceding outside gestures showed ascent alone, without anticipation

of the inside feature. The sixth speaker, the proverbial exception that proves the rule, also recalled both attempts but incorrectly remembered how Sylvester climbed the first time – she invented a non-existent ladder but for the second attempt did recall the pipe. So this speaker’s second-ascent psychological predicate formed not on contrasting paths (inside versus outside) but on contrasting *grounds* (ladder versus pipe: her equivalents). And indeed her gesture depicted upward motion but not interiority.

This natural experiment suggests that the gesture–speech unit in Figure 12.1 (one of the three who recalled both ascents) was about ascent but also was, in itself, a whole discourse unit, something like *interiority-rather-than-exteriority-is-the-next-way-of-using-the-pipe-to-get-Tweety*.

## 2 Space as Discourse

*Space itself, where gestures are made, embodies discourse themes.* Gestures are of course spatial but the spaces in which they appear are not filled at random. In cases like pointing at something they may have significance, qua space, but often the significance is something not space; space then is more a metaphor for something else. In story narrations several narrative lines can unfold at once, and each will have its own space. In our example, a speaker recalls the moment in a full-length film that he is retelling (Hitchcock’s 1929 *Blackmail*, his first talkie) where a shady character is blackmailing the female character. In the film she has already, in self-defense, killed a sexual attacker and is now anxiously revealing her crime to her boyfriend, who happens to be the very Scotland Yard detective assigned to solve the murder. The blackmailer had secretly observed the crime and now appears, attempting to extort hush money. Her boyfriend-detective decides to pin the crime on the blackmailer instead. In this fraught situation, heroine and hero face an impossible dilemma: submit to blackmail or find some dishonest means to avoid it. The narrator in Figure 12.3 is commenting on this moral quandary.



**Figure 12.3** Spatial discourse units during a film retelling. Ctr = center; L = left. McNeill 1992: 155. Used with permission of University of Chicago Press. Drawings by Laura Pedelty, now on the faculty of University of Illinois Medical School.

In (a) he is saying, “everyone’s morals are very ambiguous ‘cause [they’re sup]posed to be the good guys,” and gesturally indicates the space to his left (right hand rises left from lap). In (b) he continues with “[but she] really did kill him” and points into his front space. The space contrast (front/left) has metaphorized the abstract contrast of the ascribed versus the actual moral values of the female character. The opposition is continued in (c), with the central space again indicated but now for a different character, the blackmailer, and with ascribed rather than actual moral meaning, as he says “and [he’s a] bad guy” and then concludes indicating the left space for the blackmailer’s real morality in (d), “[but he really] didn’t kill him.”

The example is of interest because it shows how spaces stand for fields of oppositions for different story lines (Bakhtin’s 1981 *chronotopes*). The speaker had a choice of two fields of oppositions. One would have had a moral story line or chronotope: establish actual moral quality (she killed him, the blackmailer didn’t) versus apparent moral quality (she was one of the “good guys”; he was not). We could recognize this because the speaker’s gestures would have consistently differentiated center-left as Real-Apparent. But he chose instead a character chronotope, Hero versus Wicked. Within each pole he opposed Real-Apparent. Presumably due to mechanical constraints, keeping the hands in the central space for (b) and (c), this opposition happened to be different for the two characters but, since it was limited to one pole, Heroes and Wicked, it did not undermine the story line. Our point is that different story lines have different spatializations, and by them we can tell which the speaker is using. Behind it all was a use of space to dichotomize – the concept of opposition itself as opposition in space.

### 3 Catchments and Prosody

The field of meaningful oppositions a psychological predicate differentiates can be discovered directly in the gestures themselves. We then uncover yet another form of gestural discourse cohesion. *Catchments* (abbreviated as C) occur when space, trajectory, hand shape, and so on recur in two or more (not necessarily consecutive) gestures. Catchments show the effective contextual background and provide an empirical route to the discovery of the discourse context.

- A catchment is recognized from recurrences of gesture form features over a stretch of discourse.
- It is a kind of thread of consistent visuospatial action imagery running through the discourse and provides a gesture-based window into discourse cohesion.
- The logic is that discourse themes produce gestures with recurring features; these recurrences give rise to the catchment.
- Thus, reasoning in reverse, a catchment offers clues to the cohesive links in the text with which it co-occurs.

Adam Kendon, in 1972, published a detailed analysis of a filmed conversation, and identified and correlated three hierarchies – kinesic, prosodic, and discursive. We can follow up on Kendon’s analysis making use of the concepts of a psychological predicate

and catchment. In our study, subjects were asked to describe their living quarters to an interlocutor. In one case, describing her house, the following occurred:

(2) so you're in the kitchen

n' there's a sss-

the back starc\*

oh I forgot to say

when you come though the\*

when you enter the house from the front

and you open the door with the\*

the glass in them

there's a\* the front staircase runs right up there on your left

so you can go straight up stairs to the second floor from there if you want

but if you come around through the kitchen into the back

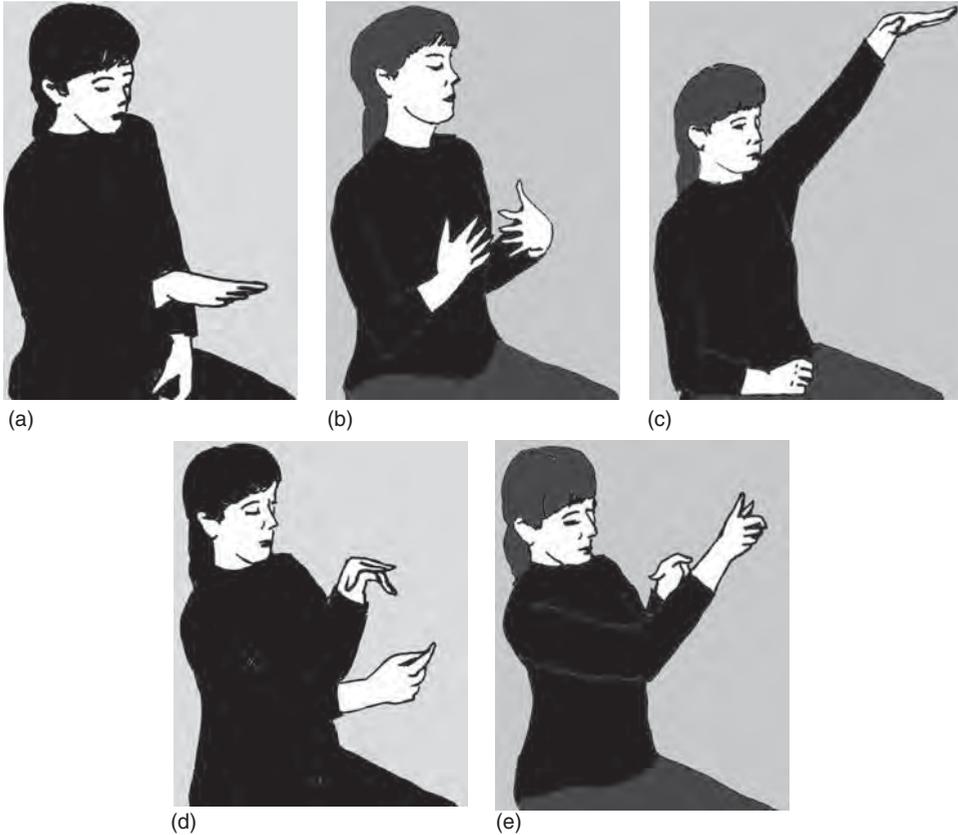
there's a back staircase that winds around like this

and put you up on the second floor

The following four catchments can be identified covering this passage:

- C1 consists of right-hand gestures elevated above the right knee; all are associated with *the kitchen* at the back of the house. See Figure 12.4a.
- C2 consists of two-similar-hands gestures; all are associated with the theme of *the front doors* of the house. See Figure 12.4b.
- C3 consists of left-hand gestures made with the arm extended and lifted up; all are associated with *the front staircase and second floor*. See Figure 12.4c.
- C4 consists of right-hand gestures where the hand rises and turns in a spiral motion while the left hand remains in an elevated hold; all are associated with *the back staircase and its relationship to the second floor*. See Figure 12.4d and Figure 12.4e.

Each catchment is distinctive in form, location, and/or movement and has non-consecutive occurrences. The C2 “front door” catchment links back to a much earlier description of the front doors of the house. The centerpiece of this discourse is the back staircase (C4) and its location at the back of the house, where it connects the kitchen to the second floor. The first mention of the back staircase is immediately aborted (“oh I forgot to say”) and is replaced by C2 “front door” and then C3 “front staircase.” C3 is



**Figure 12.4** Catchments during a living-space description. (a) C1 kitchen gesture with “so you’re in the kitchen.” (b) C2 front doors gesture with “when you enter the house.” (c) C3 front staircase/second floor gesture with “to the second floor.” (d) C4 back staircase gesture with “there’s a back staircase that winds around like this.” (e) C3+C4 back staircase+second floor gesture with “and puts you up on the second floor.”

Original screen grabs from McNeill *et al.* (2001). Used with permission of John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam/Philadelphia. [www.benjamins.com](http://www.benjamins.com). Computer drawings by Fey Parrill in McNeill 2005: 169. Used with permission of University of Chicago Press.

held as the kitchen C1 and back staircase C4 catchments resume. C3 is hierarchically dominated by C1 and C4, as we infer because it is motionless. One interpretation of the discourse is that the speaker aborted the first mention of the back staircase when she recalled that she had yet to mention another way to reach the second floor of the house, which was linked to the front entrance. A repair was undertaken by introducing C2 (the front doors, going back to the beginning of the house tour) and from there presenting the front staircase and second floor (C3). At the end of this repair, an overlap of catchments took place when the elevated left hand from C3 was held, now representing the second floor, and the back staircase C4 resumed and connected to it. The two-different-hands gesture thus created an overlap of the C3 and C4 catchments.

**Table 12.1** Purpose hierarchy (using the query procedure of Nakatani *et al.* 1995).

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WHY? Ways of getting to the second floor (1) C4 [‘n’ then there’s a s<sss>’] [the <b>back stairc</b> ’]	WHY? To locate the back staircase (1.1) C1 # [so <b>you’re in the kitchen</b> ]
WHY? Ways of getting to the second floor (1) C4 [there’s a b <b>ack sta</b> ]	WHY? To note the existence of the first staircase (1.1.1) [I <b>forgot to say</b> ] WHY? To restart the tour (1.1.1.1) C2 [when you <b>enter</b> through the*] [when you <b>enter</b> the house from the front] [and <b>you</b> <ou> <b>open</b> the doors with t][he*] [<uumm> % <b>smack</b> / ] [ / <b>the glas</b> ][s inn them #]
WHY? Ways of getting to the second floor (1) C4 <b>there’s a back sta</b> ]	WHY? To explain first staircase (1.1.1) C3 [there’s a* the <b>front staircase</b> ] [runs <b>right up there</b> o][n* on your <b>left</b> ] [so you can go <b>straight up</b> ][stair] [s to the <b>se</b> ][ <b>econd floor</b> ][r from there] [if <b>you want</b> ]
WHY? Ways of getting to the second floor (1) C4 <b>there’s a back sta</b> ]	WHY? To locate the back staircase (1.1) C1 [but if <b>you come around through</b> the ki [tchen <b>into the bac</b> ]k
WHY? To connect to the second floor (1.2) C4+C3 <b>[and putss you up on the second floor]</b>	

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McNeill *et al.* 2001: 27. Used with permission of John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam/Philadelphia. www.benjamins.com.

The arrangement in Table 12.1 shows a hierarchy of *discourse purposes* as revealed by the Nakatani *et al.* (1995) query procedure. Position in the hierarchy is indicated by indentation; gesture location is shown with bold. The text is broken up so that each line is a single prosodic phrase. The numbers refer to the hierarchical level of the purpose, as determined by the procedure, which consists of asking and answering with a purpose why each line was uttered (the procedure applies only to statements that fulfill a purpose, which is not always the case; however, in this discourse the assumption evidently applies). Table 12.2 compares the hierarchy to the discourse’s catchment structure; they correspond closely – indeed, 100 percent!

Each catchment has its own purpose level or levels not shared by the other catchments. At this degree of delicacy, there is a perfect mapping of the discourse structure onto gesture and the speaker apparently created discourse segments on the basis of consistent WHY-purposes. Gestures are thus here accurately accounted for as presenting information that is relevant to the WHY? questions of the purpose hierarchy. For example, the answer to purpose 1.1 is “in the kitchen,” and a gesture was performed that conveyed this content (the hand held in a space identified as the kitchen). Predicting gestures from purposes suggests that the WHY? hierarchy was guiding the speaker by defining what was newsworthy at each point, hence her psychological predicates, and that gestures expressed this content. The catchment is the base from which the communicative weight of the gesture is formed. Each gesture is simultaneously shaped by its semantic content and its relationship to a catchment.

**Table 12.2** Correspondence of catchments with the discourse purpose hierarchy.

<i>Catchment</i>	<i>Purpose level</i>	<i>Catchments answering Why?</i>
<b>C1:</b> RH above knee: <kitchen> <connect>	1.1 or 1.2	100%
<b>C2:</b> BHs spread apart in front of chest: <front doors>	1.1.1.1	100%
<b>C3:</b> LH rises up and forward: <front stairs> <2nd floor>	1.1.1	100%
<b>C4:</b> RH rises and twists: <back stairs>	1	100%

McNeill *et al.* 2001: 27. Used with permission of John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam/Philadelphia. www.benjamins.com.

Thus several dimensions converge: the catchment determines the form of the gesture; the utterance purpose defines the communicative weight; the gesture provides the content.

The third leg of Kendon's triad is prosody. To access this dimension, we make use of the ToBI (Tone-Break-Index) analytic system. Following Beckman and Hirschberg (1994), a ToBI transcription occupies four tiers: (1) orthographic transcription (as above), (2) a tone tier in which phrasal tones and pitch accents are marked, (3) a break-index tier in which juncture degree is rated between each pair of words and after the final word, and (4) a miscellaneous tier (comments by the coder). We focus on tiers (2) and (3).<sup>2</sup>

Table 12.3 summarizes (2), the tone tier. The more deeply embedded a segment in the discourse, the higher the final boundary tone, conveying a "more is to come" meaning.

**Table 12.3** Intonation boundaries of the four catchments.

<i>Catchments in Table 12.1 (in order of hierarchical level)</i>	<i>Discourse level in Table 12.1</i>	<i>Number of low tone boundaries</i>	<i>Number of high tone boundaries</i>
<b>C4:</b> RH rises and twists: <back stairs>	1	3	1
<b>C1:</b> RH above knee: <kitchen> <connect>	1.1 or 1.2	3	0
<b>C3:</b> LH rises up and forward: <front stairs> <2nd floor>	1.1.1	2	5
<b>C2:</b> BHs spread apart in front of chest: <front doors>	1.1.1.1	1	6

McNeill *et al.* 2001: 29. Used with permission of John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam/Philadelphia. www.benjamins.com. ToBI coding by Karl-Erik McCullough.

The more dominant the segment, correspondingly, the lower the final tone, reflecting a declarative pattern. This contrast evidently reflects a general characteristic of intonation contours with independent and dependent content.

Prosodically, each catchment had its own distinctive boundary tone. The C1 (kitchen) and C4 (back staircase) catchments, which come together at the end of the discourse in terms of the spatial layout of the house, were low. C2 and C3 were preponderantly high. Catchments thus exhibit distinct prosodic features.

What factors influence the boundary tone of a given catchment? Two seem important. One is the discourse embeddedness of the content, noted above, in which embedded content tended to have high final tones and main-line content low final tones. Iconicity is a second factor. The high and low tones seem to show semantic motivation (cf. Bolinger 1986) in that phrases having to do with the base of the stairs tended to end low and those with the second floor high. Thus aspects of intonation behave like gestures themselves and are predictable from knowledge of both semantic content and position in the discourse structure.

The break-index code shows the degree of phonological distinctiveness at each “break” point in the speech stream, ranging from 0 for the highest degree of phonetic reduction to 4 for a full intonation-phrase boundary. Table 12.4 shows that the C4 catchment (the back staircase) had a high level of phonetic reduction (level 0), reflecting more internal continuity of speech. In a seeming paradox, C4 also had the highest proportion of full intonation-phrase boundaries (level 4). However, the paradox is only apparent and makes sense if we consider that the back staircase was the dominant catchment of the full discourse. This central position yielded tightly configured gesture-prosody packages – internal boundaries glossed over while external boundaries were maximized.

Our general conclusion is that the organization of discourse is inseparable from gesture and prosody: the three components are different sides of a single mental-communicative process. A purely text-based approach, as in the narratology tradition, is blind to two-thirds of this discourse structure. Indeed, the principal themes of the living-space discourse were *gestural* – the four catchments embodied the speaker’s intentions and were the foundations of the discourse purposes of successive utterances. The utterance hierarchy grew out of these images but only partially encoded them (as we see in the greater delicacy of discourse information in gesture). It was to present catchment themes that the discourse, at each moment and step by step, was organized.

**Table 12.4** Break-index values.

<i>Catchment</i>	0	1	2	3	4	<i>Number of breaks</i>
<b>C1:</b> kitchen	0%	82%	9%	9%	0%	11
<b>C2:</b> front door	4%	57%	17%	13%	9%	23
<b>C3:</b> front staircase	4%	68%	12%	4%	12%	25
<b>C4:</b> back staircase	19%	58%	0%	4%	19%	26

McNeill *et al.* 2001: 29. Used with permission of John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam/Philadelphia. [www.benjamins.com](http://www.benjamins.com).

Prosody, the other component of the triad, is gesture in spoken form, as in Bolinger (1986). The psychological predicate is the basis for integrating all these components. It provides the co-equal generation of gesture and speech from the same semantic intent. The catchment is the locus around which this integration proceeds.

## 4 Beats

Beats can be regarded as miniaturized versions of other gestures even when the other gesture is concurrent – making it a sort of double exposure – a conception based on Tuite (1993), who argued that every gesture contains a rhythmical pulse, a beat, on which iconicity and metaphoricity build; here, we say that every beat is a distillation or miniaturization of a more complex or larger gesture. It is called the “beat” after the musical beat or the idea of beating a surface of some kind – the hand(s) moving up and down or back and forth in short strokes. However, this rhythmicity may be effect rather than cause. The function of the beat (either concurrent or successive) is like that of yellow highlighter – the beat emphasizes that something else, speech or other gestures than the beat itself, is important in some larger context. It is this expansion to context that the beat signals. Just as gesticulations absorb their context, beats explicitly index it. This function explains why beats coincide with prosodic emphasis, since prosody performs a similar function; prosodic highlighting is the true co-expressivity of the beat. Thus beats move with the speech rhythm but this rhythm is not the source; rather, both beat and rhythm have a shared source in contextual highlighting. Bressemer (2010) has tracked different hand shapes and orientations of beats in shadings of this function.

The beat’s formal simplicity belies its semiotic complexity. Of gestures, beats are among the more complex semiotically. One can see this complexity in the at least four kinds of beat that capture different relationships to the larger context.

Firstly, beats alone highlight that content (otherwise not imaged) is new in the context. An example (another example from the narration of Hitchcock’s *Blackmail*) enumerates successive features of a newly introduced character in the story:

(3) “his girlfriend, Alice, Alice White”

In this example, a beat accompanies each stressed increment of new (non-repeated) information – respectively, her functional role, first name, and last name. Again, prosody is a factor, with the stress peaks performing the same function. The beats are co-expressive with this prosodic marking. Together they add extra effort and this highlights the increments of content.

Two analyses (Levy and McNeill 1992) of the distribution of beats relative to the episode structure of spoken narratives – one in English and one in Georgian – show the tendency of beats to occur at the start of new episode units (Levy and McNeill 1992). The narrations were segmented into episodes on the basis of explicit scene-changing devices that made reference to the film itself, as well as clue words (Reichman 1978) such as “at any rate” or “anyway.” Table 12.5 shows the distribution of gestures that accompanied full noun phrases, relative to the position of the reference in an episode unit.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 12.5** Distribution of beat gestures accompanying references made with full noun phrases in narration of film.

<i>Position in episode unit</i>	<i>+gesture</i>	<i>-gesture</i>	<i>Total number of full noun phrases</i>
<i>English</i>			
Position 1	22	13	35
Position 2-last	17	47	64
<i>Georgian</i>			
Position 1	12	3	15
Position 2-last	18	78	96

Levy and McNeill 1992: 288. Used with permission of Taylor and Francis journals.

Secondly, beats can follow another gesture; an example is “the weight came down [with a large downward iconic gesture] and he got clobbered [a beat].” The beat, a miniaturized version of the first gesture, synchronizes with a stress peak but its function is not to tap out this rhythm but to indicate the point in speech that relates to the first gesture semantically (the effect of the weight’s falling on the character).

Thirdly, beats can occur in advance of another gesture – the reverse of the second kind of beat. Such a sequence indicates a shift of discourse level, from the metalevel (about the structure of the discourse), with the beat, to a descriptive level (the content of the discourse), with the following full gesture; the beat is a miniaturized anticipation of the larger gesture. For example, “so the next thing he does [metanarrative with a beat] is go in the front door [narrative with an iconic for motion].” The beat indicates a structural feature of the story – its temporal sequence – to which the iconic gesture for entering that follows relates.

Finally, a beat can be superimposed on an ongoing representational gesture. The beat signals that the gesture (and its concomitant speech) has a significance beyond itself, in the larger context. It is the all-purpose highlighter in which the other cases (enumeration, semantic link, discourse-level shift) all may occur, and is a “double flash” of the gesture on which it is riding.

To summarize, the beat relates the moment of its occurrence to some other occurrence. Beats only exist in relation to things other than themselves.

## 5 Viewpoints and Subjectivity: A New Look

Viewpoints in gesture are of two basic kinds. Many take the perspective of a detached observer, watching an event as if it occurred on a stage or screen: the hands are the whole character, the space is the space in which the character resides, and the speaker’s own head and body are on the outside, looking in. This is observer viewpoint. The other perspective is that of the participant in the action: the hands are the character’s hands, her motion its motion, and the speaker’s body is the character’s in the scene. This is character viewpoint. Some gestures combine the perspectives, one part of the

gesture being in observer viewpoint, another part in character viewpoint. The following example is of this dual type. The effect is a kind of gestural irony. The narrator, Narrator Viv, is describing a complicated scene in which Sylvester has catapulted himself up to Tweety by throwing a weight onto the other end of a kind of seesaw. Shooting up exactly to Tweety's window, he grabs Tweety and falls back down to the ground, landing on the seesaw. This launches the weight, which arcs through the air and lands on him. As Sylvester comes down Viv's hand is Sylvester's, grasping Tweety – character viewpoint. At the same time the motion of the hand is Sylvester as a whole moving down – observer viewpoint.

(4) and he grabs Tweety Bird and as he comes back down he lands on the ground and he starts running away and at this time the five hundred pound weight comes down and lands on him

The initial character viewpoint could have been denotative for “grab” but why did Narrator Viv continue a character viewpoint when she took on observer viewpoint for the trajectory? Russell (2012) points to an indirect free style in gesture, much like that in literary writing (Banfield 1993), which character viewpoint produces – the “new look” of this section. Indirect free style as a literary style reports thought and subjectivity rather than words: “now she had got to be bothered by that beast of a woman.” This contrasts with direct and indirect quotes: “she said, ‘I’ll be bothered by ...’” or “she said she would be bothered by ...” (which also may have their gesture counterparts). The character viewpoint of Narrator Viv’s gesture captures Sylvester’s subjectivity, his satisfaction with his catapult method. The observer viewpoint trajectory, however, displays (unbeknownst to Sylvester) the unfolding disaster – the weight arcing overhead to land on him. The character viewpoint, as an indirect free-style report, gave Narrator Viv the feel of Sylvester’s “subjectivity” (if a cartoon character has such a thing), a necessity for the ironic contrast with the observer viewpoint’s objective knowledge of what was to come.

Narrator Viv could also have actually said, in spoken free indirect style, “he thought he had Tweety at last,” but she did not. Gesture alone in this case embodied the mode, suggesting that it is, equally, a mode of thought as well as a mode of presenting someone else’s thought.

Levy and McNeill (1992) observed contrasting storytelling strategies, one of which we now suspect matches this character viewpoint functionality. In this strategy, termed “the constructive strategy,” the narrator does not tend to mark the start of new episodes with beats (in other words, does not show the association with referring expressions that appears in Table 12.5); uses iconic gestures and “deictic” discourse markers with demonstrative pronouns or deictic verbs of motion, such as “this I didn’t understand” or “he went back into the narrative”; and seemingly shows a tendency toward character viewpoint – this narrator “created the impression of ‘traveling through’ the story, moving from one temporal/spatial location to another” (Levy and McNeill 1992: 300). In the second strategy, “the anticipatory,” adopted by a different narrator, there is a strong association of beats with the start of new episode units (as in the analyses appearing in Table 12.5); with the episodes marked primarily with “non-deictic” devices containing references to the generalized film viewer in subject position and structural components of the film in the predicate, such as “then you see the scene” or “you get a flashback”;

and with the speaker seeming to create the impression of the film as object [cf. observer viewpoint], whose components (scenes) moved in relation to a stationary viewer. The interesting possibility this parallel with Russell's free indirect style mode of the character viewpoint suggests, together with the earlier supposition that the free indirect style is a mode of thought as well as of reporting thought, is that individuals form differing individual cognitive and communicative styles along these lines, some speakers being characteristically character viewpoint "subjective", with the free indirect style in their own thought and speech, while others are more observer viewpoint objective, avoiding the subjectivity of the free indirect style. If they do any kind of reporting, "objective" speakers do it through quotes, direct or indirect (a prediction that invites test).

## 6 Pointing

Almost every gesticulation includes some deixis. The upward thrust of Figure 12.1 indicated the location of the pipe and its position relative to the character and Sylvester's position. This deixis was not accomplished with a dedicated point but was built into the gesticulation itself. A dedicated, stand-alone point on the other hand has properties that make it like an emblem. Like "OK," which must be performed with the forefinger in contact with the thumb and the other fingers extended, points have form standards: the extended index finger is standard in North American and Northern European culture; a flat hand is standard in some British Isles uses (Kendon 2004); and lip points are standard in Laos (Enfield 2001; see Figure 12.3). All have in common an iconic vector from a zero point, or "origo" (Bühler's 1982 term), to some target of the point.

While Figure 12.5 seems to be a gesture whose target was an object or locus in physical space, in discourse we find pointing capturing other phenomena. Some pointing



**Figure 12.5** Jahai (Laos) lip point. Enfield 2001: 190. Used with permission of John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam/Philadelphia. [www.benjamins.com](http://www.benjamins.com).

**Table 12.6** Distribution of pointing gestures accompanying references made with proper names in a comic-book narration (English).

<i>Position in episode unit</i>	<i>+gesture</i>	<i>-gesture</i>	<i>Total number of proper names</i>
Position 1	6	1	7
Position 2-last	4	14	18

Levy and McNeill 1992: 290. Used with permission of Taylor & Francis journals.

gestures are similar to beats and mark the introduction of novel events or characters (Marslen-Wilson, Levy, and Tyler 1982). The analysis in Table 12.6 is taken from a narration of a comic book. The narrator had a copy of the comic book resting on his lap, and he took advantage of this arrangement to point at times to pictures of the characters on its cover. These points concentrated on the first mentions of proper names. The distribution of gestures was motivated, at least in part, by the episodic structure of his retelling.

Many points in discourse are metaphoric. Rather than indicate a locus in space for a reference, they create a spot in space to stand for the reference that otherwise could not have a spatial locus. These metaphoric points are prominent in conversations. The gesture indicates a space but the space has a non-spatial meaning. The so-called "Mr. A and Mr. B conversation" compellingly illustrates the force of such gestures in the flow of conversational discourse (Table 12.7). The conversation was recorded in the early 1970s by the late Starkey Duncan as part of an extensive investigation of face-to-face interaction (see Duncan and Fiske 1977). It was named "the Mr. A – Mr. B conversation" by Silverstein (1997). The participants were previously unacquainted male graduate students at the University of Chicago. Mr. A and Mr. B were introduced, placed in front of a video camera, and told simply to "have a conversation." As would be expected in such a situation, the participants started by exchanging academic biographies. Each already knew that the other was a graduate student and the specific school within the university the other attended, but nothing more. Mr. A, a budding lawyer, made a determined effort to uncover Mr. B's academic past, about which Mr. B was strangely unforthcoming. After several false starts, Mr. A finally pinned Mr. B down with QA8: "an' [you wént to undergraduate hére or ...]," which elicited RB8 "[in Chicágo] át, uh, Loyola," the reluctant Mr. B's academic homeland (see Table 12.7).<sup>4</sup>

Pointing is the only gesture to appear in this snippet of conversation. It carried the full load of meaningful oppositions – establishing, maintaining, and at two points shifting them. The stretch began with Mr. A's QA6, "how do you like Chicago compared to," and QA7, "did you [go to school thére] or uh," the sentences co-referential with a just prior mention by Mr. B (not shown) that he had once lived in Iowa. A's QA7 was accompanied by a gesture into the space shared between A and B. B's immediate reply (RB7.1) also pointed into the shared space, affirming B's sojourn in Iowa as the current topic of the shared space. B then launched into a series of statements (RB7.2 through RB7.5) with a new area of deixis to the left, all having to do with a new topic, B's education in Chicago. Thus there was a shift of topic and with it a shift of space. He finished his education

**Table 12.7** Mr. A and Mr. B conversation snippet.

<i>Mr. A</i>	<i>Mr. B</i>
QA6 how do you like Chicago compared to	
QA7 did you [go to school <i>thére</i> ] or uh <i>points to shared space</i>	
	RB7.1 I did go to school [there] <i>points to shared space</i>
	RB7.2 [I went to school <i>hére</i> ] <i>points to left</i>
	RB7.3 [áalso] <i>circles to left</i>
uh-huh	
	RB7.4 [I] <i>points to shared space</i>
	RB7.5 [ / um] <i>points to left</i>
	RB7.6 so I [came back] <i>points to shared space</i>
oh, uh-huh	
	RB7.7 [kind of /] <i>points to right</i>
QA8 an' [you wént to undergraduate <i>hére</i> or.....(A's gesture held).....]	
<i>points to shared space</i>	
	RB8 [in <i>Chicágo</i> ] <i>át</i> , uh, Loyola <i>points to shared space</i>
óh óh óh óh óh I'm an óld Jésuit Boy mysélf / / unfórtunately	

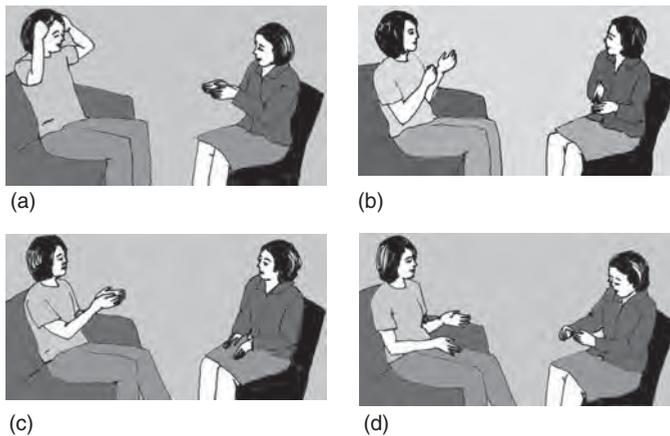
McNeill 2005: 152. Used with permission of University of Chicago Press.

topic and returned to the shared space. However, it now for him had a new meaning, no longer Iowa-then but Chicago-now (RB7.6 “so I [came back]”). B’s next statement hinted at the precise way in which the meaning of the shared space had changed. He said at RB7.7, “[kind of /]” and pointed to the *right*. This was the only use of the right space by either A or B in the snippet. It is significant that it occurred with a hedge. The hedge implies that he came back to one sort of Chicago but not to another sort of Chicago. He was contrasting something to the shared space with the right-space hedge, and this something was a “kind of” Chicago. Among inhabitants, the University of Chicago is often called just “Chicago,” and this would be the default in a conversation between two enrolled students seated in a building of that university. But B’s right-space hedge signaled that the meaning of the shared space for him now was not this default but the city (for him, the university was the “kind of” Chicago in the right-hand space). It is equally clear, however, that A, also shifting meaning and pointing into the shared space, took it to mean the university. So, at this moment, the shared space had two meanings. A’s question at QA8 with an extended point into the shared space forced a clarification. B then answered, hesitantly, with a final shared-space point accompanied by speech that distinguished the two meanings in this way, in RB8: “[in *Chicágo*] *át*, uh, Loyola” – “in” indexing the city, “at” the university. Mr. A and Mr. B, in their fluent, active, and metaphoric uses of space, were in no way unusual; indeed, were typical of face-to-face conversation.

## 7 Mimicry and Social-Interactive Discourse

We have already seen gestures acting as social discourse units in the Mr. A–Mr. B conversation. Many other examples can be found. Gestures are intrinsically social. They express this quality in discourse units that themselves comprise interactions and social mimicry. Schegloff (1984) used gesture to forecast what would be “in play” in the next round of conversation. We follow his lead, supplemented with the concept of a psychological predicate, and look for joint psychological predicates and fields of meaningful oppositions. A new joint discourse unit is formed, among other ways, when one person mimics the gesture of another or when two individuals participate in one psychological predicate, one providing the linguistic side, the other the gesture.

Kimbara (2006) studied gestural mimicry as an interactive phenomenon. The example in Figure 12.6 is from her research. Mimicry is a process of “interpersonal synchrony,” as Kimbara terms it, that creates a sense of solidarity and is prominent when the interlocutors are personally close. Figure 12.6 presents such a case. Two friends are having a conversation. The example begins with a gesture by the friend on the right. She is describing the chaotic scene that develops on Tokyo subway platforms during rush hour where multiple lines of waiting passengers take form but disintegrate into an elbow-swinging crowd when the train arrives. (a) depicts the lines; (b) is their thickness and leftward direction vis-à-vis the speaker/viewer. The listener is commencing her gesture preparation during (b) as well, and (c) and (d) are her mimicry. The imagery



**Figure 12.6** Interpersonal mimicry. (a and b) Speaker on right: describing the line as “irregular”; her gesture depicts lines of waiting passengers; the separation of her hands may depict the density of the crowding. Speaker on left: in (b), hands entering the gesture space and preparing to perform gesture in panels (c) and (d). (c and d) Continuous with panels (a) and (b). Speaker on left mimics right speaker’s two-lines gesture as she emphatically agrees (“yes, yes, yes, yes”), including absolute direction (in both figures, the hands are moving toward camera). Meanwhile, in (d), right speaker is preparing her next gesture.

Images from Kimbara 2006. Used with permission of John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam/Philadelphia. [www.benjamins.com](http://www.benjamins.com). Computer drawings by Fey Parrill in McNeill 2005: 160. Used with permission of University of Chicago Press.

is the same as the original: the same two lines, the same thickness, and even the same absolute direction (this may be mimicry of the speaker’s own position as the origo zero point). From a psychological predicate viewpoint, the second speaker’s idea unit included imagery from the first speaker’s psychological predicate.

Joint construction goes further, to form collaborative psychological predicates wherein mind #2 mimics the gesture and speech of mind #1; if at the same time #2 asks (implicitly) in what context this mimicked gesture and speech could have been newsworthy, where they could have jointly been a point of differentiation, #1’s field of meaningful oppositions suddenly appears. The effect is dramatic. The psychological predicate and field of oppositions rise as if by magic (but it is not magic – it is because the original gesture had absorbed this context and mimicking it re-creates it at least in part). Mimicry imports the psychological predicate into one’s own thought–language–hand link. Mimicry is thus a kind of *borrowed embodiment*. It re-creates the other’s gesture–speech unit as if it were a psychological predicate of one’s own. Turn-taking at such momentary overlaps of psychological predicates depends on this process and creates yet another interactive discourse unit. Turn-taking is often analyzed as coordinated activity of one speaker authorizing the next speaker (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974). The process also involves joint psychological predicates at the exchange point, with gestures playing a critical role. A psychological predicate starts with one speaker and passes to the next speaker. Speaker A says “from what” and Speaker B, with some overlap, takes over with “from- from the way we do it.” The joint inhabitation is seen in the deployment of gaze and gesture:

(5) A begins with a glance at C (a third participant), then gestures interactively toward B, followed immediately by gaze at B and an iconic gesture depicting the object of reference.

This form of mimicry appears at turn exchanges during conversational interactions, a kind of formation of a joint idea unit that ensures that the dialogic thread continues unbroken (see McNeill *et al.* 2010 for full details).<sup>5</sup>

Even more dramatic demonstrations of two-body psychological predicates appear in Figure 12.7, from an experiment devised by Furuyama (2000). The setting was one person teaching a second person, a stranger, how to create an origami box. In (a), the learner



**Figure 12.7** Embodiment in two bodies. (a) Mimicry by learner (on left). (b) Appropriation by learner (left).

From research by Furuyama 2000. Computer drawings by Fey Parrill in McNeill 2005: 161. Used with permission of University of Chicago Press.

on the left mimics the teacher's gesture, and again mimicry has social-interactive content. It occurred without the learner speaking but was synchronized with the *tutor's* speech. As the tutor said "[pull down] the corner," the learner performed the gesture during the bracketed portion. The learner appropriated the other's *speech*, combining it with *her gesture*, as if they were jointly creating a single psychological predicate. The similarities to what Gill (2007) calls *entrainment* are notable.

The reverse appropriation also occurs. The learner appropriates *the tutor's gesture* by combining it with *her speech*. Again, there is inhabitation, this time of gesture, and there is again a kind of joint psychological predicate. In (b) the learner takes manual control of the tutor's gesture and combines it with her speech. She said, "[you bend this down?]," and during the bracketed speech moved the tutor's hand down. As Furuyama observes, the tutor had turned in his chair so that the same left-right gesture space was available to him and the learner, a maneuver that invited the learner to enter his gesture space. It is striking that the American taboo normally prohibiting strangers from non-accidental physical contact was overridden, possibly because the hands had become symbols and were no longer the "hands," the actual body parts, belonging to another person.

Thus we find discourse units formed by two persons, their gestures and fields of meaningful oppositions realized in common through mimicry. This can take place in conversations or during instruction or even in the kind of virtual interaction that a gesture coder has with video images of another person's gestures.

## 8 In Children

Gestures as discourse units appear even in young children. The data we describe are taken from a longitudinal study of the spontaneous narratives of a young child, Ella, between the ages of one and three years, video-recorded and transcribed by Forrester (2002) and available on the CHILDES website. In the example we present, Ella, age two years seven months, is seated at the kitchen table engaged in conversation with both her parents.

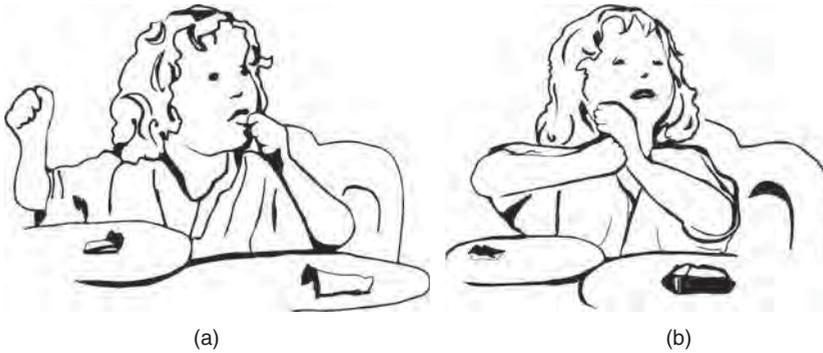
The example begins at the very start of the recording, so we do not have earlier context; where we break in the mother has introduced the topic of a child frightened by participating in a psychology experiment involving Thomas the Tank Engine (6a). In (6b) the father comments on this topic, and in (6c) and (6d) Ella responds with newsworthy information. (Square brackets indicate movement of the hand[s] from rest to rest, and slash marks indicate identifiably different segments within the larger gestures.)

(6a) Mother: Brenda's daughter was saying about taking her son up there and he being really scared doing the experiment.

(6b) Father: oh yeah I know maybe they not liking Thomas the Tank what was horrible.

(6c) Ella: I like Thomas xxxxx much (Mother: mmhhmm) (Father: you do, don't you?)

(6d) Ella: mm xxxx [<sub>1</sub>xxxx /<sub>2</sub> xx Trucks<sup>6</sup> /<sub>3</sub> on the- /<sub>4</sub> on television / (Mother: mmhhmm)



**Figure 12.8** (a) “on the-” (b) “(pause) on television.”  
 Drawings by Dusty Hope. From Levy and McNeill 2015. Used with permission of Cambridge University Press.

- 1: both hands move out (preparation)
- 2: both hands start to move in toward each other
- 3: both hands remain in midair
- 4: both hands, in fists, come together (stroke)

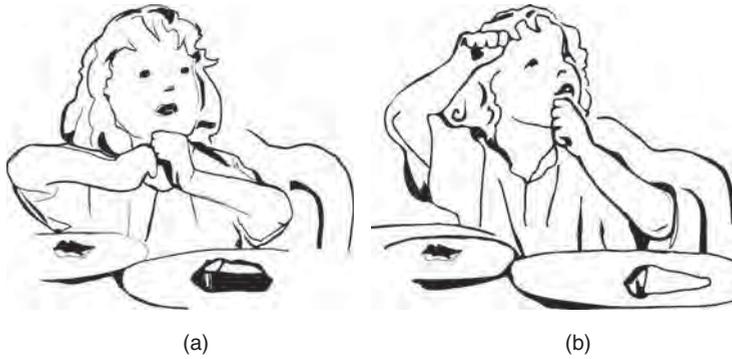
Ella’s second utterance, (6d), is accompanied by a single, adult-like gesture, produced with preparation and stroke, as both hands come together on “television” (Figure 12.8). This is a manifestation in both speech and gesture of the psychological predicate, watching the show on television, and the speech–gesture combination helps differentiate the newsworthy information from the earlier context of her parents’ utterances (the show in an experimental setting). The utterance in (6d) is thus at the same time *continuous with* and *contrasts with* earlier utterances, in keeping with the “equivalence” principle (in part, why it seems adult-like) – in other words it both presupposes earlier utterances and yet pushes the communication forward.

The gesture has the following imagistic property. It is produced as both hands, in fists, come together in center space and stop for an instant on the false start (“on the-”) when the hands remain separated in midair, as if embodying the shape of a television. The gesture is completed as the hands come together on the rest of the utterance in the space defined by the earlier part of the gesture, perhaps embodying the collision of two trains – an incident in the original television show that father and daughter often talked about, as Ella found it “very noticeable and interesting” (Forrester pers. comm.).

Ella’s next utterance is a response to her father’s request for clarification. It helps to push the communication forward, but only in the sense of clarifying the earlier reference.

(7a) Father: /<sub>5</sub> on the television? nor do I know what you mean/

- 5: Ella’s hands remain still in the air while the father is speaking (hold)



**Figure 12.9** (a) (Father speaking) “on the television?”: Ella’s gesture is a hold from the previous gesture. (b) (Ella speaking) “the Trucks”: both hands wave in air while maintaining hold from previous gesture.

Drawings by Dusty Hope. From Levy and McNeill 2015. Used with permission of Cambridge University Press.

(7b) Ella: /<sub>6</sub> the Trucks (Father: the Trucks yeah)

6: both hands wave in air while maintaining position (hold) and come together

When Ella’s hands come together in (7b), the gesture appearing in (7b) is continuous in form and position in space with Ella’s earlier gesture (Figure 12.9). While her father speaks in (7a), Ella’s hands remain still in the air with fists together (a hold from the previous gesture). In (7b), when she rearticulates “Trucks,” she maintains her fists in the air and moves her hands in a wavy trajectory. The gesture takes place *within the space set by the earlier gesture*, as if the hands were entities moving on the television screen embodied in the earlier gesture. Both gesture and speech are continuous with earlier utterances and appear to be an early instance of a catchment.

A third gesture in this sequence appears in Ella’s next utterance, again a response to her father’s questions (Figure 12.10). Ella answers in the affirmative, reusing and



**Figure 12.10** “got Trouble with Trucks mum.”

Drawing by Dusty Hope. From Levy and McNeill 2015. Used with permission of Cambridge University Press.

elaborating on her father's words. Her answer, like her father's question, presupposes the fun fair and so is semantically continuous with the utterance that precedes it. It also asserts something new, the identity of trucks observed at the fair (questioned by her father in [8a]) and in this way also pushes the communication forward.

(8a) Father: /<sub>7</sub> d'you remember we saw] those funny trucks in the fun fair yesterday, did they look like Trouble with Trucks?

7: Ella's hands move apart and down to rest.

(8b) Ella: the fun fair has [<sub>8</sub>got <sub>9</sub>Trouble with Trucks <sub>10</sub>mum]

8: both hands start to rise up (preparation)

9: hands at maximum height; move together and meet in same position as (6d) and (7); hands are clasped (stroke)

10: hands move down to rest (retraction)

Once again the gesture in (8b) co-occurs with the articulation of the psychological predicate, the new information "got Trouble with Trucks." It is formed with both hands coming together, as in the first gesture in the series, although this time with the hands open.

This is the earliest example we find in the recordings of a sequence of gestures with adult-like properties. That is, each of the three spoken utterances in the sequence is accompanied by only a single gesture, with either the entire gesture or its stroke marking newsworthy information. (Earlier, gestures segmented utterances into smaller linguistic units.)

This suggests that, at this very young age, gestures for this child have become an inherent phenomenon of the discourse level of analysis; that is, that the psychological predicate differentiating a field of meaningful oppositions is now the basic operating principle of speech and gesture. We propose that the continuity of gesturing helps the child carry presuppositions from utterance to utterance and thus sets preconditions for the use of truly cohesive devices. In fact, an early use of the sequencer *then* in an inter-utterance, monologic context appears soon after the passages above. Ella and her parents are still on the topic of the fun fair:

(9a) Father: what else did you like in the fun fair?

(9b) Ella: em [<sub>11</sub>one horsey] [<sub>12</sub>I liked a geen horse on a big fair]

11: right hand beat

12: small gestures hidden by table

(9c) Mother: did Eva and Kelly go on as well go on the horses up and down?

(9d) Ella: mmmmmm then it will [<sub>13</sub>stop] (Mother: then it stopped)

13: right hand holding shirt, moves down

Other instances of *then* in an inter-utterance, monologic context occur several minutes later, when Ella and her parents continue to discuss the fun fair (at 4:57 on the CHILDES video):

(10a) Ella: I went on a caterpillar

(10b) Mother: oh was it good fun? (Ella: mmhhmm)

(10c) [<sub>14</sub>yellow (cup?)] (Mother: sorry?)

14: left hand iconic depiction of cup shape moving downward; shakes head, as if shaking head no; comes to rest with chin resting on hand]

(10d) Ella: [<sub>15</sub>.../<sub>16</sub> (then?) /<sub>17</sub> it stop

15: left hand moves out from chin (preparation)

16: left hand moves up in cup shape, palm up (preparation)

17: left hand moves down (stroke)

(10e) Ella: [<sub>18</sub> then /<sub>19</sub> put his seat /<sub>20</sub> belt /<sub>21</sub> on ...]

18: left hand straight, moves up (preparation)

19: left arm bends at elbow and moves across chest, as if putting seatbelt on (stroke)

20: left hand remains at rest near right shoulder (hold)

21: left hand moves forward, palm up, as if in a communicative, "shrugging" gesture; then retracts

\*transcription differs from CHILDES transcript

It is impossible to know whether the temporal coincidence of the first gestural catchment and the early temporal connectives (*then*) is motivated or merely accidental, but it nevertheless helps us to make our point: that the imagistic properties of gestures can contribute to continuity of meaning, and then the production of gestures is an activity on which the acquisition and use of discourse-cohesive devices rest.

## 9 Conclusions

We have shown several ways in which gestures convey discourse information – the point of highest communicative dynamism as it is differentiated in psychological predicates, space, beats, and social interaction. We find cross-linguistic similarities (English/Georgian) and a host of others – catchments, prosody, viewpoints, pointing, and the social-interactive value of gesture as for example in gesture mimicry.

### NOTES

- 1 Wallace Chafe (pers. comm.) suggested the term “newsworthy.” We often use “field of meaningful oppositions” for the context, to emphasize the role of differentiation.
- 2 ToBI coding by Karl-Erik McCullough.
- 3 Another analysis (Fowler, Levy, and Brown 1997) showed a tendency for narrators to shorten expressions referring to characters when they were second mentions in an episode, and to lengthen expressions that were first in an episode and followed a mention in an earlier episode. Overall, expressions that occurred first in an episode averaged 536 ms in duration and expressions that occurred second in the same episode 495 ms; expressions that occurred last in a previous episode averaged 491 ms. The analysis was based on the four film narrations studied by Levy and McNeill (1992) and two others of the eight originally collected that also provided a sufficient quantity of word pairs to measure.
- 4 Using Silverstein’s notation and transcription: Q = question, R = reply; A = by Mr. A, B = by Mr. B; numerals = position in sequence in Silverstein (1997) with subdivisions of RB7 to indicate gesture space uses.
- 5 This offers an explanation (discovered by Liesbet Quaeghebeur, pers. comm.) of the curious phenomenon of tip-of-the-tongue contagion – one person cannot recall a common word whose meaning is clear and you, the interlocutor, suddenly also are unable to recall it. If conversation includes “mind merging,” it could also include “tip-of-the-tongue merging” through spontaneous mimicry.
- 6 “Troublesome Trucks” from *Thomas and Friends* television show (Thomas the Tank Engine).

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## II Approaches and Methodologies

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# 13 Nine Ways of Looking at Apologies *The Necessity for Interdisciplinary Theory and Method in Discourse Analysis*

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ROBIN TOLMACH LAKOFF

## 0 Introduction: The Problems, Paradoxes, and Pleasures of Interdisciplinary Research<sup>1</sup>

Of all the aspects of language, discourse analysis is singularly interdisciplinary – a word with a somewhat speckled past. At the moment, “interdisciplinary” is a good word. But it was not always so.

Originally all scholarship was implicitly multidisciplinary, in the sense that sharp distinctions were not explicitly recognized among disciplines. It was only in the mid-nineteenth century that disciplines were rigorously segmented into university departments, with all the budgetary and other turf rivalries that departmental structure brought in its train.<sup>2</sup> As knowledge in many fields, particularly in the social and physical sciences, increased exponentially and got more complex in the late twentieth century, departmental and disciplinary boundaries became at once more essential, to preserve order and identity, and more embarrassingly obstructionist to new ways of thought. The physical sciences seem to have solved the problem by creating new formal fields and new departmental structures to house and identify new ways of pursuing knowledge: molecular biology and biochemistry, for instance. But the social sciences – more unsure of both their legitimacy and their domains – seem to have had more of a problem in deciding what to do when ideas spill out of their original disciplinary receptacles.

Linguistics is a paradigmatic case. If our turf is, as we like to tell introductory classes, “the scientific study of language,” what does “language” properly include? Some

linguists interpret “language” as “language alone”: they draw the line in the sand at the point where analysis involves interaction or persuasion, or anything we *do* with words.

Others incorporate these territories into linguistics, willingly or grudgingly, but still try to keep them separate. *Here*, in a central subdivision, we will discuss language-in-isolation; beyond this impregnable fence that guards the province of philosophy, speech acts and implicature; there, further than the eye can see, next to the kingdom of sociology, conversation; and far away, adjoining the duchies of rhetoric and mass communication, public discourse. Each area has developed its own language, as nations will, unintelligible to those within other areas of linguistics, and even those in adjoining principalities. These boundaries are guarded jealously and justified zealously.

There are certainly advantages to territoriality, not only political but genuinely intellectual. Within a field’s strict confines one can achieve competence and control. No one, surely, can claim to know all of linguistics any more (as was perfectly possible a generation or two ago); but at least one can without undue strain claim mastery over an area like pragmatics or Conversation Analysis. But disadvantages, to the point of paradox, offset these advantages.<sup>3</sup> In this chapter I want to discuss the necessity of an inter-, cross-, and multidisciplinary approach for discourse analysis, an area that borrows from and contributes to many fields both within linguistics and outside of it. To illustrate my argument I will use as an example the speech act of apology, considering what we need to know about it in order to achieve a full and satisfying explanation of its properties and range of use.

### ***0.1 Discourse analysis as interdisciplinary***

Even if a case could be made for the autonomous treatment of some aspects of language (e.g., syntax, or phonetics), discourse cannot be satisfactorily analyzed in a vacuum, whether contextual or methodological. We might say of syntax that though it is located firmly within the boundaries of linguistics proper, sometimes reference to another sub-field (suprasegmental phonology, or dialectology) or discipline (neurology) enhances the understanding of syntactic processes. But even in such cases the syntactician would be merely borrowing from outside, not obliterating the boundaries between syntax and the other field. But the assumption of autonomy works less well with discourse analysis. To do a thorough job of talking about “discourse,” or “a discourse,” the analyst must have recourse to the findings and methods of other (sub)disciplines; there is no “discourse analysis” otherwise. At the same time, our discovery procedures and methods of analysis, the questions we ask, and what we consider “answers” are uniquely our own, even as they represent the commingling of many diverse concepts. Our data may range from small units (sentences or turns) to much larger and more abstract entities (courtroom trials; novels; political events). And when we analyze those data, we must often consider them in terms of the smaller and more concrete units of which they are composed, using tools developed for the analysis of turns or sentences to understand the functions, meanings, and structurings of the larger and more abstract units we term “discourse.” We may be concerned with any of several aspects of an extended utterance: its role in a longer document (a narrative); its interactive function (in creating small groups like couples or families); its role as a maker of institutional affiliation (academic language) and societal influence (journalism). Therefore our statements will reflect the

belief systems of other fields: literary analysis; psychology; anthropology and sociology; political science, as well as areas closer to home (syntax, pragmatics, Conversation Analysis). This perspective is controversial both within linguistics (on the grounds that we are changing the rules or moving from the finite safety of autonomy to the chaos of interconnection) and from outside (on the basis that we are misusing the methods and languages of disciplines in which we are interlopers). But we must tolerate these critiques and learn to answer them if we are going to accomplish anything interesting, for it is precisely at the interstices of established disciplines and disciplinary thinking that the interesting work of discourse analysis will be done.

## 1 A Case in Point: Understanding Apology

Let me take as an example of the interdisciplinary nature of discourse analysis a case that at first may seem overly simple, hardly a part of “discourse analysis” at all, more typically considered as an exercise in pragmatics or Conversation Analysis: the apology. But we have to understand apologies as contributions to a larger discourse, viewing them from a variety of perspectives, formal and functional, cognitive and interactive, individual and group, intralanguage and societal; to examine the apology from the perspective of phonology, syntax, lexical semantics, speech act pragmatics, conversational analysis, narratology, and sociolinguistics. In some ways any speech act verb might illustrate the point. But apologies are particularly good examples, theoretically rich as well as practically important. They are hard to identify, define, or categorize, a difficulty that arises directly out of the functions they perform. Hence too, they occur in a range of forms from canonically explicit to ambiguously indirect; the functions served by those forms range from abject abasement for wrongdoing, to conventional greasing of the social wheels, to expressions of sympathy, advance mollification for intended bad behavior, and formal public displays of currently “appropriate” feeling. Thus, in terms of the relation between form and function, apologies are both one-to-many and many-to-one, a fact that only makes the analyst’s task more daunting (and more exciting).

### 1.1 *Form and function in apologies*

Apology, more than most speech acts, places psychological burdens both on its maker and, less seriously, on its recipient. That is the reason for the plethora of indirect forms that, in appropriate contexts, we recognize as apologies. There does exist an unambiguous apology form, seen in:

I apologize for eating your hamster.

But that form is rarely encountered in the most characteristic apologies, informal ones between intimates. In these cases we usually resort to any of a set of forms that involve one or another of the presuppositions or assertions of apologies (cf. Section 2.2), either blurring it or explicitly stating it (allowing other aspects of the act of apology to be passed over in silence). For instance, the speaker’s *responsibility* for the act can be downplayed in favor of an explicit statement conveying *regret*:

I'm sorry about your hamster,  
or in extreme cases responsibility may be explicitly assigned elsewhere:

Well, *someone* left the hamster in the refrigerator!  
or the utterance may deny that wrongdoing occurred at all:

Well, that's what hamsters are for, right?

The presence of *well* in extreme cases like this suggests an awareness that, as apologies, these utterances are not fully satisfactory, and that the addressee's goodwill is required to make them function appropriately (cf. Lakoff 1973; Schiffrin 1985). Note that *well* seems much less strongly mandated in the first case above, with *sorry*. Indeed, in the latter two cases the speech act may arguably have crossed over the line that separates apology from explanation (cf. Section 2.2).

But some forms of apologies refer specifically to one of their functions, perhaps as a way to minimize the utterer's responsibility for the others:

I admit I ate the hamster. (Responsibility)

It was wrong of me to eat the hamster/I shouldn't have eaten the hamster. (Wrongdoing)

Can you find it in your heart to forgive me for eating the hamster? (Wish for forgiveness)

I'll never eat a hamster again as long as I live. (Abjuration of bad behavior)

These cases illustrate the many forms available for the performance of the single act of apology. The converse is also true (perhaps to a lesser degree): a single form, "I'm sorry," can function variously as an apology, an expression of non-responsible sympathy, and as a denial that an apology is, in fact, in order at all:

I'm sorry that I ate the hamster.

I'm sorry, Mr. Smith isn't available today.

Well, I'm sorry! but you don't know what you're talking about!<sup>4</sup>

One advantage to having all these choices, for apologizers, is that they are thus enabled to calibrate the self-abasement to the perceived seriousness of the offense. It may seem that a full canonical apology would always be preferable to an offended party. But this is not necessarily true. Suppose you are at the movies. The show is in progress when someone moving past you steps on your foot. The occasion requires an expression of recognition of wrongdoing. But do you want the full canonical treatment? Both those around you, and you yourself, would be inconvenienced by it. A grunted "sorry" is all you desire; anything more is inappropriate and embarrassing.

On the other hand, some apologies, to be felicitous, require at least the *appearance* of contrition. In these cases the recipients must have the power and the right to enforce demands for “real remorse.”

Another advantage of options is that an apologizer with power can, by making use of an ambiguous form, look virtuous while saving face. This is often seen in legally mandated “apologies.” A particularly notorious case occurred at the University of California at Berkeley some years back, when a freshman woman accused several football players of acquaintance rape. She was persuaded to accept a plea bargain that involved an “apology” from the team members. Their apology stated that while they “apologized,” they had not done what they were accused of doing. Some might argue that the second clause renders the first nonsensical or at least infelicitous (cf. Section 2.4). Others might argue that this example perfectly illustrates the ability of institutional power to give meaning to otherwise bizarre utterances. If such vapid “apologies” have any meaning at all, it can only reside in the acknowledgment that the addressee has been hurt and has personhood or stature enough to require redress.

Similar cases occur in civil suits, in which corporate defendants refuse to publicly admit responsibility even though that might save them the expense and possible face-loss of a protracted trial. Their reasoning is that an apology is legally tantamount to a confession of wrongdoing via the presupposition of the speech act.

There are other problematic cases. One currently in vogue is the public-official apology, a statement made by someone in a position of power regretting bad behavior by previous holders of that office, in the name of the governed, against wronged ancestors of the aggrieved group. There are many such examples in recent years: for example President Clinton’s apology to Africans for slavery, and Tony Blair’s to the Irish for the potato famine. The willingness of many public officials to make such statements is striking compared with their reluctance to make apologies for their own, personal past misbehaviors. The reason is simple: the official cases are not true felicitous apologies, while the personal ones are. No one ever wants to make the latter kind, *especially* a powerful person, who stands to lose face, and therefore possibly power, by making one.

Most analyses of the apology speech act have focused on its felicity from the speaker’s perspective, in particular the assessment of the speaker’s state of mind (sincerity as manifested by signs of contrition). But this can create problems. For some speech acts (e.g., promises) felicity can be determined by the speaker’s future actions alone. Others, though, like bets, require some sort of “uptake” from the addressee: “You’re on!” or “It’s a bet!” Apologies are normally considered members of the first class. But perhaps under some conditions – especially when the recipients have been outspoken in demanding apologies of a particular form – it may be appropriate to assign some responsibility to them for the felicity of the speech act. If, for instance, they make it clear that they have no intention of accepting any apology, no matter what, then surely no apology can be felicitous, and it is the demanders who make the entire performance infelicitous.

Even more confusing are forms that look like apologies but are not. Tannen (1994) has discussed the usage, especially common in women, of forms like “I’m sorry, Mr. Smith is out of town until Wednesday.” As Tannen notes, these are not meant as apologies: the speaker does not mean to accept responsibility, nor is there any acknowledgment of misbehavior. At most in such cases, “I’m sorry” is a way for the speaker to head off

the addressee's annoyance and prevent an unpleasant closure, by expressing sympathy and connectedness. Sometimes it is little more than a way of bringing a polite end to a less than satisfactory interchange. The "I'm sorry! but (you're an idiot)" type is similar in form, but quite different in function. It seems to be an example of a *but*-preface (Baker 1975). On a radio talk show recently about women raising children by themselves, the suggestion was made that this is often successful. A man called and, in the course of his comment, said, "I'm sorry! But [children need fathers]." This "I'm sorry!" is an apparent apology in advance for an utterance that is likely to be offensive. As such, it cannot be sincere, since if you know something you say will be offensive, and you care, you will not say it at all. Since these forms constitute challenges (= "I'm confronting you and you can't do anything about it!"), they are correctly felt to be rude, and so are seldom used by people with less power or something to lose by being offensive, while the former type are most often used by people in those positions.

## 2 The Function of Apologies

On both formal (forms like "I'm sorry," whether true apologies or not) and functional (the performance of apologies via many speech act types) levels, apologies have a tendency to be ambiguous. That is in itself a good reason to study them, and a good reason why studying them well requires many disciplinary models and approaches. Some of us, especially in the earlier stages of our careers, have dismissed levels other than those we are comfortable working at as simplistic, subjective, or beyond the legitimate reach of linguistics. But each of the nine levels I will now discuss offers insights about what apologies are and, more generally, what discourse is; and to achieve a full analysis, we have to be aware that all these levels exist and contribute to the meaning and function of apologies.

### 2.1 *Phonological and nonverbal expressions in apology*

While there are in English no specific sounds associated with canonical or appropriate apology, there do exist suprasegmental and nonverbal levels that are important, especially for the addressee, in the determination of the acceptability of an apology. These levels are the basis for hearers' judgments about the apologizer's sincerity and sufficiency of "remorse," since we see them as beyond a speaker's control and therefore more likely to be truthful than the verbal utterance (cf. Ekman and Friesen 1969). So for instance an apology made too quickly, or in a monotone, will strike a hearer as scripted, non-spontaneous, and so not deeply felt. A breaking voice, on the other hand, bespeaks sincerity, as do certain nonverbal cues. An inability to make eye contact, generally judged negatively by Americans, has positive value (signifying appropriate shame) with apologies; the shuffling of feet and the use of self-adaptors (Ekman and Friesen 1968) like hand-wringing play a similar role. President Clinton is notorious on such occasions for biting his lip. While smiling is usually positively evaluated in American social interactions, its presence (often identified as a "smirk") usually detracts from the effectiveness of an apology.

A question for any analysis of this kind is the extent to which these assumptions are universal. It is popularly believed that nonverbal signifiers of emotion, like the emotions they signify, are universal: everyone feels, or should feel, remorse over the same events; the same amount of remorse; and therefore, should express it in the same way. But this is not necessarily true. What occasions embarrassment in one culture may not in another. The way genuine feelings are translated into surface representations (both how and how much), what Hochschild (1983) terms “emotion-work,” may well differ across cultures, even cultures that are closely related and whose members speak the same (verbal) language.<sup>5</sup> Viewers of the 1997 “Cambridge Nanny” case on television, as well as jurors in that case, commented that the English nanny, Louise Woodward, accused of killing a baby in her care, did not show “enough remorse” on the stand.<sup>6</sup> Questioned about this later, she said that “we,” that is, the English, did not “wear our hearts on our sleeves.” Jurors basing their verdicts in part on witnesses’ demeanor, as they are instructed to do, may make wrong decisions in cross-cultural situations like this.

## 2.2 *The lexical semantics of apology: apology vs. explanation*

The semantic problem of apology is this: What do we *mean* when we talk about “apologizing”? How does *apology* differ from *explanation* (the original sense of the word in Greek), *excuse*, and *justification*? The utterance “I apologize for X” involves several presuppositions (in that word’s looser sense) and at least one assertion (Fillmore 1971):

- *Presuppositions:*
  - X is bad for A (addressee)
  - Sp regrets X
  - Sp undertakes not to do X again
  - Sp (or someone under Sp’s control) is responsible for X
  - Sp could have done otherwise
- *Assertion:*
  - Speech act puts Sp one-down vis-à-vis A

At least one of these conditions is missing in excuses, justifications, and explanations. In an excuse, the speaker denies either his or her own responsibility (“the cat made me do it”) or ability to do otherwise (“I tried to, but your phone was busy”). In a justification, the speaker denies that the action was bad, if properly understood (“everybody else gets to do it”). In an explanation, the speaker takes responsibility for the action, but suggests that the addressee finds it bad because he or she does not understand it (“I did it for your own good”). So after apologies and excuses, the speaker ends up one-down; after justifications, both parties may be equal; and after an explanation, it is the recipient who ends up losing face as someone who does not get it. Explanations benefit their speakers, apologies their addressees.<sup>7</sup>

Semantic analyses like this can help us understand otherwise inexplicable choices in discourse. In 1983, Congress had passed a bill making the birthday of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King a national holiday. Conservatives were unhappy about this, one

of them arguing that King was “a man of immoral character whose frequent association with leading agents of communism is well-established.” President Ronald Reagan, while privately indicating his agreement with that assessment, publicly waffled. Asked at a press conference whether he agreed with Senator Jesse Helms that King had had communist associations, the President said, “We’ll know in about 35 years, won’t we?”

With an election coming up, Reagan was urged by Democratic candidate Walter Mondale to apologize to King’s widow. At first his spokesman said he would not, but eventually he phoned her. The call itself was not recorded, but asked later about its content, Coretta Scott King replied, “He apologized to me. He said it was a flippant response to what he considered a flippant question.”

Prudence might dictate that the Reagan forces leave bad enough alone here. But shortly thereafter an assistant press secretary found it necessary to correct Mrs. King’s statement: “It was an explanation,” he said. “He didn’t mean the remarks the way they sounded.”

Now, suppose that the President had uttered precisely the words Mrs. King attributed to him (which would be appropriately described by the press secretary’s statement). Why worry about whether “It was a flippant response to what I consider a flippant question” is an *apology* or an *explanation*? It might function as either: an apology for being “flippant” under inappropriate circumstances; or an explanation that “they” misunderstood a remark intended “merely” in jest.

The spokesman’s insistence on defining the speech act differently from Mrs. King kept a divisive issue alive. There had to be a really good reason to do so. For presidents, and especially an imperial president like Reagan, it is crucial not to be one-down, because that constitutes a loss of power and influence. It was obviously considered more important to avoid this consequence than to remain on good terms with the constituency of the late Dr. King. But we can only understand what otherwise looks like pointless and even damaging intransigence in high places if we understand the lexical semantics of apologizing, and the importance of protecting the President of the United States from FTAs (face-threatening acts: Brown and Levinson 1987).

### 2.3 *Syntax and the apology*

Autonomous syntax does not have much to say about apologies. One might note the tendency of speakers to distance themselves from both the making of the apology itself, and the actions for which it offers redress, through indirect forms – either subjunctive equivalents like:

I want to apologize.

I’d like to apologize.

I guess I owe you an apology.

or the placement of the speaker/wrongdoer in other than subject position, or out of the sentence altogether:

It's too bad that X happened.

Sorry you got Xed.

or the sequestration of the apology in subordinate clauses, backgrounded and therefore less salient and accessible:

I feel I owe you an apology.

It looks to me like an apology might be in order.

While strictly speaking these are syntactic choices, only an autonomous syntactician would characterize them as principally artifacts of syntax. Rather, the embedded or subjunctive syntax is the handmaiden of other aspects of the utterance – pragmatics and semantics. We decide on the basis of semantics, pragmatics, and discourse considerations how noticeable a role we want ourselves to play in our reports, and the syntax obligingly provides us with the means to represent ourselves as we would like to be seen (or not seen). Syntactic form must be part of a discussion of apology, but it cannot be considered meaningful in isolation.

## 2.4 *The pragmatics of apology: speech acts*

Pragmatics occupies a realm intermediate between language-autonomous, decontextualized approaches and more complex theories entailing the consideration of the linguistic context and extralinguistic circumstances in which utterances occur. In his discussion of speech acts Austin (1962) referred to “utterances” rather than “propositions” or “sentences,” because he was talking about language use, rather than mere form. His title indicates that we “do things with words.” Since we alter reality by our utterances, it makes little sense to see language, or linguistics, as autonomous. In other ways, though, Austin’s methods are akin to those of transformational syntax and its lineal descendants: the analysis of decontextualized structures constructed by the analyst.

Austinian analysis can help to explain both the numerousness and the specific forms of apologies, among them:

I’m sorry I Xed.

I guess I Xed.

I shouldn’t have Xed.

You must be pretty mad that I Xed.

I was a real jerk to X.

... and I’ll never X again.

Each of these forms comments on one of the conditions underlying the successful performance of an apology: a felicity condition in Austin's terminology, or preparatory or essential condition (according to Searle 1969). The first example expresses the speaker's regret; the second assumes (though it hedges on) the speaker's responsibility for the act; the third, that the act was wrong; the fourth, that the addressee was hurt; the fifth puts the speaker clearly one-down; and the sixth promises that such a thing will never happen again. This point was originally made by Gordon and Lakoff in their theory of conversational postulates (1971), though without an explanation for why conversational postulates are used.

In stating explicitly that one of the conditions for a felicitous apology is met, without explicitly acknowledging that an apology is being performed, a speaker necessarily places considerable responsibility for endowing the act with meaning on the addressee. The latter makes use of Gricean (1975) conversational maxims and implicatures to understand why the speaker is saying something the addressee has no demonstrated need to know – a flouting of the Gricean maxims of Quantity and Relevance. Ostensibly the addressee has no need to learn about the speaker's internal psychological state of regret – but if the first example above can be understood as implicating an apology, with all the interpersonal baggage that that entails, the utterance is clearly in obedience with the Cooperative Principle.

Although Austin framed his theory in terms of decontextualized utterances and assumed a strongly speaker-based perspective rather than seeing the discourse as created by all participants playing various roles, the interactive situations implied in his theory suggest a more contextualized, interactional model. For instance, Austin speaks of some speech acts as requiring certain forms of participation on the addressee's part to be felicitous. Thus, in a felicitous bet, an addressee has to say "it's a bet," or "you're on." Are apologies like bets in requiring some response, or some expectation, on the part of the addressee? If an addressee has no intention of accepting *anything* the speaker says, if no form at all will elicit forgiveness, Austin might say that no apology could be felicitous, but the fault would reside with the addressee rather than the speaker.

The apology battle between President Clinton and the Republican members of Congress in the fall of 1998 can be explained at least in part through this perspective.<sup>8</sup> Both sides contributed to the impasse. On the one hand, the President refused to apologize until the last possible moment, when the semen-stained dress made its public appearance. Even at that it took three or more attempts before, in the eyes of the public and the pundits, he got it right. In his first attempt, on August 17, he was angry and belligerent rather than contrite. He called his behavior "wrong" and the relationship with Monica Lewinsky "inappropriate," but did not say "I'm sorry."

He tried again on a trip to Europe in early September. The physical distance between Sp and A probably made it easier to utter the apology, but made it less effective. In Moscow on September 2, Clinton said, "I *have acknowledged* that I made a mistake, *said* that I regretted it, *asked* to be forgiven." The past-tense reports of his earlier speech acts sound at first like apologies, but of course are not performative (as apologies must be), but merely reports of apologies, and therefore have no interactive value. On September 5, in Dublin, the President finally said that he was "very sorry about" the affair. But since he said it to people who were not the original addressees, not

the people purportedly hurt by the behavior, again the utterance was not a felicitous apology.

On September 11, at a prayer breakfast, he tried again. "With tears in his eyes," the report in the *New York Times* begins, the President "admitted softly" that "I don't think that there is a fancy way to say that I have sinned." It should be noted that he has still not quite *said* "I have sinned," but merely said that these words could be said. Indeed, though all the correct language is there in the rest of the speech,

It is important to me that everybody who has been hurt know [sic.] that the sorrow I feel is genuine . . . I have asked all for their forgiveness.

the expressions of contrition are all framed as indirect discourse, as presupposed rather than asserted, blunting their force and mitigating the speaker's responsibility. On the other hand, the nonverbal aspects are right in place, the tears and the soft voice. At this point the President's apology finally passed muster, suggesting that, as Ekman and Friesen point out, nonverbal signs mean more than verbal.

But even though the people, through the pollsters, voiced approval, the Republicans in Congress continued to withhold it. Asked what it would take to get their forgiveness, several asserted that nothing would serve. If that was their assumption from the start, could any apology by the President have been felicitous?

The assumptions of speech act theory shed light on why the President may have made the choices he made (we can only guess at his, or anyone's, intentions); and why Americans responded to the repeated attempts as they did. Lexical semantics shows why the President was reluctant to use the "s"-word, even running serious risks by his refusal to do so. Speech act theory helps explain why people were dissatisfied with his attempts, but also suggests that for one intended set of addressees at any rate, nothing the President said could be a felicitous apology.

## 2.5 *The speech event*

All participants in a discourse contribute to its meaning and perhaps even the form it takes (as Clinton's ultimate apology was shaped and reshaped by the "reviews" early versions got in the media). Utterances are situated in larger events, whether purely linguistic – an encompassing utterance, a conversation – or another human activity – a ritual, a job, a performance. Hence, no single canonical "apology" form will fit with equal appropriateness into any context. From the perspective of the situated discourse event, what is required in an apology is subsumed under several categories, among them:

- *Register.* Even for equally heinous behaviors, an apology made in a close family context is different from one that is made publicly. Between intimates an apology may not be required ("love is never having to say you're sorry") for behavior for which one might be required in a more distant relationship. Different kinds of behavior may convey sincerity in intimate and in formal contexts (touching is often appropriate at home, less so in public).

- *Genre*. In informal circumstances, a simple oral “OK” from the addressee may suffice to denote forgiveness. But in more formal settings (as in the settling of a lawsuit), a written statement exculpating the defendant may be required from the plaintiff to end the matter, with its wording carefully overseen by both sides.
- *Key* (Hymes 1972). Under some conditions, an apology made ironically or otherwise humorously may be acceptable. My father once offended me and later sent me a copy of *The Portable Curmudgeon*, which I took to be an apology (= “I’m a curmudgeon all right, but I can’t help it”) and forgave him.

## 2.6 Conversation analysis: the apology adjacency pair

Conversation Analysis (CA) as a research method has this analogy with autonomous syntactic analysis: because in both the analyst is prevented from dealing directly with meaning, intention, function, or understanding, the question “What constitutes an apology?” cannot be fully explored by either. Formal structures such as adjacency pairs can reveal what sort of second is preferred when the first member of a turn sequence is an apology.

For instance, the tools and methods of CA can clarify what constitutes a preferred second in response to an apology. If a concern of linguists is the determination of what can occur “grammatically” in the context of something else, then – if we are going to achieve a unified field and a cross-disciplinary perspective – CA has to be able to address the question: What form does a “preferred” utterance take, and why? Traditional CA cannot do this, or cannot do it very well, because it does not permit introspection or mentalistic analysis. But (as analysts like Gumperz [1982] and Tannen [1984] have pointed out) without the ability to address questions of intention and effect, the analysis of conversation bogs down in much the way pretransformational syntactic analysis did. To shed light on apologies from a CA perspective, the analyst must note that, of the various possible seconds available in response to an apology, different ones are more apt to co-occur with differently formed apologies:

- A: I apologize for my appalling conduct.  
 B: ?No prob, dude.  
 B': ?Hey, we all make mistakes.  
 B'': ?Gosh, I never noticed.  
 B''': I accept your apology / Accepted.  
 B''': I forgive you / Forgiven.

But change A to A':

- A': Sorry 'bout that,

and the assignment of ?'s shifts abruptly.

Traditional CA, of course, would never use constructed examples or mentalistic judgments like these. Yet there must be some way of talking about what speakers believe, find plausible, and use.

## 2.7 *Narrative analysis: the story behind the apology*

Narrative analysis has become fashionable in many fields, from literature to law, psychology, anthropology, history, and political science. All these fields have come to the realization that humans make sense of their lives through the stories they construct. We develop psychological problems when our stories about our lives lack coherency (e.g., Schafer 1980; Spence 1982); in courtrooms, jurors determine whose “story” is more plausible, plaintiff or defendant, or whether the prosecutor’s story has been successfully undermined by the defense attorney (cf. Delgado 1989). We can look at apologies as plot points in a story: What events led up to their making; how did the utterance of an apology move the story along? What happens when the internal stories of two people are in conflict – A sees B as someone who owes A an apology; B either does not believe she or he has done anything wrong, or believes that their social differences are such that no apology is necessary?

We might look at the tale told earlier of Ronald Reagan and Coretta Scott King as involving just such a set of conflicting narratives. King expected an apology, Reagan did not believe one was in order, for both of the reasons suggested above. Reagan (or his people) was (or were) ingenious enough to construct an utterance that could satisfy the plots of two different groups of storytellers, creating (possibly) successful conclusions to two very different stories. (This happy outcome works best, of course, if the duplicity does not come to light – as in this instance it did.)

When an apology is duly made and properly accepted, both parties come away satisfied. A good apology convinces both participants that their narratives are rational and permits both to have more or less happy endings. Even the humbled apologizer gets accepted back into the human fold, recognized as recognizing the need for an apology at this juncture, sharing with the addressee a common view of the narrative they have participated in creating. Even as apologizers are distanced momentarily from the fold of the virtuous, they are welcomed back as being, at any rate, competent.

## 2.8 *Sociolinguistic considerations*

Sociolinguistic analysis directly links the social group memberships of the pair involved in the apology and their options and expectations in the event. Larger cultural background plays a significant role in the understanding of the need for apologies and the determination of their appropriate form. For instance, in many societies “honor” is important, and may both keep an apology from being made where an American might readily make one, and make a formal explicit apology requisite where we might do without one. Apology is always face threatening for the speaker; but not making a necessary apology may occasion more serious face loss in the long run. As Brown and Levinson (1987) would say, the weightiness of a contemplated apology as a face threat must be computed by giving consideration to the intimacy and power relationships of the parties involved, and the seriousness of the misdeed that occasioned it.

Other extralinguistic issues are equally relevant. If, for instance, as Tannen (1994) suggests, women tend to use “I’m sorry” as a smoother of difficult moments, but men are less likely to do so, the genders will misunderstand each other (and women, as

people who traditionally are interpreted by others, will suffer more from the misunderstanding). Similarly, apologies raise the important question of when, how much, and in what way you divulge your “real self” or private persona to the world via language. As in the Cambridge Nanny case, when one culture believes it is shameful to let one’s guard down at all in public, and another believes that the sincerity of a public apology is gauged by sobs, tears, and hand-wringing, it will be difficult for a member of one group to produce an apology that will at once gratify members of the other, and leave the apologizer herself or himself with any shred of self-esteem.

## 2.9 Text analysis: apology as a document

Finally, we can use much of the understanding gained at earlier levels to understand political and social events as reported in the media (both the choices of wording and the decisions as to what to discuss: the “text” and, perhaps, the “metatext(s)”). For instance, between the beginning of August and the end of September 1998 a large amount of space in the major American print media was dedicated to the analysis of and judgment upon the President’s several apologies; polls of the American people, assessing their opinions about the satisfactoriness of each presidential apology; reflections upon what apologies were and how they were appropriately made; and so on. We may deduce from this that apology had assumed a superhot, perhaps symbolic, importance at that moment (a search using Lexis-Nexus would tell the researcher that never before or since had the word “apology” received so much play in so many media over so long a time). At this level we can examine the subtext: Why do “we,” whoever “we” are, require a show of contrition at this time? And why are the demanders never satisfied? Answers to these questions require the examination of language at all the levels discussed above. In this way, through concentration on a particular speech act, located in a specific cultural and societal time and place, we can come to understand a great deal about who we are, what we want, and the rules and assumptions that bind us together as a society.

## NOTES

- 1 I would like to thank Deborah Tannen for her perceptive comments and suggestions.
- 2 And there were many fewer areas of knowledge identified as “disciplines” or “departments.” Within the humanities, for instance, modern languages were recognized only in the late nineteenth century as valid subjects for university study. The first chair in English at Harvard was established in 1876; at Oxford, the English honors degree was created (with some sniping from traditionalists) in 1896 (Delbanco 1999). The social sciences are even newer, with anthropology and sociology dating from the first third of the twentieth century; departments of linguistics became commonplace only toward the end of the 1960s.
- 3 As an illustration, if the syntactician is permitted to offer analyses that take no cognizance of the fact that sentences are produced in the service of cognition and communication, then surely such analyses can function only as unintentional self-parodies, the ivory tower at its most aloof and irrelevant,

- social science turned antisocial (and not too scientific, since form divorced from function tends to offer very few useful or lasting generalizations).
- 4 Older readers may recall Steve Martin's line on *Saturday Night Live*, "Well, excu-u-use me!," to precisely this effect.
  - 5 The relation between "real" feelings and "surface" ones proves as intriguing as it is vexing for several disciplines. It manifests itself in Ekman and Friesen's (1975) distinction between "automatic" expressions of emotion that represent universal human instincts (e.g., scowling to express anger) and those that people learn as part of their culture's communicative repertoire (e.g., Japanese giggling, vs. American joking, to cover embarrassment); in the various distinctions made within several versions of transformational generative grammar ("deep," "abstract," "underlying," or "logical" vs. "surface" structure); and in psychoanalytic discussion of the "latent" vs. "manifest" content of dreams, symptoms, and errors. Here is another point at which disparate fields come together in a common quest, obscured by differences in vocabulary and methodology.
  - 6 This was a notorious and controversial case shown on Court TV and tirelessly reported in network news and magazine shows nightly. Louise Woodward, a young British national employed in Cambridge MA as a nanny, was accused of shaking the baby in her charge to death. The evidence was ambiguous. Found guilty by the jury, she was placed on probation by the judge and allowed to go free, both decisions provoking controversy among the public and "experts" of various stripes.
  - 7 However, the popularity in high places of the adage "Never apologize, never explain" argues that the two may be closer than the above analysis suggests.
  - 8 For the historical record: in January of 1998, evidence came to light that President Clinton had engaged in sexual conduct with a White House intern, Monica Lewinsky. Shortly thereafter on a television interview he said, "I have never, at any time, had sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky." The question remained red-hot for several months, with continual denials on one side and insistences on the other. In August Lewinsky's "semen-stained dress" came to light, and subsequent DNA testing proved the semen to be the President's. Apologies were then demanded – for exactly what (the sexual behavior; the untruthfulness; the fact that the statement had been accompanied by wagging/shaking his finger at us/you/the American people) was never precisely clarified.

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# 14 Interactional Sociolinguistics

## *A Personal Perspective*

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JOHN J. GUMPERZ

### 0 Introduction: Background

Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS) is an approach to discourse analysis that has its origin in the search for replicable methods of qualitative analysis that account for our ability to interpret what participants intend to convey in everyday communicative practice. It is well known that conversationalists always rely on knowledge that goes beyond grammar and lexicon to make themselves heard. But how such knowledge affects understanding is still not sufficiently understood.

My perspective on verbal communication is grounded in earlier work on ethnography of communication (Hymes 1961); Hymes's key insight was that instead of seeking to explain talk as directly reflecting the beliefs and values of communities, structuralist abstractions that are notoriously difficult to operationalize, it should be more fruitful to concentrate on situations of speaking or, to use Roman Jakobson's term, speech events. Events are arguably more concretely available for ethnographic investigation (Gumperz and Hymes 1964, 1972). They constitute units of interaction subject to direct analysis by established empirical means. At the same time, what happens in such events frequently enters into public discussion, so that replicable information on relevant beliefs and values can readily be obtained through focused ethnographic inquiry.

The ethnography of communication debate stimulated a wide variety of empirical investigations. These early studies and particularly the findings, which tended to be presented in terms of grammar-like rules of speaking of the form "in situation A do or say X" (Bauman and Sherzer 1976), have been convincingly criticized on the grounds that they cannot capture everyday practice (Bourdieu 1977, 1994; Brown and Levinson 1979). Nevertheless it is clear that speech event analysis has played an important role in calling attention both to the importance of context in talk and to discourse as the

principal site for language and culture studies. As a result, research on language and culture has increasingly come to concentrate on discourse as the basic research site. Ethnographic insight gained through long-term, first-hand immersion in strategically selected fieldwork situations is applied to the interpretation of what transpires in longer sequences and yields hypotheses on how native speakers think in everyday interaction. IS is one of several traditions concerned with these issues.<sup>1</sup>

To look at talk as it occurs in speech events is to look at communicative practices. Along with others I claim that such practices constitute an intermediate and in many ways analytically distinct level of organization. A sociological predecessor here is Erving Goffman, who proposed the concept of "Interaction Order" as a distinct level of discursive organization bridging the linguistic and the social. Goffman's work on this topic has greatly influenced the conversational analysts' argument that conversation is separate both from grammar and from macro-social structures and must be analyzed in its own terms. In my early approach to interaction I took a position situated somewhere between those of Erving Goffman (1981) and Harold Garfinkel (1967). The former looked at encounters from an ethologist's perspective, while the latter was concerned with the often overlooked interpretive processes that make interaction work. I argue that all communication is intentional and grounded in inferences that depend upon the assumption of mutual good faith. Culturally specific presuppositions play a key role in inferring what is intended.

Suggestive evidence to indicate that sociocultural background knowledge does in fact enter into everyday decision-making comes from Garfinkel's (1967) ethnomethodological experiments. Garfinkel sees interaction as constituted by goal-oriented moves, and his main concern is with the interpretive processes through which interactional outcomes are achieved. Based on a variety of illustrative examples taken from what he refers to as naturally organized situations, he argues that everyday talk can never be precise and detailed enough to convey what is really intended, so that interactants inevitably and necessarily rely on what he calls "practical reasoning" and unstated, taken-for-granted background knowledge to fill in for what is left unsaid. He goes on to point out that in so doing they display a built-in, deeply internalized, and for the most part un verbalized sense of social order. Yet apart from advocating that analysts resort to historical methods to trace how specific understandings come about so as to recover what types of knowledge are at work, Garfinkel gives no further specifics of how interpretive processes work in everyday talk.

It is the philosopher Paul Grice (1989) who lays the foundations for a truly social perspective on speaking, with his emphasis on conversational cooperation as a precondition for understanding. Arguing that communicating is by its very nature an intentional process, Grice goes on to develop a theory of meaning that brackets the traditional semanticists' concern with word-to-world relationships or denotation, to focus not on utterance interpretation as such, but on *implicature* – roughly, what a speaker intends to convey by means of a message. Grice coined the verb *implicate* to suggest that our interpretations, although often not closely related to context-free lexical meaning, are ultimately grounded in surface form. They are derived from what is perceptibly said through inference via processes of implicatures, processes that in turn rest on a finite set of general, essentially social *principles of conversational cooperation*. Grice cites a number of conversational examples, which show that situated implicatures often bear little denotational likeness to propositional or, loosely

speaking, literal meaning. Exactly how Gricean principles of conversational implicature can be formulated more precisely is still a matter of dispute.

Garfinkel, by documenting the intrinsic incompleteness of everyday talk, and Grice, in claiming that listeners rely on assumptions about conversational cooperation to recast what is literally said, each in his own way argues for the importance of extracom communicative knowledge in human understanding. But in contrast to other interpretivist perspectives, which seek to explain a particular action in terms of general, community-wide or pan-human norms or values, their perspective on interpretation is basically a dialogic one. The fundamental problem is not deciding on what an expression means but determining what a speaker intends to convey by means of a specific message. This view, that inferences are rooted in discourse as well as in the local circumstances in which they were produced, is by now widely accepted in discourse studies.

Goffman has given us the outline of a communicative perspective on the social world. In his earlier work he sets aside traditional analytical categories such as role, status, identity, and the like to concentrate on the phenomenal bases of interactive processes. Among the questions that concern him are: How can we distinguish among various possible kinds of face-to-face gatherings? What are the observable interactive signs by which we can describe the types of involvement that mark them? What kind of speaking roles can we identify in interaction and how are these marked at the level of behavior? What are the dialogic processes through which interactants display shared perceptions of who they are, manage interpersonal relationships, and otherwise position themselves vis-à-vis others? In later work he provides vivid illustrations to argue how interactions are framed in such a way as to relate the ongoing interaction to broader classes of encounters and make what transpires intelligible in terms of prior experience. Among other things, he points out that "framing" can be viewed as something like a filtering process through which societal-level values and principles of conduct are transformed and refocused so as to apply to the situation at hand. It follows that we can no longer think of community-wide beliefs and ideologies as directly revealed in talk. Interaction, he goes on to claim, should be seen as a separate level of communicative organization: thus the interaction order, which bridges the verbal and the social, must be analyzed in terms of its own analytical units both at the level of language and in interaction. His arguments thus foreshadow current thinking on communicative practice. However, Goffman provides only illustrative information to flesh out his methodological arguments. He is not concerned with how grammar and lexicon function both to frame what is being said and to affect situated assessments of what is conveyed at any one point in an encounter.

Conversational analysis as it is currently practiced began as an attempt to apply something akin to Goffman and Garfinkel's program to the study of everyday talk. A major initial goal was to show how the essentially social orderliness of even the simplest, most casual exchanges is produced, by focusing on the verbal "methods" conversationalists themselves employ in managing verbal exchanges. For the purpose of analysis, talk is treated as constituted by sequentially organized strings of speaking turns, such that by means of these turns conversationalists indicate the meaning of their actions and their understanding of prior actions (Goffman 1989). Relationships among turns are examined to demonstrate empirically how conversational effects are achieved. The term "empirical" is important here, since many conversational analysts use it to justify the claim that only overtly lexicalized propositional content counts as

data, so that the indirect inferences that play such an important role in other forms of discourse analysis are excluded.

From an IS perspective the question we must ask is: How do we know what aspects of background knowledge are relevant at any one time, and is extracommunicative background knowledge enough? We assume that information about contextual frames is communicated as part of the process of interacting, and therefore it becomes necessary to be clearer about the specifics of what happens in the interaction as such, to assess what is intended. Conversational analysts also set out to do this, and their work has brilliantly shown what can be learned through turn-by-turn sequential analyses. But I suggest that sequential analysis cannot by itself account for situated interpretation. It describes just one of the many indexical processes that affect inferencing. I argue that assessments of communicative intent at any one point in an exchange take the form of hypotheses that are either confirmed or rejected in the course of the exchange. That is, I adopt the conversational analysts' focus on members' procedures but apply it to inferencing. The analytical problem then becomes not just to determine what is meant, but to discover how interpretive assessments relate to the linguistic signaling processes through which they are negotiated.

## 1 Diversity as a Central IS Theme

A main IS theme is the inherent linguistic and cultural diversity of today's communicative environments. Research on the communicative import of diversity has been and continues to be plagued by deep theoretical divisions. On the one hand there are those who regard communicative practices as shaped by *habitus*: embodied dispositions to act and to perceive the world that directly reflect the macrosocietal conditions, political and economic forces, and relationships of power in which they were acquired (Bourdieu 1977, 1994). They argue that it is to such conditioning factors that we must look for insights into the nature of diversity. Others take a more constructivist approach, claiming that since our social worlds are ultimately shaped through interaction, it is necessary to begin by learning more about the way localized interactive processes work before we can turn to research on diversity. Since the two traditions differ in what they regard as relevant data and in the methods of analysis they employ, their findings are for the most part incommensurable.

IS seeks to bridge the gap between these two approaches by focusing on communicative practice as the everyday-world site where societal and interactive forces merge. Hanks (1996) defines communicative practice as largely resting on the discursive practices of actors acting in pursuit of their goals and aspirations. Therefore speaking, when seen in a practice perspective, is not just a matter of individuals' encoding and decoding messages. To interact is to engage in an ongoing process of negotiation, both to infer what others intend to convey and to monitor how one's own contributions are received. In other words, what is at issue is shared or non-shared interpretations rather than denotational meaning. And background knowledge of the kind I alluded to above, i.e. that goes beyond overt lexical information, always plays a key role in the interpretive process. IS analysis therefore concentrates on speech exchanges involving two or more actors as its main object of study. The aim is to show how individuals

participating in such exchanges use talk to achieve their communicative goals in real-life situations, by concentrating on the meaning-making processes and the taken-for-granted, background assumptions that underlie the negotiation of interpretations.

As in-depth, discourse-level analyses of situated performances became available, it soon became evident that speech event categorizations cannot be treated as extralinguistically defined givens. More often than not, participants' definition of what the relevant event is and what it means in an encounter emerges in and through the performance itself (Bauman 1986; Bauman and Briggs 1990; Hymes 1981). As Hanks puts it in an article on genre and related questions of language use: "The idea of objectivist rules is replaced by schemes and strategies, leading one to view genre as a set of focal and prototypical elements which actors use variously and which never become fixed in a unitary structure" (1987: 681, quoted in Bauman and Briggs 1990). What holds for the literary theorists' *genre* is true also for events (Gumperz 1982a). In both cases we are dealing with schemata or frames, embodying presuppositions associated with ideologies and principles of communicative conduct that in a way bracket the talk, and that thereby affect the way in which we assess or interpret what transpires in the course of an encounter. Presuppositions that over time come to be associated with specific events may be metonymically evoked, in the course of communicative practice, to set the criteria or establish frames in terms of which constituent messages are interpreted, a point that will be taken up later in this chapter.

The analytical issue thus shifts from the search for grammar-like rules of language use as traditionally conceived, to questions such as (1) how and by what signaling devices language functions to evoke the contextual presuppositions that affect interpretation, and (2) what presuppositions are at work in particular talk exchanges. Thus the IS approach to diversity is essentially a semiotic one, which allows for a shifting balance between multiple inputs. Such an approach accounts for the fact that what count as different systems at the level of denotational structures can come to convey information at the level of communicative structure.

IS assumes that interpretive assessments always build on local or context-specific background knowledge that takes the form of presuppositions that shift in the course of an encounter. Analysis focuses on *conversational inference*, defined as the interpretive procedure by means of which interactants assess what is communicatively intended at any one point in an exchange, and on which they rely to plan and produce their responses. Sequential positioning of turns at speaking is clearly an important input to conversational inference, but many other, analytically prior factors are also involved. Furthermore, it is also true that individuals engaged in conversation do not just react to literal meaning – if there is such a thing – in the linguist's sense of the term. At issue is communicative intent; to assess what is intended, listeners must go beyond surface meaning to fill in what is left unsaid. For example, if Tom had just been talking to Fred and I asked what they had been doing, he might answer "I asked Fred if he was free this evening." From this I might infer that he might be planning to join Fred in some activity, although literally speaking this is clearly not what the utterance "means."

My interpretation is of course not the only possible one. I relied on background knowledge acquired through past communicative experience to infer what was intended. To the extent that background knowledge is not shared, interpretations may differ. What the presuppositions are that enter into conversational inference and how they are reflected in talk vary, among other things, with speakers' and listeners'

communicative background. Sharing of inferential procedures cannot be taken for granted; it must be demonstrated through ethnographically informed, in-depth analysis of what transpires in an encounter. A main purpose of IS analysis is to show how diversity affects interpretation. Some of the best-known IS studies were conducted in urban workplace settings, where lay participants who are under great pressure to perform must deal with experts whose interpretive premises are quite different from theirs, and therefore operate with different background assumptions (Gumperz 1982a, 1982b; Gumperz and Roberts 1991).<sup>2</sup>

The following brief extracts will illustrate some of the above points. They are taken from a set of selection interviews recorded in the mid-1970s in the British Midlands. The applicants are applying for paid traineeships at a publicly funded institution, offering instruction in skills that are in short supply:

- (1) Electrician:
- a. *Interviewer:* have you visited the skills center?
  - b. *Applicant:* yes, I did.
  - c. *Interviewer:* so you've had a look at the workshops?
  - d. *Applicant:* yes.
  - e. *Interviewer:* you know what the training allowance is? do you?
  - f. *Applicant:* yeah.
  - g. *Interviewer:* Do you know how much you've got to live on for the period of time.
- (2) Bricklayer:
- a. *Interviewer:* have you visited the skills center?
  - b. *Applicant:* yep. I've been there. yeah.
  - c. *Interviewer:* so you've had a chance to look around? and did you look in at the brick shop?
  - d. *Applicant:* ah yeah. we had a look around the brickshop. and uhm, it look o.k. I mean it's-...
  - e. *Interviewer:* all right.
  - f. *Applicant:* pretty good yeah.

Note that while the interviewer asks roughly the same questions in each case, the two applicants differ in the way they answer and the treatment they receive. In (2) the applicant (the bricklayer) elaborates his answers, enabling the interviewer to judge how he has interpreted the question. The two participants actively collaborate in constructing the exchange and we have the impression that they understand each other. In turn (d), for example, when the applicant hesitates as if he were searching for the right word ("I mean it's-..."), the interviewer helps him with "all right" and the exchange ends on a note of agreement. In (1), on the other hand, the applicant (the electrician) provides only minimal replies, volunteering no information on his own. We have the impression he is being rather passive, leaving the interviewer to do all the work. When the interviewer in turn (g) rephrases her question about the training allowance, it seems that she is not sure that the applicant understands what it is she wants.

The electrician, although he has been living in Britain for a number of years, is South Asian by background, and the bricklayer a native of the local region. We could argue therefore that ideology-based prejudice is at work. There is no question that ideology is an important factor, but experience with this and other similar workplace situations suggests that the treatment the two applicants receive is also due to the fact that, based on their communicative and cultural backgrounds, interviewers and applicants draw different inferences from what they see and hear. IS analyses of such inferential processes can provide evidence to show how such differences come about and how they affect the workplace climate. The latter part of this chapter will present a more detailed discussion of the electrician's interview, but first, more background on basic IS assumptions.

Initial insights into the role of language use in inferential processes came from studies of *code-switching* (Blom and Gumperz 1972), a term commonly used to refer to alternation among different speech varieties within the same event. Such alternations are employed throughout the world, particularly among participants in local networks of relationship. They are commonly described via rules of alternation similar in form to rules of language usage. For example, in the old Catholic church service Latin was said to be appropriate for prayer, while the native language was used for sermons. Yet if we examine switching as it enters into the discursive practices that constitute the event, it soon becomes apparent that it is not the objective situation that determines language use. The data show that the discursive juxtaposition of grammatically and lexically distinct ways of speaking in any one stretch of talk evokes a shift in contextual presuppositions which then in turn affects interpretation. As recent comparative empirical studies demonstrate (Auer 1998), code-switching constitutes a basic communicative resource that in many situations serves as a communicative strategy to achieve specific interpretive effects.

In IS analysis, speaking is treated as a reflexive process such that everything said can be seen as either directly reacting to preceding talk, reflecting a set of immediate circumstances, or responding to past events, whether directly experienced or indirectly transmitted. To engage in verbal communication therefore is not just to express one's thoughts. Speaking ties into a communicative ecology that significantly affects the course of an interaction. Conversational inference relies on two types of verbal signs: symbolic signs that convey information via the well-known lexical and grammatical rules and indexical signs that signal by direct association between sign and context. Terms like "here" and "there" or "this" and "that" are typical examples of indexicality, in that what is intended in any one instance can only be understood with reference to some physical or discursive environment. But context also can be and often is communicatively evoked through talk, and it is that evocation process that is at work in code-switching.

I use the term *contextualization cue* to refer to any verbal sign which, when processed in co-occurrence with symbolic grammatical and lexical signs, serves to construct the contextual ground for situated interpretation and thereby affects how constituent messages are understood. Code-switching is one such contextualization cue. Others include pronunciation along with prosody (i.e., intonation and stress), rhythm, tempo, and other such suprasegmental signs. Contextualization cues, when processed in co-occurrence with other cues and grammatical and lexical signs, construct the contextual ground for situated interpretation and thereby affect how particular messages

are understood (Gumperz 1982a). As metapragmatic signs (Lucy 1993), contextualization cues represent speakers' ways of signaling and providing information to interlocutors and audiences about how language is being used at any one point in the ongoing exchange. What sets them apart from communicatively similar lexicalized signs is that they are intrinsically oral forms. Since no utterance can be pronounced without such signs, contextualization cues are ever present in talk, and to the extent that they can be shown to affect interpretation, they provide direct evidence for the necessary role that indexicality plays in talk. Moreover, contextualization strategies signal meaning largely by cueing indirect inferences. In conversation, we could not possibly express all the information that interlocutors must have to plan their own contributions and attune their talk to that of their interlocutors, so it is easy to see the reason for this indirectness.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, indirect (not overtly lexicalized) signaling mechanisms are for the most part culturally or subculturally specific. In fact prosody and "accent" (in the sense of phonetically marked features of pronunciation), for example, are among the principal means by which we identify where people are from and "who" they are, and assess their social identity, as happened in the above examples. The reason we can do this is that contextualization strategies are learned primarily through direct personal contacts of the kind characteristic of family, peer-group, and close friendship relations, where background knowledge is likely to be shared and speakers can be confident that others will understand their indirect allusions.

I will give some additional concrete examples to show how I view the process of understanding. Some time ago, while driving to the office, my radio was tuned to a classical radio station. At the end of the program, the announcer, a replacement for the regular host who was scheduled to return the next day, signed off with the following words: "I've enjoyed being with *you* these last two weeks." I had not been listening very carefully, but the extrastrong focal accent on "*you*" in a syntactic position where I would have expected an unaccented pronoun caught my attention. It sounded as if the announcer was talking to someone else. Yet there was no other person with him on the program. This led me to call on past communicative experience to construct an alternative, more plausible scenario which might suggest an interpretation. The speaker's words reminded me of a leave-taking exchange, where a first speaker might begin with "I've enjoyed being with you" and the second might respond with "It was fun being with *you*." I therefore inferred that the announcer, by accenting the personal pronoun as one would in the second part of the exchange, was actually implicating the first.

In the above examples, participants' as well as my own interpretations relied on background knowledge to construct possible scenarios or envisionments or to intertextually retrieve specific expressions in terms of which the speakers' words made sense. I use the term *activity type* or *activity* to refer to these evoked envisionments. My claim is that interpretation of communicative intent always – that is, not just in intercultural encounters – rests on such constructs. These imagined activities function like Goffman's frames, abstract representations of the actions of actors engaged in strategically planning and positioning their moves in order to accomplish communicative ends in real-life encounters.

I am not claiming that IS analysis can solve the problem of interpretive ambiguity. The aim is to find likely solutions, that is, solutions that are plausible in that they show how constituent actions cohere in light of the event as a whole, and the assumptions in

terms of which we assess the event's significance. This is of course quite different from determining the truth or falsity of specific interpretations. The method resembles the conversational analyst's procedures of reconstructing the strategies members employ in formulating specific actions. But IS differs from conversational analysis in that the concern is with situated interpretation of communicative intent, not with strategies as such, and that analysis is not confined to overtly lexicalized information. Instead of taking interpretive processes for granted, IS analysis suggests (1) what the most likely interpretations are, (2) what the assumptions and inferential processes are by which they are achieved, and (3) how they relate to what is literally said.

In studies of intercultural and interethnic communication, IS methods have been useful in isolating systematic differences in interpretive practices that affect individuals' ability to create and maintain conversational involvement, and consequently to get their views across. This is especially true for today's culturally diverse institutional and workplace settings, where goal-oriented interaction plays a key role. As pointed out above, the issue is not merely what someone means at any one time, but shared interpretation. And such sharing always presupposes the ability to negotiate repairs, agree on how parts of an argument cohere, and follow both thematic shifts and shifts in presupposition. Apart from focusing on interpretations as such, IS analysis attempts to illustrate how these tasks are accomplished. It is for this reason that the analysis places so much stress on contextualization processes.

## 2 IS Method

In empirical studies, IS analysts have worked out a set of procedures along the following lines. First there is an initial period of ethnographic research designed to (1) provide insight into the local communicative ecology; (2) discover recurrent encounter types most likely to yield communicative data relevant to the research problem at hand; and (3) find out through observation, interviewing key participants, and checking one's own interpretations with them how local actors handle the problems they encounter and what their expectations and presuppositions are. In the second stage, the ethnographic findings provide the basis for selecting events reflecting representative sets of interactions for recording. (4) The next phase of the analysis begins with scanning the recorded materials at two levels of organization: (a) content and (b) pronunciation and prosodic organization. The aim is to isolate sequentially bounded units, marked off from others in the recorded data by some degree of thematic coherence, and by beginnings and ends detectable through co-occurring shifts in content, prosody, or stylistic and other formal markers. Extending the ethnographer of communication's practice somewhat, I use the term *event* to refer to such temporally organized units. The aim is to discover strips of naturally organized interaction containing empirical evidence to confirm or disconfirm our analyst's interpretations, evidence against which to test assumptions about what is intended elsewhere in the sequence.

Once isolated, events are transcribed and *interactional texts* (that is, transcripts that account for all the communicatively significant, verbal and nonverbal signs perceived) (Silverstein 1992) are prepared by setting down on paper all those perceptual cues: verbal and nonverbal, segmental and nonsegmental, prosodic, paralinguistic, and

others that, as past and ongoing research shows, speakers and listeners demonstrably rely on as part of the inferential process. This procedure enables us not only to gain insights into situated understandings, but also to isolate recurrent form-context relationships and show how they contribute to interpretation. These relationships can then be studied comparatively across events, to yield more general hypotheses about speakers' contextualization practices.

Now let us return to the electrician's interview, to show in more detail how the methodological principles outlined above work in analysis. This time a third person, the course instructor, joins in the questioning. In the first extract, the questioning is designed to test the applicant's knowledge of the course:

- (3) a. *Interviewer:* and you've put here, that you want to apply for that course because there are more jobs in ... the *trade*.
- b. *Applicant:* yeah (low).
- c. *Interviewer:* so perhaps you could explain to Mr. C. *apart* from *that* reason, *why* else you want to apply for *electrical* work.
- d. *Applicant:* I think I like ... this job in my-, as a profession.
- e. *Instructor:* and *why* do you think you'll like it?
- f. *Applicant:* why?
- g. *Instructor:* could you explain to me why?
- h. *Applicant:* why do I like it? I think it is more job *prospect*.

By using stress to foreground the word "trade" the interviewer is drawing the applicant's attention to the term the applicant used in the written questionnaire he filled out before the interview, relying on him to infer what she intended to convey by this strategy. That is, she is indirectly asking the applicant to elaborate his reply to questions about his interest in electrical work. But just as he did in the previous example, the applicant is treating her remarks literally, as if he had been asked a simple "yes or no" question. When the interviewer tries to elicit more information, by accenting key expressions to call attention to what needs explanation, the applicant simply paraphrases his earlier written response. At this point the course instructor takes over. Like his colleague, he also relies on indirect accenting strategies. Unable to infer what is intended and increasingly uncertain about what he is supposed to say, the applicant once again rephrases what he has just said. He does not seem to notice that the interviewers, by strategically positioning their accents, are attempting to direct his attention to significant points in the argument which they seem to think require more comment.

Research with British-resident South Asians in general, and other similar exchanges in the same set of interviews, indicate that such problems are not unique. By virtue of their communicative background, as native speakers of languages that employ other linguistic means to highlight information in discourse, South Asians often fail to recognize that accenting is used in English to convey key information, and thus do not recognize the significance of the interviewers' contextualization cues. Furthermore, we know from ethnographic data that the South Asian candidates have been socialized to expect interview practices that differ significantly from those the interviewers employ. They have learned to treat interviews as hierarchical encounters, where candidates

are expected to show reluctance to dwell on personal likes or preferences and avoid giving the appearance of being too forward or assertive (Gumperz 1996).

The consequences of the miscommunication that results become clear in the following segment, when the instructor turns to the topic of the applicant's previous experience with electrical work:

- (4) i. *Instructor:* what sorts of work have you done before in this particular field?
- j. *Applicant:* what do you mean please?
- k. *Instructor:* well, electrical installation and maintenance. some of it involves jobs done in your home. in your own *home* have you *done* work in your own home?
- l. *Applicant:* yes sir.
- m. *Instructor:* yeah, and what sorts of jobs have you done?
- n. *Applicant:* well I-, I wired up my own house.
- o. *Instructor:* you've wired your own house?
- p. *Applicant:* yeah.
- q. *Instructor:* yeah?
- r. *Applicant:* it is passed, by the authority, electricity board.
- s. *Instructor:* yeah?
- t. *Applicant:* first time.
- u. *Instructor:* so having wired your own house, could you tell me what the "consumer box" is?
- v. *Applicant:* yeah, where the fuses is.
- w. *Instructor:* where the fuses are. all right fine. have you done *anything* other than wiring your own house?

In turn (n) it seems that the applicant is finally about to provide the information the interviewers need. But he evidently did not expect the instructor's question. Coming as it does after the applicant's statement, a native speaker would interpret it as a request for elaboration. But the applicant treats it as a "yes or no" question. And when the instructor then questions his answer, the applicant changes topic. He does not understand that he is being asked to explain what the work he claims to have done involves. In turn (u) the instructor makes one more effort to test the applicant's knowledge. But the instructor gives only a lexical description of the term. From other interviews analyzed as part of this study, we know that when the interviewers change topic and ask about a specific technical term, they expect the applicant to use such questions as a point of departure for showing what they know about the work involved. We conclude therefore that the instructor is unimpressed with the information he has received and sees the applicant as a doubtful candidate. Although the applicant apparently has had quite a bit of experience doing electrical work, he has difficulty providing sufficient narrative detail to convince the interviewers that he has had relevant previous experience and is really interested in the course. In the end he does not gain admission.

Altogether, the evidence we have shows that many native speakers of South Asian languages respond similarly whenever interviewers rely on prosody, formulaic

expressions, or other indirect means to contextualize their questions. Moreover, initial interpretive differences tend to be compounded rather than repaired in the course of the encounter (Gumperz 1982a, 1982b, 1996). We could say linguistic diversity is the cause of the difficulty such minority candidates encounter, but that is too simplistic an explanation.

The three principals in this example have lived in the region for over a decade and, apart from the Asian's accent and minor grammatical oddities, they all speak English well. Moreover, they agree on what a selection interview is about and understand what is being said at the level of literal or denotational meaning. Both interviewers and interviewee rely on inferencing to interpret what is intended. But their inferences rest on different context-bound presuppositions, and they are therefore unable to agree on what is intended. The communicative difficulties are interactively produced. The interpretive processes involved are automatic and not readily subject to conscious recall, so that those involved are likely to be unaware of the discursive reasons for the misunderstandings. The question is one of differences in principles of communicative etiquette and of conventions of interpersonal communication. Such conventions are typically learned through informal personal contact. Because of the political and economic conditions in which they live, minority group members' access to such learning opportunities is likely to be quite limited.

But interpersonal contact alone does not explain the inferential leap from differences in discursive practices to judgments of ability. How can we explain the fact that the interviewers regard the candidate's seeming unresponsiveness and his failure to be explicit in expanding on his answers as evidence for lack of professional knowledge? We need to go beyond the local encounter, and look at societal ideologies in terms of which the interaction is assessed, to find an explanation. While it is true that overt discrimination against minorities in Western industrialized societies has significantly decreased over the last few years, the language ideologies that associate control of the officially accepted standard language with basic ability continue to prevail (Irvine and Gal 1999). In this sense, we can say that the interviewer's assessment was ideologically based and did not necessarily reflect the interviewee's technical abilities or his real interest in the course.

By revealing the underlying interpretive process at work in an encounter, which is otherwise bound to remain hidden, IS analysis of key situations in institutional life can provide insights into the interpretive and ideological bases of communicative assessments, while at the same time enabling participants to learn from some of the difficulties arising in their contacts with others.

### **3 Conclusion**

The intercultural encounters I have discussed constitute an extreme case where participants represent historically and linguistically quite distinct traditions. All the participants had lived and worked in Western industrial settings for much of their adult life, but they brought into that different linguistic and cultural background experiences which continue to resonate in these encounters. While such examples are useful in illustrating how inferential processes are grounded in both linguistic and

other background knowledge, they also show that the social outcomes and interactional consequences of communicative misalignment are far greater than any single analysis can show. As some of the shorter examples cited above indicate, IS analysis is applicable to communicative situations of all kinds, monolingual or multilingual, as a means of monitoring the communication processes that are so important in institutional life.

## NOTES

- 1 For other related approaches see, for example, Bauman (1986); Briggs (1996); Fairclough (1995); Guenther (1993); Hill and Irvine (1993); Kallmeyer (1994); Sarangi and Roberts (1999); Sherzer (1983); Silverstein and Urban (1996); Tannen (1984, 1989); Young (1994).
- 2 For additional work on basic IS concepts, see Gumperz (1982b, 1992, 1996). For recent case study analyses see Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz (1994, 1996); Gumperz (1998).

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# 15 Framing and Positioning

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CYNTHIA GORDON

## 0 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Framing and positioning are theoretical frameworks for investigating the everyday interactions by which people live and construct their social worlds. Discourse analysts have used and developed these theories to uncover and explain how, through linguistic and paralinguistic means, interlocutors create and negotiate meanings, relationships, and identities. Framing and positioning lend insight into the layered nature of social interaction, the discursive construction of multiple selves, and the complexity of language use. In short, the application, interconnection, and continued extension of these theories contribute in significant ways to our understanding of human communication and experience.

Framing and positioning have much in common: both were introduced to capture the flexibility of social situations and selves, going beyond the more static concept of “role” and viewing interaction as constructed moment by moment. Both facilitate a layered understanding of social life – that is, of selves and situations as multifaceted, complex, and ambiguous. In addition, both theories incorporate the general notion of intertextuality (Kristeva 1980; see also Bakhtin 1981, 1986; Becker 1995), or the idea that all utterances and texts are related to other (previously experienced and remembered) utterances and texts. On the broadest level, framing and positioning offer especially rich frameworks in that they encompass both social and psychological aspects of interaction.

In what follows, I introduce framing and positioning separately: despite their similarities, each emerged from a different disciplinary background – sociology and anthropology for framing versus psychology for positioning – and with a different purpose. *Framing* refers to how people establish “definitions of a situation” (Goffman 1974: 10),

and discourse analysts typically have drawn on it to explore how interlocutors construct and make sense of social experience, including how they create alignments or “footings” (Goffman 1981). *Positioning* addresses “the discursive production of selves” (Davies and Harré 1990), or how people create identities for themselves and others in interaction; it has been used primarily by discourse analysts to analyze narratives. In introducing these theories separately, I identify central concepts and tenets, and give an overview of key research studies and findings. For each I also present a short sample analysis to demonstrate the theory in action.

Next, I discuss how contemporary scholarship has interwoven framing and positioning, which are increasingly viewed as kindred theories. While the exact relationships between the concepts of “framing” and “positioning,” as well as similar notions – not only “footing” but also “stance,” “indexing,” and “voice” – are not universally agreed upon, I discuss and demonstrate the productivity of discerning meanings for these concepts, and of integrating elements of the theories. Finally, I conclude by discussing future potential for framing and positioning in discourse analysis.

## 1 Framing

### 1.1 Background and definitions

“Frame” – the central concept in framing or frames theory – has multiple meanings, due in part to its multidisciplinary use. Discourse analysts usually trace “frame” to anthropologist Gregory Bateson’s (1972) essay “A theory of play and fantasy.” While observing monkeys playing at a zoo, Bateson realized that the monkeys could establish a “play frame.” A monkey’s nip of another during “play” means something different than it would outside play, where it would be treated as a serious, aggressive act. Something in the biting monkey’s behavior sends what Bateson calls a “metamessage”; this metamessage instructs the receiver (as well as an observing anthropologist) on how to interpret the message (i.e., “this is play”). Frames, for Bateson, are primarily psychological, and they contribute to sense-making.

In *Frame Analysis*, sociologist Erving Goffman (1974) draws on and extends Bateson’s concept of frame in investigating everyday human experience. In contrast to Bateson, Goffman considers frames to be primarily social and situational; as he explains, they are “definitions of a situation” that interlocutors establish in interaction (1974: 10). Thus a “real experience” differs from a “theatrical performance”; it is framed differently, and participants treat what transpires differently. Likewise, a “theatrical performance” in everyday life differs from one that occurs on a television sitcom. And framing becomes an interactional issue when participants do not share a definition of a situation, such as when a student believes he is engaged in a friendly chat with a fellow student whereas the fellow “student” knows herself to be an undercover narcotics officer gathering information.

The notion of “footing” (Goffman 1981) is central to understanding how framing works. As people create frames, they also construct footings, or alignments between one another as well as between themselves and what is said. In Goffman’s words, “a change in footing implies a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the

others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance"; it is "another way of talking about a change in our frame for events" (1981: 128). Thus, when an undercover officer acts like a young person interested in buying illegal drugs for a party, she takes up a variety of footings, such as toward the topic of talk (i.e., toward drugs as entertainment) and her co-conversationalist (i.e., as an equal, a "fellow student"). She simultaneously frames the encounter as a casual conversation rather than an intelligence-gathering mission.

How footing works is strikingly elucidated in Goffman's (1981) analysis of a scene described in a 1973 newspaper article: after an official bill-signing ceremony in the Oval Office, then-US President Richard Nixon begins questioning (and teasing) journalist Helen Thomas, the only woman present, about her clothing (she was wearing pants, rather than a dress). As Nixon and other journalists look on, Thomas turns her body around at Nixon's request, so he can view and evaluate her outfit. Thus, a news reporter "pirouetted" – an action normally performed onstage by ballerinas or on runways by fashion models; the definition of the situation was transformed into an impromptu fashion show wherein Thomas was put on display. It was simultaneously "rekeyed" (Goffman 1974), a phenomenon that Tannen (2006: 601) describes as involving "a change in the tone or tenor of an interaction." A serious encounter (a bill-signing) became more playful. And yet, while a rather complex framing occurred in this interaction, in many ways what transpired was quite unremarkable and quotidian.

Footing encompasses not only alignments between speakers but also alignments of speakers to utterances, which Goffman (1981) refers to as *production format*. Goffman argues that a speaker is not a unitary entity; each utterance has an *animator* (who physically produces the words), an *author* (who selects the words), and a *principal* (whose position is established by, and who is committed to, what the words express). When Nixon spoke off the cuff to Thomas about her clothing, he was animator, author, and principal. Political speeches, in contrast, provide a common example where the speaker does not fill all three roles: Nixon might have animated an official speech and been its principal, but more than likely a speechwriter was the author. A speaker who reads a statement on behalf of the President may very well only fill the role of animator: she voices words chosen by a professional writer of such statements (the author) to represent the position of the President (the principal). A speaker can also represent himself or herself as a *figure* in the talk.

Footing also encompasses the alignments of hearers to utterances, which Goffman (1981) calls *participation framework*. Some participants are *ratified*, or acknowledged as included in the encounter. Among those ratified, some are *addressed* while others may be *unaddressed*. Still other participants may be perceived, but are *unratified* in terms of their involvement in the encounter. These distinctions indicate that, like speakers, hearers are multifaceted: in the bill-signing example, Helen Thomas was the only addressed recipient, yet the male journalists were also ratified (as audience members).

In his analysis of artifacts of interaction, such as newspaper articles, Goffman (1974, 1981) outlined some of the common framings of everyday life and made important initial connections between framing, footing, and language. He invited linguists and other communication experts to pursue these connections, closing his "Footing" essay by noting, "I believe linguistics provides us with the cues and markers through which ... footings become manifest, helping us to find our way to a structural basis for analyzing them" (Goffman 1981: 157).

Through analyses of recorded conversations that are transcribed in detail, discourse analysts from a range of traditions, including Interactional Sociolinguistics and Conversation Analysis, have developed a truly linguistic understanding of framing. Anthropological linguist John Gumperz's (1982, this volume) work on contextualization in discourse provides a key "structural basis" for analyzing framing and the creation of footings, though the term Gumperz uses is "speech activity." According to Gumperz, "contextualization cues" are linguistic and paralinguistic features that people use to indicate how they mean what they say. Hearers in turn assess these to identify situational definitions, and to make sense of utterances. For instance, people often signal play frames through the contextualization cue of laughter. Nixon's laughter helped to construct a play footing toward Thomas and to frame the interaction with her as playful, though the scene is also readily interpretable as sexist. The complexity of cues such as laughter is one of many topics discourse analysts have considered.

## 1.2 Key studies

Goffman (1981) mentions a foundational analysis by Tannen and Wallat, later published in Tannen's (1993a) edited volume *Framing in Discourse*, that brings linguistic precision to the analysis of framing. Tannen and Wallat (1993) investigate a video-recorded medical encounter involving a pediatrician, a cerebral palsied child, and the child's mother, demonstrating how the pediatrician uses language and paralanguage to quickly switch between the three primary frames that comprise the situation: the social encounter, examination, and consultation. For example, the pediatrician uses motherese and teasing in her social encounter with the child. In the examination frame she examines the child while also verbalizing, in a flat tone of voice and using medical jargon, her findings for the pediatric residents who will later view the video recording for educational purposes. The consultation frame involves interacting with the mother and keeping the child and her own verbalization to the residents on hold. Often the pediatrician manages two frames at once, for example engaging socially with the child while examining her. Thus Tannen and Wallat (1993) extend and document one of Goffman's most profound observations: social life is layered as experience is recast and transformed through language, as the Nixon-Thomas example suggested. In Goffman's words, "within one alignment, another can be fully enclosed. In truth, in talk it seems routine that, while firmly standing on two feet, we jump up and down on another" (1981: 155).

In addition to providing a groundbreaking analysis of the linguistic dexterity involved in framing an everyday, institutional situation, Tannen and Wallat (1993) provide an overview of uses of the term and concept of "frame" across disciplines and distill two primary meanings: they use "interactive frame" to refer to a Goffmanian sense of frame, as "a definition of what is going on in interaction, without which no utterance (or movement or gesture) could be interpreted" (59-60). They suggest "knowledge schema" to refer to "participants' expectations about people, objects, events and settings in the world" (60). Tannen and Wallat demonstrate how these concepts are interconnected. For example, when the mother makes known her (faulty) knowledge schema about her child's health, the pediatrician switches frames and adjusts her footing: she pauses her examination to talk with the mother. Further, participants'

knowledge schemas regarding medical encounters shape their behaviors and interpretations of what transpires. The mother, for example, reported in an interview with Tannen and Wallat that she felt the doctor “was great” as compared to other pediatricians (63).

Contemporary studies on framing in discourse analysis contribute to our understanding of the flexibility, multi-layered nature, and linguistic constitution of frames and footings. They also (typically, indirectly) acknowledge the role of “intertextuality” (Hodges, this volume; Kristeva 1980): the framing of a particular interaction is shaped in numerous ways by other, prior interactions. For instance, contextualization cues come to have conventional, established uses (see Gumperz, this volume). Participants bring into encounters their knowledge schemas, which are based on prior experiences. Further, the linguistic expressions people use carry a history, which adds multiple layers of meaning to interaction (Bakhtin 1981, 1986; Becker 1995; Gordon 2009; Tannen 2007b).

Framing has been used to study a variety of social scenes, including family dinners (M. H. Goodwin 1996; Kendall 2008), courtroom interactions (Matoesian 1999), sociolinguistic interviews (Schiffrin 1993), radio talk shows (Hutchby 1999), psychiatric interviews (Ribeiro 1993), computer-related activities in classrooms (Aarsand 2008), and children’s pretend play (Gordon 2002; Kyratzis 2010). It has also lent insight into particular conversational moves. These include finishing another participant’s utterance (Antaki, Díaz, and Collins 1996); storytelling (C. Goodwin 1984; M. H. Goodwin 1996); making repairs to self-reference (Lerner and Kitzinger 2007); and quotation, or what Tannen (2007b) calls “constructed dialogue,” as well as other ways of speaking on behalf of another person or in another’s voice (Matoesian 1999; Schiffrin 1993; Tannen 2007a). Framing has elucidated phenomena such as the construction of agency (Al Zidjaly 2009), identities (Aarsand 2008; Lerner and Kitzinger 2007), and “institutionality” (Hutchby 1999); the negotiation of relationships (Gordon 2009; Tannen 2007a); and the keying of conversation, including as ironic (Clift 1999) and argumentative (M. H. Goodwin 1996). This body of research has increased understanding of structural elements of conversation, ranging from conversational openings (Hutchby 1999) to how verbal and nonverbal elements of communication are interrelated (C. Goodwin 1984, 2007; M. H. Goodwin 1996). Particular ways of laminating frames have also been identified and explicated, including via reframing (Matsumoto 2011; Tannen 2006) or shifting frame (M. H. Goodwin 1996), embedding frames (Gordon 2002, 2009; see also Tannen 1993b), and blending frames (Gordon 2008, 2009). The sample analysis that follows elucidates the lamination of frames in the form of blending, while also showing how framing is linguistically accomplished.

### ***1.3 Sample analysis: framing***

I draw an example from my own research analyzing discourse gathered as part of a larger project for which members of four dual-income American couples with at least one child self-audio-recorded their everyday conversations for one week (see Tannen, Kendall, and Gordon’s 2007 edited volume for project details). Since Bateson (1972), it has been clear that framing is essential to creating “play.” I use framing to examine

parent-child role-play, showing how it is discursively created and revealing its layered nature, while also capturing the flexibility of the situations that constitute social life. In addition, this research highlights the role of intertextuality in framing, a primary goal of my research (see Gordon 2009).

In the extract I present here (from Gordon 2008), a father, Steve, talks to his nearly three-year-old daughter, Natalie. It is morning at home, and Steve is getting himself ready for work and preparing Natalie for the day; Steve's wife (Natalie's mother) is asleep upstairs. Steve has also been entertaining Natalie: Natalie had been pretending that her "daughter" (her doll, Lucy) was sick, and Steve had been enacting Lucy, making her cough and talk in a high-pitched voice. Then Natalie broke the play frame by throwing a temper tantrum (ostensibly because she did not like the breakfast spoon Steve gave her). Play is introduced again by Natalie, as seen in line 1, when she indicates she wants Steve to enact Lucy, and Natalie will act as Lucy's mother. Steve seems to assume they will re-commence the "doctor" play. Steve enacts the role of a doctor using a low-pitched voice; this contextualization cue signals that he is not speaking as himself and sends the metamessage "this is play."

- (1) 1 Natalie: You be the daughter and I'll be the mommy okay?  
 2 Steve: Okay.  
 3 Natalie: Hi this is my daughter Lucy,  
 4 she's not feeling well.  
 5 Steve: <deep voice> She's not eh?>  
 6 Natalie: No.  
 7 Steve: <deep voice> What are her symptoms.>

While Steve changes the quality of his voice to indicate his footing within the play frame, Natalie does not. However, she refers to a doll as *my daughter Lucy*, and attributes feelings to her, which contribute to the construction of play.

As the interaction continues, Steve examines Natalie's "daughter" and produces speech acts such as directing, diagnosing, and recommending. He thus signals that he is pretending to be a doctor. However, he also "laminates" experience (Goffman 1974), or more specifically "blends" frames (Gordon 2008, 2009), when he issues a breakfast-related directive to Natalie while playing the doctor role. This means that he constructs two simultaneous definitions of the situation. In this case, one is of play but the other is not-play and prepares Natalie for her day.

- (2) 8 Natalie: Could you check her out please?  
 9 Steve: <deep voice> Sure.  
 10 → Here while I check her out,  
 11 → you drink this apple juice.  
 12 Let's see Lucy?  
 13 Cough.>  
 14 <coughs> ((enacting Natalie's doll))  
 15 Say ah:.  
 16 Mmm. Mm hmmm.

- 17 ((short pause))  
 18 I think she's got a little bit of a cold.  
 19 She needs to rest and keep warm.  
 20 Let's cover her up.  
 21 And she needs constant care and attention.  
 22 ((short pause))  
 23 That's it.

In this stretch of talk, Steve interacts with the doll by producing directives (line 13, *Cough.*; line 15, *Say ah::*), providing his diagnosis that she has *a little bit of a cold* (line 18), and making recommendations (e.g., line 19, *She needs to rest and keep warm.*). “Play” is not the only frame in this interaction, though. In lines 10–11, Steve uses the play to accomplish a parenting task: using the low-pitched “doctor” voice, he encourages Natalie to drink her juice (*Here, while I check her [Lucy] out, you drink this apple juice.*). In other words, he directs her to accomplish a task that needs to be done before the rest of the day can unfold – Natalie needs to finish breakfast. In this utterance, Steve uses pitch as a contextualization cue to signal play. At the same time he produces a directive that aims to both propel the play forward (he indicates that he will examine the patient) and accomplish a non-play task. He thereby blends interactive frames.

This father shows himself to be, like the pediatrician in Tannen and Wallat’s (1993) study, a “dexterous speaker” (Goffman 1981: 156) who manipulates frames moment by moment in talk. Like being a pediatrician, being a father does not mean playing one “role” but entails shifting between multiple frames and footings. Goffman (1974, 1981) argues that such laminations are not “special” but are typical in everyday life; my research on family talk supports this contention (especially Gordon 2009). This example also highlights the ambiguity of framing in interaction – it is unclear whether the child perceives the non-play element of the situation (though elsewhere she resists similarly formulated attempts to influence her behavior; see Gordon 2008).

The framing of this father–child encounter is inherently intertextual. It draws on the participants’ knowledge schemas about medical encounters, for example. Further, it is intertextually linked to the recurrent frames that occur in this family’s talk. In Gordon (2009), I demonstrate how members of this family repeatedly create and engage in play frames (including pretend play), drawing on various forms of shared “prior text” (Becker 1995) to do so. For instance, they repeat one another’s words to tease, they reenact shared experiences, and they engage in patterned verbal routines. They thereby create and display the linguistic inventiveness and sense of fun that construct a playful family culture. Thus, the play that Steve and Natalie co-construct is best understood as part of a broader, intertextual pattern that characterizes and creates the family, including its identity.

In summary, framing was introduced as a means of exploring everyday sense-making, and its application and expansion by discourse analysts elucidate a variety of sociolinguistic phenomena, including how people construct meanings, how contextualization cues function, and how interaction is collaboratively created, in a variety of contexts. In addition, the notion of “footing” has proven useful for exploring participants’ ongoing negotiation of the relationships and identities people create in

framing discourse. Identity construction, however, has been more closely tied to the theory of positioning, considered next.

## 2 Positioning

### 2.1 *Background and definitions*

Positioning was introduced by Bronwyn Davies, whose background is interdisciplinary and based in education, and Rom Harré, who has a background in psychology and philosophy. Positioning, as outlined by Davies and Harré (1990), offers a dynamic, flexible alternative to the concept of role. The term is usually traced to Hollway's (1984) use of "position" in her analysis of gender and subjectivity in heterosexual relations, as noted by van Langenhove and Harré (1999: 16). Positioning, according to Davies and Harré, refers to "the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines" (1990: 48). This means that, as humans, we are continually "locating ourselves in conversations according to those narrative forms with which we are familiar and bringing to those narratives our own subjective lived histories through which we have learnt metaphors, characters, and plot" (Davies and Harré 1990: 52). "Narrative" in this context refers to both stories that are told and those that are experienced and remembered, stories in a more metaphorical sense. Positioning theory, though "potentially applicable to all types of discourse," has primarily been used to explore identity construction in narrative, as observed by Georgakopoulou (2007: 122).

Positioning was developed to better understand "personhood" (Davies and Harré 1990: 46). The theory conceptualizes an individual – a self – as emergent in interaction. Davies and Harré give an example in which they summarize and analyze a shared prior experience that they call "a lived narrative" (1990: 55). It involves a situation in which two characters, Sano (a male, who is healthy – Harré) and Enfermada (a female, who is sick – Davies), are colleagues attending a conference in a strange city. Sano and Enfermada are outside, in very cold weather, seeking a pharmacy to get some medicine for Enfermada. It becomes apparent the venture will not be fruitful. Sano states, "I'm sorry to have dragged you all this way when you're not well"; Enfermada replies, "You didn't drag me, I chose to come." This exchange makes both participants uncomfortable. Positioning explains what happened.

Through reflecting back on this verbal exchange, and their retrospective glosses of the episode, Davies and Harré reveal that the participants' two contrasting story lines, and the entailed positionings of the self and other, provide an explanation for what occurred and the identities that were constructed for each of them. Sano glossed the episode as a story of healthy aiding the sick, a nurse–patient story line. His comment about "dragging you all this way" thus positions him as having failed in fulfilling his obligations as caregiver. Enfermada, in contrast, perceived Sano's comment through a feminist lens and a story line of sexism; thus Sano's utterance positions Enfermada as non-agentive and marginal, leading to her objection. As Davies and Harré suggest, this is an example that not only shows "the way in which two people can be living in quite

different narratives without realising that they are doing so" but also that positioning is "a real conversational phenomenon and not just an analyst's tool" (1990: 57). As is the case for framing, positioning can be ambiguous.

The example also demonstrates how positioning, like framing, is co-accomplished. In positioning the self (what van Langenhove and Harré [1999] call *self-positioning*), one also positions others (*other-positioning*). Positioning can be deliberate (*intentional positioning*) or unintentional (*tacit positioning*). In all cases, individuals are positioned morally and regarding "their individual attributes and particularities" (van Langenhove and Harré 1999: 22). To interpret positioning, people refer to their prior experiences; positioning therefore has an intertextual dimension. For example, Enfermada's identification and understanding of her positioning by Sano may derive from her "scanning [her] past experience for a concrete occasion on which to build an interpretation" (Davies and Harré 1990: 51). This scanning helped identify possible meanings of the positioning.

Van Langenhove and Harré (1999) identify three "orders" of positioning. First-order positioning refers to how participants locate themselves and others in lived story lines and moral spaces. Second-order positioning occurs when first-order positioning is questioned – when the story line itself becomes the focus of talk. Telling a narrative in which characters are positioned vis-à-vis one another constitutes another level: third-order positioning.

A highly influential take on the idea of different positioning layers was introduced into the study of narrative and identity by Bamberg (Bamberg 1997; Talbot *et al.* 1996). Bamberg and colleagues distinguish three different (though interconnected) levels of positioning. Level 1 involves the positioning of characters vis-à-vis each other in the narrated events, or how the narrator positions himself or herself as a story character to other characters. Level 2 refers to the positioning of the narrator vis-à-vis his or her audience in the telling. Level 3 concerns the speaker's or writer's positioning of self as teller vis-à-vis self as character and in other ways that make more decontextualized claims about the self. In telling stories, then, narrators are able to depict themselves as characters that interact with other people (level 1), to interact with the story's audience in particular ways (level 2), and to evaluate themselves as characters and connect the self to broader cultural categories and ideologies (level 3). This facilitates multifaceted identity construction. The idea that positioning occurs at multiple levels plays a central role in many of the discourse analytic studies I turn to in the next section.

## 2.2 Key studies

Numerous studies have demonstrated and elucidated the complexity of positioning and the positioning-identity link through the analysis of narratives that have been audio- or video-recorded and transcribed. Analyzing actual interaction, rather than remembered episodes, facilitates a deeper investigation into the discursive features that accomplish positioning. It also facilitates a better understanding of positions as flexible and fleeting. As Davies and Harré point out, positions differ in scope and are constantly changing: they may be seen "in terms of known 'roles' (actual or metaphorical), or in terms of known characters in shared story lines, or they may be much more ephemeral

and involve shifts in power, access, or blocking to access, to certain features of claimed or desired identity, and so on" (1990: 49).

For example, Wortham analyzes one narrative told by a woman in an interview situation to demonstrate "how the self *represented* in an autobiographical narrative and the self *enacted* in the same narrative can interrelate so as to partly construct the self" (2000: 58, italics in the original). In particular, he focuses on the narrator's self-construction in terms of personal agency. Wortham's analysis reveals how the speaker depicts herself as a character in the story vis-à-vis other characters (positioning level 1); her character develops from a passive child who was abused at the residential school she attended (as she explains, "I was beaten") to a more agentive teenager who "ran away" and "refused" to tell her mother where she was until they "negotiated" a solution regarding her attendance at the school. In a parallel way, the narrator enacts this identity shift from passive to agentive in how she orients to her telling and the interviewer (positioning level 2). For example, while narrating her youth she positions herself to the interviewer as if in a therapist-client relationship (i.e., as vulnerable and seeking support). In contrast, she provides commentary on her negative teenage experiences in ways that position her and the interviewer as peers (i.e., both maintain analytic distance from the story). Accordingly, the narrator constructs herself not as simply passive or agentive but as engaged in an ongoing process of maintaining assertiveness as part of her identity (level 3). Wortham's study thus clarifies interconnections between narrative and self-construction. Wortham also identifies features that accomplish positioning, among them referring terms for people, kinds of verbs, and constructed dialogue.

De Fina and King (2011) use positioning theory to examine interviews conducted in Spanish with Latina immigrants to the United States. They focus on the women's talk about their language experiences, finding that the women, as well as the interviewers, position themselves in ways that reaffirm and contest dominant language ideologies and ideologies about migration. For example, one narrator, in telling a story about a language conflict, talks about learning English as an individual responsibility. She also describes Spanish as divisive in her workplace. Thus, the interviewee reinforces recognizable language ideologies about immigrants to the United States (they should learn English) and about language (multiple languages prevent cohesion), while also constructing the struggles that help constitute immigrant identities.

Positioning has additionally been considered in non-interview settings. Korobov and Bamberg (2007), for instance, examine the naturally occurring talk of a group of adolescent boys and explore how the boys construct complex gendered identities in discussing an occurrence of female nudity that they witnessed on a television show. The boys do not simply construct identities as "males" but rather take up "masculine," "heterosexual," "child," and "consumer critic" positions. Further, they accomplish this positioning in indirect ways, through word choice, laughter, formulaic shows of appreciation, hyperbole, and other features. Thus, they create multi-layered identities, using various (para)linguistic strategies to position themselves vis-à-vis the topic of talk, the people they talk about, and one another.

Aronsson and Gottzén (2011) explore family communication about food, demonstrating how both verbal and nonverbal strategies are used to construct the flexible "generational positions" that characterize family talk. Fosberg (2007) examines positioning in parent-child negotiations about homework. Linking micro-level

conversations to broader cultural ideologies, he finds that such negotiations are “contextualized in relation to the Swedish discourses on homework and parental involvement” (2007: 210). Scholars have also used the framework to explore identity development for students (Wortham 2004) and teachers (Watson 2007), as well as to investigate topics as varied as gendered and social positioning in a second language learning classroom (Menard-Warwick 2007), the functions on a radio call-in show of “figurative clusters” (two sequentially ordered metaphors and/or similes) (Kupferberg and Green 2008), and storytelling and the construction of a family ethos (C. E. Davies 2010).

Across studies, positioning theory has lent insights into various aspects of identity, including as related to gender, ethnicity, personal agency, and institutional role. Positioning is a multi-layered phenomenon that occurs through specific linguistic choices, and how this works is increasingly well understood. Further, the theory makes ties between the here and now of conversation, prior conversations, and broader ideologies (such as about language or social categories). Thus, intertextuality plays a role in creating and interpreting positions. Positioning, like framing, thereby considers both psychological and social elements of interaction. The sample analysis presented next demonstrates these points.

### ***2.3 Sample analysis: positioning***

Georgakopoulou (2005, 2007: ch. 5) analyzes audio-recorded naturally occurring conversations among three Greek women in their late teens who self-describe as “best friends.” The data were collected as part of a larger ethnographic study, which provides context for the discourse analysis of these data. In their talk, the women tell many stories, in particular about men in the local community whom they view as potential suitors. Georgakopoulou draws on positioning to explore the women’s talk, describing it as a “meso-analytic concept” that bridges micro-linguistic practices, such as uses of referring terms, and larger activities such as ongoing relationship and identity construction (2007: 121–2).

The micro-features of the women’s talk construct not only identities for the men discussed but also individual identities for the friends, as well as a “we” that is bound by a collective memory and shared interactional history (Georgakopoulou 2007: 119). One such micro-feature is the nicknames used for the men. These position the women as an ingroup; they also position the men as belonging to two contrastive (stereotypical) categories: the tough (hard) man versus the soft (feminine) man. Along with other strategies, Georgakopoulou argues, these nicknames serve as what Sacks (1992) calls “membership categorization devices”; these not only evoke categories of people but also link members of the category to specific activities and scenes. This idea is highly compatible with Davies and Harré’s (1990: 50) observation that, to accomplish positioning, “cultural stereotypes such as nurse/patient, conductor/orchestra, and mother/son may be called on as a resource.”

In (3), Tonia recounts to Fotini and Vivi seeing a man whom they call “Eclairette” (a diminutive form for “pastry”) and consider a potentially good match for Fotini. The story is highly co-constructed and collaborative, as is typical of the friends’ talk. (I have

used the women's full pseudonyms rather than initials but have otherwise not altered the transcript. Bold is used by Georgakopoulou for membership categorization devices. The original Greek data can be found in Georgakopoulou 2007: 126.)

(3) Georgakopoulou (2007: 126-7)

- 1 Tonia: Oh ::(.) I didn't tell you. This morning I go past (( )) it was packed (0.5) where's
- 2 **Eclaire::tte?** (.) where's **Eclaire::tte?** (.) the::re's **Eclairette**. There in a corner (.)
- 3 with his **brush** ((or vacuum cleaner))
- 4 Fotini: Man (.) the brush and Ekleraki have become // one
- 5 Vivi: //The Phillips vacuum cleaner sucks the dust ((sings the slogan of a TV commercial)) ((They all laugh))
- 6 Tonia: Guys (.) as if he were a **woman** with a **brush** (.) wha:t a thing!
- 7 Fotini: I'll have a **house-proud man** guys (.) what else do I want?
- 8 Vivi: Had he had a *kourabies* ((traditional pastry with powdered sugar)) and **he was clea:ning?**
- 9 Tonia: hhhh hhh (( )) passes and says (.) wow did it rain?=  
10 Fotini: =hhhhh (.) Had it been raining **sweets?**

Focusing on the membership categorization devices in the extract highlights the positioning of the man who is the topic of talk. Various discursive strategies – the nickname “Eclairette,” Fotini’s description of him as a “house-proud man,” and mentions of numerous activities associated with femininity (cleaning, eating sweets) – position Eclairette as a “soft” man in a story line of a stereotypical housewife’s everyday experiences (positioning level 1).

In positioning Eclairette in their talk, the women also accomplish the larger projects of constructing their friendship and creating their own gendered identities. For instance, the ingroup name “Eclairette” reinforces the women’s closeness in the conversational moment (positioning level 2), which is also evident in the collaborative construction of narratives featuring Eclairette. It also indexes their shared past. Further, because Eclairette is understood as a potential love match for Fotini, the talk in particular contributes to the establishment of her gendered identity. As Georgakopoulou (2007: 141) points out, across the women’s conversations, Eclairette is “routinely and playfully positioned as a nice, sweet, and domestic guy,” whereas another romantic interest of Fotini’s is positioned as tough and even “crude.” (In fact, both become highly exaggerated and stereotyped in the women’s talk, and Fotini ends up instead dating a different man deemed appropriate by the group.) Georgakopoulou explains that the women’s positioning of men in their talk is part of “the process of the participants making sense of men and of their own heterosexual roles and identities” (2007: 141). In this short extract, the women positioned Eclairette in a metaphorical location, and Fotini was positioned vis-à-vis that location, giving her the opportunity to conceptualize herself as a woman with a “soft,” “house-proud” man. This activity, then, is part of the women’s ongoing exploration of their own identities as heterosexual young women.

In summary, positioning theory provides a framework to explore selves as discursive constructions, and to investigate different aspects of identity, including the development and negotiation of these aspects. Discourse analysts have developed the theory substantially, disentangling levels of narrative positioning and investigating how various linguistic features contribute to identity creation. Meanwhile, the originators of the theory have taken it in various directions. In an edited volume (Moghaddam and Harré 2012), Harré and colleagues apply positioning to political processes with a focus on conflict and the social psychology of public policy implementation. In revisiting the Sano and Enfermada example and analyzing others with an eye toward ethics, Davies (2008) pursues the theory's relevance for uncovering and resisting social injustices, including discrimination in education and sexism.

### 3 Integrated and Related Perspectives

#### 3.1 *Framing, positioning, and related notions*

In their initial presentation of positioning theory, Davies and Harré (1990) acknowledge connections between positioning, Goffman's (1974, 1981) framing theory, and the entailed concept of footing. However, they suggest that his concept of frame (as articulated in his 1974 book) is "not a well thought through concept" (Davies and Harré 1990: 53). In part, they argue, this is because Goffman (1974) does not distinguish frames from schemas (a difference that was fully articulated later by Tannen and Wallat 1993). In addition, Davies and Harré (1990: 54) view Goffman's understanding of frames as overly static, as pre-existing cultural forms. They suggest that Goffman's "later idea of 'footing' is more promising as an alternative to positioning" (Davies and Harré 1990: 54) yet still criticize it for being too static. However, various studies in discourse analysis demonstrate Goffman's claims that framing and footing are fundamentally interconnected and that both, like positioning, entail flexibility and are apt for the study of social experiences and identities. In fact, Harré has recently reflected, "the useful concept of 'footing' sits well with positioning theory" and the notion of "'frame' is used to refer to story line genera" (2010: 54). This seems to suggest that footing roughly corresponds with position, and frame with story line.

Following such observations and a review of the literature, framing and positioning can be understood as distinct, yet compatible, theoretical frameworks. Tannen (1994: 199–200), for instance, identifies *framing*, *alignment*, and *positioning* as rough synonyms that are useful for exploring gender in interaction. Tannen (2009) suggests correspondence between Goffman's (1974) understanding of *frame*, Gumperz's (1982) notion of *speech activity* (a parallel Gumperz [1982] also draws), Tannen and Wallat's (1993) *interactive frame*, and Davies and Harré's (1990) *positioning* in that the concepts all address and explain situated sense-making and self-making. Georgakopoulou (2007: 122) argues that *footing*, *frame*, *stance*, *evaluation*, *involvement*, and *positioning* all facilitate analyses that make links between micro-conversational activities and larger identity projects, serving metaphorically as meso-level analytic notions.

Presently, “stance” is gaining currency as a concept in variationist sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology, as well as in discourse analysis. Jaffe (2009: 4) suggests that “stance is a uniquely productive way of conceptualizing the processes of indexicalization that are a link between individual performance and social meaning” (see also Ochs 1992). Du Bois’s (2007) notion of “the stance triangle” provides an oft-cited account of the distinctiveness of stance as a theoretical notion. Du Bois (2007: 163) argues that, in taking a stance, a person “(1) evaluates an object, (2) positions a subject (usually the self), and (3) aligns with other subjects.” He provides a paraphrase of this process from a stancetaker’s perspective: “I evaluate something, and thereby position myself, and thereby align with you” (Du Bois 2007: 163). In other words, stancetaking simultaneously involves processes of evaluation, positioning, and what Goffman (1981) describes as taking up alignments or footings.

“Stance” has recently been drawn upon to explore a range of topics, including the achievement of intersubjectivity in storytelling situations (Kärkkäinen 2006), the creation of an individual linguistic style (Johnstone 2009), the construction of gendered identities through the use of slang (Bucholtz 2009), and the dissemination of ideologies about body shape and weight (Coupland and Coupland 2009). Such studies productively elucidate interactional phenomena, often highlighting the prominence and power of evaluation in interaction (see especially Englebretson 2007). However, there is still some debate as to the novelty of a focus on stancetaking. As Irvine (2009: 54) observes:

The issues brought together under this rubric (stance) are not really novel. Our understanding of speech as social action has for decades relied on discussions of “footing” – a position within a set of participant roles in an act of speaking – as well as on discussions of social positioning on a larger scale, thus indexing social groups or even broad categories of participation in social life.

Further, as Englebretson (2007: 1) notes, “Definitions and conceptions of stance are as broad and varied as the individual backgrounds and interests of researchers themselves.” It is thus difficult to pin down a single meaning for the concept.

Also relevant in the study of sense- and self-making and often used in conjunction with the notions of framing/footing and positioning is Bakhtin’s (1981) understanding of all utterances as dialogic – as harkening back to and incorporating elements of prior utterances – and specifically his concept of “voice.” Bakhtin (1981) makes the profound observation that more than one “voice” goes into the making of any individual utterance; people continuously use the words of others for their own purposes. Ribeiro (2006) thus suggests that the concept of voice captures how personal agency is made salient in interactions where changes in footing and positioning take place. Also drawing on Bakhtin (1981), but within a focus on stance, Jaffe (2009: 10) explains that prior utterances voiced by others “are both resources for stancetaking as well as inevitable frameworks for their interpretation and meaning.” Thus, intertextuality not only is part of positioning and framing but also is relevant to related frameworks such as stance and voice.

In the face of such diversity of meanings of some individual terms, and the wide variety of concepts broadly related to positioning and framing, Bucholtz and Hall (2005)

distill a framework for discourse analytic and sociolinguistic explorations of identity that incorporates many of these concepts. They suggest that framing, positioning, and similar notions collectively “show how even in the most fleeting of interactional moves, speakers position themselves and others as particular kinds of people” (595). They thus propose that integrating various notions can be productive.

Further, integrative studies can explore and develop the subtle differences between these frameworks and their entailed concepts, while also advancing our understanding of language, identity, and social situations. Aspects of two or more of these frameworks are usefully interwoven, for example, by Baynham (2011), Bucholtz (2009), Goodwin and Alim (2010), Matsumoto (2011), Schiffrin (1996, 2002), and Tannen (1999). These studies focus on identity but also address meaning-making more broadly, including issues such as workplace relationships (Tannen 1999), talk about painful experiences (Matsumoto 2011; Schiffrin 2002), and functions of slang (Bucholtz 2009). They additionally investigate a range of linguistic and paralinguistic resources – from speech acts to referring terms to tone of voice – in a variety of contexts.

Despite this growing body of scholarship, the exact interrelationship between positioning and framing (as well as related terms) remains open to negotiation. Many scholars use the terms without explicitly differentiating the theories. Others, such as Kendall (2008) and Ribeiro (2006), suggest that a change in position involves a greater alignment shift than does a change in footing. Further, whereas “position” is often viewed as more closely linked to socially recognizable categories, footing can be restricted to Goffman’s discussions of production format and participation framework (e.g., Bucholtz and Hall 2005; Harré 2010). A productive example of a differentiation between, and integration of, framing and positioning is the work of Kendall (2007), of which I present a short extract.

### ***3.2 Sample analysis: integrating framing and positioning***

Kendall (2007, 2008) examines gendered identity construction in naturally occurring family conversations. She follows Tannen (1994) in drawing on framing to explore language and gender. Kendall defines “frames” as situational definitions and “positions” as related to individuals’ “ongoing discursive construction of identity” (Kendall 2007: 127). In this view, frames and positions are connected. As Kendall (2008: 545) explains, “positions are mutually constitutive components of frames. Participants create frames by taking up and making certain positions available to others; and, conversely, participants make certain positions available through the frames they create and maintain.” Footings, in Kendall’s (2008: 548) understanding, serve to differentiate positions: a shift in footing adjusts participant structures, enables the speaker to act in different “social capacities,” and realigns the dynamics of power and solidarity in the encounter (as these dynamics are outlined in Tannen 1994).

Kendall’s (2008) analysis of the audio-recorded dinner-time conversations of one married heterosexual American couple and their 10-year-old child reveals the productivity of using positioning and framing in tandem. She finds that the mother takes up many more positions than does the father, and in more frames. Like the pediatrician in Tannen and Wallat’s (1993) study, the mother switches quickly between frames,

including the dinner frame, in which food and eating are the focus; the caregiving frame, which centers on the child and her needs; and the socialization frame, in which the child is taught to behave appropriately. Further, within each frame, the mother takes up multiple positions. For example, in the child-socialization frame, she positions herself as monitor of her daughter's nonverbal behaviors (what Kendall calls Behavior Monitor), verbal behaviors (Language Monitor), and observance of the dinner-time ritual (Etiquette Monitor). To do this, the mother uses language and paralinguistic to shift footing in the sense of who is addressed and in terms of power and solidarity.

For example, in (4), the mother (Elaine) responds when the child (Beth) utters the phrase "deer poop" at the table (she is talking about deer in the family's garden). How the mother does this creates footings that establish the Language Monitor position within a socialization frame.

(4) Kendall (2008: 554)

- 6 Beth: Yeah we've got deer poop out-  
 7 [These are-  
 8 Elaine: → [Hey! Excuse me, let's not use that language!  
 9 Beth: Sorry.  
 10 Elaine: → It would be droppings, thank you.  
 12 Beth: Deer droppings

In the arrowed lines (original to the transcript), the mother objects to her daughter's language use and recommends an acceptable alternative. Elaine addresses directives to Beth. She thereby adjusts her footing toward her daughter, taking up a position of power but one that also aims to contribute to her daughter's positive development. Here and elsewhere she thus establishes herself as the Language Monitor of the family.

Interestingly, the father never takes up this position, or any other position of authority, in the socialization frame. His most prominent position is Comedian, which he frequently assumes in the conversation frame, where the definition of what is going on is family sociability. This striking contrast echoes the gendered division of labor identified in prior sociological research on American families (e.g., Hochschild 1989) while also showing, as Kendall explains, that interactional patterns "are a component of the sex-based division of labor at home" (2008: 564). Kendall (2007) further explores this theme in her analysis of gendered positions in family discourse as related to traditional and feminist ideologies about parenting and paid employment.

In summary, Kendall's (2008) findings provide insight into gendered identity construction while also elucidating how footings, and in turn positions, are linguistically constructed within the frames that constitute everyday family life. Kendall thereby demonstrates how the concepts of framing and positioning, and the related notion of footing, can be both differentiated and interconnected, to lend insights into identities (what exactly it means to be a "mother") and social situations (what frames constitute what is often simply referred to as "family dinner").

## 4 Conclusions and future directions

Framing and positioning elucidate the complexity of human social interaction, including the ongoing discursive co-construction of meanings, situations, relationships, and identities. Despite their different relative foci on situations and selves, respectively, the perspectives are interrelated and complementary: in framing theory, the term *frame* emphasizes situational understandings, and *footing* focuses on participants. Reciprocally, in positioning theory, *positions* are a means of understanding personhood, whereas the notion of *story line* roughly corresponds to the social situation.

The two theories both support a layered understanding of human experience. The related concepts of frame lamination, and various levels and kinds of positioning, help us not only to dissect interaction but also to understand how an ordinary situation, or an individual person (or even a single social role, such as “pediatrician” or “father”), involves flexibility and multiplicity. Thus a medical encounter is built of multiple interactive frames (Tannen and Wallat 1993) and a young person’s identity construction involves alignments related to her peers, members of the opposite sex, and cultural ideologies about gender (Georgakopoulou 2005, 2007).

As a situated, ongoing process, meaning-making relies on prior knowledge and experience. Thus intertextuality underlies both framing and positioning. In framing, it surfaces through participants’ knowledge schemas about how particular frames generally unfold. Intertextuality also captures the interlinking of specific social interactions. For example, the previously analyzed pretend-play discourse of the father (Steve) and child (Natalie) connects to various other play frames that occur in the talk of this family, including pretend play between the child and her mother. The parents also recurrently enact their own playful verbal routines, for instance exchanging terms of endearment (such as “my love” and “my dove”; see Gordon 2009). Through such strategies, members of this family link disparate interactions and construct and display a linguistically creative, playful family culture. Thus, the father and child’s co-constructed pretend play is best understood as part of a broader, intertextual pattern that characterizes and creates the family, including its identity.

In positioning, the “story line” concept accomplishes a similar linking of diverse conversations; creating and interpreting positions depends on constructing and recognizing (previously experienced) story lines, and people’s identities are constructed within and across story lines and interactions. In these ways, framing – growing from a field that has tended to look out into the world (sociology) – and positioning – developing from one that has tended to look within (psychology) – have found a meeting point, where the interactional and the psychological are understood as inseparable in language.

From this distinctive position, framing and positioning are poised to serve future discourse analytic inquiry, along with related notions such as stance. For example, the idea of lamination or layering has only begun to be explored in detail, and yet I would suggest it is increasingly applicable to aspects of contemporary life. These include the seeming omnipresence of multi-tasking and the footing shifts such multi-tasking might entail (e.g., Good 2009), and the complexity of identity construction in both “real” life and in “virtual” online worlds (e.g., Aarsand 2008; Al Zidjaly 2010). As part of

such ongoing and future investigations into situations and selves, the interconnections between framing theory, positioning theory, and related frameworks will be further developed and elucidated.

## NOTES

1 I thank Najma Al Zidjaly, Jeffrey Good, and Deborah Tannen for their comments on an earlier version of this chapter. This chapter was completed at

the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (CASBS) at Stanford University; I am grateful for the center's support.

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# 16 Conversational Interaction

## *The Embodiment of Human Sociality*

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EMANUEL A. SCHEGLOFF

### 0 Introduction

The central theme of my contribution to this volume is that interaction is the primary, fundamental embodiment of sociality – what I have called elsewhere (Schegloff 1996d) “the primordial site of sociality.” From this point of view, human discourse – that is, talk-and-related-conduct-in-interaction – refers to those features of the organization of human interaction that provide the flexibility and robustness that allows it to supply the infrastructure that supports the overall or macro-structure of societies in the same sense that roads and railways serve as infrastructure for the economy, and that grounds all of the traditionally recognized institutions of societies and the lives of their members.

If one reflects on the concrete activities that make up these abstractly named institutions – the economy, the polity, and the institutions for the reproduction of the society (courtship, marriage, family, socialization, and education), the law, religion, and so forth, it turns out that interaction – and *talk* in interaction – figure centrally in them. When the most powerful macrostructures of society fail and crumble (as, e.g., after the demise of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe), the social structure that is left is interaction, in a largely unaffected state. People talk in turns, which compose orderly sequences through which courses of action are developed; they deal with transient problems of speaking, hearing, or understanding the talk and reset the interaction on its course; they organize themselves so as to allow stories to be told; they fill out

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This chapter appeared previously, with minor differences, as “Interaction: The infrastructure for social institutions, the natural ecological niche for language, and the arena in which culture is enacted.” In N. J. Enfield and S. C. Levinson (Eds.), *Roots of Human Sociality: Culture, cognition and interaction* (pp. 70–96), London: Berg (2006), the Wenner-Gren Foundation. Cross-references to other contributions in that volume have been omitted here. Reprinted by kind permission of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

*The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Second Edition.

Edited by Deborah Tannen, Heidi E. Hamilton, and Deborah Schiffrin.

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occasions of interaction from approaches and greetings through to closure, and part in an orderly way. I mention this here to bring to the forefront of attention what rests on the back of interaction: the organization of interaction needs to be – and is – robust enough, flexible enough, and sufficiently self-maintaining to sustain social order at family dinners and in coal mining pits, around the surgical operating table and on skid row, in New York City and Montenegro and Rossel Island, and so forth, in every nook and cranny where human life is to be found.

Accordingly, my plan is to sketch the contours of half a dozen generic organizations of practice central to the conduct of interaction, and, more specifically, that form of interaction that is distinctive to humans – talk in interaction.<sup>1</sup> By referring to them as generic, I mean to convey that where stable talk in interaction is sustained, solutions to key organizational problems are in operation, and these organizations of practice are the basis for these solutions. We begin by sketching some of these basic organizations of practice, and then turn briefly to their bearing on some other aspects of contemporary social science inquiry.

## 1 Generic Problems and Practice(d) Solutions

Although it is almost certainly the case that many important organizational problems of talk in interaction and their solutions are as yet unknown, let alone understood, it appears that the following ones will have a continuing claim on researchers' attention.<sup>2</sup>

### ***1.1 The “turn-taking” problem: Who should talk or move or act next and when should they do so? How does this affect the construction and understanding of the turns or acts themselves?***

So far it seems to be the case that wherever investigators have looked carefully, talk in interaction is organized to be done one speaker at a time.<sup>3</sup> Achieving and maintaining such a state of talk may prompt the invocation of conventionalized arrangements like a chairperson to allocate the turns, or mapping the order of turn allocation onto ordered features of the candidate participants such as relative status (Albert 1964). But the first of these marks the setting as institutionally or ceremonially distinct from “ordinary talk,” and the latter engenders a range of problems that make it unsustainable as a general organization of interaction. What is at stake in “turn-taking” is not politeness or civility, but the very possibility of coordinated courses of action between the participants (e.g., allowing for initiative and response) – very high stakes indeed.

Even with just two participants, achieving one at a time poses a problem of coordination if the talk is to be without recurrent substantial silences and overlaps: how to coordinate the ending of one speaker and the starting up by another. If there are more than two “ratified participants” (Goffman 1963), there is the additional issue of having at least one of the current non-speakers, and not more than one of the current

non-speakers, start up on completion of the current speaker's turn. One can imagine a variety of putative solutions to these problems of coordination, but none of them can be reconciled with the data of actual, naturally occurring ordinary conversation (Schegloff n.d.).

The simplest systematics for turn-taking article by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) sketches an organization of practices that works well, and has led to non-intuitive enhancements (Schegloff 2000b, 2002). It describes units and practices for constructing turns at talk, practices for allocating turns at talk, and a set of practices that integrates the two. So far this account works across quite a wide range of settings, languages, and cultures. Departures from interactional formats familiar to Western industrialized nations involve what might be called "differences in the values of variables" – for example, different lengths of time that count as a silence, rather than differences in the underlying organization of practices.

To give a brief example, there may be differences between cultures or subcultures in what the unmarked value of a silence between the end of one turn and the start of a next should be. Leaving less than the normative "beat" of silence or more than that can engender inferences among parties to the conversation; starting a next turn "early" or starting a next turn "late" are ways of doing things in interaction, and conversation between people from different cultural settings can result in misfiring with one another. For example, one difference often remarked on by urban, metropolitan people about rural or indigenous people is that they seem to be dimwitted and somewhat hostile; comments range from Marx on the "idiocy of the rural classes" to Ron Scollon and Suzanne Scollon's work (1981) on the relation between migrants from the "lower 48" states in the United States and Alaska Natives. Having asked them a question, the urbanites – or should I say urbane-ites – find themselves not getting a timely reply and sense resistance, non-understanding, non-forthcomingness, and so forth. Often they break what they perceive as "the silence" that greeted their question with a follow-up question, which may be taken by their interlocutor to exemplify the high-pressure aggressiveness of "city slickers." But what differs between them is not that their turn-taking practices are different or differently organized, but the way they "reckon" the invisible, normative beat between one turn and the next.

I have just pointed at the organization of turn-taking; an account of what that organization is, and how it works, will have to be sought out in the by-now substantial literature addressed to those matters (cf. esp. Lerner 2003).

## ***1.2 The "sequence-organizational" problem: How are successive turns or actions formed up to be "coherent" with the prior one (or some prior one) and constitute a "course of action"? What is the nature of that coherence?***

The most common way researchers have addressed actual spates of talk has been to ask what it is about, and how movement from one "topic" to another occurs, and what it reveals about the intentions and meanings being conveyed by the speaker or the several

participants. Talking *about* things – “doing topic talk” – is surely one observable feature of talk in interaction. But it is *only one* of the things people do in talk in interaction. We would do well to open inquiry to the *full range of things that people do* in their talking in interaction – asking, requesting, inviting, offering, complaining, reporting, answering, agreeing, disagreeing, accepting, rejecting, assessing, and so forth. Indeed, doing topic talk is itself largely composed of such doings – telling, agreeing, disagreeing, assessing, rejecting, and so forth. Proceeding in this way treats action and courses of action as the more general tack and doing topic talk as one of its varieties.

A comparable contrast surfaces in contributions to some areas of psychology between what might be called “mentation” on the one hand and “action” or “practices” on the other hand. The discourse is full of terms like *understanding, knowing, inferring, reasoning, establishing common ground, intention, motive, construal* (e.g., Theory of Mind, henceforth ToM) and so forth. But *the* central question is whether human sociality is a matter of *knowing* together or of *doing* together.

At least part of this contrast turns on the terms of description used in inquiry. For example, one account of work on ToM describes an experimental setting in which infants figured out which of two previously unknown objects is being named by determining which one the investigator–speaker was looking at. But we might well ask why this is treated as a ToM, rather than a theory of interactional practice: speakers can indicate what they are talking about by looking at it, and recipients can therefore look in the direction of the speaker’s gaze to find what to look at to determine what the speaker is referring to. If this question and the issue underlying it have any cogency, they should prompt examination of the conversational and interactional settings in which so-called ToMs develop: What is said to the children? What is being done by what is being said to them? What do the children say back? What are they doing by saying that? Almost certainly what the children are learning is what others are doing and what they should do in turn. If there are theories like ToM, they are built up from and for contingencies of interaction and these are contingencies of *action or conduct*, not contingencies of theorizing. It is to the organization of action, and action realized through talk, that sequence organization is addressed.

If we ask how actions and courses of action get organized in talk in interaction, it turns out that there are a few kernel forms of organization that appear to supply the formal framework within which the context-specific actual actions and trajectories of action are shaped. By far the most common and consequential is the one we call “adjacency pair based” (Sacks 1992, vol. 2: 521–69; Schegloff 2007; Schegloff and Sacks 1973). The simplest and minimal form of a sequence is two turns long: the first initiating some kind of action trajectory – such as requesting, complaining, announcing, and the like; the second responding to that action in either a compliant or aligning way (granting, remedying, assessing, and the like, respectively) or in a misaligning or non-compliant way (rejecting, disagreeing, claiming prior knowledge, and the like, respectively).

Around and inside such “simple” pairs of actions, quite elaborate expansions can be fashioned by the participants. There are, for example, expansions before the first part of such a pair, such as “preannouncements” (“Didju hear who’s coming?”), “preinvitations” (“Are you doing anything this weekend?”), and the like. Or, to cite actual data of a preinvitation:

(1) CG,1 (Nelson is the caller; Clara is called to the phone)

1 Clara: Hello  
 2 Nelson: Hi.  
 3 Clara: Hi.  
 4 Nelson: -> Whatcha doin'.  
 5 Clara: -> Not much.  
 6 Nelson: Y'wanna drink?  
 7 Clara: Yeah.  
 8 Nelson: Okay.

And of a preannouncement:

(2) Terasaki (2004:207)

1 Jim: -> Y'wanna know who I got stoned with a few(hh) weeks ago? hh!  
 2 Ginny: -> Who.  
 3 Jim: Mary Carter 'n her boy(hh)frie(hh)nd. hh.

Notice that these “pre”s themselves make a response relevant, and so themselves constitute an adjacency pair, and can therefore themselves be expanded (e.g., “Hey Steve,” “Yeah?” “Didju hear who pulled out of the conference?” “No, who?”).

And there can be expansions after the first action–turn in an adjacency pair and before the responding second part – an inserted sequence. For example:

(3) Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks (1977: 368)

1 B: -> Fb Was last night the first time you met Missiz Kelly?  
 2 (1.0)  
 3 M: -> Fi Met whom?  
 4 B: -> Si Missiz Kelly.  
 5 M: -> Sb Yes.

Again, notice that if a first pair part is not followed by an action–turn, which could be its second pair part, then what occurs in its place is itself a first pair part and requires a response, so it too is an adjacency pair and it too can get expanded.

And after the response to the initiating action–turn there can be further talk that clearly is extending that trajectory of action. Sometimes that can be a single turn, which does not make a response to it relevant next, as at lines 3 and 8 in the following specimens, which has two such sequences.

(4) HG, 16:25–33

1 Nancy: =-hhh Dz he av iz own apa:rt[mint?]  
 2 Hyla: [·hhhh] Yea:h,=  
 3 Nancy: -> =Oh:,  
 4 (1.0)  
 5 Nancy: How didju git iz number,  
 6 (·)

7 Hyla: I(h) (·) c(h)alled infermation'n San Fr'ncissc(h)[uh!  
 8 Nancy: -> [Oh::::  
 9 (·)

But it can also be something that does make a response to it relevant next; so it too is itself an adjacency pair and can take the kinds of expansions I have been sketching here.

(5) Connie and Dee, 9

1 Dee: Well who'r you workin for.  
 2 Connie: ·hhh Well I'm working through the Amfat Corporation.  
 3 Dee: -> The who?  
 4 Connie: -> Amfah Corpora[tion. T's a holding company.  
 5 Dee: ->> [Oh  
 6 Dee: ->> Yeah.

Note here that the question–answer sequence at lines 1–2 is expanded after the answer by another at lines 3–4 (addressing a hearing or understanding problem), and that the latter is expanded by a single-turn expansion, first at line 5 (where the “got it”-registering “oh” is caught in overlap) and then again at line 6 (with the now “knew it”-registering “yeah”).

I hope that it is clear that what started as a simple two turn–action sequence can be a framework that “carries” an extensive stretch of talk.<sup>4</sup> There are some deep connections between what are nonetheless largely autonomous organizations of practice – the organization of turn-taking and the organization of action sequences. Just as interaction cannot do without practices for allocating opportunities to participate and practices for constraining the size of those opportunities – that is, an organization of turn-taking, so it cannot do without an organization of practices for using those opportunities to fashion coherent and sustained trajectories or courses of action – sequence organization.

### ***1.3 The “trouble” problem: how to deal with trouble in speaking, hearing, or understanding the talk or other conduct such that the interaction does not freeze in place; that intersubjectivity is maintained or restored; and that the turn, sequence, and activity can progress to possible completion***

If the organization of talk in interaction supplies the basic infrastructure through which the institutions and social organization of quotidian life are implemented, it had better be pretty reliable, and have ways of getting righted if beset by trouble. And so it is. Talk in interaction is as prone as any organization is to transient problems of integration and execution; speakers cannot find the word they want,

find that they have started telling about something that needs something else to be told first, hear that they articulated just the opposite word from the one they are after, find that another is talking at the same time as they are, and so forth. And talk in interaction is as vulnerable as any activity is to interference from altogether unrelated events in its environment – overflight by airplanes, an outburst of traffic noise, or other ambient noise that interferes with their recipient's ability to hear, and so forth.

For such inescapable contingencies there is an organization of practices for dealing with trouble or problems in speaking, hearing, and understanding the talk. It turns out that this organization – which we term an organization of repair – is extraordinarily effective at allowing the parties to locate and diagnose the trouble and, in virtually all cases, to deal with it quickly and successfully.

The organization of repair differentiates between repair initiated and carried through by the speaker of the trouble source, on the one hand, and other participants in the interaction, on the other hand. The practices of repair are focused in a sharply defined window of opportunity in which virtually all repair that is initiated is initiated (Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977). This “repair initiation opportunity space” begins in the same turn – indeed, in the same turn-constructional unit (TCU) – in which the trouble source occurred and extends to the next turn by that speaker.<sup>5</sup> The consequence is that the initial opportunity to initiate repair falls to the speaker of the trouble source, and a very large proportion of repairs are addressed and resolved in the same turn, and same TCU, in which the trouble source occurred (“same-turn repair”), or in its immediate aftermath (“transition space repair”). These largely involve troubles in speaking, but can also be directed to anticipatable problems for recipients – problems of hearing or understanding. The “preferences for self-initiation of repair and self-repair” have as one of their manifestations that recipients of talk that is for them problematic regularly withhold initiating repair in the next turn to allow the trouble-source speakers an additional opportunity to themselves initiate repair. If they do not do so, the next opportunity for addressing the trouble falls to recipients – ordinarily in the next turn. Finally (for our purposes), a speaker may have produced a turn at talk and had a recipient reply to it with no indication of trouble, only to find that the reply displayed what is to the speaker a problematic understanding of that turn. Then, in the turn following the one that has displayed the problematic understanding, the speaker of what now turns out to have been a trouble-source turn may take the next turn to address that problematic understanding (the canonical form being “No, I didn't mean X, I meant Y”; cf. Schegloff 1992b).

As the talk develops through the repair space, there are fewer and fewer troubles or repairables that get addressed. Most are dealt with in the same or next turn, and these range from production problems (such as word selection, word retrieval, articulation, management of prosody, etc.) and reception problems (hearing and understanding of inappropriately selected usages, such as person reference terms, technical terms, complicated syntax, etc.) to issues of intersubjectivity and strategic issues of delicateness. It is hard to say which are more important: without virtually immediate resolution of the production and reception problems, the interaction can be stalled indefinitely with unpredictable consequences; without ways of spotting departures from intersubjectivity and restoring it, the shared reality of the moment is lost, again with unpredictable consequences.

It is hard to imagine a society or culture whose organization of interaction does not include a repair component, and one that works more or less like the one I have sketched. We know that details may vary in ways linked to the linguistic structure of the language spoken – either its grammatical structure (cf., e.g., Fox, Hayashi, and Jaspersen 1996) or its phonological inventory (cf., e.g., Schegloff 1987b). But the structure of the repair space and the terms of its differentiation between same and other repair are likely not to vary. For, among its other virtues, it is the availability of the practices of repair that allows us to make do with the natural languages that philosophers and logicians have long shown to be so inadequate as to require the invention of artificial, formal ones. It is repair that allows our language use not only to allow but to exploit many of the features that have been treated as its faults – ambiguity, polysemy, contradiction, and so forth. Designed not for automatic parsers but for sentient beings, should these usages not be transparently solvable, the practices of repair are available to get solutions (Schegloff 1989).

The practices of repair and their ordered deployment are probably the main guarantors of intersubjectivity and common ground in interaction. Intersubjectivity can, therefore, not require grounding in static bodies of shared knowledge or common ground – grounding that, if taken strictly, has often been found unattainable in any case (see, e.g., Garfinkel 1967: 24–31, 35–103 for one demonstration of this). The practices of repair make intersubjectivity always a matter of immediate and local determination, not one of abstract and general shared facts, views, or stances. Built off the basic interactivity of ordinary talk, each next turn displays some understanding of the just prior or some prior other talk, action, scene, and so forth, or it displays the problematization of such understanding for its speaker. Intersubjectivity or shared understanding are thereby always addressed for practical purposes about some determinate object at some here and now, with resources – practical resources, that is, resources that are practices – for dealing with the trouble and restoring intersubjectivity. The practices of recipient design (see below) get the talk designed for its current recipients, which serves to minimize the likelihood of trouble in the first instance, and the practices of repair provide resources for spotting, diagnosing, and fixing trouble that somehow occurs nonetheless.

#### ***1.4 The word selection problem: How do the elements of a turn get selected? How does that selection inform and shape the understanding achieved by the turn's recipients?***

Turns are composed of TCUs – sentential, clausal, phrasal, and lexical, in English and a great many other languages.<sup>6</sup> But of what are TCUs composed? Referring to this generic organization as “word selection” is a vernacular way of putting it, or perhaps a linguistic or psycholinguistic one for some varieties of those disciplines. And sometimes it is a relevant way of putting it in conversation-analytic work. But here I want to call attention to the interactional practices that are only incidentally lexical or about words. These are practices of referring, or describing, or – perhaps most generally – practices of formulating. In talk in interaction, participants formulate or refer to persons (Sacks 1972a, 1972b; Sacks and Schegloff 1979; Schegloff 1996c), places (Schegloff 1972), time,

actions, and so on. The use of particular formulations cannot be adequately understood simply by reference to their correctness. The person writing this (and that is one formulation already) is not only a sociologist; he is also (as the pronoun inescapably revealed) male, Californian, Jewish, and so forth. The place I am writing is not only my office, it is in Haines Hall, at University of California, Los Angeles, in Los Angeles, on the west side, in the United States, and so forth. And although I already formulated my current activity as "writing this," it is also typing, rushing to finish before a student arrives, and so forth. That is, "correctness" will not do as the grounds for using this or that formulation, because there are always other formulations that are equally correct. What is central is relevance (not, obviously, in the sense of Sperber and Wilson 1986) – what action or actions the speaker is designing the utterance to embody.

Consider, for example, this bit of interaction. Hyla has invited Nancy (the two of them college juniors in the early 1970s) earlier in the day to go to the theater that night to see a performance of *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs* (Inge 1958), and they are talking on the phone in the late afternoon about that upcoming event (among other things). After a brief exchange about when they will meet, Nancy asks,

(6) Hyla and Nancy, 05:07-39

- 1 Nancy: How didju hear about it from the pape[r?]  
 2 Hyla: [·hhhhh I sa:w-  
 3 (0.4)  
 4 Hyla: -> A'right when was:(it,)/(this,)  
 5 (0.3)  
 6 Hyla: -> The week before my birthda:[y,]  
 7 Nancy: [Ye]a[:h,  
 8 Hyla: -> [I wz looking in the Calendar  
 9 -> section en there was u:n, (·) un a:d yihknow a liddle:: u-  
 10 thi:ng, ·hh[hh  
 11 Nancy: [Uh hu:h,=  
 12 Hyla: =At- th'-th'theater's called the Met Theater it's on  
 13 Point[setta.]  
 14 Nancy: [The Me]:t,  
 15 (·)  
 16 Nancy: I never heard of i[t].  
 17 Hyla: [I hadn't either.·hhh But anyways,-en  
 18 theh the moo- thing wz th'↓Dark e'th' ↓Top a'th'↑ Stai[:rs.]  
 19 Nancy: [Mm-h]m[: ,  
 20 Hyla: [En  
 21 I nearly wen'chhrazy cz I [: I: l o: v e ]that ] mo:vie.]  
 22 Nancy: [y: Yeah I know y|ou lo:ve]tha::t.=  
 23 Hyla: =s:So::, ·hh an' like the first sho:w,=  
 24 Nancy: =M[m hmm, ]  
 25 Hyla: [wz g'nna] be: ,  
 26 (·)  
 27 Hyla: on my birthday.=

28 Nancy: =Uh hu[h, ]  
 29 Hyla: [I'm] go'[n awhh whould hI love-  
 30 Nancy: [(So-)  
 31 (·)  
 32 Hyla: yihknow fer Sim tuh [take me tuh that.]  
 33 Nancy: [ Y a y u : : h, ]

I want to call attention here to only two bits of Hyla's responsive talk starting at line 8: the time formulation "the week before my birthday," and the activity formulation "I was looking in the Calendar section" (an ethnographic note: the "Calendar" section of the *Los Angeles Times* is the Culture and Entertainment section). First note that Hyla conducts an out-loud search for "when it was"; she is taking care with this time formulation. There are many other ways of referring to the time in question: how many weeks ago; which week of the month; the date; and so forth. She chooses "the week before my birthday." And now "I was looking in the Calendar section": not "reading the paper"; not "looking at the Calendar section"; not the "I saw" with which she had initially begun (at line 8) and so forth. By co-selecting these two formulations, she is "doing" a description of "I was looking for what to do on my birthday" although not articulating that description.

So, in turns at talk that make up sequences of actions, the elements of the talk are selected and deployed to accomplish actions and to do so recognizably; and recipients attend the talk to find what the speaker is *doing* by saying it in *those* words, in *that* way. Using "words" or "usages" or "formulations" is a generic organization of practices for talk in interaction because that talk is designed to do things, things that fit with other things in the talk – most often the just preceding ones. Talk in interaction is about constructing actions, which is why it does not reduce to language; treating talk in interaction only for its properties as a system of symbols or a medium for articulation or deploying propositions does not get at its core. And the actions that are constructed by talk and other conduct in interaction compose, and are parts of, *trajectories* or *courses* of action, which is why a pragmatics that does not attend to the sequential organization of actions is at risk for aridity.

### ***1.5 The overall structural-organization problem: How does an occasion of interaction get structured? What are those structures? And how does placement in the overall structure inform the construction and understanding of the talk and other conduct as turns, as sequences of actions, and so forth?***

Some actions are positioned not with respect to turns or sequences (although they are *done* in turns and sequences) or the repair space but by reference to the occasion of interaction as a unit with its own organization. Greetings and good-byes are the most obvious exemplars, being positioned at the beginning and ending of interactional occasions, respectively. Less obvious, perhaps, is that greetings are just one of a number of action sequence types that may compose an opening phase of an interaction (Schegloff 1986), and good-byes are the last of a number of components that make up a closing

section of an interaction. What happens in between can take either of two forms (as far as we know now) – a state of continuously sustained talk and what we can call a continuing state of incipient talk (Schegloff and Sacks 1973). The latter term is meant to refer to settings in which the parties talk for a while and then lapse into silence (silence that does not prompt a closing of the interactional occasion), at any point in which the talk may start up again. Characteristic settings in contemporary industrial societies might be families or roommates in the living room in the evening, occupants of a car in a carpool or a long journey, seatmates on an airplane, diners at table, co-workers at a workbench, and so forth. In some societies, this may be the default organization of talk in interaction.

Although greetings and good-byes are pretty much tied to their positions in the overall structural organization, other types of action may take on a distinctive character depending on where in the overall structural organization of a conversation they occur. Some types of action are commonly withheld from occurrence early in a conversation; “requests” are a case in point. Doing a request early in the organization of an interaction can be a way of marking its urgency, or some other feature known to be recognizable to the recipient(s). By contrast, many kinds of “noticings” are ordinarily meant to occur as soon as possible after the “noticeable” is detectable. Withholding the noticing from early enactment can be taken as failing to have noticed the noticeable, or as treating the noticeable as negatively valenced.

The generic character of the overall structural organization of the unit “a single conversation” consists straightforwardly in its provision of the practices for launching and closing episodes of interaction with the commitments of attention that they place on their participants. If talk in interaction is going on, the parties will find themselves to be someplace in it by reference to this order of organization.

## 2 Interactional Practices at the Roots of Human Sociality

Readers of this volume are likely to bring to it a broad range of interests – the variability of human culture and language, the workings of human cognition, and the organization of human interaction – not a small undertaking. Disciplinarily, this amounts to a reconciliation of anthropology, ethology, linguistics, communication, psychology, and sociology. Research on interaction suggests a number of beginning steps.

### 2.1 *Candidate universals in human interaction and cultural variability*

As I have intimated, if not stated explicitly, in the preceding sections, I take the generic orders of organization in talk in interaction to be candidate universals. Other social species display an organization of interaction with conspecifics, and there is no compelling reason that I am aware of for doubting that this holds true for humans. The capacity of travelers, missionaries, conquerors, and so forth to get on with host populations they are visiting while ignorant of the language and culture – both historically and contemporaneously – is, at the very least, commonsense grounds for this as a

starting position. Its import is that interaction in societies and cultures that appear different from our own be examined for their solution to what I have termed the generic organizational issues: How do they allocate opportunities to talk in interaction and constrain the duration of the talk in those opportunities? How is the talk in turns designed to embody actions and how are those actions combined to form courses of action across speakers and other participants? How are problems of speaking, hearing, and understanding the talk managed? What practices underlie the formulation of what people talk about – persons, places, actions, and whatever else enters into their talk? How are occasions of interaction launched (or avoided), how are they ended, and how is the continuity or non-continuity of talk within some occasion organized?

The import of the claim that these organizations are generic is *not* that the way talk in interaction is done in the United States, or modern industrialized societies, is generic; it is that the organizational issues to which these organizations of practice are addressed are generic. Conversation Analysis is not averse to finding, indeed celebrating, what appear to be differences in interaction in other cultures, societies, and languages. In some instances, the differences are readily understood by references to differences in the linguistic or cultural resources of that population; in others, they serve to trigger a search for a more general and formal account, under which our previous understanding and the newly encountered one are both subsumable.

Here is an example of the first of these (see Schegloff 1987b). Some years ago a graduate student working in the highlands of Guatemala in a village where Quiche was the language reported that same-turn repairs were initiated very differently there than they were in the several languages that she knew (Daden and McClaren n.d.). What is most familiar to speakers of Indo-European languages are cutoffs (e.g., glottal or dental stops) and sound stretches. But in Quiche, both stops and stretches were phonemic, and, accordingly, not used by speakers to initiate repair on the talk earlier in their turn. Long stretches, which were not phonemic for Quiche, were used to initiate same-turn repair. On the one hand, the variation in practice could be straightforwardly traced to differences in the phonemic inventory of the languages; on the other hand, our understanding of the practices of repair was reinforced by finding in this very different linguistic and cultural environment a “place” findable only by reference to the organization of repair – the initiation of same-turn repair.

Sometimes what appeared to be a major difference in the practices of talk in interaction turns out, on closer inspection made possible by modern technology, not to be different at all. For example, a classic chapter by Reisman (1974) described what he called a “contrapuntal conversational” system that, in effect, was without any turn-taking organization at all. Subsequently, Sidnell’s (2001) examination of video-recorded data from the same area revealed a turn-taking organization virtually identical to the one described in Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974).

The second of these examples appears to involve the technology of observation more than issues of universality or variation; it was the possibility of examining and reexamining the data at a level of detail not accessible to one exposure in real time that allowed specification of where and when each participant began and stopped talking. The first of the preceding examples, however, is one sort of instance of this issue, and it exemplifies a familiar polarity in inquiry – a preoccupation with variation versus a preoccupation with generality. Both are important, but in the domain we are concerned with, generality seems to me to have the priority (although not exclusivity). For the dimensions on which variability is observed and rendered consequential are framed by the

dimensions of generality that render the comparison relevant to begin with. If I ask you how a pear is different from honesty, you will think I have a joke or a clever riddle up my sleeve; they lack the common class membership that renders comparison relevant. The generic organizations of talk in interaction offer some proposed dimensions of relevance for talk in interaction *per se*; languages, cultures, and societies can be examined by reference to these organizations; whether what is found will be best understood as variability and differences, or as variations on a same underlying solution to a generic problem, remains to be found out.

Aside from these organizations of practice, or rather by virtue of them, certain other features of talk in interaction are plausible candidates for universal relevance and merit mention here. One is minimization. For various of the domains we have studied, the default or base form is the minimal form. For example:

- When a party begins talk in a turn, they have initially the right (and responsibility) to produce one TCU to completion (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974). Getting to produce more is contingent on the conduct of the speaker and of the co-participants (cf. Schegloff 1982) to overcome a minimization constraint embodied in the transition relevance of possible turn completion.
- The basic form of a sequence is two turns – the minimum for it to be a sequence (Schegloff 2007; Schegloff and Sacks 1973); additional turns represent expansions, inspectable for what they are being used to do.
- In referring to someone, there is preference for minimization – that is, for a single reference form (Sacks and Schegloff 1979); anything more is marked and is examinable for what else, over and above simply referring, it is being used to do.

In all of these domains of practice, and others, we find this transparently simplest design: the minimal form is the unmarked default; special import is attached to expansions of it.

A second feature is the special character of “nextness,” or next-prior positioning, operating at various levels of granularity (Schegloff 2000a). For example:

- The turn-taking organization serves to allocate one turn at a time – next turn.
- Absent any provision to the contrary, any turn will be heard as addressed to the just prior, that is, the one it is next after.
- The production and parsing of a turn at talk is by reference to a succession of “next elements,” where elements can be words, parts of words, or sounds. This holds as well for the deployment of self-initiated repair, which turns out to be regularly placed by reference to “next word” or “next sound” of word.
- “Nextness” can operate for sequences; if a sequence type can be reciprocal (i.e., after Alan initiates to Bill, Bill reciprocates to Alan), then the default position for the reciprocal is next sequence (most familiarly in “Alan: How are you, Bill: Fine, and you?”); or, if a presequence is done (e.g., a summons making an answer relevant next), then if the response gives a go-ahead, then the base sequence should occur next (cf. Schegloff 1968).

Most fundamentally, the basic place to look to see how someone understood a turn is to see what they produced in the next turn. In other words, overwhelmingly talk in interaction is locally organized – one turn at a time, one sequence at a time, and so forth.

A third feature is a preference for progressivity, again, at work at various levels of granularity.

- Recipients orient to each next sound as a next piece in the developing trajectory of what the speaker is saying or doing; pauses, cutoffs, repeats, in-breaths, and the like all involve some interference with progressivity, and are examinable for what import they have in the production and recognition of what is going on.
- Other initiations of repair are understood as stopping the course of action that was in progress to deal with some problem in hearing or understanding the talk, are on that count dispreferred, and may serve as harbingers of other dispreferred conduct in the offing.

There is plainly a relationship between these three features: progressivity is realized when some trajectory of action moves from the last-reached point to the next; delay means something occurs next other than what was due next; expansion of some unit – a turn, a sequence, a person reference – beyond its default, minimal realization can constitute a loss of progressivity, and so forth. The formality of these observations makes possible examination of a variety of cultural and behavioral settings as a way of assessing the degree to which, and the levels at which, the undergirdings of human sociality are species-generic or variable.

## 2.2 *Implications for human cognition: action recognition and Theory of Mind*

A good starting point for exploring the fit of human cognition with Conversation Analysis is to remark on the obvious point that, whatever is to be found in the cognitive apparatus, it is not working on a blank field in its engagement with the world. As central a theme as any in the preceding sketch of Conversation Analysis is that talk in interaction is about action and courses of action (requesting, complaining, asking, answering, (dis)agreeing, correcting, aligning, etc.). The talk speakers do is designed to embody one or more actions and to do so recognizably; the uptake co-participants manage is designed to recognize what the speaker (and other co-participants) mean to be doing with their conduct so as to underwrite an appropriate next action. A ToM has in the first instance to be furnished with methods for designing talk to do recognizable actions and methods for recognizing the actions so designed by co-participants. In a nutshell, that is a large chunk of what Conversation Analysis is about. Evidences of this are scattered in the preceding pages.

- Presequences like preinvitations, preannouncements, and the like are designed to be recognizable to recipients as foreshadowing doing an invitation or an announcement unless the recipient discourages doing so in their reply. “Are you doing anything tonight?” “Yeah, I’ve got a paper to write” warns the prospective inviter that an invitation will be rejected. That is what it is designed to do and do recognizably. A recipient hears it as something asked not for itself, not in its own right, but as a harbinger of something contingently to follow, depending on the response. That is why a question like “Are you doing anything tonight?” is often met with a return

question, “Why?” The “why” askers know they are not being asked for a behaviorally accurate account; they are being asked about their availability. I take it that this is one sort of thing that ToM studies are interested in. Getting at them will, I think, require knowing about the organization of adjacency pair based sequences and their expansions.

- How do ordinary sentences accomplish actions recognizable as requests, announcements, complaints, and so forth? As with virtually everything in talk in interaction, it is a matter of position and composition – how the talk is constructed and where it is. Consider, for example, this exchange when an undergraduate student – Carol – comes back to her room with her roommates and friends there.

(7) SN-4, 5:1-13

1 Sherie: Hi Carol.=  
 2 Carol: =H[i : .]  
 3 Ruthie: [CA:RO]L, HI::  
 4 Sherie: -> You didn' get en icecream sandwich,  
 5 Carol: I kno:w, hh I decided that my body didn't need it,  
 6 Sherie: Yes but ours di:d=  
 7 Sherie: =hh heh-heh-heh [heh-heh-heh [·hhih  
 8 (??): [ehh heh heh [  
 9 (??): [( )  
 10 Carol: hh Awright gimme some money en you c'n treat me to one an  
 11 I'll buy you a:ll some [too.]  
 12 Sherie: [I'm ] kidding, I don't need it.  
 13 (0.3)

It matters that Sherie's turn at line 4 is a noticing. Noticings are meant to be done as early as possible, and one place that qualifies is just after coming into mutually visible co-presence; here it is done directly after the exchange of greetings. But to leave it at that would be to miss the boat.

This is a “possible complaint,”<sup>7</sup> and the sequence continues past the point at which I have ended the transcript, the participants working it through as a complaint sequence. How is it a complaint? It is not a matter of divining intentions. Designing one's talk by formulating an absence is a way of doing a possible complaint; it is a practice by which complaining can get done and done recognizably. Not any absence, of course, and more needs to be said, but this is one direction that conversation-analytic work pursues: how recognizable actions get done and get recognized as such; here it is the negative formulation that is at the heart of the practice – a practice for doing “possible complaint.” I take it that this is another sort of thing that ToM studies are interested in.

- And more generally, formulations are part of the design of some talk to do some action. For example, referring to a person by name or by what we call a recognitional description, a speaker can build into a turn designed to do something else an invitation or demand to a recipient to recognize who is being referred to as someone that they know. Or the speaker can refer to that person as “this guy” and convey that this is not a person the recipient should try to recognize. Here again, practices of talking build into the talk something for the recipient to find in it.

This last point exemplifies another practice so central to talk and other conduct in interaction that it is as compelling a practice as any for universal status, and that is the practice of recipient design. The things one talks about with another are selected and configured for who that other is – either individually or categorically. And how one speaks about them – what words, reference forms, and so forth are to be used is also shaped by reference to who the recipient relevantly is at that moment, for this speaker, at this juncture of this interaction. The centrality of recipient design may have a profound bearing on ToM and on human cognition more generally, for what persons are required to deal with in the mundane intercourse of ordinary interaction is not the broad range of things that could possibly occur, could possibly require immediate understanding, and so forth but, rather, a presorted set of elements of interaction designed for who they relevantly are at that moment in that interaction. Talk in interaction is, in other words, designed for accessibility to its recipient, and overwhelmingly successfully so. This is the first line of defense of intersubjectivity and common ground. The demands on cognition – at least for interaction – are thereby substantially reduced and shaped. It is because the conditions of language use in ordinary interaction are very different from those in the discourse of logic and science that the problems that natural language poses for logic and science do not arise in quotidian talk in interaction. The relevant ways of studying human cognition may, therefore, not be ones designed for anonymous “subjects,” because that is not what human cognition for interaction is designed to deal with.

### 3 Closing

Let me end by repeating some of the final words of Erving Goffman’s Presidential Address to the American Sociological Association, “The interaction order” (1983: 17). He wrote:

For myself, I believe that human social life is ours to study naturalistically, *sub specie aeternitatis*. From the perspective of the physical and biological sciences, human social life is only a small irregular scab on the face of nature, not particularly amenable to deep systematic analysis. And so it is. But it’s ours.

*And*, one might now add, it is only *this* species’ social life that has made possible those physical and biological sciences, and the very notion of “deep systematic analysis.”

Although Goffman was virtually apologetic for the stature of interaction studies when put next to traditional studies of social structure, this was a comparison forced on him by a career in sociology and a presidential address appropriately shaped for practitioners of its entire reach. In the present context, interaction studies need no apology, nor is it necessary to eschew the possibility of deep, systematic analysis. Such studies offer the possibility of connecting the disparate threads of anthropological, communicational, ethological, linguistic, psychological, and sociological inquiry, bringing us closer to an understanding of human sociality, and, with it, of what makes us distinctively human in the first place.

## NOTES

- 1 I mean to include under this term “talk” implemented by sign language and other forms of communication in interaction that share the basic characteristics of vocalized talking; so telephone conversation but not computer chats, for the former are synchronous moment to moment and the latter are not. It should go without saying (although the contemporary use of the term multimodal interaction suggests otherwise) that “talk in interaction” should be understood as “talk and other conduct in interaction,” that is, as including posture, gesture, facial expression, ongoing other activities with which the talk may be co-temporal and potentially coordinated, and any other features of the setting by which the talk may be informed and on which it may draw.
- 2 Ideally this account would be supplemented by empirical exemplars of the several organizations of practices that are here discursively described, but, with a few exceptions, this is not possible within our space limitations. It will have to suffice to refer the reader to the works in which these organizations have been introduced: Schegloff and Sacks (1973) on overall structural organization; Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) on turn-taking; Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks (1977) on repair; Schegloff (1996d) on turn organization; and Sacks (1992, vol. 1: 521ff.), Schegloff (2007), and Schegloff and Sacks (1973) on sequence organization. Some works in which further specification of practices within these domains has been advanced are: Lerner (2002) and Schegloff (1982) on turn-taking; Schegloff (1979, 1992b, 1997, 2000c) on repair; Lerner (1991, 1996) on turn organization; and Schegloff 1996a on action formation. Work designed as exercises displaying how the conduct of analysis works, and how it supports the stances adopted in this kind of inquiry, are Schegloff (1987a and 1996b).
- 3 Two sorts of exception should be mentioned here. One involves the claim that there is a place in which talk in interaction is not so organized, as in Reisman’s (1974) claim for “contrapuntal conversation” in Antigua; Sidnell (2001) casts considerable doubt on Reisman’s account. The other involves specifications of where in conversation the “one at a time” claim does not hold, for example Lerner (2002) on “choral co-production” or Duranti (1997) on “polyphonic discourse”; here the phenomenon being described is virtually defined as an object of interest by its departure from the otherwise default organization of talk. Work on “overlapping talk” (e.g., Jefferson 1984, 1986, 2004; Schegloff 2000b, 2002) locates the topic by reference to its problematic relation to the default one-at-a-time organization.
- 4 For an analysis of quite an elaborate sequence – 125 lines of transcript composing a single sequence, see Schegloff (1990).
- 5 The way repair is organized can have the consequence that it is sometimes initiated at a greater “distance” from the trouble while still being within the boundaries that can here be only roughly characterized. For an account of this, see Schegloff (1992b).
- 6 To conserve time and space, I have omitted the practices of turn construction as a generic organization in talk in interaction, although it has a key role in the organization of turn-taking, on the one hand, and the organization of sequences, on the other hand (cf. Schegloff 1996d).
- 7 This sequence is explicated in some detail in Schegloff (1988: 118–31). It may be useful to clarify the usage here and

in some other conversation-analytic writing of the term format “a possible X,” as in the text’s “a possible complaint.” What follows is taken from Schegloff (1996d: 116–17n. 8):

The usage is not meant as a token of analytic uncertainty or hedging. Its analytic locus is not in the first instance the world of the author and reader, but the world of the parties to the interaction. To describe some utterance, for example, as “a possible invitation” (Sacks 1992, vol. 1: 300–2; Schegloff 1992a: xxvi–xxvii) or “a possible complaint” (Schegloff 1988: 120–2) is to claim that there is a describable practice of talk in interaction which is usable to do recognizable invitations or complaints (a claim which can be documented by exemplars of exchanges in which such utterances were so recognized by their recipients), and that the utterance now being described can be understood to have been produced by such a practice, and is thus analyzable as an invitation or as a complaint. This claim

is made, and can be defended, independent of whether the actual recipient on this occasion has treated it as an invitation or not, and independent of whether the speaker can be shown to have produced it for recognition as such on this occasion. Such an analytic stance is required to provide resources for accounts of “failures” to recognize an utterance as an invitation or complaint, for in order to claim that a recipient failed to recognize it as such or respond to it as such, one must be able to show that it was recognizable as such, i.e. that it was “a possible X” – for the participants (Schegloff 1995). The analyst’s treatment of an utterance as “a possible X” is then grounded in a claim about its having such a status for the participants. (For an extended exploration of how a form of turn construction – repetition – can constitute a practice for producing possible instances of a previously undescribed action – “confirming allusions,” see Schegloff 1996b.)

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# 17 Transcribing Embodied Action

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PAUL LUFF AND CHRISTIAN HEATH

## 0 Introduction

The transcription of nonverbal behavior, of bodily action, of visible conduct has long proved a problem for the human sciences. Numerous systems have been developed and promoted, systems that have attempted to address such diverse activities as dance, athletic performance, machinery operation, human–computer interaction, and nonverbal communication. For those with an interest in social interaction, it would seem fair to say that, despite some highly ambitious and systematic attempts to develop an orthography, there is no system that provides a generally accepted procedure to transcribe the visible features of participants' actions and activities. Moreover it is unlikely that one system can satisfy the diverse interests that are brought to bear in the analysis of multimodal action. Indeed, different methodological commitments place very different demands not only on what is examined and transcribed but also on how the transcription is structured and laid out. In this chapter, we will focus on one approach to the transcription of visible conduct.<sup>1</sup> The approach is informed by ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis and is concerned with providing resources with which to explore the occasioned, emergent, and sequential character of practical action and interaction. It builds on the orthography for talk developed by Gail Jefferson (1984). This orthography emerged over many years as those with an interest in and commitment to Conversation Analysis, including Jefferson herself, attempted to include aspects of visible conduct in the investigation of naturally occurring interaction (see Goodwin 1981; Heath 1986). We will attempt to demonstrate how a simple set of procedures provides the resources with which to begin to identify and transcribe the location and structure of particular actions within the local configuration of activity, and provide an important analytic resource for the investigation of multimodal interaction. To illustrate these procedures, we will draw examples from complex organizational environments where the

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*The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Second Edition.

Edited by Deborah Tannen, Heidi E. Hamilton, and Deborah Schiffrin.

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concerted and collaborative production of tasks relies upon talk, bodily comportment, and the use of various tools and technologies.

Among those interested in the naturalistic analysis of social interaction and bodily comportment, including gesture, facial expression, and gaze, the transcription of visible conduct has been a long-standing concern (Birdwhistell 1970; Erickson 1982; Kendon 1979, 1982, 1990b, 2004; Schefflen 1973). Various systems have been developed, some highly sophisticated, that in some cases draw from orthographies built to transcribe rather different kinds of activities such as dance. In various ways these have successfully provided insights into a diverse range of phenomena, be it how patients and therapists synchronize their posture in psychotherapeutic consultations (Schefflen 1973), the way in which small changes to the face encourage or discourage a kiss (Kendon 1990a), or how one person lights a cigarette for another (Birdwhistell 1970). The transcriptions, ordinarily accompanied by line drawings and various graphical schematics, have helped present highly insightful analyses of particular activities. In some cases, the commitment to develop an orthography that systematically documents all the key elements of visible conduct within an activity and stands as an adequate and independent representation of the data in its own right seems to undermine the usefulness of the orthography as an analytic resource. With such complicated renditions of material only the most dedicated would seem able to read or apply the systems in question (see, e.g., Birdwhistell 1970).

With the growing interest in “multimodality” within a range of disciplines, including sociology, cultural studies, and linguistics, we have witnessed the re-emergence of discussion and debates concerning the transcription and representation of visual conduct and phenomena. So, for example, Flewitt and colleagues (2009) have reviewed over half a dozen recent approaches to transcribing multimodal conduct that each adopt a different way of transcribing talk and visual conduct. Many of these initiatives have been facilitated by the widespread availability of software and computer applications that appear to provide systematic ways of transcribing and cataloging phenomena and interweaving text with images. Unfortunately, however, the way these applications are used inevitably reflects particular assumptions concerning visible conduct and, more generally, multimodality. For instance, the very idea of multimodality can imply that human action consists of a number of corresponding streams or modes of communication that may, for particular purposes, be related to each other but be essentially independent – an idea of the visual that reflects a long-standing tradition within the human sciences that analytically differentiates the resources that may be featured in the production of action.

In common with others within Conversation Analysis, our own approach is rather different and is reflected in the assumptions and procedures that we bring to bear in examining and transcribing fragments of “naturally occurring” social interaction. First and foremost, it is not concerned with the visible or talk *per se* but with the production of social action and with the various resources that participants draw upon in the practical and concerted accomplishment of particular activities. Secondly, it addresses the social and interactional production of social actions and activities, with the ways in which an action even within the course of its production is oriented to the presence and co-participation of others within the “perceptual range of the event,” to use Goffman’s (1981) phrase. The focus on social interaction is substantive – our interest lies in this primordial site of human activity and sociability – and methodological – the concerted, emergent, and sequential organization of interaction provides methodological

resources with which to prioritize the participants' orientation to each other's actions. Thirdly, it is concerned with the occasioned, the situated, the embodied, and embedded character of practical action: the ways in which social action instantiates and advances the circumstances that it reflexively produces. These assumptions and concerns then pervade the "practical" and analytic approach that we and others adopt to transcription, an approach that is concerned with preserving the primacy of the recorded materials while providing resources to examine the emergent, interactional, and concerted production of social actions and activities.

The procedures for transcription we discuss in this chapter have emerged over the past three decades or more and are primarily concerned with providing a resource to enable us to identify the position and characteristics of a particular action with regard to the local configuration of interaction. The transcription provides a "map of action" that enables the researcher to begin to determine the potential relations between one action and another as they emerge within the developing course of the interaction. It draws from and builds upon the transcription of talk. Indeed, where talk arises within a particular fragment, talk is routinely transcribed first, with the visual features of the participants' conduct then transcribed with regard to that talk. The recording, however, remains the principal and primary source of data, and the transcript is used with and alongside the original material; it is a resource, an aide, a mnemonic for exploring and reflecting upon the recorded data, not a replacement or substitute. In other words, the transcription of visible conduct is a resource for the analyst. It is not a set of conventionalized procedures designed for, or concerned with, providing others with unambiguous, independent (of the recording) access to the material in question.

In this chapter we introduce transcription systems researchers have developed to aid the analysis of embodied action when that action is accompanied by talk, when it is not, and when the analysis is principally concerned with the use of tools and technologies. We also briefly describe some of the challenges faced when transcripts of embodied conduct are used to present analyses in scholarly articles. We conclude by discussing a number of challenges that are emerging for the transcription of conduct, principally those arising from the data that it is now possible to collect using new recording technologies.

## **1 Talk and Visible Action**

It may be worth considering a particular fragment to reveal the ways in which the transcription of visible conduct can support an analysis of naturally occurring video data. The materials are drawn from a particularly complex setting: a line control room of the London Underground. Here, we focus on two participants: a line controller, responsible for managing the trains, and an information assistant, responsible among other things for making announcements to passengers. Their work is necessarily collaborative and quite often they engage in activities that are closely related to each other without necessarily talking explicitly to each other about what they are doing (Heath and Luff 1992). In the following instance the controller does make an explicit request to the assistant. He has just failed for a third time to make contact with a driver through the radio telephone. He then turns to the assistant and asks him to make an announcement through the public-address system to tell the driver of a train to proceed if the driver has a clear (green) signal. We will first consider the talk between controller (C) and assistant (A).

- (1) Fragment 1, transcript 1 (simplified)
- ((Attempts for a third time to contact the driver on the radio telephone.....))
- C: Control(ler) to the train at Oxford Circus South  
 (.) Driver do you receive:, over?  
 (1.1)  
 ((replaces one receiver and picks up another to contact the Station Manager))  
 (2.5)
- C: Tell him to go: (.) if you've (got) a clear sig<sup>[</sup>nal  
 A: |Yeah  
 (6.3) ((sets PA system))
- A: This is a staff announce:men:t<sup>↑</sup>  
 (0.2)
- A: to the train operator (.) if you have a:  
 Green Signal:↑ you may proceed .....

The transcription system used to transcribe talk was developed by Gail Jefferson (1984) for Conversation Analysis. Details of the transcription system can be found, with minor variations, in various monographs and edited collections of papers (see, e.g., Atkinson and Drew 1979; Atkinson and Heritage 1984; Drew and Heritage 1992; Heritage and Maynard 2006; Maynard 2003; ten Have 1999). It is worth briefly mentioning here a few of the features of the system. The talk is presented vertically, turn by turn, with the length of pauses or silences between turns given in parentheses (in tenths of a second) – as in (1.1) in the example above. When a word or part of a word is emphasized it is underlined, rising or falling intonation is indicated by the corresponding arrow (i.e., <sup>↑</sup> or <sup>↓</sup>), and when a sound is stretched or elongated it is extended by a number of colons (the number of colons capturing the length of the sound, again in tenths of a second), “receive:” being an example above. Overlapping talk is presented using brackets to indicate where the overlaps occur. When transcribing just the talk, brief descriptions of relevant activities by the participants are included in double parentheses.

At first glance the exchange appears straightforward. The controller produces a request (“Tell him to go: if you’ve (got) a clear signal”), which the assistant accepts (“yeah”). In accepting, the assistant then begins to deliver an announcement to the station through the PA system. The request and its acceptance embody an organization found throughout a range of activities within interaction, where a first action, the request, establishes the sequential relevance for a next action, an acceptance or rejection of the request. In other words, the first action projects one of two alternative actions to be undertaken by the co-participant in immediate juxtaposition with it; if the relevant response is not forthcoming, that response is noticeably or accountably absent. Of course, in the case at hand the vocal acceptance, uttered in overlap with the controller’s request, makes it incumbent upon the assistant to produce the requested action, namely, to make an announcement to ask the driver to move if there is a green signal. Although simple, the assistant’s response displays his analysis of what is required in producing a relevant response (cf. Schegloff and Sacks 1973).

The interaction between the participants is *sequentially* organized. The actions are designed with regard to, and occasioned by, prior actions and they form the foundation

to subsequent actions. Sequential organization provides the principal vehicle through which almost all actions that arise within conversation, and, more generally, mutually focused social interaction, are accomplished (Schegloff 2009). So, the intelligibility and significance of an action for the participants themselves are partly achieved by virtue of its position within the developing course of action.

Considering the details of the visual conduct, however, raises some interesting issues. We can notice that, even before the assistant utters “yeah” in response to the controller, his hand reaches for the buttons that operate the public-address system. He thereby displays, prior to the completion of the request, that he is beginning the sequentially relevant next activity. This in turn allows the controller to complete this momentary interaction and deal with some other unrelated business. Moreover, the design of the request by the controller (“Tell him to go: if you’ve got a clear signal”) raises some related issues. Even though the assistant and the controller have been occupied with quite distinct activities and the assistant has had no direct contact with the controller concerning the driver, the request is designed in such a way that it presupposes that it is clear who the “him” is and what the reasons are for “telling him to go.” The controller’s request, however, appears to operate unproblematically; the assistant delivers the correct announcement to the relevant driver. It may be that, if we consider the participants’ visual conduct immediately prior to and during the request, it might offer an account for how it is successfully accomplished by the participants. For this, we need to map out the visual conduct in more detail.

When beginning to transcribe visual conduct we begin by mapping out the talk, but, rather than being presented vertically, turn by turn, as in the transcript above, the talk is laid out horizontally across the page. Ordinarily a line is dedicated to the talk of each participant, one above each other. To represent pauses and silences a single dash is used to capture each tenth of a second. So, for example, half a second is transcribed with five dashes.

Returning to the fragment, we map out the participants’ visual conduct immediately prior to and during the controller’s request to the assistant.

(2) Fragment 1, transcript 2

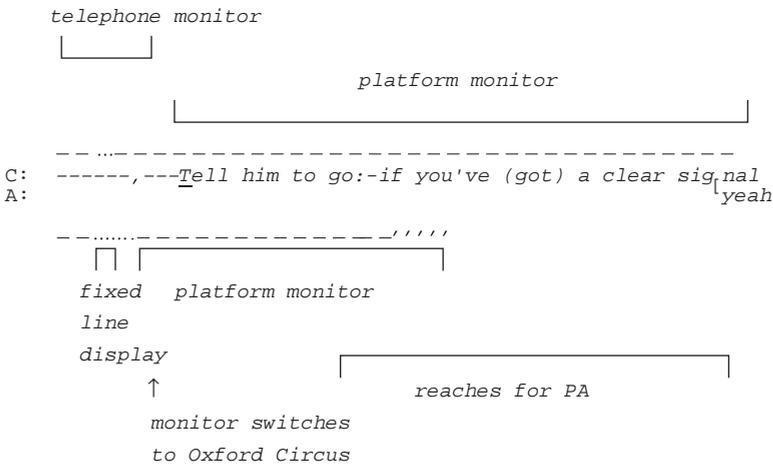




Figure 17.1 Images from fragment 1 (line control room, London Underground).

We begin by mapping the visual orientation or gaze of the participants using a system developed by Goodwin (1981). This is written on the lines immediately surrounding the talk. In this case the controller's orientation is transcribed above his talk, and the assistant's below. A continuous line indicates that the participant is looking at the co-participant, a series of dots ("...") that one party is turning toward another, and a series of commas (",,,,") that one party is turning away from the other.

In the gap following his third attempt to call the driver on the radio telephone and before he produces the request for the assistant, the controller turns to the telephone panel and looks for a number. Roughly two seconds into the silence, the assistant turns from a large electronic display on one wall of the control room (the "fixed line display") to the CCTV monitors directly in front of him. His shift of orientation appears to engender action from the controller, who immediately turns toward the same screen as the assistant. As they are both looking at the CCTV screen, an image of the south-bound platform at Oxford Circus station, the controller produces the request. Figure 17.1 shows images that give a sense of the action: taken as the assistant turns from the fixed-line display and toward the CCTV monitor (a and b) and as the controller begins the request (c and d).

As the controller produces the request, both he and the assistant are oriented toward the same object: a train standing at the platform at Oxford Circus displayed on the monitor. Thus, the assistant is able to make sense of the request in light of the controller's orientation, inferring that "him" is the driver of the train they are both looking at and that the request entails getting this particular train to move if a clear signal is visible. So, the utterance's ability to engender an appropriate response from the assistant relies, in part, upon the participants' momentary common orientation toward the same object. The utterance serves to invoke a common referent and make it an integral feature in both the production and the recognition of the activity. The utterance and the participants' visible conduct are thoroughly interdependent, each elaborating and each being dependent upon the other.

It appears, therefore, that the successful accomplishment of the request relies on the interweaving of talk and visual conduct. The visual orientation of a potential recipient may occasion the production of the request, and a shift of gaze toward a particular object can serve to engender it being noticed by another. In the space available it is not possible to discuss further complexities of this fragment.<sup>2</sup> However, by focusing on the moment at which the two colleagues establish mutual engagement during the production and acceptance of the request, we can see how one might develop an analysis that addresses the ways in which participants' actions may be oriented to features of the emergent context.

As with examining talk, the process of transcribing the visual and vocal conduct within a particular fragment is an important analytic aid. It helps the researcher to identify the details of participants' conduct and interaction, which can be hard to access even after repeated viewings of the data. Indeed, it is often only during the process of mapping out data that one begins to discover the ordering of actions, and in many cases one notices conduct during transcription that previously remained unnoticed. Once complete, the map provides a sketch of the local geography of the participants' conduct, particularly the position of actions in relation to each other. It provides a resource with which the researcher can explore the interaction within a relatively brief moment in time and consider how specific actions may be organized with respect to each other. The map is simply a way of capturing some details of the participants' conduct and is always used analytically with and alongside the data itself, the recording.

Unlike talk, bodily conduct is not necessarily structured in terms of distinct turns, but the location of a particular movement within the emerging interaction remains critical to the ways in which an action, whether spoken, visible, or a combination of both, is produced and understood by participants themselves. For example, we can see the significance for the controller of the assistant's alignment of orientation from the fixed-line diagram to the platform monitor and also of their subsequent common alignment for producing coherent action. The sequential organization of interaction therefore provides an analytic resource with which to inspect and discover how participants themselves orient to each other's action(s) and a way of providing evidence for the interpretation and analysis of particular actions, activities, and the resources that inform their accomplishment.

The fragment begins to reveal not simply the interdependence of talk and bodily conduct but also interconnected sequential relations that enable the participants to accomplish activities in complex settings. Transcribing and mapping the participants' conduct enables the researcher to begin to determine the position of particular actions to explore their potential relationship to the preceding, concurrent, and subsequent conduct, both vocal and visible, of all the participants. It also provides a way of discovering aspects of the action that might otherwise pass unnoticed and to document observations and insights. In particular, their conduct is sensitive to the preceding attempts to deal with the developing problem. It is, however, only by detailed and repeated observation of a fragment that the researcher can begin to build an analysis of the ways in which the participants' conduct orients to each other's action and provide a demonstrable case for the "contextual features," primarily the conduct of the co-participants, to which specific actions and activities are oriented.

It is worthwhile raising one or two further methodological issues that will resonate with some of the points we made earlier. Firstly, the controller's actions during the pause show the significance of anticipation, or more technically projection, to the production and intelligibility of action(s) in interaction. The controller's request projects a sequentially appropriate response and creates an obligation for the assistant to produce an appropriate response. The interactional relevance of that response informs the ways in which the controller monitors the actions of the assistant. So we can see how actions may be read by virtue of their location, as prefiguring the start of a particular activity. The ways in which actions project subsequent actions are important aspects of the ways in which we determine the significance of each other's conduct.

Secondly, we can see how the use of material artifacts, such as monitors and displays, is relevant to the analysis of the participants' conduct. The video recording provides us with the resources to begin to examine how the participants themselves are orienting toward each other's conduct, to build a case with regard to how they respond to specific actions, and to develop some insights into the complex and organized character of their interaction. However, considering the details of such activities can present further challenges when transcribing conduct, particularly when there is a noticeable absence of accompanying talk.

## 2 Bodily Interaction

Although talk is a pervasive feature of almost all settings, it is not unusual to find activities that are primarily, if not solely, accomplished through bodily conduct. For example, the behavior of pedestrians is frequently accomplished without talk, as are queues for various services and the ways visitors navigate museums or department stores even when they are with others. Similarly, many of people's activities in work and domestic environments are accomplished with regard to the contributions of others but do not necessarily involve talk. The absence of talk, however, does pose further challenges for the transcription and analysis of activities. It is worthwhile discussing an example and examining it in some detail. The fragment is drawn from research undertaken in collaboration with Marcus Sanchez Svensson (Sanchez Svensson, Heath, and Luff 2007).<sup>3</sup>

The activity we will consider, an exchange of objects, might seem quite simple and straightforward and yet it forms an important part of a more complex event, a surgical operation. If not performed appropriately, the activity disrupts the surgeon's ability to accomplish the operation.



**Figure 17.2** (a) Clip applicator and clips used to secure facial skin. (b) The scrub nurse is on the left passing the clip applicators to the surgeon. A surgical assistant stands between, another stands to the right, and a student is partly visible on the right.



**Figure 17.3** A series of images taken from recordings of a surgical operation.

The fragment is drawn from the phase of the operation in which the surgeon is preparing to remove a potentially serious growth from an area around the frontal lobe of the brain, just above the nose of the patient. To gain access to the growth, part of the facial skin is folded back and temporarily fixed using small clips. The clips are secured using clip applicators, which resemble a pair of scissors (see Figure 17.2a).

The scrub nurse prepares the applicators by inserting a clip at the end furthest from the handle. She then passes them to the surgeon. The surgeon pins the section of flesh together by closing the handles together. The surgeon then returns the used set. This simple process continues until a portion of flesh has been safely secured.

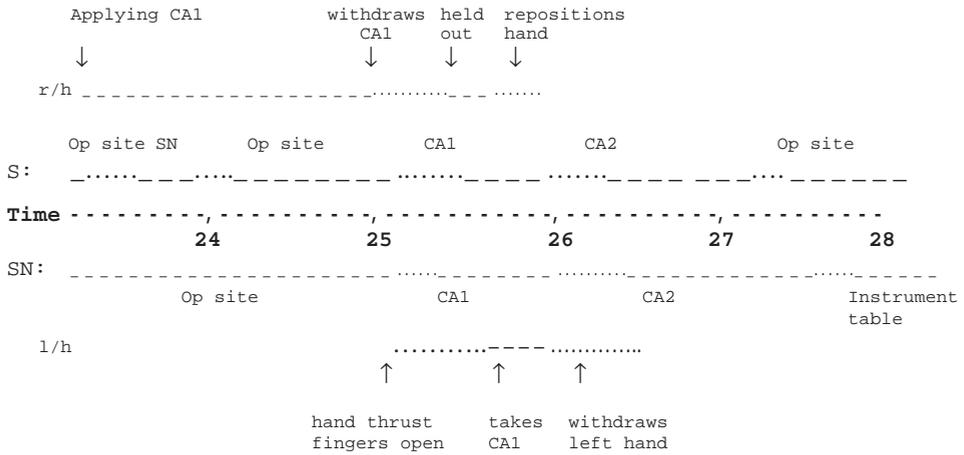
Figure 17.3 shows one of a series of exchanges in which the surgeon returns the used set and the scrub nurse passes the new set of prepared applicators.

There is no talk in this fragment. The exchange of instruments is accomplished through visible conduct by the scrub nurse on the left and the surgeon in the center of the pictures (partly obscured by an assistant on the right).

In such cases we normally use a horizontal time line as the basis of the transcript and map each of the participants' conduct in relation to the time line. Once again the time is laid out in tenths of a second with a single dash representing a tenth of a second and commas marking the full seconds. The figures "24" to "28" in the transcript refer to the time in seconds from the beginning of the fragment on the original tape. In this case, since the exchange primarily consists of the contributions of two principal participants, the surgeon and scrub nurse, we have positioned the time line in the center of the transcript. Once again, for clarity, the following transcriptions are highly simplified and selective versions of the original. We begin by simply presenting the participants' visual orientation and the surgeon (s) passing the used clip applicators (CA1) to the scrub nurse (SN). We join the action as the surgeon is oriented toward the site of the operation (Op site). The surgeon then briefly turns to the scrub nurse and returns to the site of the operation. She then looks firstly at the used set of clip applicators

(CA1), which she passes to the scrub nurse, and then to a new set (CA2) she receives from the nurse.

(3) Fragment 2 transcript 1



We can then begin to add one or two details concerning the surgeon’s passing of the used set of clip appliers; “r/h” and “l/h” simply refer to whether the participants are using their left or right hands.

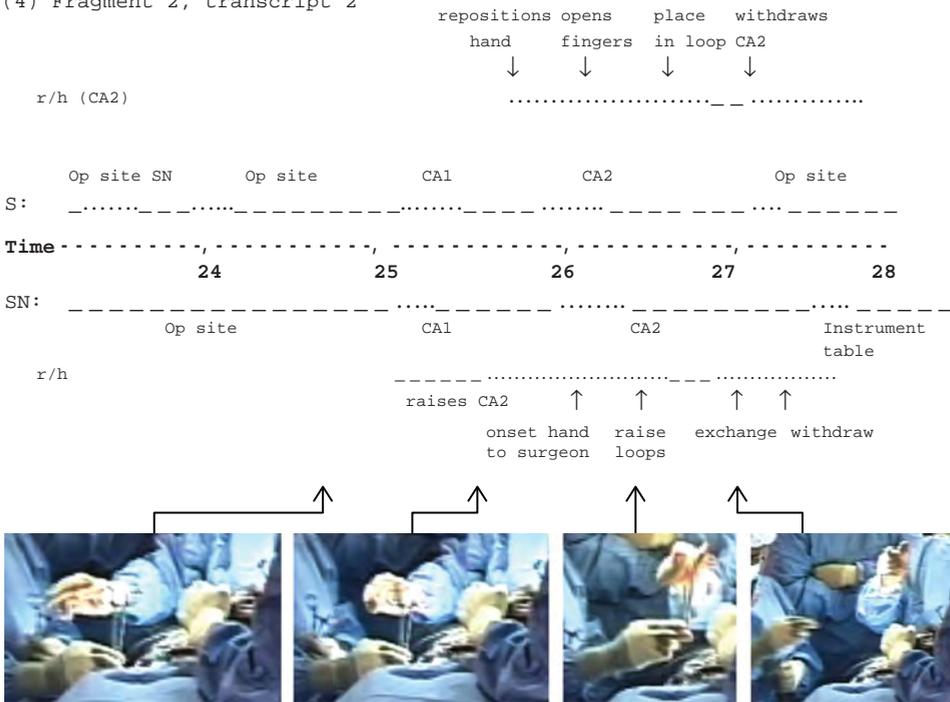
The transcript enables us to begin to identify the position of actions and potential relations between the conduct of the surgeon and the scrub nurse. For instance, as the surgeon withdraws the used clip appliers, the scrub nurse immediately, within fewer than two tenths of a second, turns toward the instrument and begins to thrust her hand toward it. The movement is progressively aligned with the hand movement of the surgeon (the hand opening as it nears) and, when the surgeon’s hand is momentarily held mid-flight, the scrub nurse grasps the used clip appliers and removes them.

The fragment suggests a sequential relationship between the actions of the surgeon and the scrub nurse. The movement of the nurse’s hand and opening fingers are sensitive to the withdrawal of the clip appliers from the operation site and the ways in which they are positioned with regard to the scrub nurse. The thrust of her hand and opening fingers serve to display to the surgeon that the scrub nurse is ready to receive the clip appliers and enables the surgeon to hold the implement mid-flight, assuming that it will be taken. In other words, the withdrawal of the clip appliers places the co-participant under an obligation to produce a sequentially appropriate next action,

and to produce that action in immediate juxtaposition with the first. This enables the smooth exchange of the implement.

The exchange is both more complicated and analytically more interesting than this brief description suggests. The passing of the used clip applicators is undertaken concurrently with the scrub nurse handing the newly prepared set to the surgeon (CA2), an exchange that occurs almost immediately following the transfer of the first set. As the scrub nurse takes the used set, the surgeon moves her hand toward the right hand of the scrub nurse and, placing her two fingers in the rings of the implement, transports the new set to the operation site and, a moment later, applies the clip. In some ways there are two interdependent sequences of action that are produced in part concurrently by the participants: on the one hand, the passing of the used clip applicators; on the other, the exchange of the new set. The withdrawal of the surgeon's hand from the site of the operation occasions an exchange of implements that enables the next phase of the operation to be accomplished. While we might point to the overall sequential structure of these activities, we can also begin to see how the very accomplishment of passing an implement is a complex interactional achievement. Consider the exchange of the new clip applicators; a brief summary transcript coupled with a series of images may help to give a more detailed sense of the action.

(4) Fragment 2, transcript 2



As the surgeon withdraws the used clip applicators from the site of the operation, the scrub nurse raises her right hand containing the new set of clip applicators (CA2). They are held, momentarily, mid-flight until the surgeon relinquishes the used set and begins

to move her right hand toward the new set. At that moment, the scrub nurse begins to transport the clip applicators toward the right hand of the surgeon, and, as the surgeon opens her thumb and forefinger, the nurse aligns the clip applicators until they are raised almost vertically, the surgeon inserting her thumb and forefinger into the loops. Within a sequence of action where one participant simply passes an object to another, we can begin to see how the accomplishment of the activity involves a complex series of actions in which the participants progressively align their conduct to enable a smooth and unproblematic exchange.

Earlier, we remarked on the ways in which actions can serve to project sequentially relevant next actions and how particular sequences of action can serve to foreshadow and implicate subsequent action and activity. In this fragment, we can see how an action may be transformed in the very course of its accomplishment. In handing an object, such as the clip applicators, to a co-participant, the action, from its beginning, may project a course of action enabling the co-participant to align to that action to receive the object in question. However, the action does not simply project what it might take to be satisfactorily complete (and by implication what conduct it requires from the recipient) but, in the course of its production, it is progressively shaped with regard to the emerging conduct of the co-participant. So, while the sequential import of an action serves to enable the recipient to orient to the course of action, its actual articulation is emergent and contingent – where the principal contingency is the concurrent action(s) of the co-participant, in this case progressive alignment and orientation of the receiving hand.

We can also begin to see that, despite the exchange of instruments being an utterly routine feature of this and many operations, on each occasion the actions are performed slightly differently. For example, the scrub nurse adjusts the ready position of the prepared clip applicators with regard to small changes in the surgeon's bodily orientation and with regard to which part of the facial flesh is being clipped. The "circumstances" or "contingencies" at each successive exchange place different demands on the way in which the same or similar actions are accomplished. The design of conduct is sensitive to these contingencies. So the typicality, regularity, and unproblematic production of these seemingly routine actions are moment-by-moment, concerted, and interactional accomplishments.

The exchange raises a further issue. In the production of their actions the participants do not simply respond to the conduct of the other but rather prospectively envisage the trajectories of actions. Thus they are able to produce a sequentially appropriate action just at the moment it becomes relevant. We have already remarked on the ways in which the scrub nurse has the prepared applicators in hand and in a state of readiness for passing so that, as the surgeon's hands begin to move away from the patient's face, one of the nurse's hands immediately moves forward to take the used instrument. We can see how the scrub nurse's understanding of the task being undertaken by the surgeon and its boundaries and transitions provides a vehicle for understanding just when it might be relevant to take and pass the clip applicators. So, in the course of their production, actions serve not only to project what it might take for them to be complete but also implicate action from others that is relevant to enable the activity to be successfully accomplished. The understanding of and orientation to trajectories of action are critical to the ways in which co-participants contribute to the collaborative and contingent organization of activities.

### 3 The Use of Tools and Technologies

In many settings the accomplishment of everyday activities involves more and more sophisticated tools and technologies. It is increasingly common for studies to be undertaken in domains where the participants collaborate with and through new technologies. In such cases it may be important to attend to the details of how participants use such technologies in interaction. Take, for example, the activities of people who work in a sophisticated control room, where several controllers can each intervene in the operation of a service through the use of computer systems. Conduct in such settings relies on the controllers being able to coordinate their activities with each other. However, analyzing such conduct relies on paying detailed attention not only to the talk and visual conduct of the participants but also to how and when they undertake activities through the systems they have available to them. This requires developing ways of transcribing such conduct.

To give a flavor of ways in which such transcriptions can be developed, we consider a study of the control center of another transportation system, that of the Docklands Light Railway in East London (see Luff and Heath 2000). As in many such settings, highly sophisticated systems are operated through separate workstations by individual personnel, with control of the various computer systems formally assigned to different personnel, each system being operated through a keyboard and screen. In the Docklands Light Railway control room, the staff manage a range of functions including the operation of the trains, communication with staff, and providing information to passengers. The Docklands Light Railway is quite unusual as it is an automated service consisting of driverless trains. The trains do have train captains who usually deal with passengers, checking tickets and answering queries, for example. Train captains can also, when certain contingencies arise, override the automated system and drive the train.

The operation of the service is managed by two controllers in the control room. They sit alongside each other and intervene in the operation of the system when problems arise. One controller, the principal controller, referred to as the “God of the Line,” operates the radio to talk to train captains and is responsible for the rescheduling of traffic where necessary. The second controller ordinarily deals with problems that arise in the depot, where the trains are stored and maintained when not in service. However, the actual division of labor is organized with regard to the contingencies that arise in dealing with particular problems and difficulties.

For example, in the following fragment a member of staff, an instructor (i), calls the principal controller (ci) on the radio to request a reset of the train’s status (to “ATP” for automatic train protection) at Crossharbour station. In this case this is so that a new member of staff can be instructed on how to operate the train manually.

(5) Fragment 3, transcript 1

I:           fi::ve two↓ (check) five two: ↓ request permission to (.)  
              change into A: Tee Pee (0.2) driver (0.3) (Ed) at  
              Crosshar:bour: (0.4) over.  
              (2.9)

Ci:           (I can see) if you could standby and let me get back to  
              you in a mo:: (1.5)

As the instructor's request comes to completion, the assistant controller (Cii) begins to type a command into the system, which he continues to do as the principal controller replies. The assistant controller completes his typing, not saying anything. Some moments later the principal controller returns the call to the instructor saying that the change has been made. The principal controller seems sensitive to the intervention of the assistant, but it is unclear what this relies on. The development of an analysis of how this is accomplished requires attending to details of what the assistant controller types into the system. This requires a way of mapping out what is typed into the systems. In the notation we developed, particular keys are distinguished: function keys are indicated by "■," number keys by "⑨," and letter keys by "A B C" and so on. "Enter" (or "carriage return") is represented by "↵" and other unidentified keys by "Ⓢ." Keys that are struck with some force are underlined> and pauses between characters are indicated by "□" each dot representing one tenth of a second. So, as the primary controller is talking on the radio, the assistant controller's typing is transcribed as shown in the following transcript.

(6) Fragment 3, transcript 2




---

ATS1

Ci: (I can see) if you could standby and let me get back to you in a mo:-

Cii: ■ ⑨ ⑨ ⑨ ⑨ ⑨ ⑨ ..↵

---

kbd



The assistant controller completes the command just following the completion of his colleague's request to the caller to stand by and wait for a "mo." As the command is brought to completion, the principal controller turns back to the telephone, re-establishes contact with the instructor, and confirms that she can change to manual when she arrives at Crossharbour. The affirmation of the request is produced with regard to the actions of the assistant controller. For the principal controller, his colleague's actions provide him with an ability to confirm the request and recommend

the instructor to follow a particular course of action, namely to set to manual operation at “route board 143” and to proceed on the section of track from there “until further notice.”

(7) Fragment 3, transcript 3 (simplified)

← Ci: That change is fine) thats affirmative when you arrive  
at Crossharbour (0.3) (routeboard) one four three (0.4)  
you may set A: Tee Pee manual (0.2) and proceed (on  
your section and clear) (0.2) until further notice↓

In this case, therefore, we can see how the principal controller orients to the completion of a sequentially relevant activity by his colleague – his typing – prior to confirming a course of action for a vehicle and its driver. The assistant controller’s activity – his typing – is made sense of by virtue of its relation to the incoming call and the instructor’s request. It is produced with regard to the assistant’s sensitivity to a conversation in which he is not a participant. Indeed, it may be the case that the assistant controller delays the production of the second packet of the command until he hears how the principal controller will respond to the request, and on hearing the onset of the reply assumes that there is no obvious objection to agreeing to the request. Moreover, it may well be the case that the principal controller’s reply is designed to display deference to his colleague, not only to delay an immediate response to the driver but also to allow the colleague to commence an appropriate response of changing the train to manual.

The fragment provides a delightful illustration of the ways in which the use of a material object, in this case a computer system, is bound into talk, and how the participants, both present and remote, coordinate their activities with each other and the system’s use. Not only does the call itself provide the resources for a computer-based command but also the use of the system informs the very instructions that the caller receives. Moreover, we can notice that the assistant controller overhears the conversation of his colleague with the instructor, and transforms that call into sequentially relevant (system-based) conduct. As the assistant undertakes this conduct the principal controller “reads” the Automatic Train Scheduler monitor in order to discriminate the solution being undertaken by his colleague. It is not just that the assistant controller types a command into the system at an appropriate moment but that what he types, the details of the command, is consequential.

Underpinning this close and complex collaboration is the participants’ orientation to sequentially appropriate conduct: certain actions render relevant particular conduct that should occur, and should occur “with dispatch.” In the case at hand, these relationships span and interconnect simultaneous activities that involve various participants in various locations. Building upon the system for mapping out talk and visual conduct, a particular transcription notation is developed that can help reveal the relationships between talk, visual conduct, and particular details of material conduct appropriate to the analysis at hand. Such transformations, whether they are to assist analysis of conduct of visitors to a museum (Heath *et al.* 2012), designers working on paper sketches (Luff, Heath, and Pitsch 2009), or the interaction between an auctioneer and bidders (Heath 2013), have been developed to be used alongside the data and the

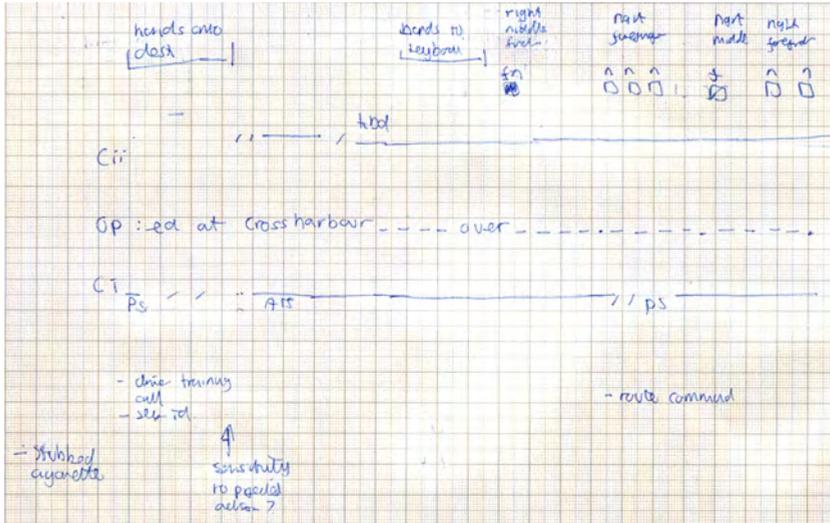


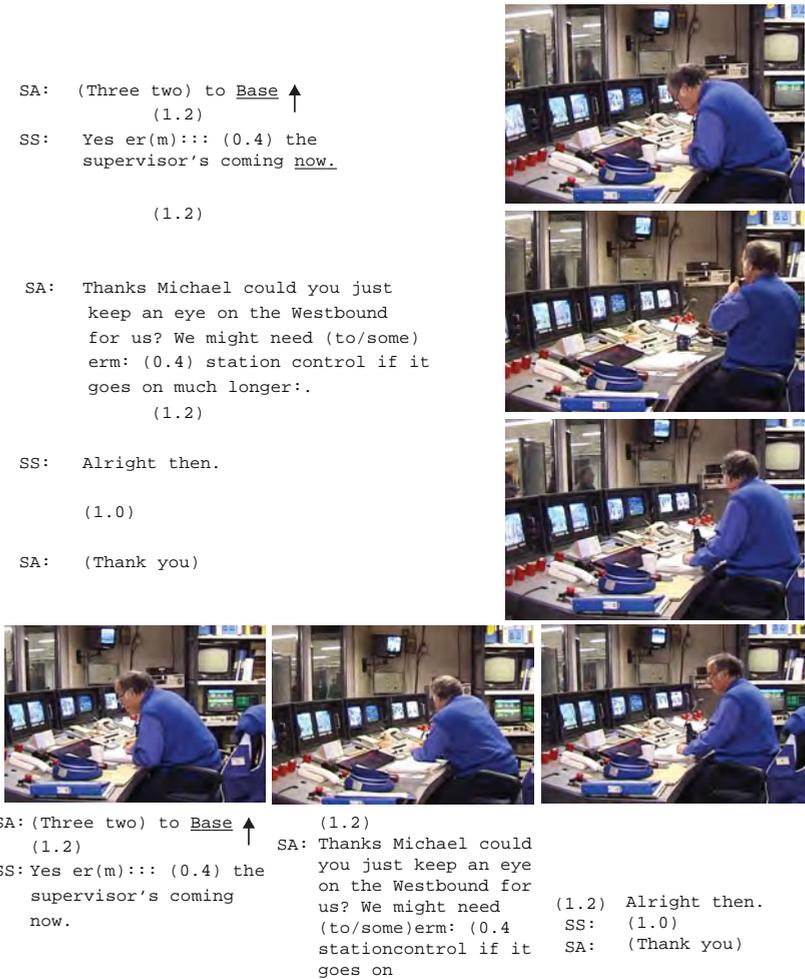
Figure 17.4 A working transcript on graph paper developed when analyzing keyboard activity in the Docklands Light Railway control room.

video recordings and aim to help reveal the sequential accomplishment of moments of concerted action.

## 4 The Presentation of Fragments

When developing a transcript for an analysis of visible conduct, talk, and perhaps other conduct it is useful to use graph paper. This allows the researcher to transcribe the visible aspects of the participants' conduct as it provides an easy way to lay out, spatially, the actions and activities that are observed. Such transcripts are used to accompany and illuminate rather than replace the data. They provide a fundamental vehicle for developing analytic insights into the organization of a particular episode of action or activity. These maps are a critical resource for the individual researcher. However, they rarely, if ever, accompany a presentation or even a published paper as they are too complex to be easily interpreted and are often incomprehensible without regard to the original data. For example, Figure 17.4 shows a copy of one of the original transcripts used when mapping out data from the Docklands Light Railway Control Room.

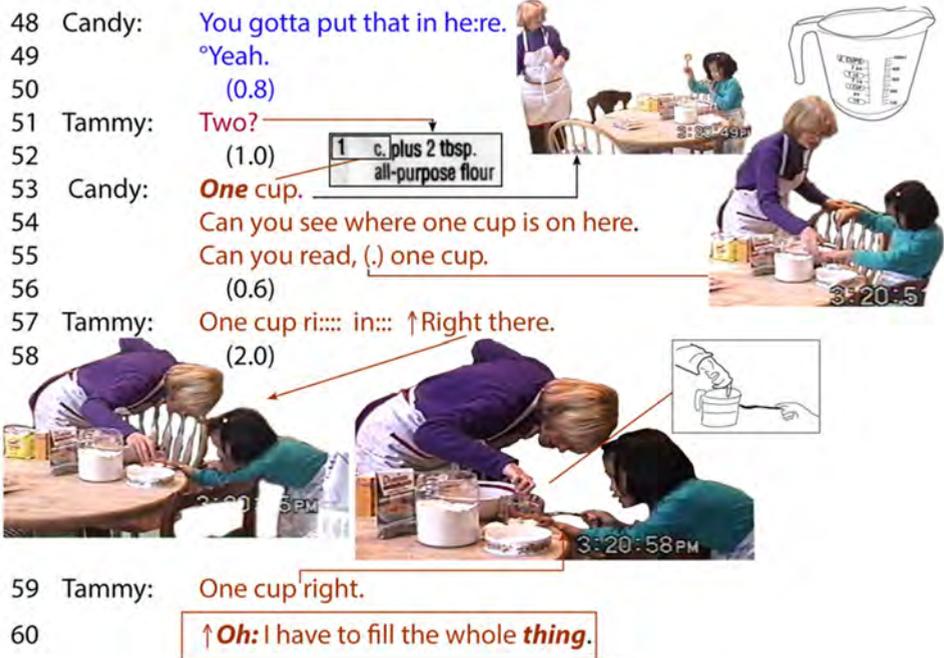
When presenting data in published form it may therefore be necessary to further transform the transcription system so it can be followed more clearly by a reader. This may involve simplifying the transcription considerably, employing an economy of description, so that the reader can gain a sense of only the phenomena that bear upon the observations, insights, and arguments that are being presented. Providing a series of images as if they were in a filmstrip, alongside the corresponding talk, can help to give a sense of the emerging nature of the visual conduct with respect to the talk. The positioning and layout of the text and the framing of the images can then



**Figure 17.5** Using vertical and horizontal image layouts, two ways of presenting the same fragment. (a) The first set has been selected to emphasize the movement in toward the screens by the participant. (b) The second set has been selected to help make apparent the less obvious shifts in gaze direction between the different screens.

be organized to support the presentation of the analysis. Even a simple choice to lay out a fragment vertically or horizontally can help direct the reader to notice particular features relevant to the analysis (see Figure 17.5).

As images taken from recordings can be highly complex, it may be that, even with a simplified transcript and the addition of a few images, the phenomena are not easy to discriminate by a viewer unfamiliar with the original data. An approach developed by Goodwin (1995), for example, extracts parts of the images from the recordings so that only particular features of conduct of the participants are included (see Figure 17.6). Graphical annotations and various means to link the text to the images then serve to



**Figure 17.6** Embedding images in transcripts. An approach for presenting fragments of data developed by Charles Goodwin (1995). Critical features relevant to the analysis and their temporal organization are included, and background details are excluded. When necessary Goodwin also adds graphics and annotations to the transcript to reveal the interrelationships between the talk and the visual conduct.

By kind permission of Charles Goodwin.

emphasize when particular aspects of conduct occur and reveal the interrelationships between the talk and visual conduct.

It should be noted that including images in transcripts for presentation may not be possible if permission has not been obtained to use them for such a purpose. If researchers carefully discuss with participants how the outcomes of a study might be disseminated when obtaining access to collect data, and if they maintain the trust of the participants throughout the study, in most cases it is possible to secure agreement to publish a few selected images.<sup>4</sup> However, in some cases ethical considerations can constrain whether and how an image is included within a publication. For example, in video recordings of medical consultations, it may be required that the face of the patient in the image cannot be shown or that other features visible in the images threaten the anonymity of the participants. Therefore it may be necessary on occasions to rework or replace images to conceal the identity of the participants or the setting in which the data were collected. For example, pictures may be faded, blurred, or selectively pixellated to preserve confidentiality. This can prove challenging in cases where the analysis rests upon the facial orientation or expression of an individual. For analyses that consider broader aspects of visual conduct, line drawings can be used to augment transcripts (see, e.g., Goodwin 1981; Heath 1986, 2013). Even when using software packages that

automatically convert video images into line drawings, complex graphical effects can be time-consuming to produce, and if the images do not reflect the analysis they can distract from rather than illuminate the issues being discussed.

A complex map of the visible and vocal conduct within a particular fragment should be seen as a device to support individual analysis rather than a way of presenting material. Ideally, the researcher needs to present the transcript with the actual extract to which it refers, but for publications that are not produced solely for electronic media this is not practically feasible. Moreover, in presenting data in text it is often necessary to highlight certain features and exclude others to enable the reader to make sense of the action. Enhancing transcripts with images can help present an analysis, but no single scheme will be suitable for all analytic purposes. So, for each case, and perhaps each fragment, particular design choices need to be made, each requiring careful selection and framing to enable the principal features of the action to be clearly accessible to the reader.

## 5 Emerging Challenges

Given the diversity of interests that are brought to bear on the analysis of visible conduct and the use of tools and technologies, no single transcription system will satisfy the very different methodological commitments we find in the social sciences. Our own approach is concerned with the analysis of naturally occurring social interaction. It draws from ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis. It focuses on the investigation of brief fragments of data, rarely more than ten seconds in length, and on short, specific sequences of action. It is primarily concerned with the interactional production of particular actions or sequence of actions, including, for example, the collaborative production of a single turn at talk or gesture, an exchange of objects, or a moment of data entry into a computer. It addresses the emergent and contingent forms of co-participation that inform and enable the concerted accomplishment of an activity. Transcription is critical in this regard, since it provides the resources with which to begin to discover and explicate the action and arrangement of action that arises within a particular fragment and drives analytic attention toward the ways in which participants themselves are sensitive to, and orient toward, each other's actions in the course of an activity's production. It provides the resources with which to discover and reveal the complexity and character of a particular activity and to examine and document potential relations and interdependencies that inform the action's production. The simplicity of the procedure belies its importance to studies of interaction and embodied action. For four decades of research it has provided a flexible way to enable the analysis of a broad range of everyday settings and activities – settings and activities that include highly variable forms of participation within complex physical and social environments.

One of the more challenging areas of research in this regard is found in the growing corpus of research concerned with interaction within organizational environments and the ways in which tools, technologies, objects, and artifacts feature in the concerted accomplishment of multimodal activities (see Engeström and Middleton 1996; Heath and Button 2002; Llewellyn and Hindmarsh 2010; Streeck, Goodwin, and LeBaron

2011; Szymanski and Whalen 2011). Commonly known as *workplace studies*, this corpus of research has examined in fine detail the interactional organization of activities in domains that include offices and call centers (Moore, Whalen, and Gathman 2010; Murphy 2004, 2005; Whalen 1995; Whalen and Vinkhuyzen 2000; Whalen, Whalen, and Henderson 2002), operating theaters (Hindmarsh and Pilnick 2002, 2007; Koschmann *et al.* 2007; Mondada 2007; Sanchez Svensson, Heath, and Luff 2007), control centers (Goodwin and Goodwin 1996; Heath and Luff 1996; Luff and Heath 2000; Suchman 1996), and medical consultations (Beach and LeBaron 2002; Greatbatch *et al.* 1993; Heath 1986). These studies have had to encompass a complex range of visible conduct and forms of looking, touching, handling, and manipulation, as well as forms of interaction that are not bounded by a singular focus of involvement: forms in which both co-located and distributed individuals participate and co-participate more or less in co-occurring actions and activities. The flexible deployment and elaboration of the transcription procedures discussed in this chapter have proved critical to these developments.

Workplace studies have drawn on recent developments in technology, particularly the enhanced image quality that even domestic video cameras now provide. These allow for details of conduct to be attended to that were not previously available and in turn can place challenges on any transcription system used to support analysis or present data to wider audiences. A simple transcription system has begun to support the analysis of details of visible conduct that hitherto were inaccessible to inquiry, providing the foundation for addressing a range of novel substantive and analytic concerns. So, for example, the enhanced quality of video makes available details of conduct with and around material artifacts that while visible to participants were hitherto inaccessible to sociological inquiry. Work and collaboration are increasingly dependent upon and accomplished through digital technologies, with organizational action and decision-making often depending on rapidly changing screen-based information. Drawing on simple procedures for mapping embodied action and interaction, a range of highly complex activities have been subject to detailed and systematic scrutiny. Consider, for example, recent studies of how the details of computer displays in call centers transform the talk between caller and called (Whalen 1995; Whalen and Vinkhuyzen 2000; Whalen, Whalen, and Henderson 2002), how high-definition monitors in keyhole surgery serve as resources to coordinate the activities of a surgical team (Mondada 2007; Streeck, Goodwin, and LeBaron 2011), and how the materials presented of live and recorded events are interwoven into the production of live television programs (Perry *et al.* 2009). For each the transcription systems have been transformed to support the analysis of complicated work activities with complex and changing visual materials. Recordings can also now reveal finer details of the visible conduct of participants – for example, that of members in an audience, such as students in a classroom (Rendle-Short 2006) or potential bidders in an auction sales room (Heath 2013). Analysis of conduct in such settings presents challenges for whether and how the visible activities of a large number of people might be transcribed. A simple transcription system that focuses on the talk and the visible conduct of selected participants can not only support the analysis of concerted behavior in such settings but also make subtle features of this conduct accessible to audiences (see Heath 2013). Small, mobile video cameras, even ones integrated into a participant's glasses, can help to give a sense of a participant's perspective on a scene. However, when people are remote from each other or when they

are moving between locations in an environment, their perspectives can become quite distinct from those of a colleague and it can be difficult for the participants themselves to determine what the focus of the activity is. This presents both analytic and methodological challenges including problems for the transcription of conduct with regard to these differing perspectives (see Mondada 2012). Nevertheless, even in such complex settings it has proved useful to develop a form of transcription centered on the sequential production of activity (primarily talk) and augment this so as to give a sense of the different individuals' distinct perspectives on the local environment (Mondada 2012).

As the quality of video recording improves and we broaden the scope of our substantive and analytic interests, we will undoubtedly confront activities that place unanticipated demands on our investigations and our ability to transcribe action. Unlike for talk, there is no natural language that enables us to reproduce visible action, so transcription inevitably requires some form of description and characterization. Analysis will not be enhanced by attempts to develop increasingly sophisticated transcription systems that provide generic solutions to encapsulate a diverse range of phenomena, but rather by adapting and evolving a simple procedure that enables limited access to the location and characteristics of action within the immediate configuration of activity. The transcription of multimodal action, like all transcription for those of us concerned with the interactional production of social action, is first and foremost an analytic resource, a way of interrogating and documenting aspects of the data, the fragments of recording that form the critical resource for our particular investigations. In the case of video and the visible, it is the recording itself that forms and remains the principal material on which analysis is built and presented; our transcriptions are simply a resource to enable and enhance our scrutiny of social action.

## NOTES

- 1 For a more in-depth discussion of the analysis and transcription of visual and vocal conduct and a fuller account of the analytic orientation that informs the background to this chapter, see Heath, Hindmarsh, and Luff (2010).
- 2 See Heath and Luff (1996) for further details.
- 3 See Sanchez Svensson, Heath, and Luff (2007) for an extended analysis of this fragment.
- 4 For a discussion of ethical considerations in collecting and presenting video data from natural settings see Heath, Hindmarsh, and Luff (2010: ch. 2).

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# 18 Constraining and Guiding the Flow of Discourse

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WALLACE CHAFE

## 0 Introduction

One of the most basic observations one can make regarding language is that it flows through time, constantly changing from one moment to the next like a flowing stream. But there are in fact two streams, one a stream of thoughts, the other of sounds. The two have very different qualities. It is instructive to compare the experience of listening to a familiar language with listening to one that is unfamiliar. In the former case it is the flow of thoughts, not sounds, of which one is conscious, but in the latter case, of necessity, it can only be the flow of sounds. When it comes to analyzing the flow of discourse, however, sounds are far easier to deal with because they are publicly observable. Thoughts are experienced within the mind and are thus less tractable to objective research. On the other hand, thoughts enjoy a priority over sounds in the sense that organizing and communicating thoughts is what language is all about. The sounds exist in the service of the thoughts and follow wherever the thoughts may take them. It is the thoughts that drive language forward.

A basic challenge for discourse analysis is to identify the forces that govern the flow of thoughts, and by extension the flow of sounds. On the one hand, the flow of thoughts is constrained by limits on the amount and duration of information that can appear in a focus of active consciousness, observable in the intonation units of speech. On the other hand, the flow of thoughts is guided by the manipulation of discourse topics at various levels. Here we examine both influences and their interaction.

## 1 Foci of Consciousness and Centers of Interest

All languages create speech in a series of spurt-like vocalizations, each usually lasting no more than a second or two. There may be a pause before each spurt, a distinctive intonation contour extending over it, perhaps an initial resetting of the pitch baseline, a change of tempo at the beginning or end, and sometimes final creaky voice or whispering. These brief segments of speech are sometimes called *intonation units* (e.g., Chafe 1987, 1994; Du Bois *et al.* 1993).

Speakers must breathe to stay alive, and one might briefly entertain the possibility that each spurt is nothing more than an expulsion of oxygen-depleted air with accompanying sound, followed by a pause for inhalation before the next exhalation. These spurts occur so rapidly, however, and are so intimately related to the flow of thoughts that explaining them solely on the basis of the need to breathe can hardly be satisfactory.

Although intonation units may be observable from casual listening to ordinary talk, their specific properties and functions could not be studied systematically before electronic sound-processing equipment made it possible to observe them in more detail. There are still disagreements about their boundaries, with different investigators relying on partially different criteria (e.g., Stelma and Cameron 2007), but however they are delimited their ubiquity in speech can hardly be doubted. It has proved productive to hypothesize that each intonation unit verbalizes a brief interval during which a particular thought resides in the speaker's focus of active consciousness (Chafe 1994: 53–70). Intonation units thus suggest that foci of active consciousness typically proceed at a pace of one or two seconds each. William James recognized this segmentation of thought and language in a famous passage where "sentence" might now be replaced with "intonation unit":

As we take, in fact, a general view of the wonderful stream of our consciousness, what strikes us first is this different pace of its parts. Like a bird's life, it seems to be made of an alternation of flights and perchings. The rhythm of language expresses this, where every thought is expressed in a sentence, and every sentence closed by a period. (James 1890, vol. 1: 243)

The following is a brief selection from a long conversation during which three women, called here Kathy, Sally, and Chris, were discussing teaching practices in an elementary-school classroom. Kathy was an experienced teacher, Sally was also a teacher but with less experience, and Chris was a less involved onlooker. At one point Sally said the following, where each line represents an intonation unit.<sup>1</sup>

- 1 Sally: (0.5) Whát I was gonna téll you about that rèally frústrates me is that,
- 2 (0.2) ùh=,
- 3 (1.3) (breath) the (0.1) the péop . . the príncipal and stuff they sày to me,
- 4 (0.9) (tsk) (breath) (begin higher pitch) óh wèll,
- 5 . . whát you dò with those thírđ-gràders,
- 6 you knòw,
- 7 is you jùst like,

- 8 (0.8) táke them=,  
 9 and pút them=,  
 10 you knòw with= òne of the smárter fòurth-gràders who's vèry  
 [vér]bal and,  
 11 Chris: [Uh huh,]  
 12 Sally: (0.1) and wèll-beháved.  
 13 (0.5) And you . . hàve them wòrk as a téam you know;  
 14 so that the (0.4) (breath) fòurth-gràder can help the thírð-gràder.

This sequence as a whole illustrates a larger unit of thought activation. In Chafe (1994: 139–44) I speculated that our minds are constructed to deal with only a very small amount of information in fully active consciousness at one time, but that “we constantly try nevertheless to push the capacity of focal consciousness beyond the bounds of a single focus, attempting to embrace larger, more intellectually challenging conglomerates of information” (140). I called these larger conglomerates “centers of interest,” and the above excerpt provides a good example. Centers of interest can be very roughly related to “sentences,” identifiable partly from syntactic criteria and partly from sentence-final intonation. One can note the sentence-final intonation contour in line 12 (shown with a period “and well-behaved.”) but then the continuation signaled by “and” in line 13 (“And you have them work as a team you know;”) before this segment finally came to rest in line 14 (“so that the fourth-grader can help the third-grader.”). Syntax and prosody do not always coincide, and natural speech is prone to inconsistencies in sentence coherence, but people do aim at verbalizing what might be regarded as “superfoci of consciousness.” Those longer segments of speech tend to occupy a ballpark range in the neighborhood of 10 seconds, though with a great deal of variation. Of interest here is the fact that these centers of interest are defined by coherent content, and thus their sequencing is determined by other factors, to which we now turn.

## 2 Topics

The word *topic* has been used in linguistics in various ways. It might, for example, apply to a constituent of a sentence, as when one speaks of a sentence having a “topic and comment” (e.g., Hockett 1958: 201), or of “topic-prominent” languages (Li and Thompson 1976), or of “topicalization” or “topic continuity” (e.g., Givón 1983). Here, however, it refers to what is sometimes called a “discourse topic” (Brown and Yule 1983: 71), as in “the topic of this paragraph.” A topic in this sense is a coherent aggregate of thoughts that may be introduced by a participant in a conversation and developed either by that participant or by another, or by several participants jointly. Topics typically have clear beginnings, although not always (cf. Tannen 2005: 53–5), and their endings may be well defined or they may simply “peter out.” As long as a topic remains open, participants in a conversation are likely to experience a drive to keep it alive. Another quote from William James nicely captures this drive:

In all our voluntary thinking there is some topic or subject about which all the members of the thought revolve. Half the time this topic is a problem, a gap we cannot yet

fill with a definite picture, word, or phrase, but which ... influences us in an intensely active and determinate psychic way. Whatever may be the images and phrases that pass before us, we feel their relation to this aching gap. To fill it up is our thought's destiny. Some bring us nearer to that consummation. Some the gap negates as quite irrelevant. Each swims in a felt fringe of relations of which the aforesaid gap is the term. (James 1890, vol. 1: 259)

Casual observation suggests that people are constrained to varying degrees by the need to develop a topic fully before the conversation moves on to another, and that there may be variable recognition of the social right to topic development. One wonders whether such differences in conversational style can be traced to differences in the degree to which an individual experiences James's aching gap and the need to fill it.

An early step in discourse analysis can be listening to a recording of a conversation with the goal of identifying topics: segments of discourse during which one or more speakers "talk about the same thing." Topics are identifiable above all from their coherent content, but there are likely to be phonetic cues as well: sometimes, though certainly not always, a longer-than-normal pause before a new topic is introduced; sometimes heightened pitch, loudness, acceleration, or a new voice quality at the outset; sometimes a tapering off of these same qualities at the end. Topics vary greatly in length. In some stretches of discourse there may appear to be no topic at all, but many parts of most conversations lend themselves to a topic-based analysis.

It may be possible to identify a "basic level" of topichood, with topics at that level often included within a more inclusive *supertopic*. Although the supertopic may have identifiable beginnings and endings, it lacks the internal structure characteristic of basic-level topics, and does not generate the same drive for closure, James's aching gap. Each time a basic-level topic is concluded, any participant in the conversation may abandon the current supertopic and, by introducing a new basic-level topic, introduce a new supertopic as well. With no internal structure of its own, a supertopic can be abandoned whenever an included basic-level topic has achieved a point of closure.

### 3 Topic Navigation

A topic is a conceptual unit too large to be accommodated within the limited capacity of fully active consciousness as verbalized in a single intonation unit. Once a topic has been introduced, the focus of consciousness navigates through it, activating first one included idea and then another until the topic is judged to have been adequately covered and closure may be judged appropriate. This navigation may be guided by a *schema*, some familiar pattern that provides a path for a speaker to follow (e.g., Bartlett 1932; Chafe 1986). As we will see, it may also be driven by a less predictable interaction between conversational participants (Chafe 1994: 120–36).

To return to the conversation between Kathy, Sally, and Chris that was introduced above, we can begin at a point where its forward movement was momentarily at a standstill. The previous topic had just been closed, and for the conversation to continue there was a need for someone to choose and introduce a new topic. The preceding topics had fallen within the domain of a supertopic that can be labeled *classroom experiences*.

One option during such a conversational lull is for someone to open a new basic-level topic that continues the current supertopic. An alternative is to introduce a new basic-level topic that simultaneously establishes a new supertopic. Imagine, for example, that someone began talking at this point about a movie she had just seen, opening a supertopic that might be labeled *current movies*.

As it happened, Sally chose the first option, opening a new basic-level topic that remained within the *classroom experiences* supertopic. What she said was:

- (1) Sally: (0.5) What I was gonna tell you about that really frustrates me is that,

No one but Sally knew where this topic would lead, and for the moment we can give it the label *something frustrating*. Later we will see how the development of this conversation suggests a different label.

The words “what I was gonna tell you about” suggest that Sally had planned to introduce this topic at an earlier point. Examination of the larger context reveals that she had tried to do exactly that but had been unsuccessful because Chris interrupted her with a different topic. What she said earlier is numbered (0) because it lay outside the excerpt with which we are principally concerned:

- (0) Sally: . . . Meanwhile in the principal’s office they’re telling me,

Two other topics intervened before Sally returned to what she had tried to start in (0), a topic that must have remained alive in her semiactive consciousness while the intervening topics were developed. It was thus still available to be reintroduced in (1): “What I was gonna tell you about that really frustrates me is that,” which was followed by an intonation unit whose wording closely resembled that of (0), as we will see.

## 4 Navigation by Schema

The *something frustrating* topic was at first developed by Sally as a monologue. There is a ubiquitous schema for a narrative topic, whose maximum components can be listed as follows (Chafe 1994: 120–36):

- summary
- initial state
- complication
- climax
- denouement
- final state
- coda.

Labov and Waletzky (1967) suggested a partially similar schema but inexplicably omitted the climax. An opening summary may or may not be present. Closer to being obligatory is the introduction of an initial state that gives the topic a spatiotemporal or epistemic orientation. The complication section disturbs this initial state with events that

lead to a climax: some unexpected event that functions as the point of the topic, the reason for its telling. A denouement then provides a relaxation toward a final state into which the new knowledge provided by the climax has been incorporated. There may or may not be a coda, a metacomment on the topic as a whole.

Sally's statement in (1) summarized the content to follow by saying that it would entail something frustrating. Not only did she open a new topic and assume the floor but also, by using the word "frustrates," she foreshadowed its organization, creating an expectation that it would include something desirable followed by an explanation of why that desirable outcome was not realized. Deciding how to proceed required additional mental processing time on Sally's part, an interval during which she uttered a prolonged hesitation sound followed by more than a second of silence and an audible breath before she continued:

- (1) Sally: (0.5) Whát I was gonna téll you about that rèally frústrates me is that,  
 (2) (0.2) ùh=,  
 (3) (1.3) (breath) the (0.1) the péop . . the príncipal and stuff they sày to me,

In (3) Sally repeated, with only partially different words, her earlier attempt to introduce this same topic in (0), "Méanwhile in the príncipal's òffice they're télling me,." In (3) she decided to mention the people who had given her advice. Her truncated "the peop" was an attempt to categorize that idea, but she quickly found a better categorization and produced the phrase "the principal and stuff" followed by the quote-introducer "they say to me."

Looking back at (1), we can see that Sally's consciousness was then operating in what I have called the "immediate mode" (Chafe 1994: 195–223). That is, Sally was talking about what was still frustrating her at the time she was talking. With (3), however, she moved into the "displaced mode" by shifting to things that had been said to her at one or more times in the past, displaced from the here and now of this conversation. Furthermore, the choice of the "generic mode" ("they say to me," without reference to any particular event) anticipated that the quote to follow would be generic as well. She was not talking about a particular act of advice-giving but about events that were less locally specified.

Sally then began the quoted advice, shifting her voice iconically to a higher pitch that lay noticeably above her normal range. The first element in the quote established an affective stance on the part of the principal and the others toward what they were telling her:

- (4) Sally: (0.9) (tsk) (breath) (begin higher pitch) óh wèll,

The alveolar click ("tsk") as well as the prosody and the wording "oh well" conveyed the lack of concern Sally had perceived in the advice. "The principal and stuff" believed that coping with the third-graders was no big deal.

The next focus established a frame for the recommended action, the idea that Sally should do something specific:

- (5) Sally: . . whàt you dò with those thír-d-gràders,

With this utterance Sally created a second level of displacement. Having begun in the immediate mode in (1) (experiencing her current frustration), "What I was gonna tell you about that really frustrates me is that," she used (3) to shift into the displaced world in which she was given advice: "the peop . . . the principal and stuff they say to me," and now with (5) she moved into the further displaced world of the recommended action, a hypothetical world that might be realized at some future time: "what you do with those third-graders,." Thus the sequence of (1), (3), and (5) established a setting that was increasingly displaced from the present conversation:

what frustrates me	(immediate)
the principal and stuff say to me	(past and generic)
what you do with those third-graders	(future and generic)

With this orientation in place, Sally arrived at a point where she could begin expressing the advice that had been given her. Putting it all together and deciding how to express it took a little more time, some of which she filled with two intonation units that shed light on still other aspects of discourse flow:

- (6) Sally: you knòw,  
 (7) is you jùst like,

There are two problems that confront anyone engaged in talk. They are created by two kinds of *unconformity*, a term I have used to refer to disparate aspects of human experience that must somehow be brought into approximate conformity if one is to interact with one's fellow humans. First, there is the inevitable unconformity between an individual's experiences – perceptions, actions, and evaluations that are either immediate, remembered, or imagined – and the limited resources a language provides for verbalizing those experiences. Second, there is the unconformity that inevitably exists between one mind and another. There is, in short, both a verbalization problem and an interaction problem. The language that people produce often shows that a speaker recognizes both, and (6) "you know" and (7) "is you just like" are examples.

With respect to verbalization, language cannot fully or adequately express an inner experience. The verbalization process allows a speaker to get a handle on the experience and share it to some degree with others, but the linguistic organization of ideas is not the same as the experience itself. The ubiquitous word "like," found here in (7) "is you just like," is one way a speaker can show recognition of the unconformity between ideas and their verbal expression – a small and passing way in which Sally showed her recognition that what she was about to say would be only a roughly satisfactory representation of what she was thinking.

With respect to the interaction problem, one mind can never fully know what another mind is experiencing, and language can only imperfectly bridge the gap. Someone engaged in a conversation needs both to clothe an inner experience in language that will more or less adequately express it and at the same time find language that will more or less satisfactorily take account of what is believed to be present in other minds. The equally ubiquitous "you know," the sole content of (6), is one way a speaker can show recognition of the unconformity between his or her own mind and the mind of

another, in this case signaling that what she was about to say was, to some degree at least, what her listeners might have expected and not something that would be totally surprising to them. It can be noted that (6) “you know” and (7) “is you just like” were attributed to the people characterized as “the principal and stuff,” not to Sally herself, but of course there is no way to know how close they came to what the principal or anyone else had actually said.

It was time for Sally to move on to the complication section of the narrative schema, in this case the recommended actions:

- (8) Sally: (0.8) táke them=,  
 (9) and pút them=,  
 (10) you knòw with= òne of the smárter fòurth-gràders who’s vèry [vér]bal  
 and,  
 (11) Chris: [Uh huh,]  
 (12) Sally: (0.1) and wèll-beháved.  
 (13) (0.5) And you . . . hàve them wòrk as a téam you know;  
 (14) so that the (0.4) (breath) fòurth-gràder can help the thír-d-gràder.

At the end of (14) the prosody conveyed a closure of this center of interest. The climax that followed came with a bang, its impact heightened by the nearly two seconds of silence that preceded it, as well as by the forceful wording:

- (15) Sally: (1.7) (loud) But . . . that’s búllshit.

The denouement justified this evaluation:

- (16) Sally: (0.1) Because,  
 (17) (0.5) thát just tèaches the thír-d-gràder=,  
 (18) with the lèsser intèlligence that,  
 (19) (0.9) that he’s wóρθless;  
 (20) . . . you know that he càn’t léarn [sùmpm on his ów=n.]

## 5 Navigation by Interaction

With (20), Sally completed her development of the topic she had opened in (1): “Whát I was gonna téll you about that rèally frústrates me is that.” Can we say that the conversation had now returned to a state where it would have been appropriate for any of the participants to introduce a different topic, either staying within the *classroom experiences* supertopic or introducing a new one? We can only speculate on Sally’s goal in opening her topic in the first place, but we might suppose that she was using (1) through (20) as a way of eliciting some reaction, perhaps sympathy, perhaps advice,

from her interlocutors. In any case, Kathy reacted in a way that was probably not what Sally was expecting. What Kathy said overlapped the end of (20):

- (21) Kathy: [Nó it's nó;  
 (22) nó it's] nó,  
 (23) you cán put them in tèams like thàt;

With these three intonation units Kathy reorganized the structure of the ongoing topic. Until now, Sally's topic had been organized around the idea that teams don't work, the idea labeled earlier *something frustrating*. Kathy now introduced the idea that teams *do* work, thereby reorganizing the topic into a bipartite structure of thesis and antithesis, the subtopics *teams don't work* and *teams do work*. Thus, the basic-level topic we have been following might now be relabeled *using teams*. But no one could have anticipated what came next.

Kathy began by justifying her statement in (23), correcting Sally's conception of the make-up of the teams:

- (24) Kathy: but you dón't put óne with óne;  
 (25) you pút like twó fòurth-gràders with-

Before she finished (25), however, Kathy decided that her intent would come across more clearly if she could establish the relative numbers of third- and fourth-graders in Sally's class. After nearly a second of silence, she briefly thought in (26) of asking for raw numbers, but she abandoned that attempt and quickly replaced it with a request for a ratio instead:

- (26) Kathy: (0.8) Hów many thír-d-gràders d-  
 (27) What's the . . [1 rátio of thír-d- 1] [2 graders to fòurth-graders. 2]

In the middle of (27) there occurred one of those conversational moments when people talk at cross-purposes, a turbulence in the flow of interactive thought. Sally did not immediately hear Kathy's question about the ratio of third-graders to fourth-graders, and not only Sally but Chris as well began to pursue directions of their own, overlapping most of (27):

- (28) Sally: [1 But they're nó 1]  
 (29) Chris: [2 You mean so they dòn't feel singled 2] [3 óut or whát. 3]

But then Sally quickly abandoned whatever she had begun in (28) and responded to Kathy's question in (27), "What's the ratio of third-graders to fourth-graders," with some precise information:

- (30) Sally: [3 Nów I have 3] like fíve thír-d-gràders.  
 (31) I have like (0.3) twénty-two kíd's.

These two statements elicited a series of misunderstandings that drove the remainder of this topic. Sally's answer invited some hasty arithmetic that should have yielded the correct number of fourth-graders, but Kathy made an error:

(32) Kathy: (0.2) Ókay,

(33) só you have fifteen fòurth-gràders and five thírð-gràders?

We can only speculate on why Kathy said "fifteen," but the subsequent conversation suggests that she had been hoping for a whole-number ratio such as 15 to 5, so that each team could have contained three fourth-graders and one third-grader.

The question in (33), "so you have fifteen fourth-graders and five third-graders," was a confirmative one, anticipating a positive answer, but Sally responded with a correction:

(34) Sally: (0.6) Nó;

(35) (0.9) uh= nó.

(36) (0.1) I have like (0.2) séven (noise) fòurth-graders.

(37) (0.1) (sotto voce) And fíve thírð-graders.

In the midst of (36) there was a background noise that masked the last syllable, "teen," of the word "seventeen," so that Kathy heard only "seven." On the basis of ordinary expectations regarding class size she responded with surprise that was communicated by her prosody:

(38) Kathy: You have twélve kíds?

Now it was Sally's turn to be surprised. Thinking she had just explained that the correct numbers were 17 fourth-graders and five third-graders, Kathy's question made no sense:

(39) Sally: (0.5) Whát?

But Kathy could only repeat it:

(40) Kathy: (0.1) You ónly have twélve kíds?

Sally repeated her previous answer, this time free of the noise:

(41) Sally: (0.4) Nó.

(42) (0.3) Séventéen;

Kathy stood corrected:

(43) Kathy: (0.2) Óh ókay,

Sally wanted to make certain that Kathy knew that 17 was not the total number in the class but only the size of the subset on which she had focused:

(44) Sally: *fóurth-grà[ders,]*

Amid all this confusion Kathy abandoned her plan to be precise about the numerical composition of the teams. If she had hoped to specify that each team would be composed of three fourth-graders and one third-grader, she now found it pointless to insist on such exactitude and fell back on a less precise recommendation:

(45) Kathy: [so] *thén* what you *dó* is you *sprinkle* the *fifth-gràders* out *évenly*.

(46) (0.6) And you *máke* . . . [the *fóurth-gràders*] (0.1) *táke* the *responsibility* for *téaching* them.

But in (45) she made another error, saying “fifth-graders” instead of “third-graders,” probably because Kathy herself had taught a fifth–sixth-grade combination in which it was the fifth-graders who were the less advanced. Sally corrected her with a questioning intonation while Kathy was uttering “fourth-graders” in (46):

(47) Sally: [*Thírd-gràders?*]

Kathy then went on to supplement what she had said in (46), “and you make the fourth-graders take the responsibility for teaching them”:

(48) Kathy: And *yóu engráin* in them,

(49) that *it’s thér* responsibility to *hèlp* those little *kíds*.

She added a coda that would drive home the success of the recommended procedure. Sandwiched between her final two intonation units was a protest by Sally to the effect that she herself had done the same:

(50) Kathy: *Thát’s* what *Í* did,

(51) Sally: I *háve* been.

(52) Kathy: [and it *wórks*.]

Even before Kathy finished (52), Chris overlapped with a question whose effect was to open a new, though related topic:

(53) Chris: [*But thén* you]

(54) can you *sáy* it’s a [*pàrt* of your] *gráde*?

There followed a lengthy discussion of whether and how one should grade the fourth-graders for their mentoring activities.

My intention in describing this example in such detail has been to illustrate how the flow of language is propelled forward by the opening of a topic and thus the creation of a drive for the topic's development until closure is judged appropriate. I have discussed a basic-level topic, ultimately called *using teams*, as an example of the highest level of topichood at which there is a coherent trajectory of development. Once open, a topic may be kept moving forward along a path provided by a schema such as the narrative schema, by the interaction of separate minds engaged in a conversation, or by some combination of both. Interactive topic development may be driven by an interlocutor's desire to agree with or contradict something said by another, or to request needed information the other may possess. This example shows especially well how the forward movement of a conversation may be driven by misunderstandings.

## 6 The Text

By stringing together all the intonation units that were introduced piecemeal above, one can produce a transcript of this entire segment of the conversation. This kind of object is often called a "text," and it is the traditional object of discourse study:

- 1 Sally: (0.5) Whát I was gonna téll you about that rèally frústrates me is that,  
 2 (0.2) ùh=,  
 3 (1.3) (breath) the (0.1) the péop . . the príncipal and stuff they sày to me,  
 4 (0.9) (tsk) (breath) (begin higher pitch) óh wèll,  
 5 . . whàt you dò with those thírð-gràders,  
 6 you knòw,  
 7 is you júst like,  
 8 (0.8) táke them=,  
 9 and pút them=,  
 10 you knòw with= òne of the smárter fóurth-gràders who's vèry [vér]bal  
 and,  
 11 Chris: [Uh huh,]  
 12 Sally: (0.1) and wèll-beháved.  
 13 (0.5) And you . . hàve them wòrk as a téam you know;  
 14 so that the (0.4) (breath) fóurth-gràder can help the thírð-gràder.  
 15 (1.7) But . . that's búllshit.  
 16 (0.1) Because,  
 17 (0.5) thát just tèaches the thírð-gràder=,  
 18 with the lèsser intélligence that,  
 19 (0.9) that he's wóorthless;  
 20 . . you know that he càn't léarn [sùmpm on his ów=n.]  
 21 Kathy: [Nó it's nó;  
 22 nó it's] nó,  
 23 you cán put them in tèams like thàt;

- 24 but you dón't put óne with óne;  
 25 you pút like twó fòurth-gràders with-  
 26 (0.8) Hów many thír-d-gràders d-  
 27 What's the . . [1 rátió of thír-d- 1] [2 graders to fòurth-gràders. 2]  
 28 Sally: [1 But they're nó 1]  
 29 Chris: [2 You mean so they dòn't feel singled 2] [3 óut or whát. 3]  
 30 Sally: [3 Nów I have 3] like fíve thír-d-gràders.  
 31 I have like (0.3) twénty-two kíd's.  
 32 Kathy: (0.2) Ókay,  
 33 só you have fíftéen fòurth-gràders and fíve thír-d-gràders?  
 34 Sally: (0.6) Nó;  
 35 (0.9) uh= nó.  
 36 (0.1) I have like (0.2) séven (noise) fòurth-gràders.  
 37 (0.1) (sotto voce) And fíve thír-d-gràders.  
 38 Kathy: You have twélve kíd's?  
 39 Sally: (0.5) Whát?  
 40 Kathy: (0.1) You ónly have twélve kíd's?  
 41 Sally: (0.4) Nó.  
 42 (0.3) Séventéen;  
 43 Kathy: (0.2) Óh ókay,  
 44 Sally: fòurth-grà[ders,]  
 45 Kathy: [so] thén what you dó is you sprínkle the fíft-h-gràders out évenly.  
 46 (0.6) And you máke . . [the fòurth-gràders] (0.1) táke the responsíbility  
 for téaching them.  
 47 Sally: [Thír-d-gràders?]  
 48 Kathy: And yóu engráin in them,  
 49 that it's thér responsíbility to hèlp those little kíd's.  
 50 Thát's what Í did,  
 51 Sally: I háve been.  
 52 Kathy: [and it wórks.]  
 53 Chris: [But thén you]  
 54 can you sáy it's a [pàrt of your] gráde?

What kind of thing is this? Does it have any validity beyond being a visual representation of a concatenation of utterances that were produced in sequence as the conversation moved forward through time? One possibility, easily discardable, is that it represents something in the minds of one or more participants before these things were said. But of course no one could have planned the above, or predicted that the conversation would proceed in this way. Is it possible, then, that this text represents something that remained in the minds of the participants afterwards? Again the answer must be no, though perhaps a more qualified no. Some of the ideas expressed here may have been retained in some form, varying from one participant to another, at least for a while, even while the details of how these thoughts were activated and verbalized during the conversation were quickly lost. The participants may have remembered for a time that they talked about using teams in the classroom, that Sally

didn't like the idea, that Kathy did, and so on. But the particular sequence of ideas and exactly how they were expressed were surely ephemeral.

It is worth reflecting on the fact that spontaneous conversations differ from "oral literature" in this respect. A person may remember a ritual or story or joke and repeat it later in another setting, though with language and content that are seldom if ever fully identical. But people do not repeat casual conversations in that way. Someone might say, "That was a good conversation," but no one would be likely to exclaim, "Let's say the whole thing again tomorrow." If people do remark occasionally, "I think we've had this conversation before," they are hardly thinking of a verbatim repetition. The collection and study of texts has in the past been slanted toward narratives and rituals, whose value lies in something close to (though seldom identical with) verbatim repetition. Discourse of that kind is more persistent in memory, and in that respect it is more like written language. Earlier discourse studies, that is, have tended to favor material that has been closer in nature to written texts (Chafe 1981).

I do not mean to suggest that a text such as the above has no use. What it gives us is a lasting record of evanescent happenings that we can examine visually at our leisure. As a kind of time machine, it is a resource that allows us as analysts to view the dynamic processes by which a sequence of linguistic events was produced, as we have done here. It is a tool that can further our understanding of how minds and language proceed through time. By freezing temporal events it helps us identify the forces responsible for creating them. But we should not be misled into interpreting this artificial aid to understanding as something with a transcendent reality.

One sometimes hears that participants in a conversation are engaged in the joint construction of a text. I suggest that it is better to think of a conversation as a uniquely human and extraordinarily important way by which separate minds are able to influence and be influenced by each other, managing to some extent, and always imperfectly, to bridge the gap between them, not by constructing a lasting object but through a constant interplay of constantly changing ideas. The example discussed here illustrates a few of the ways in which that can happen.

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## NOTES

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1 Conventions followed in this and the following transcriptions of speech include the following. The numbers in parentheses are measurements (to tenths of a second) of periods of silence. The acute and grave accents mark the nuclei of syllables with primary and secondary accents respectively. Periods show a decisively falling pitch contour, often accompanied by creaky voice, whereas semicolons show a less decisive fall. Commas show any other

terminal contour, except that the high rising pitch associated with a yes-no question is shown with a question mark. The equals sign shows a prolongation of the preceding sound. Square brackets show overlapping speech, sometimes indexed with numbers when there might be ambiguity. That is, a segment enclosed in [1 ... 1] overlaps with another segment indexed in the same way.

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# 19 Imagination in Narratives

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## 0 Introduction

Understanding narratives demands a vivid imagination. In the depths of World War I, Franz Kafka traveled from Prague to Munich to give a public reading of his yet-to-be-published short story “The penal colony.” In the audience was Max Pulver (1953: 52), who described what happened (our translation):

With his first words, an indistinct smell of blood seemed to spread out, and an extraordinarily faint taste settled on my lips. His voice might have sounded apologetic, but it forced its pictures into me with razor sharpness, like icy needles of acute torment. It wasn't just that the torture and instruments of torture were described in the executioners' words of suppressed ecstasy. It was that the listener himself was dragged into this hellish torture. He lay as a victim on the gently rocking rack, and each new word, like a new thorn, tore slowly into his back.

Pulver's experience was not unique. One woman fainted and had to be carried out, and then so did two more. Many in the audience fled before Kafka's words overwhelmed them. By the end, almost no one was left in the hall.

At the heart of Kafka's narrative is what his audience *experienced*. But how was it possible for Kafka's words – mere words – to get them to smell blood, feel pain, faint, and flee? Most of us have had similar experiences. At the cinema, we have felt fear, anger, elation, and tension, and found ourselves crying, hiding our eyes, or leaving the theater. In reading novels, we have visualized the scenes described and felt fear, anger, excitement, suspense, and sexual arousal. How is it possible to experience such things about fictional objects – about objects we know don't exist?

A basic part of the answer is imagination. But what is imagination, and how does it work? In this chapter, we will describe challenges that imagination poses for accounts of narratives and evaluate several answers to these challenges. In the end, we must be able to explain what happened to Kafka's audience.

## 1 Imagining Stories

In narratives, the *story* one tells is different from the *discourse* by which one tells it. As Chatman (1978: 19) put it,

each narrative has two parts: a story (*histoire*), the content or chain of events (actions, happenings), plus what may be called the existents (characters, items of setting); and a discourse (*discours*), that is, the expression, the means by which the content is communicated.

So, when people take in a narrative, they go beyond the discourse to imagine the story behind it. In creating the discourse, narrators rely on two general methods: *describing* and *depicting*. Kafka's "Penal colony" consists mostly of descriptions, which categorize things in the story world. His listeners in Munich used the categories for inferring the things they were to imagine. Orson Welles's movie *Citizen Kane*, in contrast, consists mostly of visual and auditory depictions, which are physical analogs of the scenes they depict. Movie-goers use them to imagine those scenes quite directly. Let us start with descriptions.

### 1.1 Imagining scenes from descriptions

When people read descriptions of scenes, most try to imagine those scenes. In one classic demonstration (Bransford, Barclay, and Franks 1972: 195), people read either (1) or (2), among other sentences, which they were later asked to remember:

- (1) Three turtles rested on a floating log and a fish swam beneath it.
- (2) Three turtles rested beside a floating log and a fish swam beneath it.

In the scene described in 1, when the fish swam beneath the log, it also swam beneath the turtles. So later, in memory, people should find it easy to confuse (1) with the same sentence ending "and a fish swam beneath *them*," and they did. Not so for (2). When the fish swam beneath the log, it did *not* swim beneath the turtles, so later, in memory, people should *not* confuse (2) with the same sentence ending "and a fish swam beneath *them*." And they didn't. Conclusion: what they represented in memory was not the sentence per se but the scene it described – almost as if they were looking at the scene itself.

People often need to imagine scenes simply to interpret the words that describe them. Take *approach* in these three descriptions:

- (3) I am standing on the porch of a farm house looking across the yard at a picket fence. A tractor [or: mouse] is just approaching it.
- (4) I am standing across the street from a post office with a mailbox in front of it. A man crossing the street is just approaching the post office [or: mailbox].
- (5) I am standing at the entrance to an exhibition hall looking at a slab of marble. A man is just approaching it with a camera [or: chisel].

In one experiment (Morrow and Clark 1988: 282–5), people were given one of the two alternatives of these and other descriptions and were asked to estimate the distance of, say, the tractor, or mouse, from the picket fence. The average estimates were as follows:

- (3') tractor to fence, 39 feet; mouse to fence, 2 feet
- (4') man to post office, 28 feet; man to mailbox, 13 feet
- (5') man with camera to marble slab, 18 feet; man with chisel to marble slab, 5 feet

People apparently interpreted *approach* by considering how near one object must be to a landmark for it to be in “interaction with” the landmark for its assumed purpose. Tractors start to interact with a fence at 39 feet, whereas mice do so only at 2 feet. These judgments depended on the size of the referent object (3), the size of the landmark (4), and the protagonist’s purpose (5).

These findings should not be surprising – and they are just a sample of a large body of such findings. But they remind us that imagination is needed for even the simplest descriptions. We need to imagine the appearance or arrangement of turtles, logs, tractors, and fences to come to the right interpretations.

## 1.2 *Imagining scenes from a point of view*

Many narratives are told from one person’s point of view. Melville’s *Moby-Dick* is a first-person account of a sailor, Ishmael, who describes his experiences aboard a whaler. When Ishmael moves from one place to the next, his viewpoint also changes. We are expected to follow these changes as we imagine the world he describes. We track not only where he is in that world but also which way he is oriented, what he is looking at, and what he is hearing. We use his descriptions to imagine his moment-by-moment perceptual experiences.

Tracking the narrator, or the protagonist, requires following a *deictic center* – the *I*, *here*, and *now* of the narrator’s point of view. We need the deictic center to interpret expressions such as *come* and *go*, *this* and *that*, and *here* and *there* (see Bühler 1982; Duchan,

Bruder, and Hewitt 1995; Fillmore 1975). Consider Hemingway's short story *The Killers*, which opens with this description:

- (6) The door to Henry's lunchroom opened and two men came in.

As Fillmore (1981) noted, we infer that the third-person narrator is inside the lunchroom because he describes the door as opening by unseen forces and the men as "coming" in, not "going" in. The deictic center, the narrator's *I-here-now*, is inside the room. And we are forced to imagine the scene from his viewpoint – as if we, too, were viewing it from inside the lunchroom.

What we imagine, therefore, should differ for first- and third-person narratives, and it does. In one study (Thomte 2009), people listened to brief narratives in either the first or the third person. Every so often, the narratives were stopped and listeners were shown a photo and had to say whether or not it "went with the story they were listening to." In one narrative, a sentence appeared in one of these two versions:

- (7) I got to my bike but as I was looking at it I realized I hadn't brought my helmet.  
 (8) She got to her bike but as she was looking at it she realized she hadn't brought her helmet.

Immediately after (7) or (8), listeners were shown one of two photos: a photo from the *protagonist's viewpoint* (looking down at the bike) or a photo from an *observer's viewpoint* (from the side, looking at the woman looking down at the bike). Participants were faster to say "yes" when the photo's viewpoint matched the narrator's. That is, they were faster on protagonist photos in first-person narratives but faster on observer photos in third-person narratives. Listeners apparently imagined the story scenes from the narrator's viewpoint, which coincided with the protagonist's viewpoint in first-person stories but with the observer's viewpoint in third-person stories (see also Brunyé *et al.* 2009).

There is other evidence that people track the protagonists in third-person narratives. In a study by Glenberg, Meyer, and Lindem (1987: 78), people were given paragraphs to read one sentence at a time. Some read one of the two versions of (9):

- (9) Warren spent the afternoon shopping at the store.  
 He picked up [or: set down] his bag and went over to look at some scarves.  
 He had been shopping all day.  
 He thought it was getting too heavy to carry.

The pronoun *it* in the last sentence refers to the bag mentioned in the second sentence. When the verb in the second sentence is *picked up*, Warren keeps the bag with him as he looks at the scarves, but, when the verb is *set down*, he leaves it behind. The bag's location influenced the interpretation of the pronoun. People read the final sentence a full 0.6 seconds faster when the verb was *picked up* than when it was *set down*. Apparently, they could readily locate the referent for *it* when the bag was still with Warren,

but not when it was not. They must therefore have imagined Warren and the bag within a spatial framework (see also Barsalou 2008; Bower and Morrow 1990).

But how do people keep track of where the protagonist is? In an experiment by Morrow (1985: 393), people memorized the layout of a small model house and then read brief narratives about the house. The narratives might have ended like this:

- (10) She walked from the study into the bedroom.  
She didn't find the glasses in the room.  
Which room is referred to?

For different people, the first sentence had different prepositions (*from* vs. *through* vs. *past the study* and *into* vs. *to the bedroom*) and different verb modalities (*walked* vs. *was walking*). Each of these differences changed people's interpretation of *the room* in the second sentence. Here are the results of just two of the variants (in percent of choices by the participants):

- (11) She walked *from* the study *into* the bedroom.

The room referred to: the bedroom, 77 percent; the study, 21 percent; other rooms, 2 percent

- (12) She walked *past* the study *to* the bedroom.

The room referred to: the bedroom 21 percent; the study 73 percent; other rooms, 6 percent

In (11), most people placed the protagonist in the bedroom, but in (12) most placed her near the study.

It is difficult to overstate the challenge from these studies for how people deploy imagination in discourse. People appear to imagine the protagonist's environment and keep track of where he or she is. They imagine scenes from the protagonist's viewpoint for first-person narratives but from an observer's viewpoint for third-person narratives. They rely not just on the descriptions given but also on their own practical knowledge of lunchrooms, houses, closets, department stores, walking, and other common items and events. And they combine information from many sources in the descriptions themselves – for example, the verb (*walked*), prepositional phrases (*from the study* and *into the bedroom*), and other items (*the bag*).

### 1.3 Imagining scenes from depictive and deictic gestures

Narrators often produce gestures that refer to the world they are talking about (Goodwin 1981; Kendon 1980, 2004; McNeill 1992; Schegloff 1984; Streeck 2009). Some

of the gestures are *iconic* and depict things, and others are *deictic* and locate things. Many do both. But all of them aid imagining scenes in the story world.

Iconic gestures are common in face-to-face narratives. In an example analyzed by Kendon (1980: 219), Fran told a friend about a scene from the film *Some Like it Hot*. Her speech is on the left, and the gestures yoked to that speech are on the right:

(13) Speech	Gestures
1 they wheel a big <i>table</i> in	Fran sweeps her left arm inward in a horizontal motion.
2 with a big	
3 with a big [1.08 sec] <i>cake</i> on it	During the pause Fran makes a series of circular motions with her forearm pointing downward and index finger extended.
4 and the <i>girl</i>	Fran raises her arm until it is fully extended vertically above her.
5 jumps <i>up</i>	

While describing the scene in words, Fran *depicted* selective pieces of it with her hands and arms.

Interpreting iconic gestures depends directly on the scenes listeners are to imagine. In line 3, Fran depicted a large birthday cake by drawing its circular outline in the air. She intended her friend to combine the drawing with what she was saying (“with a big with a big cake on it”) and *visualize* a cake the size and shape of her outline. In line (4), Fran moved immediately into a depiction of the girl jumping up out of the cake. So, in line (3), Fran performed the gesture from the viewpoint of an observer looking at the cake (as in a third-person narrative), whereas in line 4 she enacted the woman, the protagonist, jumping out of the cake (as in a first-person narrative). Remarkably, Fran changed her viewpoint in a trice and expected her audience to follow.

Deictic, or pointing, gestures are equally demanding. Consider an example from a Tzetal narrative recorded by Haviland (1996: 305–6), presented here in translation:

- (14) There were indeed people living there [pointing to a fence in the imaginary space of the narrative]. Beside the path [vertical hand moving up and down, representing an imaginary gate]. (That house) was the same size at this house here [pointing at *actual* house nearby].

The narrator first pointed at an *imaginary* fence in the space around him in which he had situated the story, and, with an iconic gesture, he added an *imaginary* gate. But then he pointed at an actual house nearby, saying, in effect, “That house [whose gate I can point to in the imaginary narrative space] is the same size as this house [which I can point to here].” As Haviland noted, narrators and their audience had to keep track of the imaginary and the actual spaces separately and in relation to each other.

For narrators to use depictive and deictic gestures appropriately, then, they must rely on the imagined appearances and locations of objects and events. They must do so in order to refer to locations, objects, and events in the scenes to be imagined. Their gestures would be impossible to interpret without imagining those scenes.

### 1.4 *Imagining scenes from voices*

Most narratives require us to imagine more than one voice. Take the first lines of a joke told by Sam to Reynard (Svartvik and Quirk 1980: 42–3):

- (15) let me tell you a story, - - -  
a girl went into a chemist's shop, and asked for . contraceptive tablets, - -  
so he said "well I've got . all kinds, and . all prices, what do you want,"  
she said "well what have you got,"

There are four voices here. The first is Sam's announcing the story to Reynard. The second belongs to the fictional narrator as he describes the conversation between the girl and the chemist. With the quotation in line 3, we imagine the chemist's voice, and in line 4, the girl's voice. Some of these voices are introduced by "he said" or "she said," but others are not. As David Lodge (1990: 144) noted, "[The] alternation of authorial description and characters' verbal interaction remains the woof and warp of literary narration to this day."

Quotations, as a type of depiction, are aids to imagining scenes vividly. Narrators use quotations to help us imagine specific individuals, what they say, how they speak. They often dramatize voices for gender, emotion, dialect, and more (Clark and Gerrig 1990; Holt 2007; Tannen 2007, 2010; Wade and Clark 1993). In one recorded narrative, Tannen (2007: 121) observed, the narrator spoke in "at least five different voices," which Tannen described variously as sobbing, innocent, upset, hysterically pleading, and bored. Many quotations incorporate gestures as well as speech, as in this example about a woman in a hospital (Polanyi 1989: 89):

- (16) I went out of my mind and I just screamed I said "Take that out! that's not for me!" ... And I shook this I-V and I said "I'm on an I-V, I can't eat. Take it out of here!"

In these two quotations, the woman "[shook] her arm as if shaking the I-V and [shouted] in the conversational setting as she [shouted] in the story" (1989: 92). Like an accomplished actor, she dramatized the physical and vocal actions of the protagonist as a piece. That way her audience could imagine the scene almost as if they were there.

Narrators may also use what is called free indirect speech – a curious mixture of quotation and description. Here are examples from spontaneous and literary narratives

in which the direct quotations are bracketed in quotation marks and the free indirect quotations in cross-hatches:

- (17) and I said. #did she mean for lunch or dinner,# - - and she said "oh either"  
(Svartvik and Quirk 1980: 98)
- (18) Her affections had continually been fluctuating but never without an object.  
The mischief of neglect and mistaken indulgence towards such a girl—#oh!  
how acutely did she now feel it!# (Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*)

In (17) Nancy quoted herself, but instead of saying "Do you mean for lunch or dinner?" she put the quotation in the third person and past tense: "Did she mean for lunch or dinner?" In (18) the narrator in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* depicted the protagonist's first-person thoughts, but only halfway, leaving them in the third person and past tense. When a professional reader recorded this excerpt, she dramatized "oh! how acutely did she now feel it!" as if she herself were the protagonist. So, free indirect quotation is also an aid to imagination, and in (18) it was to depict what the protagonist was exclaiming to herself (Cohn 1978).

In fiction, quotation is for depicting, or what Plato called *mimesis*, whereas authorial description is for telling, or Plato's *diegesis*. As Lodge (1990: 144) put it, "Roughly speaking, *mimesis* gives us the sense of reality in fiction, the illusion of access to the reality of personal experience, and *diegesis* conveys the contextualising information and framework of values which provide thematic unity and coherence." Both describing and depicting aid imagination, but with depicting the link is more direct.

## 1.5 Depictive devices

Many narratives are spoken or written, but others come as theatrical plays, radio plays, operas, operettas, puppet shows, films, television comedies, soap operas, animated cartoons, comic books, songs, and pantomimes. These forms range widely in how much they depict versus describe and, therefore, in how they engage our imagination.

Many narratives have appeared in several media. Take Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. We can read it in the original, read it in a comic-book version, hear it performed as a radio play, see it performed on stage, or see it as a film. Or there's Jane Austen's novel *Emma*. We can read it, hear it read on audio-recording, or see the film. George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* is better yet. We can read the play, hear it read aloud, or see it performed on stage, or we can take in a performance of the musical *My Fair Lady* as an audio-recording, stage version, or film. The several forms of these narratives are hardly equivalent. They induce different thoughts, different experiences, different emotions. But how?

An important difference in these narrative forms is in the *depictive devices* they make use of. Table 19.1 shows six such forms and their depictive devices.

Suppose we want to imagine a protagonist talking. With an indirect quotation (e.g., "she said that ..."), which is a type of description, we can only guess at the words the

**Table 19.1** Depictive devices used for narrations in seven media.

<i>Medium</i>	<i>Depictive devices</i>
Printed novels	Direct speech, free indirect speech
Audiobooks	Expressive direct speech, free indirect speech
Spontaneous narratives	Expressive direct speech, free indirect speech, iconic and deictic gestures
Operas	Actors, sung speech, sound effects, limited visible enactments, limited scenery, expressive music
Stage plays	Actors, "stage" speaking, sound effects, limited visible enactments, limited scenery
Films	Actors, naturalistic speaking, sound effects, visible enactments close up, rich scenery, expressive music

protagonist might have used. With direct quotation, we start with the protagonist's apparent words, but, if the medium is print, we have to imagine the voice, its accent, and its emotional tone. If the medium is an audiobook, we get help from the reader's dramatization, which may include voice, accent, and emotional tone. In spontaneous stories, narrators may add the protagonist's gestures. In operas, we get highly stylized versions of speech in a musical idiom that we are to interpret as happy, sad, angry, or desperate. In stage plays, we get help from actors dramatizing a protagonist's speech, face, and gestures. In films, we generally get enactments of a protagonist that seem even more naturalistic. As we go down the list, the depictive devices take on greater range and verisimilitude.

Depictive devices are engineered to aid imagination directly. In reading *Emma*, we work hard to imagine what Emma looks like – her hair, clothing, and mannerisms. Without a background in nineteenth-century English style, we may get many of these features wrong. But, in viewing the film *Emma*, we are *shown* what she looks like – her hair, clothing, mannerisms – so all we must imagine is that this particular actress (say, Gwyneth Paltrow) is in fact Emma. It may seem that the greater the verisimilitude of the depictive devices, the better the aid to imagination, but that is not always true. A cartoon Bugs Bunny is surely funnier than an actual bunny photographed doing the same things.

## 1.6 *Imagining emotions*

In imagining many stories, we experience emotions, but of a special type. Take what Walton (1978) called *quasi-fear*. When we see a horror film, we are afraid of what the monster will do to the heroine. Our hearts beat faster, our muscles tighten, and our knuckles turn white as the monster approaches her. But do we warn her as we would if all this were happening in front of us? Or take what Gerrig (1989a, 1989b, 1993) called *anomalous suspense*. Ordinarily, suspense is a state in which we "lack knowledge about some sufficiently important target outcome" (Gerrig 1993: 79). Yet, as Gerrig documented, when we read suspense stories, we often feel suspense even when we know

how the stories turn out. As with Walton's quasi-fear, we compartmentalize our emotional experience in the story world as separate from the actual world.

Most narratives are designed to elicit emotion. Novels are classified into genres largely by which emotions they evoke. Mysteries lead to suspense and fear; adventures to excitement, fear, and elation; horror stories to horror, loathing, and fear; light romances to sexual excitement; heavier romances to erotic arousal; satires to amusement; and so on. Films evoke many of the same emotions. Here, then, we return full circle to Kafka's "The Penal Colony" and the reactions it evoked. In listening to Kafka, his audience was led to imagine the penal colony in part as if they were experiencing it in the here and now. And yet, at the same time, they recognized that these were as-if experiences and that they were still firmly rooted in the actual world.

### 1.7 *The narrative experience*

The evidence we have reviewed brings out four phenomena that are characteristic of narratives and narration:

- 1 *Experience*. People experience selective features of a story world *almost as if* they were actual, present experiences. These include the perception of visual appearances, spatial relations, points of view, voices, and emotions.
- 2 *Depictive devices*. What people imagine is aided by depictive devices – direct quotation, gestures, stage sets, sound effects, and more. Unlike descriptions, these are physical analogs of the scenes they depict and are engineered to support people's imagination of those scenes.
- 3 *Participation*. Narrators design what they say to enable certain forms of imagination, but to succeed they rely on the willing cooperation of their audiences.
- 4 *Compartmentalization*. In participating in narratives, people distinguish their as-if experiences in the story world from their actual experiences in the real world – though not always without problems.

Any theory of narratives should be able to account for these four phenomena.

## 2 Participating in Narratives

Over the years cognitive scientists have proposed many accounts of narratives and narration. Some were intended to be comprehensive, but most were aimed at limited aspects of narratives. These accounts can be classified roughly into four categories: schema theories, mental models, mental simulations, and joint pretense. We will evaluate these theories against the four phenomena characteristic of narratives.

### 2.1 *Schema theories*

In the early 1990s, psychologists developed the notion of *schema* to account for how people understand and remember stories. A schema is a set of cultural preconceptions

about causal or other types of relationships. In the classic experiments by Bartlett (1932), people were told a Native American folk story, "The war of the ghosts," which included many elements unfamiliar to Western norms. In their retellings, people often distorted the story to fit their cultural expectations. For example, many changed "hunting seals" into "fishing," a more likely pastime in their schema.

Schemas of a different type were proposed for the structure of stories themselves. According to one account (Rumelhart 1975), stories consist of setting followed by an episode; an episode consists of an event plus a reaction to it; a reaction consists of an internal response plus an external response; and so on. Listeners are assumed to parse stories into these functional sections in much the way they parse sentences into constituents. In another account (Labov 1972), narratives of personal experience were divided into six parts: (1) an abstract, briefly summarizing the story; (2) an orientation, a stage setting about the who, when, what, and where of the story; (3) a complicating action; (4) an evaluation of these actions; (5) the result or resolution of the complicating action; and (6) a coda, a signal of completion. Narrators and their audience were assumed to refer to such schemas in producing and understanding narratives.

A third class of schemas are *scripts*, which are schemas that guide our expectations about everyday events (Schank and Abelson 1977). When we go to a restaurant, for example, we consult a "restaurant script" that tells us that we need to order from a menu, wait for our food, and pay at the end. We consult the same script when we interpret descriptions about going to a restaurant. We assume that the protagonist ordered food and paid the bill in the proper order even if these events weren't mentioned (Bower, Black, and Turner 1979). And if we are told, contrary to the restaurant script, that the protagonist paid before ordering food, we may recall the events in their usual order because that is what fits our script.

Schemas were designed, then, to explain how people can have a mental representation of a story that is more detailed than the original discourse. People can take the limited input of the discourse and, by applying schemas, elaborate on it in various ways. By themselves, however, schemas are of little help in accounting for our four criteria. They do not account for the *experience* of imagining a story world, the use of depictive devices, willing participation in narratives, or the compartmentalization of experience.

## 2.2 *Mental models*

Whereas schemas are cultural preconceptions that people bring to a narrative, mental models are mental constructions in which people represent specific objects, events, and relationships in utterances or narratives (Johnson-Laird 1983). They are mental instantiations of the world being described. People create mental models based on the discourse, the situation, and the purposes they have to serve. So, when people try to understand "Three turtles rested on a floating log, and a fish swam beneath it," they create a mental model of the turtle, pond, log, and fish so they can track these objects in relation to each other. Likewise, when people try to interpret "A tractor is just approaching the fence," they create a mental model of the scene so they can judge where the tractor and fence must be. According to one proposal (Just and Carpenter 1980, 1987), people reading a printed narrative create a mental model for each sentence they read to help them parse and understand the sentence. Whenever the next word

is not what they expected in the model so far, they alter the model and go on. Mental models begin with information from generic schemas and add visual and spatial relations to instantiate the scenes being described.

Mental models can also represent dynamic events. If you are asked how many windows there are in your house, you are likely to imagine walking through the house counting the windows – a dynamic process (Shepard and Cooper 1982). According to Hegarty (1992; Hegarty, Just, and Morrison 1988), people understand diagrams of pulleys in much the same way – through dynamic mental models (see also Gentner and Stevens 1983). So mental models seem eminently suited for representing the dynamic course of events people consult in telling and understanding narratives.

Despite their advantages, mental models fail to account for several of the phenomena characteristic of narratives. They do not say what it is to *imagine* events in a story – to see things from particular vantage points or to experience fear or suspense. Nor do they say how depictive devices such as gestures, stage props, and voices aid in these experiences. They do not account for the different roles speakers and listeners play in creating these experiences. Nor do they deal with the way we compartmentalize our experiences of real and story worlds.

### 2.3 *Mental simulations*

Mental simulations, as proposed by Kahneman and Tversky (1982), are a type of dynamic mental model in which people can modify the initial settings of the model and compare the outcomes. People might simulate a process for many purposes: (1) to predict its outcome; (2) to assess its probability; (3) to assess counterfactual alternatives (“if only ...”); or (4) to project the effects of causality. When people simulate alternative endings to a story, for example, they tend to make “downhill” changes to scenarios – they remove unusual or unexpected aspects of the situation. They rarely make “uphill” changes, which introduce unusual aspects, and they never make “horizontal” changes, which alter arbitrary aspects (Kahneman and Miller 1986; Kahneman and Tversky 1982). Mental simulations, therefore, are able to represent the way people *imagine* working through an event (see, e.g., Sanford and Emmott 2012).

Mental simulations are well suited for imaginary experiences, including emotional ones (see Davies and Stone 1995). When people think back over fatal accidents of loved ones, they often experience guilt, anger, or regret as they mentally simulate alternatives for those accidents – as they think “if only she hadn’t driven down that street” or “what if he had left two minutes earlier” (Kahneman and Tversky 1982). Mental simulations require the active participation of the participants, and they introduce a boundary between reality and the simulation (taking the system offline and feeding it hypothetical inputs). Still, there is no account for how people are aided by depictive devices, and many of these devices’ properties have yet to be tested.

### 2.4 *Joint pretense*

A joint pretense is an activity in which two or more people jointly act as if they were doing something that they are not actually, really, or seriously doing at that moment

(Clark 1996; Goffman 1974; Walton 1978, 1983, 1990). The prototype is the game of make-believe. Suppose Burt and Roger, both aged five, pretend to be lion and lion-tamer. To succeed, they must coordinate their imaginings, simulating the lion and lion-tamer doing things together. They must also imagine the backyard as a circus ring, the back porch as a lion cage, and much, much more. The crucial point is that Burt and Roger are simultaneously engaged in two layers of joint action. At layer 1, they are Burt and Roger playing a game of make-believe. At layer 2, they are a lion and lion-tamer performing in a circus (Clark 1996).

Participating in narratives can be viewed as just such a joint pretense (Bruce 1981; Clark 1996; Currie 1990; Walton 1978, 1983, 1990). Take (15), in which Sam is telling Reynard a joke. When Sam says "A girl went into a chemist's shop and asked for contraceptive tablets," he is asking Reynard to join with him in the pretense that he is a reporter, that Reynard is a reportee, and that he is telling Reynard about an actual girl going into an actual chemist's shop. Or take *Moby-Dick*, which begins "Call me Ishmael." Melville is asking his readers to join him in the pretense that these are the words of an actual sailor telling his contemporaries about his actual adventures in pursuing a great white whale. Or take Clark Gable in *Gone with the Wind*. When he says to Vivien Leigh, "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn," movie-goers are expected to join with him, producer David Selznick, and MGM in the pretense that he is Rhett Butler and that Rhett Butler is telling Scarlett O'Hara that he doesn't give a damn.

Joint pretense addresses all four phenomena that are characteristic of imagining in narratives – at least in principle. When people engage in a pretense, they simulate selective aspects of the narrative world as if they were aspects of the actual world. These require mental simulations, as in reading *Moby-Dick* or seeing *Gone with the Wind*, but may also require physical simulations, as in enacting voices and gestures in direct quotations. People are aided in these simulations by depictive devices, which help them step into the characters' shoes and do what the characters do. Joint pretense brings out the roles of narrator and listener: the two must coordinate their imaginings in just the right way. And, finally, the layering of joint pretense enables the participants to compartmentalize their as-if experiences from their actual experiences (Clark 1996; Gerrig 1993).

### 3 Conclusion

Narratives would be dull if they did not transport us into exciting new worlds. People tell stories not merely to get us to understand what they mean. They do so to get us to experience those worlds. As novelist John Gardner put it, "The writer's intent is that the reader fall through the printed page into the scene represented" (1983: 132). That, in turn, takes imagination – not unfettered imagination, but imagination coordinated by the narrator and audience, or what Gardner called "controlled dreaming." Only then can we experience the penal colony as Kafka meant us to experience it – imagining seeing the dreadful visions, feeling sick to the stomach, wanting to escape.

In imagining a story world, people have the experience of perceiving visual and spatial relations, point of view, voices, and emotions – though the perceptions are incomplete. A theory of narratives must account for these experiences as well as for the

role of depictive devices, the coordination of imagination between narrators and their audiences, and the compartmentalization of the story world from the real world. Most theories cannot account for all these criteria, though theories of joint pretense show promise. On this view, narrators and their audiences join in the pretense that the scenes being described and depicted are actual in the here and now. This enables audiences to simulate the people, objects, and events of the story world – to fall through the printed page into the scene represented.

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# 20 Oral Discourse as a Semiotic Ecology *The Co-construction and Mutual Influence of Speaking, Listening, and Looking*

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FREDERICK ERICKSON

## 0 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

When Zellig Harris in a seminal article discussed prospects for what was then the newly emerging field of discourse analysis, he identified two types of problem for it: “continuing descriptive linguistics beyond the limits of a single sentence at a time ... [and] correlating nonlinguistic and linguistic behavior” (Harris 1952: 1). In this he said more than could be realized at that time. After a little over half a century of research on oral discourse – work that employs audiovisual recording as a primary data source – it has become apparent that oral discourse does involve connections across sentences and the signaling of meaning by multiple semiotic modalities, as Harris was so prescient in forecasting. In addition it has become apparent that discourse also involves connections that are manifested in the concerted actions of all the participants in an interactional event. In other words, oral discourse is a multimodal semiotic ecology, co-constructed by interlocutors in their conjoint actions of speaking, looking, and listening.

This chapter begins with general discussion of processes of co-construction and mutual influence among interlocutors in the production of oral discourse. The topic of listening and looking in relation to speaking is considered first, followed by discussion of timing and rhythm in the social organization of interaction, the breath group organization of talk, and the role of postural/interpersonal distance configurations and gaze engagement by interlocutors. The chapter continues with a set of examples of oral discourse in interaction, with transcription approaches that emphasize the rhythm of interaction and mutual influence between listeners and speakers. It concludes with an

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*The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Second Edition.

Edited by Deborah Tannen, Heidi E. Hamilton, and Deborah Schiffrin.

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overview of current work on oral discourse as a *multimodal semiotic ecology* (see Erickson 2011a: 181; Goodwin 2010: 391, 2013; Streeck, Goodwin, and LeBaron 2011: 1–26).

It should be noted that the social-ecological perspective on interaction, discourse, and semiosis that is presented here comes from a line of earlier work that came to be called *context analysis*. That approach originated in a research group convened in 1955–6 at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford. This group consisted of linguists, anthropologists, and psychiatrists. They studied a sound film of an interview, preparing detailed transcripts and analysis of both verbal and non-verbal behavior of the interlocutors. Over time the transcripts and commentaries were expanded and prepared in a typescript manuscript that was never published, titled *The Natural History of an Interview* (McQuown 1971, and see the discussion in Kendon 1990: 15–49; Leeds-Hurwitz 1987). A basic principle in this work was to give equal research attention to listening behavior and speaking behavior, considering what all parties engaged in interaction are doing together as producing a semiotic ecology enacted continuously in real time. Later, Scheflen (1973) and Kendon (1990) became major proponents of the context-analysis approach. Further research informed by the context-analysis perspective has been done by Erickson (1986, 2004), Erickson and Shultz (1982), McDermott, Gospodinoff, and Aron (1978), McDermott and Raley (2011), Mehan 1979, Streeck (1983, 2002), and most especially Charles and Marjorie Goodwin (C. Goodwin 1981, 1994, 2013; M. Goodwin 2006). At the conclusion of this chapter I will return to a discussion of the context-analysis perspective in relation to other current approaches to discourse analysis.

## 1 Orienting Discussion

### 1.1 *Listening and looking in relation to speaking*

It is a commonplace to recognize that in addition to the phonology and grammar of utterances there are paralinguistic phenomena in speech that provide information – in pitch, volume, and voice-quality shifts. And a speaker's utterances are accompanied by kinesic activity, in gesture and other aspects of body motion, as well as by gaze and facial expression. But all this is only one side of a coin, for connections of meaning are communicated not only in what speakers are doing as they are speaking but also by what listeners are doing while they are listening.

Listeners indicate reactions to speakers by facial expression, by gesture and other kinesic activity, and also by speech that occurs simultaneously with the speech of the speaker, as well as involving what a listener says at a next moment in response to what the previous speaker has just said (as in question–answer adjacency pairs, or in jointly intermittent filling-in of list slots by two or more interlocutors). To be sure, there is *sequential ordering* in all this, as conversational analysis points out (see Schegloff, this volume). Yet equally fundamental with sequential order in the overall ecology of mutual influence between interlocutors is what listeners are doing *simultaneously with what speakers are doing*.

As a speaker is uttering a breath group, a listener's face can begin to indicate heightened interest or lessening of interest, or a change from initial disapproval toward

grudging approval and eventually full approval. In addition, as a speaker is speaking, the listener may be saying things in verbal and nonverbal “back channels” (*mhm, yeah*, nodding) placed in brief pauses in the speech stream of the speaker, and even in words or non-lexical sounds produced overlappingly with the speech of the speaker. In other words, in the production of oral discourse in face-to-face conversation, people are not talking with one another through keyholes. *They can see one another as they hear one another*. Visual monitoring by listeners of what speakers are doing nonverbally occurs simultaneously with the production of speech by speakers, just as nonverbal displays by listeners are instantly available to speakers through visual monitoring. When one adds the semiotic information provided by visual monitoring of artifacts in the scene of interaction – for example a document lying on a table in front of interlocutors, whose content is referred to indexically by the interlocutors – it is apparent that it is not only a speaker’s utterances that make connections across diverse semiotic means to communicate crucial information in a scene. Rather, the listener’s activity is also an important part of the overall semiotic ecology, and information from listening behavior is complemented by artifacts that are visually available for notice from moment to moment by the interlocutors.

Thus the phenomenon of research interest in studying what oral discourse is and how it works is not simply “talk in interaction,” as the phrase from Conversation Analysis suggests. Rather it is “talk/listening/looking/attention to/engagement with artifacts in interaction” that should be the phenomenon of research interest; not only a multimodal approach to semiosis in discourse but also a multiparty approach (see also the discussion on multiparty “lamination” of multiple semiotic resources by Goodwin 2013: 11–17). What listeners are doing while speakers are speaking, and what influence that has on the real-time production of utterances by speakers, is a neglected topic in the study of oral discourse (Erickson 2010, 2011b). As I have said elsewhere (Erickson 1986: 316, 2004: 110), to be engaged in interaction with others is like climbing a tree that climbs you back in the same time.

## 1.2 *Timing and the social organization of interaction*

Social interaction happens in real time, and it is timing that holds together as coherent the concerted actions of participants in that interaction.<sup>2</sup> Timing is experienced phenomenologically as a succession of “now” moments, each “now” preceded by an immediately past moment. This can be thought of as a kairoic rather than a chronometric sense of timing in interaction (*kairos* being the Greek term for turning points in time as opportunity, the right time, moments of appropriateness for action, while *chronos* refers to objectively measured time, as in clock time). Particular moments of *kairos* in social interaction can be identified in terms of their *chronos* location in a time stream, but the two aspects of timing are conceptually distinct. Because the timing of interaction concerns social action, it is flexible while still identifiable in gestalt-like patterns. The rhythmic organization of uttering speech simplifies the perceptual and information-processing tasks presented to an auditor by marking the continuous stream of verbal and nonverbal behavior with prominence points whose emphasis underscores the current “now” moment and projects the immediately “next” moment. (Since its inception, modern cognitive psychology has emphasized limits on the amount of information that humans can perceive and comprehend in real time [see

Newell and Simon 1972; Simon 1979]. In the ongoing stream of verbal and nonverbal communicative behavior, there is much more information present in real time than can be processed cognitively. It may be that the pulse interval, by underscoring the current “now” moment, prevents cognitive overload, simplifying the information-processing task for interlocutors. In that case we could expect that important new information chunks would appear more often than not at a periodic interval across time.)

Behaviorally, timing is organized as an underlying pulse or cadence in the performance of verbal and nonverbal actions (see Byers 1972). This is a simple harmonic oscillator – a wave form of very low frequency. As mentioned above, the time intervals between one pulse, the next pulse, and the one after that vary slightly from one to the next, as in the musical performance style called *rubato*; that is, the timing is approximately consistent chronometrically as a series of pulses without being mechanistically exact, as in the pulses of a metronome. (On these slight irregularities, see Osborne 2009.) In many of the examples that Erickson and others have investigated, the pulse interval is approximately one second in duration – varying from slightly less than one second to slightly more than one second. The time interval between two successive pulses determines the fundamental *tempo* of interaction – a faster tempo involves a shorter pulse interval and a slower tempo involves a longer pulse interval. As noted in the discussion above, in actual performance the pulse interval may vary plus or minus one or two tenths of a second, from one iteration of the pulse to the next, but overall in a series of successive pulses, perceived as a gestalt, there will be consistency in the pulse interval. (The pulse interval is especially prominent in English, which is a stress-timed language [see Avery and Ehrlich 1992], but it also can be found in other languages – Romance and non-Indo-European. It is not so much a matter of how syllables are timed as it is that social interaction *takes place in time and thus all uttering is timed*. Speech doesn’t drive interaction all by itself; rather, speech participates as one among a number of components in the overall ecology of concerted social action.)

The pulse/cadence interval is experienced by humans in their earliest engagements in social interaction. The periodicity of pulse gestalts is apparent in the verbal and nonverbal behavior of caretakers and infants during play episodes. Malloch (1999), for example, reports that in one such episode the mother spoke to her child in bursts of speech that averaged 1.53 seconds in duration, plus or minus a maximum of 0.1 second. He shows this with a spectrograph print, which was reproduced in Erickson (2003: 14), together with a transcription from his spectrograph. (In the transcription that appears here each burst of speech begins at the left margin, two successive dots represent a half-second pause, and four successive dots represent a full-second pause.)

Mo: Come on . . . a-  
 gain . . . .  
 Come on then  
 That’s clever  
 (baby vocalizes)  
 Oh yes . . . is  
 that right . .  
 well tell me some more then

Gratier (1999) reported a similar periodicity in vocalizations between mothers and infants, with a pulse tempo of roughly five in every 10 seconds. Similar timing patterns

have been reported over the past 30 years by the research group led by Daniel Stern (see, e.g., Beebe, Stern, and Jaffe 1979; Jaffe *et al.* 2001; see also Trevarthen 1999 and the discussion of musical perception and cognition in Temperley 2001). In a recent paper, Gratier and Apter-Danon (2009) show how this periodicity is flexible, mutually produced by mother and infant.

In speech among adult interlocutors, this pulse organization is also apparent, but it is manifested in more subtle ways. Some but not all of the stressed syllables occur at a relatively constant pulse interval, and a resumption of talk may also occur on that interval after a pause in speaking has taken place. The pulse interval is also marked by various nonverbal actions performed by the speaker – occurring either simultaneously with the stressed syllable or in “substitution” for a stressed syllable – on the “beat” of the interval (e.g., the point in time at which occurs the most full extension in a gesture, and/or a shift in postural position, and/or the onset and offset of gaze between interlocutors).

### 1.3 *Breath groups*

Especially important for oral discourse is the breath group, as the basic unit of information in speech (see the extended discussion in Chafe 1994). A breath group is a strip of speech demarcated by an overall intonational contour and concluded by a slight pause. It is the basic performed unit of oral discourse – akin to a phrase in music: a connected vocal “gesture” across time. Pauses between breath groups have special kairotic significance, as moments of appropriateness for listening response (see the discussions in Erickson 1986, 2004: 10, 176–7; Erickson and Shultz 1982: 130ff) or for what in Conversation Analysis is called “transition relevance moments” – that is, moments of appropriateness for turn exchange among interlocutors.

The syllable within the breath group that is most prominently marked by an increase in pitch, volume, or both is termed the *stressed tonal nucleus*. Especially important for the timing of uttering and the signaling of new information is the position of the stressed tonal nucleus within a breath group – that is, the stressed tonal nucleus often has special “kairotic” significance. Usually, although not always, the stressed tonal nucleus within a breath group is uttered at the pulse/cadence interval according to which the verbal and nonverbal behavior of interlocutors is organized temporally. Often the stressed tonal nucleus (a syllable or a one-syllable word) contains important information – new information, or information that adds to that which was previously projected, as in the next item in a list.

Syllables on the way toward the stressed tonal nucleus within the breath group are enclitic to it (i.e., leaning forward to it). They are de-emphasized and shortened in comparison with other syllables in the breath group and are uttered two times or four times faster than other syllables, projecting ahead toward the moment when the next stressed tonal nucleus will be performed. Gestures and postural re-arrangements (e.g., torso and shoulder repositionings) also may accelerate enclitically toward the point of the stressed tonal nucleus’s uttering, thus marking the pulse interval by multimodal redundancy. This change in syllable rate over elapsed time is obscured by speech transcription approaches based on the operation of a typewriter – now a computer. In typesetting and typewriting each letter of type and each space between letters occupies the same horizontal position on a line, and such consistency of horizontal positioning is unable to

represent the differences in timing between the syllables in the breath group as actually uttered – that is, the enclitic projection of syllables toward the stressed tonal nucleus. To show that timing it is necessary to alter the spacing between letters or use musical notation to show differences in rate of uttering across syllables in a breath group.

In conventional typesetting (capitalization below shows the stressed tonal nucleus) the following utterance appears as follows:

and the dishes and the FORKS . . . and the napkins and the GLASSES . . . 'n SALT . . . 'n PEPPER

In actually uttering, the syllables preceding the stressed tonal nucleus lean forward toward it, as represented by eliminating the spaces between letters:

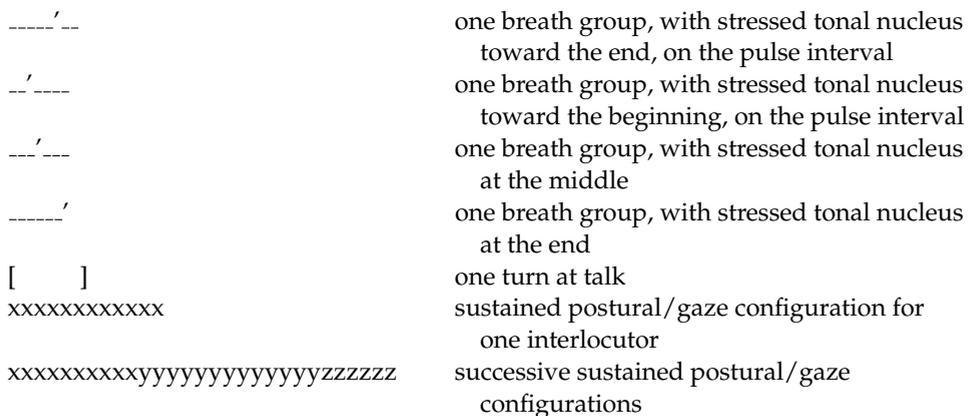
AndthedishesandtheFORKS . . . andthenapkinsandtheGLASSES . . . 'nSALT . . . 'nPEPPER

In sum, since the breath group is the primary information unit in speech, the stressed tonal nucleus within the breath group is a principal locus for the presentation of new information, and, since the stressed tonal nucleus tends to occur on the pulse interval, the timing organization of speech rhythm provides basic support for the capacity of speech to communicate information within the ongoing conduct of talk (see also Reed 2013; Steedman 1996; Richardson, Dale, and Shockley 2008; van Leeuwen 2013; Wennerstrom 2001).

### 1.4 Postural, proxemic, and gaze positionings

Sustained strips of postural configuration, interpersonal distance (*proxemics*), and gaze direction are also held across stretches of time. These nonverbal *supra-suprasegmentals*, visually monitored by interlocutors, are an aspect of the *simultaneous* order in interaction. They may change at breath-group boundaries. They can also sustain across a succession of breath groups, within an extended turn of one speaker, and they can sustain across a succession of turns that alternate between various speakers. Sometimes these changes in positionings will take place just before a change in discourse topic or a change in emotional *key* – for example, a switch from seriousness to irony. Thus these nonverbal signals can foreshadow (*adumbrate*) changes in talk that will result further downstream in time (see the discussion in Hall 1964).

The typical relations between pulse interval, breath group, stressed tonal nucleus, and postural/proxemic/gaze positionings can be illustrated schematically as follows:





*pause* as far as  
4074

**next** semester  
4124

*pause*  
4150

why don't we give some  
4176  
(*C reaches for a small note pad . . .*)

**thought** to ah . .  
4200

*pause* to  
4224

what you'd like to take there  
4250  
*note pad is now in place in front of C)*

*pause*  
4274

*pause* do you  
4300

**plan** on con-  
4325

**tin**-u-ing along this P.  
4350 (*C shifts in chair and*

**E.** major?  
4374  
*rests left elbow on desk, touching chin with left hand)*

*pause*  
4400

S: yeah I  
**guess** so . . . I might as well keep it  
4424

**up**  
4450

Consider the semantic emphasis that appears in the sequence of single syllables uttered by the counselor that receive primary stress: **now**, **next**, **why**, **thought**, **what**, **take**, **plan**, (con)**tin**(uing), (P.) **E**. These stressed syllables are sketching, as it were, an outline of new information points that are being revealed, and they do so in a temporally connected series of next moments until the overall trajectory of new information is completed:

**now** (a new topic is about to be stated)  
 pause (what is the new topic?)  
**next** semester (that's the new topic—next semester)  
 give some  
**thought**  
 pause (thought to what?) to  
**what**  
**take** (what courses you would take)  
 pause  
 pause do you  
**plan** (what plan?) on con-  
**tin-u**-ing (continuing what?) along this P.  
**E**. major? (continuing in your current course of study?)

This idea sequence was finally completed across a series of next moments marked by stressed syllables. It was a discourse unit consisting of a shift to future time reference as a topic, followed by a rhetorical question (“Why don’t we give some thought to what you’d like to take there?”) and then by an actual question specifically identifying the student’s major course of study (“Do you plan on continuing along this P. E. major?”). After the completion of the advisor’s extended utterance the student began his answer with unstressed syllables just before the next pulse interval and continued with a stressed syllable, “**guess**,” on that interval, followed by a stressed on the next pulse interval: “keep it **up**.” The pulse interval can be seen not only to be sketching a series of semantically significant new information points but also to be indicating points of transition relevance – the completion of the advisor’s turn – followed by the initiation of the student’s rejoinder in a turn that was also organized rhythmically in terms of the subsequent pulse intervals.

Notice also that just before the new topic was stated the advisor began to change postural position. He had been sitting erect behind his desk, looking alternately at the student’s cumulative folder, which was placed just in front of him, and at the student’s face – his gaze was directed back and forth between those two objects of attention, with only his head moving slightly as he changed gaze direction. In that configuration of posture, gaze, and interpersonal distance he had been asking questions about the courses the student was enrolled in during the current semester. After his shift in posture he said, “Now, ah, as far as next semester.” Thus the shift in postural positioning slightly preceded the shift in time reference that was manifested in the talk, foreshadowing that topic shift. Formerly the talk was about the current semester; from now on the talk would concern plans for the next semester.

The advisor had said, “Do you plan on continuing along this P. E. major?” The student then said, “Yeah, I guess so ... (*abruptly*) Iwannagointocounselingtoosee . . . (*slower*) you know, to have two-way, like equal balance.” At this point the counselor shifted postural position again and began a convoluted and repetitive explanation of how to become a

counselor: "First of all you're gonna need certification/state teacher certification . . . In other words you're gonna have to be certified in some area . . . English, or History . . . or whatever else happen to be your bag . . . P.E. . . . Secondly you're gonna have to have a master's degree." Notice that in successive breath groups the advisor repeated the same point about certification, lowering the level of abstraction without adding new information: state teacher certification, certified in some area, English, history. By persisting at the same substantive point the advisor was overexplaining – as Shultz and I termed it, he was *hyper-explaining* (for detailed discussion see Erickson 1986, 2011b; Erickson and Shultz 1982: 121ff). We analyzed multiple instances of explanation sequences and found that the pause between breath groups functioned in a way akin to what in Conversation Analysis is called a transition-relevance place – these pause moments were *kairos* moments of appropriateness for animated listening response by the person listening to the explanation. In this example, the advisor continued to hyper-explain in successive breath groups until the listening student raised his hand to his chin and said "mhm" after the counselor had said "P. E." – the last list item in the sequence. Only then did the advisor go on to raise the next point: "Secondly, you're gonna have to have a master's degree." In the absence of active nonverbal and/or verbal listening response in the pauses between breath groups – the *kairos* moments of appropriateness for active listening response – a speaker tends to hyper-explain. When listening responses are present, speakers tend not to hyper-explain, persisting at the same point, but tend to go on directly to the next substantive point in the explanation sequence.

The phenomenon of hyper-explanation points to the importance of listening activity in influencing the ongoing course of discourse production by speakers (see Erickson 1986; Goodwin 1981). In real time, speakers are looking and listening to what their auditors are doing, and accommodating their talk to the listening responses they see and hear.

Reciprocally, auditors accommodate their listening activity to what speakers are doing. A particularly apt example of this comes from an analysis of a dinner-table conversation in which children and parents were discussing family expenses – how much things cost every month, and what particular items they had to pay for on a regular basis. Various family members produced brief utterances in which they mentioned one of those items, collectively producing a list of items in the family budget: mortgage, taxes, insurance, food, car, gas, clothes. Each of the list-item nouns was produced by a speaker as a stressed tonal nucleus in the breath group that constituted each brief utterance – that is, the list-item nouns were uttered on the underlying pulse interval. As the list-item nouns were being said by one speaker at a time, the rest of the family members were eating their food. The timing of their food-intake behavior – putting fork to plate on the overall pulse interval and then lifting the fork to the mouth – was coordinated with the timing of the speech behavior – the *kairos* moments in which list-item nouns were being produced in the speech stream. As a new breath group was being uttered, with the list-item noun appearing as a stressed tonal nucleus at the end of that breath group, a listener at the dinner table would hold his or her food-loaded fork in the air until the list-item noun had been uttered. Only then, on the next "beat," would they put the fork in their mouth. In that dinner scene, some of the fork movements of the diners were being organized in *kairos* fashion as listening behavior. By participating in a shared timing pattern, food-consumption activity and oral discourse activity were mutually influencing each other at the dinner table – both kinds of activity participating together in an overall semiotic ecology. For extended discussion and

detailed transcripts of this example, see Erickson (1992, 2004: 36–48). A further example comes from Kaplan (1992). In a study of the timing of note-taking writing by students in college classrooms during lectures by instructors, Kaplan showed how the presence or absence of listening response by note-taking at listening-response-relevant moments influenced the real-time production of discourse in the lecturer’s speaking.

## 2.2 Example 2: pulse interval timing of question–answer sequences

Here is another example that illustrates the timing of turn exchange between interlocutors – the temporal placement of an answer slot in relation to the completion of a question slot.

The following transcription shows the timing of the vowel in primary stressed syllables (in seconds and tenths and hundredths of seconds) as well as the pitch of the vowel (in Hertz units) and its volume (in decibels). As in the previous example, here the stressed syllables appear at the left margin of the transcript. This information was determined through digital recording of the speech, using the PRAAT software for acoustic analysis. Time was measured at the center of the stressed vowel, together with the pitch and volume information that appeared at that point in time.

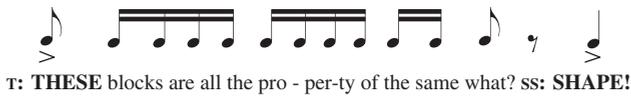
In a kindergarten and first-grade classroom the teacher was conducting a mathematics lesson on sets and set properties. She had placed a set of triangle-shaped blocks on the floor next to another set of blocks that were all green in color. She had placed rope rings around each of the sets of blocks. Pointing to the set of triangle blocks, the teacher said, “These blocks are all the property of the same what?” The students replied, “Shape, shape, shape,” with increasing volume at each iteration of the answer.

(2)

		<i>(pointing to the set of triangle blocks)</i>		
T:	<b>these</b>	blocks	are	all the
	sec.	6.17		
	Hz	331.2		
	dB	74.29		
		<b>property</b>	of the same	
	sec.	7.04		
	Hz	249.1		
	dB	78.99		
		<b>what</b>		
	sec.	8.24		
	Hz	397.3		
	dB	76.76		
SS:	<b>shape</b>	shape	shape	
	sec.	9.28	9.44	9.68
	Hz	372.2	324.4	335.7
	dB	72.32	74.99	79.86

Here the pulse interval between the stressed syllables in the sequence was approximately one second (plus or minus 0.2 seconds) in the sequence 6.17, 7.04, 8.24, 9.28. This was not so metronomically exact as was the pulse interval illustrated in (1) but it was still clearly consistent as a gestalt shape in time. Semantically, the stressed word “these” in the teacher’s question – which was the stressed tonal nucleus in that breath group – accompanied simultaneously by the pointing gesture, referred multimodally to the set of blocks that were all triangles, and then the stressed syllable “prop” followed by the stressed syllable “what” emphasized that the teacher was requesting an answer consisting of a word that would be the property common to all the members of the set of blocks. After the teacher’s question turn was completed, the students uttered the correct answer word “shape” in the answer slot turn that began at the onset of the next pulse interval. (Notice also that the two “echo” answer words after the initial answer “shape” succeed the first answer and one another at intervals of 0.2 seconds.)

This timing pattern can also be illustrated by quasi-musical notation, in which pitches are not indicated but the speech rhythms are shown.



Erickson 2009. Reproduced by permission of Oxford University Press.

### 2.3 Example 3: timing of nonverbal answer displays

This example was discussed in my early paper on classroom discourse as improvisation (Erickson 1982). It also appeared in a recent chapter on the musicality of classroom talk (Erickson 2009) and the discussion presented below is adapted from that which appeared in that chapter. As illustrated by the two previous examples, the pulse timing of stressed syllables, especially those that are stressed tonal nuclei within a breath group, functions to indicate where appropriate moments for turn exchange are located in the temporal stream of the real-time performance of talk. That aspect of rhythmic structure – the timing of turn-exchange slots in question–answer discourse sequences – was what was taken advantage of opportunistically for improvisation by Carlos. He was one of the children in an inner-city bilingual first-grade classroom in which all the students were Spanish dominant, and in which instruction was conducted in Spanish at the beginning of the school year.

Early in September, during the first days of school, the students were being introduced to Arabic numerals and to the Spanish words designating each number in the series 1–10. The numerals were displayed in a series of large cards, one card for each numeral. The cards were attached to the wall above the chalkboard at the front of the classroom. The series of cards covered the width of the chalkboard; consequently each numeral was large enough to be seen and read by all the students in the class.

The teacher asked Carlos to stand before the chalkboard, holding a pointer. He was to point up at each numbered card in succession as the teacher said the “name” of each numeral. There was a cadence-like timing gestalt in the sequence, with a volume-stressed number-syllable coming on the next “beat” preceded by the word “numero,”



Carlos did not supplant the designated answerer's turn at answering – he did not try to take away the “floor” from the other student. Rather he created a win–win solution to his problem of wanting to stay in the limelight. His improvisation of drumming in the answer slots allowed the designated answerer to respond to the teacher's questions by pointing, yet it afforded Carlos the chance to continue multimodally in a quasi-answering role, piggy-backing his pencil-drumming “answers” on top of the answer slot the other student was filling by pointing to the numeral card above the chalkboard. He was sharing in the “floor” rather than competing for it. Notice here that it is the very order of the discourse routine, and the temporal organization of relationships between question turns and answer turns, that provided an affordance for Carlos's opportunistic improvisation. (Notice also the enclitic timing relationship of the initial sounds in the teacher's evaluation slot, “Muy bien” to the stressed tonal nucleus in that slot: “muy” was uttered as two syllables [moo-ee] at twice the speed at which the stressed tonal nucleus syllable “bien” was uttered within that breath group.)

In another study of question–answer sequences in school classroom discourse I used musical notation to show the timing of answer slots in relation to question slots during teacher–student exchanges in a kindergarten and first-grade classroom (see Erickson 1996, 2004: 53–71). The analysis showed how more classroom-experienced first-graders were able to act as “turn sharks,” stealing answer turns from less classroom-experienced kindergartners during the first days of school in the new school year. The “turn sharks” were more aggressive than was Carlos in the previous example. But like Carlos they used their implicit knowledge of timing to seize the *kairos* moment of appropriateness for answering, so as to be able to steal turns from the kindergartners, who had not yet fully mastered the subtleties of timing in classroom discourse routines.

## 2.4 Example 4: timing, pitch, and multimodal semiosis

The next example comes from kindergarten and first-grade classrooms at the University Lab School at the University of California, Los Angeles, in which the physics of matter, energy, and motion had been taught thematically across an entire school year. Near the end of the year the students constructed and studied a culminating project: a classroom-sized roller coaster to send messages back and forth between adjoining classrooms. The key principle of dynamics in physics by which a roller coaster operates is the alternation between kinetic and potential energy.

On the final day of instruction, just before the last day of school, during which parents were to come to see the roller coaster in operation, the teachers discovered that some of the students were misunderstanding the distinction between kinetic and potential energy; they were conflating energy and velocity (a common misconception at high-school level). The teachers decided to re-teach the distinction between the two kinds of energy, emphasizing that energy is neither lost nor gained in the alternation between the two; rather that one kind of energy is transformed into the other. Potential energy is maximized as the roller-coaster car reaches the top of a slope and kinetic energy is maximized as the car reaches the bottom of a slope.

One teacher drew a schematic diagram of a roller coaster. Holding an ink stick in her hand, with a student also holding the ink stick, the teacher animated the action of

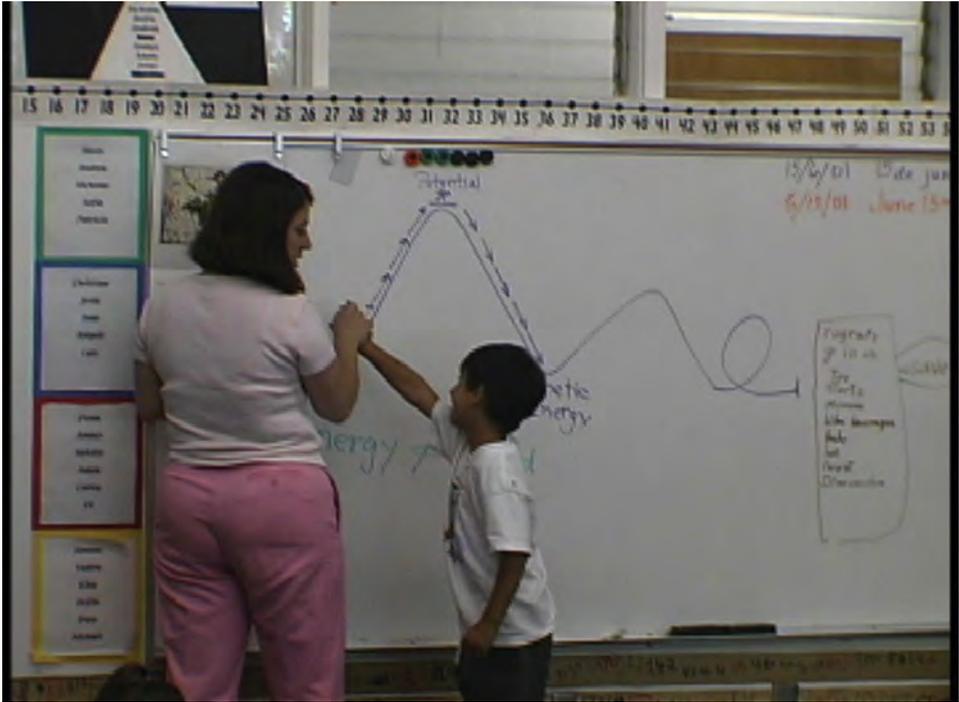


Figure 20.1 “Gaining potential, potential potential ...”

the roller-coaster car by tracing its progress up and down the slope. Figure 20.1 is a photograph of the semiotically laminated demonstration by the teacher and student at the chalkboard.

Now let us consider the talk that took place in the demonstration. Notice that pitch and volume increased in the teacher’s voice as she and the student animated the action of the car going up the slope of the roller coaster, on its way toward the point of maximum potential energy at the top of the slope. Multimodally the rising pitch and volume of the voice became metaphoric, modeling the increase in potential energy in the car as it traveled upward. The teacher said, “Here’s the **curve . . . .** gaining potential, potential, potential, potential, potential, potential, potential, potential . . . . (even louder) *maximum potential!*”

(4)

Here’s	the	
0.052	0.223	(time: sec.)
372	402	(pitch: Hz)
77.3	75.6	(volume: dB)

**curve . . . .**

0.375

401

85.6

gaining po  
1.28 1.67  
243 269  
82.4 78.3

ten tial po  
1.85  
287  
79.6

ten tial po  
2.44  
278  
73.2

ten tial po  
2.98  
270  
75.5

ten tial po  
3.52  
2.78  
75.4

ten tial po  
4.05  
285  
74.3

ten tial po  
4.59  
286  
74.5

ten tial po  
5.15  
292  
74.1

ten tial . .  
5.66  
303  
73.6  
(0.4 sec. pause for emphasis)

**max i mum po**

6.36  
401.2  
83.8

**ten tial . . ki**

7.04            8.06  
433             301  
80.9            74.9

**ne tic ki**

8.16  
297  
80.0

**ne tic ki**

8.50  
282  
79.0

**ne tic ki**

8.83  
281  
80.3

**ne tic ki**

9.18  
284  
76.3

**ne tic ki**

9.50  
293  
82.4

**ne tic . .**

9.92  
312  
80.4

**max i mum ki**

10.59  
291  
80.2

**ne tic**

11.43  
358  
84.5

Notice that from the first stressed syllable, “curve” (which is followed by a pause and then by the stressed syllable “gain”), the succession of stressed syllables that occurred next – a reiteration of the syllable “ten” in the word “potential” – were all spaced approximately a half-second apart. After a breath pause the teacher uttered “max” in “maximum” and the last stressed syllable in the series was “ten” in “potential,” which like the syllable “max” was uttered on the one-second pulse interval. Starting from the lower left on the initial slope of the diagram and proceeding upward with the reiterations of the word “potential,” the ink stick reached the top of the slope as the teacher said “maximum.” The pitch level increased overall across the reiterations of the syllable “ten,” going from an initial point of 287 Hz at the first “ten” and moving slightly down on the next three iterations, followed by consistently rising pitches on the next four iterations, to 303 Hz just before the final “max” of “maximum” (at 401 Hz) and “ten” in potential at 433 Hz. From the lowest pitch in that sequence (270 Hz) to the highest pitch at 433 Hz there is a pitch trajectory whose amplitude extends across 160 Hz (about a quarter of an octave). Notice also that the trajectory from the initial point of least potential energy to the ultimate point of greatest potential energy was further underscored multimodally by volume increase, from 79.6 dB at the first iteration of the syllable “ten” in “potential” to 83.8 dB at the syllable “max” in “maximum.” All this as the teacher’s hand covered and guided the student’s hand as together they moved the marker up and down on the whiteboard. Thus timing, pitch, and volume patterning were all employed together with kinesis in hand and arm movement to communicate literal referential meaning, adding small increments of new information within and across breath groups in the discourse through multimodal semiotic means.

An interesting precursor to contemporary claims about the musicality of speech in English, especially concerning pitch and timing organization, can be found in a monograph by an eighteenth-century author, Joshua Steele. In 1775 he published a treatise titled *An Essay towards Establishing the Melody and Measure of Speech to be Expressed and Perpetuated by Peculiar Symbols*. It was presented to the president and fellows of the British Royal Society. The “peculiar symbols” referred to in the title are a quasi-musical notation, using regular musical measures of two beats or three beats, showing both the rhythm of the uttering of syllables and their relative pitch levels. On page 47 of the treatise Steele included a rendering in his notation of the manner in which he had heard the actor David Garrick utter the opening words of the most famous soliloquy of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. To show the timing of Garrick’s performance I have converted Steele’s notation into the transcription format used earlier in this chapter.

- (5) *Hamlet*, Act 3, Scene 1, line 55  
to  
**be**  
. . . or  
not to be  
*pause*  
**that** is the  
**question**

Further confirmation for the timing patterns of speech in English comes from stylized rendering of speech in a musical genre from the Baroque and Classical periods called

*recitative*. In this genre a composer deliberately imitated the timing and pitch of ordinary speech. For example, in Handel's late Baroque oratorio *Messiah*, the following passage from the English version of Hebrew scriptures (Isaiah 35: 5–6) was set in recitative.

(6)

. . Then shall the  
**eyes** of the  
**blind** be  
**op-ened**  
. . and the  
**ears** of the  
**deaf** un-  
**stopp-ed**

This example and similar ones are discussed in Erickson (2003). Handel's *Messiah* was written about 20 years before Steele's publication of his treatise on the musicality of speech prosody. Steele would certainly have been familiar with recitative as a musical genre.

As in the examples from ordinary speech presented earlier in this chapter, semantic expectations are set up by the grammar of the text from Isaiah, and these are further emphasized by the pulse organization of Handel's musical imitation of speech: (*Then shall the what?*) The eyes. (*Of whom?*) The blind. (*Be what?*) Opened. (*And the what?*) The ears. (*Of whom?*) Of the deaf. (*Be what?*) Unstopped.

### 3 Conclusion

The 1970s and early 1980s were a time of special innovation in the study of discourse. Conversation Analysis developed in the work of Sacks and Schegloff (see Schegloff, this volume). They were influenced by Goffman, who also engaged conversational analysis in dialogue and critique. Goffman had also influenced Gumperz in the latter's development of Interactional Sociolinguistics, with its central emphasis on contextualization and conversational inference (Gumperz 1992; see also the extended discussion of "rethinking context" in Duranti and Goodwin 1992). Work in both Conversation Analysis and Interactional Sociolinguistics began to emerge in Europe.

The context-analysis perspective that developed from the pioneering work of the Natural History of an Interview study group had influenced Conversation Analysis and Interactional Sociolinguistics indirectly through Goffman, who had worked in the Bay Area with colleagues of the Natural History of an Interview researchers, and who had been a colleague of Gumperz and Hymes when they taught at the University of California at Berkeley. The "context-analysis" perspective very directly influenced Charles and Marjorie Goodwin, Ray McDermott, and myself. At the beginning of the 1980s, Goodwin and I were working independently on listeners' influences on speakers (Erickson and Shultz 1982: 129ff; Goodwin 1981). Scollon and I were in dialogue on the use of quasi-musical notation to show timing patterns in speech – presenting in the same year at the 1981 Georgetown Linguistics Roundtable (Erickson 1983; Scollon

1983). As Reed (2013) has pointed out recently, there have been few others who used musical notation in this way. There was also interest in the timing of mother–infant interaction (see Beebe, Stern, and Jaffe 1979, among others).

Since the beginning of the 1990s there has been a resurgence of interest in the study of social interaction and oral discourse as a semiotic ecology. Duranti and Goodwin edited a book of essays titled *Rethinking Context* (1992), including a chapter by Gumperz on contextualization and conversational inference (see also Auer and Di Luzio 1992). In the early and mid-1990s, major work on rhythm and tempo of spoken interaction was done in Germany by Auer and his associates, and a major report of that work appears in Auer, Couper-Kuhlen, and Müller (1999). While acknowledging the importance of a pulse interval in the organization of oral discourse, especially for the regulation of turn-taking (and providing examples of speech not only in English but also in Italian and German), they do not agree that the pulse interval is as consistently present in speaking as Scollon and I have claimed, especially in syllable-timed languages. (I have included PRAAT software measurements of timing in this chapter as well as timing data from frame numbering on cinema film as a way of providing evidence from machine analysis for the claims I have been making in publications since the early 1980s about the importance of pulse organization for the coordination of listening and speaking activity by interlocutors as they co-construct discourse in social interaction.) How general is the importance of pulse organization for the overall timing of speech remains an open question, as does the importance of pulse organization for conversational turn-taking and for the temporal placement of verbal and non-verbal listening responses. It may be that in syllable-timed languages pulse organization is not as ubiquitous as it appears to be in stress-timed languages, English in particular.

Further research on timing in the conduct of interaction is needed, and indeed that has been happening since the mid-1990s. There has been a resurgence of interest in interactional timing in studies of mother–infant interaction (see Gratier 1999; Gratier and Apter-Danon 2009; Jaffe *et al.* 2001; Malloch 1999). A major volume on communicative musicality appeared in 2009, edited by Malloch and Trevarthen, and includes a chapter on the musicality of classroom talk, of which I was the author (Erickson 2009). Recent review articles on rhythm and timing in speech have also appeared (Richardson, Dale, and Shockley 2008; Reed 2013). All these recent publications on timing give significant attention to pulse patterns in the organization of interaction.

In a book (1999) and in a review article (2013), van Leeuwen makes connections between rhythm in interaction and multimodality in discourse. In addition there is a burgeoning literature on multimodal discourse analysis (Jewitt 2009; Kress 2010; Kress and van Leeuwen 2001; Levine and Scollon 2004) and on methods of video analysis (Erickson 2006; Heath, Hindmarsh, and Luff 2010; Knoblauch *et al.* 2006). In *Conversation Analysis and Interactional Sociolinguistics*, which were both initially based on analysis of audio recordings, video recording is now generally used as a primary data source, permitting studies of listening activity in relation to speaking activity.

Finally, recent developments in computer software for machine analysis of speech sounds and body motion open possibilities for larger scale studies of the interactional co-construction of discourse than were possible when transcription and micro-analysis of speaking and listening behavior in social interaction had to be done manually.

To conclude, when humans talk with one another they usually do it with their eyes open, and they always do it in a succession of present and next moments in real time. Across those moments, what listeners are doing influences what speakers are doing (and vice versa), simultaneously and sequentially, with shared timing holding together the whole multiparty performance as concerted social action. Further, we are almost always talking while surrounded by an environment of contextual semiotic resources that are available for visual attention – artifacts and physical settings. All these information sources are made use of by speakers doing conversational inference. It is through such multimodal sense-making procedures, conducted in real time in speaking, listening, and looking, that speakers are able to adapt what they are saying to the circumstances in which they are speaking and, in so doing, are able to contextualize and recontextualize those circumstances. Thus the conception of oral discourse as a multimodal semiotic ecology, initially forecasted theoretically in the 1950s by Harris and pioneered empirically by the Natural History of an Interview research group, appears to be a notion that has become timely and pertinent again as a foundation for the development of further insights into how humans make meaning together in social interaction.

## NOTES

- 1 I wish to thank Deborah Tannen for editorial advice and Janet Rocha and Laura Amador for assistance in the PRAAT acoustic analysis reported in this chapter.
- 2 The discussion of timing presented here follows closely that found in Erickson (2003, 2004: 3–12, 2013).

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# 21 Multimodality

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THEO VAN LEEUWEN

## 0 Introduction

The term *multimodality* designates a phenomenon rather than a theory or a method – the phenomenon that discourse is almost always multimodal. The term *multimodal* here indicates that different semiotic modes (for instance language and image) are combined and integrated in a given instance of discourse or kind of discourse: spoken discourse, for instance, integrates language with intonation, voice quality, facial expression, gesture, and posture as well as aspects of self-presentation such as dress and hairstyle; written discourse integrates language with typographic expression and increasingly also with illustration, layout, and color. As a field of study, multimodality therefore focuses on the common properties of, and differences between, these different semiotic modes, and on the ways in which they are integrated in multimodal texts and communicative events. In doing so it borrows concepts and methods from linguistic discourse analysis but also takes inspiration from other relevant disciplines, such as art and design theory.

The contemporary interest in multimodality was stimulated by the increasing multimodality of contemporary communication. Magazines and display advertisements began to increase and diversify their use of images and graphic communication in the 1920s. Comic strips did the same in the 1930s. The arrival of film foregrounded subtle aspects of nonverbal communication, influencing how people talk and smile the world over; the microphone did the same for voice quality and intonation; and, later, television made nonverbal communication a decisive factor in politics. More recently, the computer has brought typography, layout, illustration, and information graphics, all previously the domain of specialist designers, within reach of every computer user. Clearly discourse can no longer be adequately studied without paying attention to multimodality, whether in the context of conversation, social media, the workplace, or the public sphere.

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*The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Second Edition.

Edited by Deborah Tannen, Heidi E. Hamilton, and Deborah Schiffrin.

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## 1 A Short History of Multimodality as a Field of Study

Because of its importance as a phenomenon, multimodality has been studied in a range of disciplines. The interaction of the senses in perception was a topic in the psychology of perception as far back as the 1920s. More recently, historians such as Classen (e.g., 1993) and Corbin (1994) have begun to document the “history of the senses,” and human–computer interaction specialists have also become increasingly interested in multimodality (e.g., Bongers and van der Veer 2007).

This chapter focuses on the way multimodality is studied by linguists and semioticians. During the 1930s and 1940s, the Prague School began to extend linguistics into the visual arts and the nonverbal aspects of theater (see Garvin 1964; Matějka and Titunik 1976). Mathesius wrote about the nonverbal aspects of radio speech (see Garvin 1964: 159), and Veltruský (1964) wrote about the theater as a “multiple sign system,” discussing sets, costumes, and props as signs that provide setting and characterization as well as take part in the action, concluding that the theater “can show new ways of perceiving and understanding the world” by restoring “the link between man and his environment” (Veltruský 1964: 91). Bogatyrev’s (1971) study of traditional Moravian Slovakian dress described dress as a language conveying what we would now call demographic information – age group, place of residence, marital status, religion, and occupation.

1960s Paris School structuralist semiotics also used concepts and methods from linguistics to understand communicative modes other than language, applying these for the most part to analyses of popular culture and the mass media, rather than to the arts. Barthes’ work on visual images and fashion (e.g., 1967, 1977, 1983) was crucial. Borrowing from Hjelmslev, Barthes distinguished between the denotative and connotative meanings of people, places, and things in photographs, thus establishing that photographs do not only reproduce reality but also convey abstract ideas: contemporary media imagery, Barthes argued, has established a “veritable lexicon” of objects that function as “inducers of accepted ideas” (1977: 23), just as did emblems in Medieval and Renaissance art. More recently such visual lexicons have been realized in online image banks such as Getty Images, which can be searched for visual representations of “freedom,” “creativity,” “innovation,” “curiosity,” and many other abstract concepts (Machin 2004). In his work on text–image relations, Barthes (1977) distinguished between relations in which the text “anchors” the meaning of the image, making it more specific and precise; relations of “illustration” in which images illustrate texts; and “relay” relations in which image and text complement each other. More recently, Martinec and Salway (2005) and van Leeuwen (2005) have elaborated these distinctions further. Like Bogatyrev, Barthes (1983) also explored the language of dress, analyzing captions from fashion magazines to understand the meaning system of contemporary fashion. Other Paris School semioticians studied the semiotics of the cinema, comic strips, information graphics, and music in a similar vein.

In roughly the same period American linguists were taking an interest in the multimodal analysis of spoken language and nonverbal communication. Pittenger, Hockett, and Danehy (1960) published a highly detailed and groundbreaking multimodal analysis of the first five minutes of a psychiatric interview, and Birdwhistell (e.g., 1973) developed an intricate set of tools for the analysis of body motion. In the late

1960s, Conversation Analysis replaced the 16 mm film sound camera with the cassette recorder as the research tool of choice, and attention to nonverbal communication decreased somewhat, although some conversation analysts and ethnomethodologists have continued to include it (e.g., Goodwin 2001; Ochs 1979). Elsewhere the study of nonverbal communication has continued to develop, for example in Adam Kendon's (2004) elegant system of gestural phrasing. The role of rhythm in integrating multimodal action, introduced by Edward Hall (1983), continued in the work of Erickson (1982), Scollon (1982), van Leeuwen (e.g., 2005), and others. *Mediated discourse analysis* (e.g., Scollon 2003, 2004) pays close attention to the nonverbal aspects of social interaction, and links micro-analysis to analysis of the wider social and political context. Sigrid Norris (2005), for instance, analyzes her ethnographic interviews in this vein, including not just the interview itself but also the activity in which the interviewee is engaged while being interviewed (ironing clothes), the soap opera that is running on television in the background, the game played by the interviewee's daughter on the floor of the room, and, at a larger scale, the interviewee's life story and the discourses she invokes to represent it – discourses about women as professionals and housewives, about mothering, about the power relations between men and women, and so on. Thus Norris's analysis weaves several practices together into a complex multimodal texture (conversing, ironing, playing, watching television) and connects them to larger practices and their attendant identities (being the subject of an interview, mothering, being a housewife), all this in various densities and with shifting foregroundings and backgroundings of the various strands of the multimodal texture. The results of the analysis then feed into theoretical reflections on agency, identity, and habitus. The complexities of analyses of this kind are made visible by means of transcriptions that include elements of traditional Conversation Analysis as well as photographs on which lines spoken by the characters, complete with intonation transcription and relevant television or computer-screen images, are superimposed, as shown in Figure 21.1.

The Sydney school of semiotics was inspired by the linguistics of M. A. K. Halliday (1978, 1994). It was here that the term *multimodality* was first used in the sense in which I use it in this chapter. The work includes “grammars” of specific modes such as visual design (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006; O'Toole 1994), body action (Martinec 2000, 2001), film (Bateman and Schmidt 2012), and music (van Leeuwen 1999); approaches to analyzing how different modes are integrated in multimodal texts (e.g., Bateman 2008; van Leeuwen 2005); and applications to education (e.g., Jewitt 2006; Kress 2003), media discourse (Bednarek and Caple 2012; Knox 2007), and other domains of contemporary discourse and communication. In the remainder of this chapter I will first focus on “grammars,” then on the integration of different modes in multimodal genres, and finally on applications of multimodal discourse analysis.

## 2 Visual Grammar

Sydney school “grammars” of non-linguistic semiotic modes assume that meanings belong to culture rather than to specific modes, and that any given communicative function or meaning can in principle be realized in any semiotic mode, albeit by different signifiers. In other words, there is semiotic commonality in the domain of meaning



**Figure 21.1** Multimodal transcription.  
Norris 2005: 1896.

and semiotic difference in the domain of form. But that distinction is not watertight. Form is not semantically neutral. There is a difference between expressing the “same” meaning visually or verbally. Different modes have different “affordances.” The visual, for instance, establishes meaning spatially, in non-linear and instantaneous fashion, whereas the verbal expresses meaning in linear fashion and over time. Such differences can have important consequences.

The affordances of different modes ... have profound effects on that which is to be realized in the mode. This is the insight gained from the “linguistic turn” of the 1970s which showed that language was not a neutral vehicle for representation. All modes have that effect. Knowledge changes in shape when it is realized in the different modal material. (Kress 2003: 50)

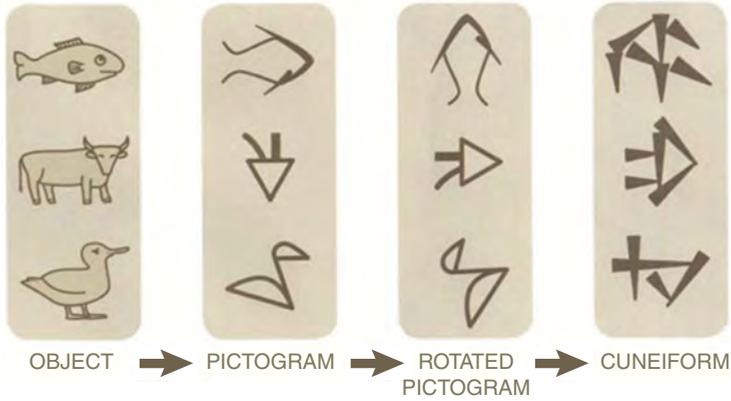
What can be realized is which “modal material” is historically and culturally specific, and subject to change – sometimes violent change, as in the great iconoclasm. At the moment we are experiencing such change. Many documents that used to take the form of densely printed pages now make abundant use of typography, color, and layout, and, if they are electronic pages, also animation. Much information that used to be conveyed in verbal reports is now conveyed through “data visualization.” This makes it all the more important to understand these new forms of discourse and to develop ways of analyzing them.

In their “grammar of visual design,” Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) mapped semantic-functional categories from Halliday’s theory of transitivity (Halliday 1994) onto formal categories from the visual theorist Rudolf Arnheim (e.g., 1982). Their key example was a page from an Australian primary-school social studies textbook titled *Our Society and Others* (Oakley *et al.* 1985). On that page, two pictures were shown side by side. The right-hand picture, an early nineteenth-century engraving, showed, on its

left and in the foreground, two British settlers stealthily moving forward, guns at the ready and aimed at a group of Indigenous Australians seated around a fire, at some distance. Kress and van Leeuwen analyzed this picture in the same way Halliday had analyzed clauses, as consisting of three kinds of constituent: participants (here, on the one hand the two settlers and on the other hand the group of Aborigines), processes (here the oblique line connecting the two participants, formed by the outstretched arms and guns), and circumstances (here the landscape in the background). But where, in Halliday's clause analysis, participants are realized by nouns or nominal groups, processes by verbs or verbal groups, and circumstances by adverbs or adverbial groups, in images, so Kress and van Leeuwen suggested, participants are realized by "volumes" (distinct and salient shapes clearly set off against their immediate environment), processes by vectors (oblique lines formed by some represented object and pointing in a particular direction), and circumstances by the setting, the background. When there are two participants, as in this picture, the participant from which the vector emanates is the "actor" of the "action" that is realized by the vector (here, the settlers), and the participant at which the vector is directed is the "goal" of that action (here the Aborigines). As in linguistic clauses, goals may or may not occur. The actor may aim a gun at a target that is actually depicted, as in this case, or just aim, without any representation of the target. A literal translation of the picture would therefore be something like "The settlers gun-stalked the Aborigines." But the caption expresses this differently, without representing the target: "The British used guns." This brings out the critical importance of comparing and contrasting visual and verbal realizations of the "same" meaning. The visual may "say" things that the verbal leaves unsaid – or vice versa.

The other picture, also an early nineteenth-century engraving, does not contain a vector. It shows three objects, three Aboriginal artifacts: an axe, a basket, and a wooden sword. They are decontextualized, shown against a blank background, and arranged in symmetrical fashion, with the same orientation to the horizontal and vertical axis and the same amount of space between them. Rather than a vector, expressing a dynamic process that interprets events in a narrative frame, this picture realizes a static configuration that expresses events in a conceptual frame. It *classifies* the three objects: its visual symmetry suggests that all three objects belong to the same category. But this category is not named. The caption simply says "Axe, basket and wooden sword." Clearly it is possible to visually represent the same concept ("technology") dynamically or statically. And here a significant choice was made: the technology of the Aborigines is represented in a static frame, the technology of the British invaders in a dynamic frame. It could have been the other way around, with, for instance, Aborigines stalking the invaders (something that they frequently did) and the nineteenth-century British guns represented as exotic objects in an old-fashioned museum exhibit.

The example shows that the meaning of images does not result only from the denotative and connotative meanings of the people, places, and things they represent but also from their composition; from the way the represented people, places, and things are organized into larger wholes by a visual grammar; and from the fact that there are different types of visual composition, expressing different ideational relationships between the depicted participants. These types of composition occur across various genres. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) show, for instance, that "actor–process–goal" constructions can be found not just in images but also in diagrams (e.g., flowcharts) and abstract paintings. And classificational images can often be seen in advertisements,

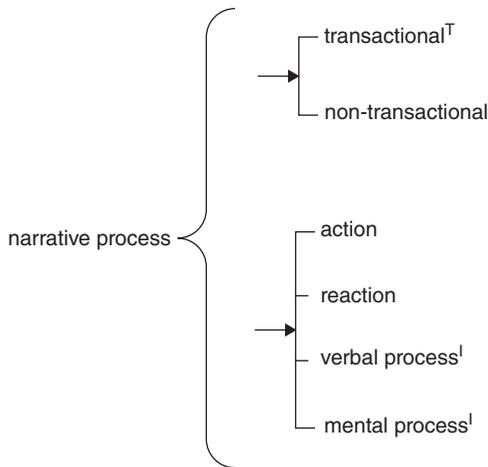


**Figure 21.2** The evolution of cuneiform.  
 Reproduced with permission from Greg Rickard *et al.*, *Pearson History 7 Student Book* © 2011 Pearson Australia, page 27.

where they might display the possible uses or users of a product, or the varieties of a brand or product, or in the now ubiquitous bullet-pointed lists.

As the example of the bullet-pointed list suggests, visual grammar can also *integrate* words, images, and graphic elements (e.g., arrows or bullet points), even at the level of simple, clause-like structures, as in Figure 21.2, which is taken from a junior high-school history textbook and has arrow vectors as the processes, perhaps meaning “became” or “morphed into.”

Different kinds of vectors realize different kinds of processes. Eyeline vectors, for instance, connect participants to what they are looking at, and the protuberances of speech balloons and thought balloons connect speakers or thinkers to what they say or think. Following Halliday (1994), Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) represent this as a system of binary choices, or “system network.” Figure 21.3, for instance, shows a



**Figure 21.3** Narrative processes.

system network of the “narrative processes” discussed above: transactional processes (narrative processes with a “goal”) and non-transactional processes, verbal processes (with a speech bubble), mental processes (with a thought bubble), reactions (with an eyeline vector), and actions (another kind of vector). Further types can be found in Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). Square brackets represent binary (either ... or) choices, curly brackets represent simultaneous (and ... and) choices, and, if a choice in a system has the superscript “I,” it must go with the choice “T” from a simultaneous system.

Similar systems underlie the organization of semiotic resources in semiotic software. Djonov and van Leeuwen (2011), for instance have analyzed the system of visual texture choices offered by PowerPoint as it developed through the eight different versions that Microsoft issued between 1992 and 2007.

Some semiotic modes are not easily described by means of system networks. They seem to be organized parametrically, as a range of simultaneous choices between continua. Voice quality, for instance (see van Leeuwen 2009) is a composite of features such as pitch range, loudness, vocal tension, roughness, breathiness, vibrato, and so on, and all these features are continua – for example, from monotone or near monotone to the widest possible pitch range, or from near inaudible mumbling to a loud, booming voice. All these features are also always present at the same time, and it is the degree to which each is used that will create the unique qualities of specific voices or vocal performances.

Some voice qualities are instantly recognized as belonging to particular types of speaker, or as the vocal style of actors such as Marlon Brando or Marilyn Monroe, or singers such as Louis Armstrong or Marlene Dietrich (see Bell 2011). The meaning of these voice qualities then derives from our associations with these types of speaker, or from the persona of the actors or singers, as mediated through popular culture. But ultimately the meaning of voice quality, like all meaning, derives from *experiential metaphor* and is understood on the basis of our concrete, material, bodily experience: “No metaphor can ever be comprehended or even adequately represented independently of an experiential basis” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 19). For Lakoff and Johnson, this includes physical, bodily experiences such as walking upright – and, for instance, tensing the voice is such an experience. When the voice is tensed it becomes higher, sharper, and brighter, because the walls of the throat dampen the sound less. The resulting sound not only *is* tense but also *means* “tense.” Our experience tells us what kinds of situation make us tense, which can include anxiety as well as excited anticipation. This constitutes a broad meaning potential that will become more precise in specific contexts. The ethnographic musicologist Alan Lomax (1968: 194), for instance, has documented how tense female singing styles are popular in places where there is much sexual repression:

It is as if one of the assignments of the favoured singer is to act out the level of sexual tension which the customs of the society establish as normal. The content of this message may be painful and anxiety-producing, but the effect upon the culture member may be stimulating, erotic and pleasurable, since the song reminds of familiar sexual emotions and experiences.

Similar arguments can be made with respect to other aspects of voice quality (see van Leeuwen 2009) and used to analyze, for instance, the “iconic” voices that, in the age

of the microphone, have shaped a new language of voice expression. Billie Holiday's voice, for instance, is rather high (certainly by comparison with other female singers of her time and genre), tense, and relatively loud, with just a hint of vibrato in the longer notes – a mixture of toughness (loud), anxiety (tense), vulnerability (high), and repressed emotion (vibrato). Marilyn Monroe used a high yet breathy voice, combining childlike innocence with sensual seductiveness. Lauren Bacall used a sensuous low voice, and, in her autobiography, recalls how Howards Hawks conceived of her character for *To Have and to Have Not* (1944) as “a masculine approach – insolent, no capitulation, no helplessness” (Bacall 1979: 87). To this end Hawks not only invented “the look” – a quizzical look upwards with the head slightly bowed, suggesting deference as well as insolence – but also told her “to practice shouting, keeping the voice low” (Bacall 1979: 92). There is evidence that such inventions of popular culture have now become a stylistic repertoire rather than a model for signature styles. Singers such as Madonna and Gwen Stefani draw on a wide range of recognizable singing styles, and Marlon Brando's hoarse whisper is now part of the repertoire of many American actors. As film sound theorist Michael Chion has said (1999: 174):

The voice is ceasing to be identified with a specific face. It appears much less stable. This general realization that the voice is radically other than the body that adopts it (or that it adopts) for the duration of a film seems to me to be one of the most significant phenomena in the recent development of the cinema, television and audiovisual media in general.

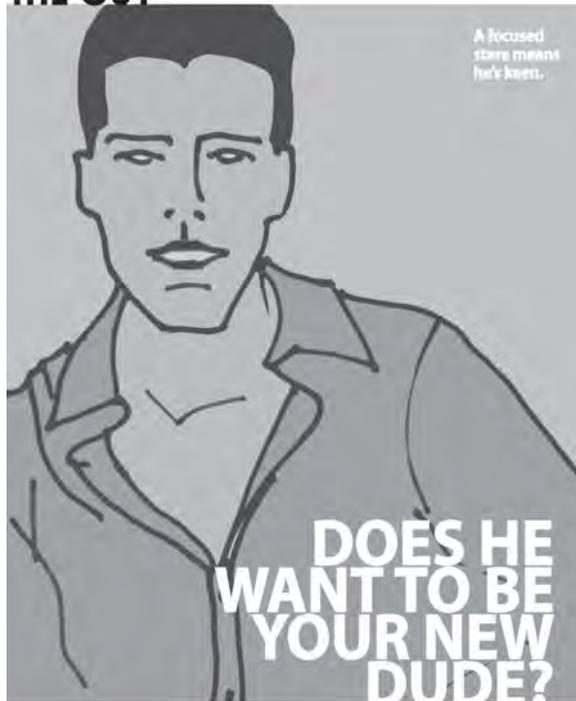
Other semiotic modes have been analyzed in a similar way, for instance color schemes (van Leeuwen 2011) and typography (van Leeuwen 2006), and they, too, seem increasingly to be used to signify identity, whether it be the identity of an individual text maker or some kind of corporate identity.

### 3 Multimodality and Genre

The concept of genre has played a prominent role in multimodal discourse analysis as one of the principles that can integrate different modes into a multimodal whole. As pioneered in Labov's (1972) narrative analysis, genre is modeled as a sequence of stages with specific communicative functions that, in their particular order, realize the overall communicative function of the genre. Thus a recipe (see Eggins 1994) typically starts with an “enticement” aimed at whetting the readers' appetite and persuading them to try it (“A glorious way to serve the biggest, most succulent mushrooms you can find”), followed by ingredients and step-by-step instructions. Such genres are usually multimodal. Stages may either be verbal or visual, or both. In magazine recipes, for instance, the enticements are usually visual.

Figure 21.4 reproduces the layout, typography, and color of a women's magazine article. The image at the top shows a young man looking enigmatically at the viewer, with the text superimposed in white: “Does he want to be your new dude?”. Then, in black on the white frame that separates the image from the text box below it: “Here

## THE GUY



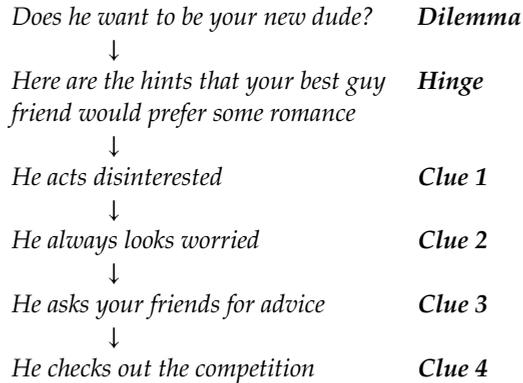
**Here are the hints that your best guy friend would prefer some romance.**

- **He acts disinterested.** Once he feels he has a chance with you, his dude instincts kick in. So if you're feeling neglected, ask him why he's been ignoring you lately. If he can't answer, he's into you.
- **He always looks worried.** When a best guy friend wants to become your dude, he cannot relax. Tight facial muscles are a sign that he's worried, as is a furrowed brow, and sweaty hands.
- **He asks your friends for advice.** You might think that by asking your friends for advice, that he's starting to ignore you. Far from this, this means he's into you big time.
- **He checks out the competition.** Guys are territorial animals. When he sees you around other dudes, he's looking out for signs of a spark. By keeping his eye on other dudes, he's showing he's keen.

Figure 21.4 Layout of a women's magazine article.

are the hints that your best guy friend would prefer some romance." The text box is gray in color and contains four "hints," each bullet-pointed and headlined in white lettering: "He acts disinterested," "He always looks worried," "He asks your friends for advice," and "He checks out the competition." The text underneath each of these headlines elaborates the point further – for example, under "He asks your friends for advice," we read, "You might think that by asking your friends for advice, that he's starting to ignore you. Far from this, this means he's into you big time."

The generic structure of the text could be analyzed as follows:



The "dilemma" is realized multimodally, by text as well as by the image, in which the boy looks brooding and mysterious. But the text as a whole is also multimodal. Its generic structure is realized *visually*. The white line that separates the "dilemma" and the "clues" marks these as distinct parts of the text, yet the gray-and-white color scheme of the text box (a color scheme that also dominates in the image) links them together, giving the whole a unified textual identity. The four "clues" are also distinct and separate. Each has its own bullet point and white title, and they are separated by empty space. But together they form a coherent, symmetrically arranged classification configuration, just like the Aboriginal artifacts in the earlier example.

The same analysis can be applied to interaction. The excerpt below, taken from Paddy Chayevsky's 1953 television play *Printer's Measure* (Chayevsky 1994), provides a concise example. In this play, Mr. Healey is a grumpy but dedicated old craftsman who swears by his very traditional typesetting methods. "The Boy," his apprentice, initially admires him but eventually switches to the modern phototypesetting methods his mentor despises. The excerpt is an episode from the Boy's apprenticeship. Here each "stage" of the generic structure, as demarcated by the arrow and labeled "Call to attention," "Demonstration," and so on, is an *exchange*, consisting of an initiating and a responding move, although, since this is a play script, not all responses are included. When the play is actually performed by actors, the response to Mr. Healey pointing out a letterhead might for instance be an expression of rapt attention on the Boy's part. Note how, within each stage, some of the moves are realized by speech and others by actions such as looking up, scurrying down the shop, and so on. The moves

themselves will also be multimodal. Mr. Healey's summons ("Hey! Come here!"), for instance, as performed by an actor, would surely involve distinct gestures and postures.

<i>Mr Healey:</i>	<i>Hey! Come here!</i>	<b><i>Call to attention</i></b>
	<i>The boy looks up and comes scurrying down the shop, dodging the poking arm of the Kluege press and comes to Mr Healy</i>	
	↓	
	<i>Mr Healey pulls out a letterhead, points to a line of print</i>	<b><i>Demonstration</i></b>
	↓	
<i>Mr Healey:</i>	<i>What kind of type is that?</i>	<b><i>Quizzing</i></b>
<i>Boy:</i>	<i>Twelve point Clearface</i>	
	↓	
<i>Mr Healey:</i>	<i>How do you know?</i>	<b><i>Probing</i></b>
<i>Boy:</i>	<i>It's lighter than Goudy and the lower case "e" goes up</i>	
	↓	
<i>Mr Healey:</i>	<i>Clearface is a delicate type. It's clear. It's got line and grace. Remember that.</i>	<b><i>Instruction</i></b>
	↓	
<i>Mr Healey:</i>	<i>Beat it!</i>	<b><i>Dismissal</i></b>
	<i>The boy hurries back to the front of the shop.</i>	

Genres, in this model, are templates for communicative action, linear processes unfolding over time. But many texts are not linear. How can genre analysis be applied to spatially realized texts? In many cases it will be possible to posit a reading path. Reading paths, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 218), are created by differences in salience, by the degree to which some textual elements attract the reader's or viewer's attention over and above other elements. Differences in salience can be realized by foregrounding or by differences in size, boldness, tonal contrast, or color. In this way visual compositions can set up particular hierarchies between the elements to guide the movement of the hypothetical reader's eyes within and across the different textual elements. Such reading paths will begin with the most salient element, from there move to the next most salient element, and so on, in a trajectory that need not be similar to the left–right and top–bottom order of densely printed pages.

In Figure 21.5, for instance, taken from a magazine for young drivers published by the Road and Traffic Authority of New South Wales, the reading path is likely to begin with the headline, left bottom, which is printed in a stark dark pink color that clashes with the rest of the page. From there the eye is likely to move up, via the car as it were, to the tree, and from there to the text. Even if the text is not read, the message will come across: a (small) car can, literally and figuratively, "lead to" luscious and environmentally healthy green.



**But enough of the guilt trip: what can we do to help?**

We can use less fuel for a start (see **Tips for saving fuel**).

Car companies are also getting in on the act. Toyota has successfully launched an electric-petrol 'hybrid' car – the Prius – which saves a lot of fuel.

Now Daimler Chrysler – the maker of those dinky little smart cars – has started a program to 'neutralise' the carbon dioxide emissions from the cars they sell for one year.

Membership to the 'Carbon Zero' program is offered free to buyers of a smart car. Under the program, owners can balance the impact their car has on the environment.

Smart Australia claims that the program is a first for Australian drivers. Owners can choose to balance their carbon dioxide output one of two ways: through a tree planting program or through an investment in alternative wind energy.

A company called Greenfleet will plant eight trees on behalf of each smart car owner. They estimate that these trees will absorb the same amount of carbon dioxide that is released by driving 16,000 km in a year.

Burning petrol in your car releases all kinds of nasties into the air.

According to the Department of Environment and Heritage, every litre of petrol you use results in 2.5 kilograms of carbon dioxide being released from the exhaust. Carbon dioxide is a green-house gas – meaning it contributes to the 'green-house effect'.

Scientists predict that increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases will increase the average global temperature, leading to changes in the world's climate and weather patterns.

And this ain't good.



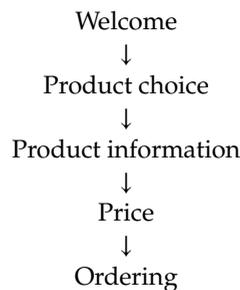
**BUY A CAR  
PLANT A TREE**

**If you drive a car, then you're contributing to the big environmental baddie: global warming. The good news is that you can do something to reduce, or even begin to neutralise, the damage.**

GEARED MAGAZINE  
ISSUE NUMBER 2 // 2006  
46

Figure 21.5 Environmentally responsible driving.  
Geared magazine, issue 2, RTA 2006.

As eye-tracking research has shown (Holsanova, Rahm, and Holmqvist 2006), actual reading paths also depend on familiarity with layout conventions: when, for instance, a newspaper page features a bright-red advertisement in the right-bottom corner (objectively by far the most salient element), some readers' "path" might still not start there because they know that that space is always reserved for advertisements, and they are not interested in advertisements. Another problem is that some texts, for example contemporary Web pages, may have a beginning but not an end. A Sony homepage, for instance, featured a head-and-shoulders picture of a glamorous blonde model top left, without doubt the most salient element. To her right were the words "Welcome to the world of Sony," in large, bold font, and, below that, slightly less salient, "What's New." But the lower part of the page was entirely taken up by identical and symmetrically arranged rectangular buttons, each representing a product. Here a specific path cannot be predicted on the basis of salience, and that is precisely the point – the display of offers gives readers a choice of possible paths. It is a semiotic virtual supermarket shelf. However, what readers will actually do will still form a linear and goal-oriented trajectory that could be analyzed along the lines explained above. And the "stages" still need to have specific semiotic characteristics if they are going to be meaningful and functional in the reader's trajectory, which might, for instance, take the form:



## 4 Applications

As edited collections on multimodality bring out (e.g., Djonov and Zhao 2013; Dreyfus, Hood, and Stenglin 2011; Jewitt 2009; O'Halloran and Smith 2011; Ventola, Charles, and Kaltenbacher 2009), multimodal analysis has been applied in a number of fields, including education, media discourse, organization studies, and health communication. Two of these areas will here be discussed in detail: education and media discourse.

The New London Group (James Gee, Mary Kalantzis, Gunther Kress, Allan Luke, and others) stimulated an interest in applying multimodal analysis to education (New London Group 1996). This led to three kinds of studies: studies of the development of literacy in young children, often connected to a call for integrating multimodal literacy into the curriculum; studies of multimodal learning resources, including textbooks, toys, CD-ROMs, and the Internet; and studies of multimodal classroom interaction.

Gunther Kress's *Before Writing* (1997) investigated how young children use the affordances of the materials they have at hand, or the techniques they have mastered, on the basis of "interest" in what is of crucial importance to them at the given moment. In one

of his key examples a three-year-old child draws a car as a series of circles (“wheels”). Having mastered the drawing of circles, the child now uses circles as a means of expressing what, to him, is a crucial characteristic of cars. As a semiotic resource the circle has many possible meanings, but the one the child selects is motivated by his interest of the moment, his interest in thinking about cars. Thus, learning to draw and learning to understand the world around him go hand in hand. But, Kress said,

As children are drawn into culture, “what is to hand” becomes more and more that which the culture values and therefore makes readily available. The child’s active, transformative practice remains, but it is more and more applied to materials which are already culturally formed. In this way children become the agents of their own cultural and social making. (Kress 1997: 13)

Closely related is the study of the affordances and learning potentials of different communicative modes. In *Literacy in the New Media Age* (2003: 52–7), Kress studied the use of various modes by junior high-school students learning about blood circulation. One used language, writing a kind of travel diary with a red blood cell as its protagonist making a voyage through the body. Another drew a concept map, with boxes representing the heart, the arteries, the lungs, and so on, and arrows representing the movement of blood from one “box” to another. The linearity of the story, Kress said, was an apt signifier for the blood moving from organ to organ, and language allowed the expression of causality, but the use of a range of different words for the idea of movement (“leave,” “squeeze,” “drop off,” “enter,” etc.), while stylistically desirable, diminished the generality that scientific discourse normally requires. The boxes and arrows of the concept did provide scientific generality, but, as the arrows in the student’s concept map radiated from a central “blood box,” the concept of circularity was lost, and, as drawings do not, or not yet, allow the expression of causality, causality remained unexpressed. Each mode, Kress concluded, has its own epistemological affordances and limitations, and understanding these is fundamental for creating effective multimodal representations.

This applies not only to textbooks but also to other learning resources. Jewitt (2006) studied how children use computer games to learn science, struggling to reconcile the rules of the game with their everyday experiences. When learning to understand “bouncing” through a game called *Playground*, for instance, children could choose a behavior (a particular kind of bounce, as represented by pictures of a spring, a ball, etc.) and attach it to an object, a bullet, that could then bounce off bars. But this was confusing. Can bullets be bouncy? And isn’t the behavior of “bouncing” the property of the bars the bullets bounce against rather than of the bullets? Everyday experience can be at odds with the constraints of the computer program. Nevertheless, games of this kind do allow children to explore the rules of mechanics systematically, interactively, and multimodally, practically without any verbal input. Jewitt’s transcriptions of the conversations children engaged in as they were working with the program threw light on the active nature of this kind of learning. “I want there to be little bars where if you get it, it goes another way and another way,” said one of the children, and then proceeded to enact exactly that. Many other studies of this kind, too, combine analysis of the meaning potential of multimodal resources with ethnographic accounts of their use in concrete situations, thus documenting the learning process as an active *transformative practice*, to use Kress’s term again.

Finally, studies of classroom interaction have also moved from the traditional emphasis on linguistic exchange structures to strong contextualization and detailed attention to nonverbal communication and setting – for example, to the way classrooms are arranged, to what is hung on the walls, the technological resources available, and so on. Kress *et al.* (2005), for instance, described one classroom as realizing a “transmission” pedagogy, with individual student tables lined up in rows, and another as realizing a “participatory/authoritarian” pedagogy. In the latter, tables were put together to create teams of four or five students facing each other (“participation”), yet these groups of tables were angled to allow the teacher total visual control from the front of the classroom, an arrangement that constrained the posture of the students, at least if they wanted to see the teacher and follow the lesson (“authoritarian”).

## 5 Conclusion

In all this work, multimodality is seen as a key toward better learning, with different modes enabling the representation of different aspects of, and perspectives on, the objects of the learning. This work stresses that the meaning potential of different modes needs to be better understood by teachers, and that multimodal literacy needs to be more fully integrated into the curriculum, in ways based on what we can learn from studying the spontaneous learning of very young children, and from studying other forms of informal learning, such as playing with toys or computer games.

Multimodal analysis has also been applied to the critical analysis of media discourses (e.g., Bednarek and Caple 2012; Kress and van Leeuwen 1998; Knox 2007). In *Global Media Discourse* (2007), Machin and van Leeuwen analyzed how, in the Internet image bank Getty Images, photographic images can be searched for the concepts they express rather than for the people, places, and events they record and document. The visual expression of concepts by means of staged photographs has of course long existed in advertising, but now, Machin and van Leeuwen show, it also extends to the editorial content of newspapers and magazines, where we traditionally expect “records of reality.” Conceptual images of this kind are produced to fit into multimodal designs, using restricted color palettes that will easily harmonize with page layout and leaving space for words, and they are generic rather than specific, using a range of decontextualizing devices and a restricted vocabulary of attributes to indicate the identity of people and places (e.g., hard hat and rolled-up blueprint means “architect”; laptop means “office”; non-descript skyscraper means “city”), a sign that the language of the visual is tightening into vocabularies of pictograms and logos. Such generic images are deliberately designed to be used in multiple contexts and hence sold over and over. Finally, Machin and van Leeuwen (2007: 151) explored the concepts that can be expressed with this new visual “language” (as Getty Images explicitly calls itself) and found that the positive values of contemporary discourse dominate: *freedom, creativity, innovation, determination, concentration, spirituality, well-being*, and so on.

Van Leeuwen (2008) developed a framework for analyzing how the identity of “social actors” can be signified verbally, visually, and with the Playmobil toy system. Social actors can, for instance, be represented as individuals or as “types,” individually or collectively, and they can be “functionalized,” categorized by what they *do* (their

profession or some other kind of activity), or “classified,” categorized by what they are deemed to *be* (e.g., gender, class, ethnicity, nationality). His analysis demonstrates that many identity categories can be expressed verbally as well as visually. Individual identity, for instance, is linguistically expressed by names and visually by pictures that are detailed enough to show individual characteristics without these being overwhelmed by attributes with group-identity connotations such as hair styles, hats, turbans, hijabs, and so on. Playmobil, finally, does not allow the expression of individual identity at all. Its minimalistic characters offer children a range of social roles and types, a microcosm of the social world, differentiated only by skin color, hair style, and dress.

In an article on “visual racism,” van Leeuwen stresses the importance of a critical edge to the study of multimodal discourse:

Visually communicated racism can be much more easily denied, much more easily dismissed as “in the eye of the beholder” than verbal racism ... It is for this reason that a consideration of images should have pride of place in any inquiry into racist discourse. If images seem to just show “what is” we need to show that that may not always be so. If images seem just to allude to things and never “say them explicitly,” we need to make these allusions explicit. (van Leeuwen 2000: 335)

And Fairclough (2000: 4), too, has called for greater attention to multimodality in Critical Discourse Analysis, especially in relation to nonverbal communication:

Communicative style is a matter of language in the broadest sense – certainly verbal language (words), but also all other aspects of the complex bodily performance that constitutes political style (gestures, facial expression, how people hold themselves and move, dress and hairstyle, and so forth). A successful leader’s communicative style is not simply what makes him attractive to voters in a general way, it conveys certain values which can powerfully enhance the political message.

In all these areas multimodality has rightly become a key concern. But much work remains to be done. The theoretical basis of multimodality research has to be strengthened, for instance in relation to the kinds of normative discourses that govern contemporary uses of semiotic resources, or to the way in which multimodality has allowed the development of new affective and poetic semiotic resources. The methods and multidisciplinaryities used in multimodal analysis will need to be refined, for instance in relation to the complexities of contemporary data visualization and the increasingly important role of digital semiotic technologies in contemporary communicative practices. And the interaction between global trends and local traditions and initiatives will become an increasingly important field of research as especially Asian scholars begin to introduce non-Western traditions into the mainstream of discourse analysis (see Shi-xu 2005). The changes in the semiotic landscape are so profound and happen at such speed that the methods and concepts of multimodality will have to undergo a period of continuous development and innovation if they are to respond adequately to the pace of development and innovation in contemporary communication.

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# 22 Critical Discourse Analysis

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TEUN A. VAN DIJK

## 0 Introduction: What Is Critical Discourse Analysis?

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such *dissident research*, critical discourse analysts take an explicit position and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately challenge social inequality. This is also why CDA may be characterized as a *social movement* of politically committed discourse analysts.

One widespread misunderstanding of CDA is that it is a special *method* of doing discourse analysis. There is no such method: in CDA all methods of the cross-discipline of discourse studies, as well as other relevant methods in the humanities and social sciences, may be used (Wodak and Meyer 2008; Titscher *et al.* 2000). To avoid this misunderstanding and to emphasize that many methods and approaches may be used in the critical study of text and talk, we now prefer the more general term *critical discourse studies* (CDS) for the field of research (van Dijk 2008b). However, since most studies continue to use the well-known abbreviation CDA, this chapter will also continue to use it.

As an *analytical practice*, CDA is not one direction of research among many others in the study of discourse. Rather, it is a critical *perspective* that may be found in all areas of discourse studies, such as discourse grammar, Conversation Analysis, discourse pragmatics, rhetoric, stylistics, narrative analysis, argumentation analysis, multimodal discourse analysis and social semiotics, sociolinguistics, and ethnography of communication or the psychology of discourse-processing, among others. In other words, CDA is discourse study *with an attitude*.

Some of the tenets of CDA could already be found in the critical theory of the Frankfurt School before World War II (Agger 1992; Drake 2009; Rasmussen and Swindal 2004). Its current focus on language and discourse was initiated with the

*critical linguistics* that emerged (mostly in the United Kingdom and Australia) at the end of the 1970s (Fowler *et al.* 1979; see also Mey 1985). CDA also has counterparts in “critical” developments in sociolinguistics, stylistics, pragmatics, psychology, and the social sciences, some already dating back to the early 1970s (Birnbaum 1971; Calhoun 1995; Fay 1987; Fox and Prilleltensky 1997; Hymes 1972; Ibáñez and Iñiguez 1997; Jeffries 2010; Singh 1996; Thomas 1993; Turkel 1996; Wodak 1996). As is the case in these neighboring disciplines, CDA may be seen as a reaction against the dominant formal (often “asocial” or “uncritical”) paradigms of the 1960s and 1970s, for instance in structural and generative linguistics as well as later text grammars and Conversation Analysis.

Critical research on discourse has the following general properties, among others:

- It focuses primarily on *social problems* and *political issues* rather than the mere study of discourse structures outside their social and political contexts.
- This critical analysis of social problems is usually *multidisciplinary*.
- Rather than merely *describe* discourse structures, it tries to *explain* them in terms of properties of social interaction and especially social structure.
- More specifically, CDA focuses on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of *power abuse (dominance)* in society.

Fairclough and Wodak (1997) summarized the main tenets of CDA as follows:

- 1 CDA addresses social problems.
- 2 Power relations are discursive.
- 3 Discourse constitutes society and culture.
- 4 Discourse does ideological work.
- 5 Discourse is historical.
- 6 The link between text and society is mediated.
- 7 Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory.
- 8 Discourse is a form of social action.

Against this general background the present chapter focuses on some theoretical issues that are central in CDA, such as the relations between social macro- and micro-structures, domination as abuse of power, and how dominant groups control text and context and thus also the mind. After sketching this multidisciplinary theoretical framework, we review some CDA research on discourse and gender, racist text and talk, and the way power is reproduced in the mass media, political discourse, and the professions.

Since a single chapter must be very selective, I will refer to a large number of other introductions of handbooks in the field (e.g., Caldas-Coulthard and Coulthard 1996; Fairclough 1992a, 1992b, 1995a; Fairclough and Wodak 1997; Fowler *et al.* 1979; Le and Short 2009; Locke 2004; Machin and Mayr 2012; van Dijk 1993, 2008b; van Leeuwen 2005, 2008; Wodak and Chilton 2005; Wodak and Meyer 2008; Young and Harrison 2004).

# 1 Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks

Since CDA is not a specific direction of research, it does not have a unitary theoretical framework. Within the general aims and properties mentioned above, there are many types of CDA, and these may be theoretically and analytically quite diverse. Critical analysis of conversation is very different from an analysis of news reports in the press or of lessons and teaching at school. Yet, given the common perspective and the general aims of CDA, we may also find overall conceptual frameworks that are closely related. As suggested, most kinds of CDA will ask questions about the way specific discourse structures are deployed in the reproduction of social dominance, whether they are part of a conversation or a news report or other genres and contexts. Thus, the typical vocabulary of many scholars in CDA will feature such notions as *power, dominance, hegemony, ideology, class, gender, race, discrimination, interests, reproduction, institutions, social structure, and social order*, besides the more familiar discourse analytical notions.

This section focuses on a number of basic concepts and thus devises a triangulated theoretical framework that relates *discourse, cognition, and society* (including *history, politics, and culture*) as the major dimensions of CDA and discourse studies more generally.

## 1.1 *Macro versus micro*

Language use, discourse, verbal interaction, and communication belong to the micro-level of the social order. Power, dominance, and inequality between social groups are typically terms that belong to a macro-level of analysis. This means that CDA must bridge the well-known “gap” between micro (agency, interactional) and macro (structural, institutional, organizational) approaches (Alexander *et al.* 1987; Huber 1991; Knorr-Cetina and Cicourel 1981; van Dijk 1980).

In everyday interaction and experience, the macro- and micro-levels (and intermediary “mesolevels”) form one unified whole. For instance, a racist speech in parliament is a discourse at the interactional micro-level of social structure in the specific situation of a debate, but at the same time it may enact or be a constituent part of legislation or the reproduction of racism at the macro-level (Wodak and van Dijk 2000). That such level distinctions are relative may be seen from the fact that this very parliamentary speech may again feature semantic macrostructures (topics) as well as semantic micro-structures such as local propositions and their concepts (van Dijk 1980).

There are several ways to analyze and bridge the societal macro–micro gap, and thus to arrive at a unified critical analysis:

- 1 *Members–groups*. Language users engage in discourse *as* members of (several) social groups, organizations, or institutions; and, conversely, groups thus may act “by” or “through” their members.
- 2 *Actions–process*. Social acts of individual actors are thus constituent parts of group actions and social processes, such as legislation, newsmaking, or the reproduction of racism.

- 3 *Context–social structure.* Situations of discursive interaction are similarly part, or constitutive of, social structure; for example, a press conference may be a typical local practice of organizations and media institutions as macro-level structures. That is, “local” and more “global” contexts are closely related, and both exercise constraints on discourse.
- 4 *Personal and social cognition.* Language users as social actors have both personal and social cognition (personal memories, knowledge, and opinions) as well as those shared with members of their group or culture as a whole. In other words, whereas the other links between societal macro- and micro-structures mentioned above are merely analytical relations, the real interface between society and discourse is sociocognitive because language users as social actors mentally represent and connect both levels. This also resolves the well-known structure–agency dichotomy in sociology.

## 1.2 Power as control

A central notion in most critical work on discourse is that of power, and more specifically the *social power* of groups or institutions (among many studies, see, e.g., Lukes 1986; Wrong 1979). Summarizing a complex philosophical and social analysis, I define social power in terms of *control* (van Dijk 2008b). Thus, groups have (more or less) power if they are able to (more or less) control the acts and minds of (members of) other groups. This ability presupposes a *power base* of privileged access to scarce social resources, such as force, money, status, fame, knowledge, information, “culture,” or indeed various forms of public discourse and communication (Mayr 2008).

Different *types of power* may be distinguished according to the various resources employed to exercise such power: the coercive power of the military and other violent people will rather be based on force; the rich will have power because of their money; the more or less “persuasive power” of parents, professors, or journalists may be based on knowledge, information, or authority. Note also that power is seldom absolute. Groups may more or less control other groups, or only control them in specific situations or social domains. A judge controls people only in the courtroom, and a teacher only students in a classroom. Moreover, dominated groups may more or less resist, accept, condone, collude or comply with, or legitimate such power, and even find it “natural.”

The power of dominant groups may be integrated in laws, rules, norms, habits, and even a quite general consensus, and thus take the form of what Gramsci called *hegemony* (Gramsci 1971). Note also that power is not always exercised in obviously abusive acts of dominant group members, but may be enacted in the myriad taken-for-granted actions of everyday life (Foucault 1980), as is typically the case in the many forms of everyday sexism or racism (Essed 1991). Similarly, not all members of a powerful group are always more powerful than all members of dominated groups: power is only defined here for groups as a whole.

For our analysis of the relations between discourse and power, thus, we first find that *access* to specific forms of discourse – for example, those of politics, the media, education, or science – is itself a power resource (van Dijk 1996). Secondly, as suggested earlier, action is controlled by our minds. So, as we shall see in more detail in Section 1.2.2,

if we are able to influence people's minds – for example, their knowledge, attitudes, or ideologies – we indirectly may control (some of) their actions, as we know from persuasion and manipulation. Closing the discourse–power circle, finally, this means that those groups who control most influential discourse also have more chances to indirectly control the minds and actions of others.

Simplifying these very intricate relationships even further for this chapter, we can split the issue of discursive power into three interrelated questions for CDA research:

- 1 How do powerful groups control the text and context of public discourse?
- 2 How does such power discourse control the minds and actions of less powerful groups, and what are the social consequences of such control, such as social inequality?
- 3 What are the properties of the discourse of powerful groups, institutions, and organizations and how are such properties forms of power abuse?

We shall deal with these questions in the theoretical framework presented in the following sections.

### 1.2.1 *Control of text and context of discourse*

We have seen that, among many other resources that define the power base of a group or institution, *access to* or *control over* public discourse and communication is an important “symbolic” resource, and this is also the case for knowledge and information (Kedar 1987; Mayr 2003; Sarangi and Slembrouck 1996; van Dijk 1996, 2008b, 2014).

Most people have active control only over everyday talk with family members, friends, or colleagues, whereas they are more or less passive targets of public text or talk – for example, of the mass media, teachers, bosses, police officers, judges, or welfare bureaucrats, among other authorities, who may simply tell them what (not) to believe or what (not) to do.

On the other hand, members of more powerful social groups and institutions, and especially their leaders (the *symbolic elites*; see van Dijk 1993), have more or less exclusive access to, and control over, one or more types of public discourse. Thus, professors control scholarly discourse, teachers educational discourse, journalists media discourse, lawyers legal discourse, and politicians policy and other public political discourse. Those who have more control over more – and more influential – genres of discourse (and more discourse properties) are by that definition also more powerful. *In other words, we here have a discursive definition (as well as a practical diagnostic) of one of the crucial constituents of social power* (van Dijk 1996, 2008b).

These notions of discourse access and control are very general, and it is one of the tasks of CDA to spell out these forms of power and especially their abuses – that is, forms of domination. Thus, if discourse is defined in terms of complex communicative events, consisting of text and context, access and control may be defined both for the relevant categories of the *communicative situation*, defined as *context*, as well as for the *structures of text and talk*.

The communicative situation consists of such categories as setting (time, place); ongoing actions (including discourses and discourse genres); and the participants in

various communicative, social, or institutional roles and identities, as well as their goals, knowledge, opinions, attitudes, and ideologies (for references, see van Dijk 2008a, 2009a). Controlling the communicative situation involves control over one or more of these categories – for example, deciding on the time and place of a communicative event, or on which participants may or must be present, and in which roles or identities, or what knowledge or opinions they should (not) have, and which social actions may or must be accomplished by discourse. More specifically, such control may focus on the subjective definition of the communicative situation – that is, the *context models* of the participants – because it is the context model that in turn controls the pragmatic *appropriateness* of discourse (van Dijk 2008a, 2009a).

Thus, professors and not students control the setting (time and place) of an exam, and who qualify as participants. Police officers or judges define the overall communicative situation of an interrogation, and who *may* ask questions or who *must* reply (Matoesian 1993; Shuy 1998a, 1998b). Institutional speakers may abuse their power in such situations – for example, when police officers use force or threats to get a confession from a suspect (Heydon 2005; Linell and Jönsson 1991; Thornborrow 2002) or when male editors exclude women from writing economic news (Creedon 1989; van Zoonen 1994).

Genres typically have conventional *schemas* consisting of various *categories*. Access to some of these may be prohibited or obligatory – for example, some greetings in a conversation may only be used by speakers of a specific social group, rank, age, or gender (Irvine 1974).

Besides the control of speech acts or genres or other properties of the communicative situation, powerful groups may control various aspects of the structures of text and talk. Thus, crucial for all discourse and communication is who controls *topics* (semantic macrostructures) and *topic change*, as when editors decide what news topics will be covered in the media (Gans 1979; Lindegren-Lerman 1983; van Dijk 1988), teachers decide what topics will be dealt with in class (Manke 1997), or men control topics and topic change in conversations with women (Okamoto and Smith-Lovin 2001). Publishers and editors may thus give priority to negative topics about immigrants in the media and ignore or ban topics about white elite racism (van Dijk 1991, 1993). In times of crises, also in democracies, politicians may justify censorship of topics or information that is alleged to threaten national security, as was the case in the United States after 9/11 (Graber 2003).

Although much discourse control is contextual or topical, the local details of lexical or syntactic style, propositional meaning, turn-taking in conversation, rhetorical devices, and narrative structures (among many other discourse structures) may be controlled by powerful group members, professionals, groups, organization, or institutions. For instance:

- Powerless speakers may be ordered to “keep their voice down” or to “keep quiet”; thus women may be “silenced” in many ways (Houston and Kramarae 1991).
- In some cultures, while addressing powerful recipients, powerless speakers need to “mumble” as a form of respect (Albert 1972).
- In court, lower-class women may be ordered by a judge to answer direct questions, whereas middle-class men may be allowed to give their own version of a traffic violation in a personal story (Wodak 1984).

In sum, many levels and structures of context, text, and talk can in principle be more or less controlled by powerful speakers and institutions, and such power may be abused at the expense of specific recipients, groups, or civil society at large. Thus, we will see below that many studies show how men may control talk of women. It should, however, be stressed that talk and text do not always and directly enact or embody the overall power relations between groups: it is always the context that may interfere with, reinforce, or otherwise transform such relationships. We shall review more research on the control of discourse below.

### 1.2.2 *Mind control*

If controlling the contexts and structures of text and talk is a first major form of the exercise of power, controlling people's minds through such discourse is an indirect but fundamental way to reproduce dominance and hegemony. Indeed, discourse control usually aims at controlling the intentions, plans, knowledge, opinions, attitudes, and ideologies – as well as their consequent actions – of recipients. A sociocognitive approach in CDA thus examines social structures of power through the analysis of the relations between discourse and cognition. Cognition is the necessary interface that links discourse as language use and social interaction with social situations and social structures (van Dijk 2008b).

The analysis of mind control presupposes the usual distinction between personal or autobiographical memory, on the one hand, and generic, socially shared “semantic” memory, on the other (Tulving 2002). More specifically, we assume that episodic memory represents people's personal experiences as multimodal *mental models* (Johnson-Laird 1983). In communication and interaction, mental models (sometimes called *situation models*; see van Dijk and Kintsch 1983) are the subjective representation of the events, action, or situation a discourse is *about* – and hence such models have a referential *semantic* nature. Understanding or interpreting discourse about specific events, as is the case for stories and news reports, consists of the construction of a subjective model of the situation the discourse is about. On the other hand, *context models* (van Dijk 2008a, 2009a) control the *pragmatic* properties of discourse, such as speech acts, appropriateness, or politeness. Both semantic situation models as well as pragmatic context models not only represent situations but also feature people's opinions and emotions about the situation.

Specific discourse structures, such as topics, arguments, metaphor, lexical choice, and rhetorical figures, among many other structures to be dealt with below, may influence the contents and the structures of mental models in ways preferred by the speakers, as in most forms of interaction and communication, as we know from classical rhetoric as well as contemporary persuasion research (Dillard and Pfau 2002; O'Keefe 2002). If such discursive control over the mental models of recipients is in the best interests of the speakers or writers and against the best interests of the recipients, we have an instance of discursive power abuse usually called *manipulation* (van Dijk 2006).

Speakers of powerful groups may want to control not only *specific* knowledge and opinions represented in the subjective mental models of specific recipients – as is most typically the case in news reports and parliamentary debates – but also the *generic* knowledge, attitudes, and ideologies shared by whole groups or all citizens,

for instance through the argumentative structures of editorials or op-ed articles. Via repeated political or media discourse about similar events, and via specific discourse moves of generalization, they may condition the generalization and abstraction of specific mental models to more general structures of knowledge and ideology, for instance about immigration, terrorism, or the economic crisis (see, e.g., Forest 2009). Such general cognitive influence may be in the interests of the recipients, as is the case in useful social information or education, but also may be in the interests of the speakers and against the best interests of the recipients, as is the case for epistemic or ideological manipulation and indoctrination (Winn 1983).

Discursive control of specific situation models and shared generic social representations such as sociocultural knowledge as well as group attitudes and ideologies depend not only on the persuasive structures of text and talk but also on *contextual conditions*. Thus, recipients tend to accept the beliefs, knowledge, and opinions (unless they are inconsistent with their personal beliefs and experiences) of people or institutions they define (in their context models) as authoritative, trustworthy, or credible sources, such as scholars, experts, professionals, or reliable media (Nesler *et al.* 1993). In some situations participants are obliged to be recipients of discourse – for example, in education and in many job situations. Lessons, learning materials, job instructions, and other discourse types in such cases may *need* to be attended to, interpreted, and learned as intended by institutional or organizational authors (Giroux 1981). In many situations there are no public discourses or media that may provide information from which alternative beliefs may be derived (Downing 1984). Finally, recipients may not have the knowledge and beliefs needed to challenge the discourses or information they are exposed to (Wodak 1987).

Besides these contextual influences on interpretation, CDA especially focuses on the ways *discourse structures* may influence specific mental models and generic representations of the recipients, and especially how beliefs may thus be manipulated. Here are some well-known examples, among many, taken from my own research on dominant discourse on immigration (van Dijk 1984, 1991, 1993):

- *Headlines and leads* of news reports express semantic *macrostructures* (main topics) as defined by the journalists and may thus give rise to preferred macrostructures of mental models. A demonstration may thus be defined as a violation of the social order or as a democratic right of the demonstrators; similarly, a violent attack may be defined as a form of resistance against the abuse of state power or as a form of terrorism. Negative actions of immigrants or minorities thus tend to be enhanced by their salient expression on the front page and in headlines defining immigration as an invasion of aliens.
- *Implications and presuppositions* are powerful semantic properties of discourse that aim to obliquely assert “facts” that may not be true, as when politicians and the media refer to the *violence* of demonstrators or the *criminality* of minorities.
- *Metaphors* are powerful means to make abstract mental models more concrete. Thus the abstract notion of immigration may be made more concrete, and hence more threatening, by using metaphors such as *waves* of immigrants – thus creating fear of *drowning* in immigrants among the other citizens.
- *The lexical expression* of mental models in the discourse of powerful speakers may influence not only knowledge but also opinions in the mental models of recipients.

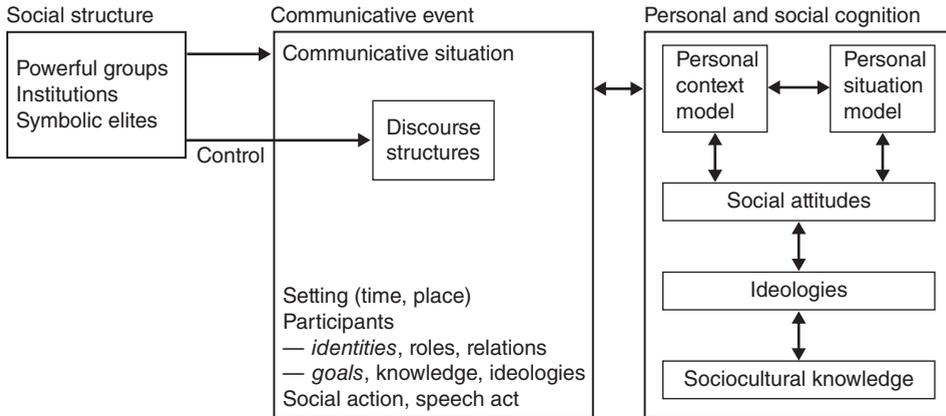


Figure 22.1 Schema of the discursive reproduction of power.

Thus, immigrants may be labeled *illegal* or *undocumented* in political discourse, thus influencing public opinion on immigration.

- *Passive sentence structures and nominalizations* may be used to hide or downplay the violent or other negative actions of state agents (e.g., the military, the police) or ingroups (e.g., we, British). Thus, media or political discourse may speak about *discrimination* without being very explicit about who discriminates against whom.

In this way many structures of text and talk may influence the way recipients construe their mental models of specific situations, or how they generalize these to form stereotypes or prejudices (van Dijk 1984). The general strategy of dominant discourse and mind control often follows the basic intergroup polarization of underlying ideologies: Emphasizing Our good things, Emphasizing Their bad things, Mitigating Our bad things, and Mitigating Their good things – a strategy I have called the *ideological square* (van Dijk 1998).

The theoretical framework sketched above for the discursive reproduction of power and domination thus links social structures of groups and institutions to their control of the structures of context, text, and talk of communicative events, and indirectly to the influence of the personal models and the socially shared attitudes, ideologies, and knowledge of individual recipients and whole groups, as represented in Figure 22.1. Personal and social cognition thus influenced may finally in turn control the social actions that are consistent with the interests of powerful groups in general, and of the symbolic elites in particular, thus closing the circle of the discursive reproduction of power and domination.

### 1.2.3 Discourses of domination

The power of dominant groups shows not only in their control of the discourse of others but also in their own discourse. That is, social power may also be locally enacted by the very properties of discourse of (members of) powerful groups (see also Bradac and Street 1989). Studies of social style have paid extensive attention to the way language

and discourse may vary and index power differences between speakers and recipients (Eckert and Rickford 2001), such as

- *Morphology*. Men may use diminutives when addressing women as a way to belittle them (Makri-Tsilipakou 2003).
- *Lexicon*. The paradigmatic case of domination is the use of racist slurs when talking to or about ethnic minorities (Essed 1997; van Dijk 1984, 1987) – for example, as a legitimization of neighborhood crimes (Stokoe and Edwards 2007).
- *Pronouns*. Power differences, deference, and politeness between speakers and recipients are typically marked by pronouns and special morphology (Brown and Gilman 1960; Brown and Levinson 1987).
- *Syntax and lexicon*. In rape trials passive syntax and euphemistic lexical items may be used by men to mitigate their responsibility for their violence against women (Ehrlich 2001); male-controlled mass media may similarly mitigate male violence in news reports (Clark 1992; Henley, Miller, and Beazley 1995).
- *Metaphor*. As is the case for mitigating syntax and lexicon, metaphors may also be used in court to suggest that rape victims may be lying (Luchjebroers and Aldridge 2007). Cohn (1987) shows how sex and death metaphors characterize the discourse of the military (see also the critical studies of the use of metaphor by powerful speakers by Charteris-Black 2005; Lakoff 1996, 2002).
- *Storytelling*. Stories in many ways index social identities (De Fina, Schiffrin, and Bamberg 2006) and may also be used to show power, as when some female managers tell stories to show how tough they can be as leaders (Holmes 2006).
- *Conversation*. Many properties of talk show differences of power or status, for instance in turn-taking, sequencing (e.g., opening and closing), interruptions, topic initiation, and change (see, e.g., Hutchby 1996), especially when studied for gender differences. Depending on culture and context, more powerful speakers may speak first (but not in Wolof, where lower ranking speakers must speak first; see Irvine 1974).

These and many other properties not only characterize dominant discourse as such but are also especially powerful because of their social effects and the control of the minds and actions of recipients.

## 2 Research in Critical Discourse Analysis

After the above account of the theory of a critical approach to discourse, we now briefly review some research in CDA, referring to other chapters in this volume where relevant. For reasons of space, we must limit our review to studies in English, despite the fact that a large body of CDA research is available in French, German, Spanish, and other languages. Also, we shall only focus on some main areas of CDA, such as the study of gender and race, as prototypical examples of critical inquiry and on only a few genres, such as those of the media and politics. Although many discourse studies dealing with aspects of power, domination, and social inequality have not been explicitly conducted under the label of CDA, we shall nevertheless refer to some of these studies.

## 2.1 *Gender inequality*

One vast field of critical research on discourse and language that initially was not carried out within a CDA perspective is that of gender. In many ways, feminist work on discourse has become paradigmatic for much CDA, especially since much of this work explicitly deals with social inequality and domination, so much so that there is now a branch of feminist CDA (Lazar 2005). For a review, see Kendall and Tannen (this volume); see also the more recent books authored and edited by (for example) Baxter (2005); Cameron (1990, 1992); Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003); Ehrlich (2008); Holmes and Meyerhoff (2003); Kotthoff and Wodak (1997); Macaulay (2004); McIlvenny (2002); Sunderland (2004); Wodak (1997); for discussion and comparison with an approach that emphasizes cultural differences rather than power differences and inequality, see (for example) Tannen (1994a, 1994c); but see also Tannen (1994b), in which many of the properties of discursive dominance are dealt with, for an analysis of gender differences at work.

Whereas research on discourse and gender initially focused on assumed gender differences of text and talk (such as the use of diminutives or tag questions by women), a more critical approach paid special attention to male access and domination in interaction, such as interruptions and the control of topic introduction and change.

Current research emphasizes that gender differences (if any) are closely related to other aspects of the social and communicative context – such as the social class, status, or role of participants (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003; see also Macaulay 2004; van Dijk 2008a). Incidentally, it is remarkable that, whereas critical discourse studies of gender and race are numerous, there is as yet very little critical research on dominant and resistant social-class discourse outside sociolinguistics and stylistics (but see, e.g., Fairclough 1989, 1992b, 2000). Thus, Willott, Griffin, and Torrance (2001) show how economic white-collar offenders legitimate their crimes in terms of class status in a prison context with lower-class inmates.

## 2.2 *Ethnocentrism, antisemitism, nationalism, and racism*

Many studies on ethnic and racial inequality reveal a remarkable degree of similarity between the stereotypes, prejudices, and other forms of verbal derogation across discourse types, media, and national boundaries (for a review, see Wodak and Reisigl, this volume). For example, in a vast research program that began in the early 1980s, we have examined how minorities and ethnic relations in Europe and the Americas are represented in conversation, everyday stories, news reports, textbooks, parliamentary debates, corporate discourse, and scholarly text and talk (van Dijk 1984, 1987, 1991, 1993, 2005, 2009b; Wodak and van Dijk 2000). The stereotypical topics of difference, deviation, and threat have been studied, as have story structures, conversational features (such as hesitations and repairs in mentioning Others), semantic moves such as disclaimers (e.g., “We have nothing against blacks, but ...”), negative lexical description of Others (as “illegals”), and a host of other discourse features. The aim of these projects was to show how discourse expresses and reproduces underlying prejudices about Others in the social and political context.

The major conclusion of this project is that racism is a complex system of social domination reproduced by everyday discriminatory social practices (including discourse) based on, as well as controlling, ethnically biased personal mental models and socially shared prejudices and ideologies, as explained in Section 1. Since the symbolic elites control public discourse they are the most directly responsible for the discursive reproduction of racism in society.

### 2.3 *Media discourse*

Today, critical analysis of media discourse has a central place in CDA, but it was first introduced in critical communication studies. The critical tone was set by a series of “Bad News” studies by the Glasgow University Media Group (1976, 1980, 1982, 1985, 1993) on features of television reporting in the coverage of various issues such as industrial disputes (strikes), the Falklands (Malvinas) war, and the media coverage of AIDS. At the same time the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, directed by Stuart Hall, made significant contributions to the critical study of media messages and images and its role in “policing the crisis” and the reproduction of racism (see, e.g., Hall *et al.* 1980). In a similar critical spirit, Cohen (1980) studied the “moral panic” about the “mods and the rockers” as (re)produced by the British tabloid press (for a review of many other approaches to the study of news, including critical studies, see Allan 2010).

Toward the end of the 1970s, the first critical study of the media in linguistics was introduced by Roger Fowler and his associates (Fowler *et al.* 1979). These authors showed, among other things, how the very structures of sentences, such as the use of actives or passives, may enhance the negative representation of outgroup actors, such as black youths, and downplay the negative actions of ingroups or the authorities, such as the police (see also van Dijk 1988, 1991). Fowler’s later critical studies of the media continued this tradition but also paid tribute to the British cultural studies paradigm that defines news not as a reflection of reality but as a product shaped by political, economic, and cultural forces (Fowler 1991). More than in much other critical work on the media, he also focuses on the linguistic “tools” for such a critical study, such as the analysis of transitivity in syntax, lexical structure, modality, and speech acts.

In the past two decades CDA approaches to the media have multiplied. These studies have not only investigated the social and communicative contexts of news and other press or broadcast genres, as is the case in critical media studies, but have also related these to a systematic analysis of the structures of media discourse, such as lexicon, syntax, topics, metaphor, coherence, actor description, social identities, genres, modality, presupposition, rhetorical figures, interaction, news schemas, and multimodal analysis of images, among many other structures (for an introduction, see, e.g., Richardson 2007). As is the case in many critical media studies (not reviewed here), these critical analyses are applied to the coverage of pressing social and political issues – such as the Gulf and Iraq wars, the war on drugs, and terrorism (especially the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center) on the one hand, and globalization, sexism, racism, and islamophobia on the other – but from a more discourse analytical point of view (among many other books, see Chilton 1988; Fairclough 1995b; Machin and van Leeuwen 2007; O’Keeffe 2006; Richardson 2004; Talbot 2007; van Dijk 1988, 1991; see also Cotter, this volume and the papers published in the journal *Discourse & Society*).

## 2.4 *Political discourse*

Since CDA is especially interested in the critical study of power abuse – and its resistance – it is not surprising that political discourse has been a central focus in CDA, even before CDA was used as a label, for instance in the early work of Chilton on the nuclear arms debate, Orwellian language, and security metaphors (Chilton 1985, 1988, 1995; see also his introduction to political discourse studies: Chilton 2004; Chilton and Schäffner 2002).

Across many countries, issues, genres, empirical studies, and methods, it has been Ruth Wodak and her collaborators who have played a leading role in the CDA approach to political discourse. In a vast number of books and articles, first in German and later in English, she examined antisemitism, racism, nationalism, the political discourse of and about Waldheim and Haider, and the everyday “making” of politics in Brussels (see, e.g., Wodak 1989, 2009; Wodak *et al.* 1999; Wodak and van Dijk 2000).

Fairclough’s studies of political discourse, often conducted within a political-economic perspective, have paid detailed attention to issues of globalization (Fairclough 2006) and British politics, such as the discourse of New Labour (Fairclough 2000), following his foundational studies of language and power (Fairclough 1989) and CDA (Fairclough 1995a). His approach to CDA especially emphasizes the need to relate discourse structures and discursive practices to social and political structures at the macro-level.

## 2.5 *Professional and institutional power*

The CDA focus on domination and resistance implies special interest for institutional and organizational discourse, as is the case for politics and the mass media as well as for the discourse of members of communities and social groups. There are of course many other social domains in which professional and institutional power and power abuse have been critically studied from a discourse analytical perspective (besides more sociological approaches), such as:

- text and talk in the courtroom (for a review, see Shuy, this volume)
- bureaucratic discourse (Sarangi and Slembrouck 1996)
- medical discourse (for a review, see Jones, this volume)
- educational discourse (Corson 1995; Rogers 2003; see also Adger and Wright, this volume)
- academic and scientific discourse (Bizzell 1992; Martin 1998)
- corporate and organizational discourse (Grant *et al.* 2004; Fox and Fox 2004; Mumby 1993; see also Mayr, this volume).
- discourse of the unions (Muntigl, Weiss, and Wodak 2000).

In all these cases, power and dominance are associated with specific social domains (politics, media, law, education, science, etc.), their professional elites and institutions, and the rules and routines that form the background of the everyday discursive reproduction of power in such domains and institutions. The victims or targets of such power are usually the public or citizens at large, the “masses,” clients, subjects, the audience, students, and other groups that are dependent on institutional and organizational

power. Unfortunately, their discourses of resistance and dissent have been much less studied in CDA (see Huspek 2009).

### 3 Conclusion

We have seen in this chapter that critical discourse analyses deal with the relationship between discourse, domination, and dissent. We have also sketched the complex theoretical framework needed to analyze discourse and power, and provided a glimpse of the many ways in which power and domination are reproduced by text and talk.

Yet several methodological and theoretical gaps remain. First, the cognitive interface between discourse structures and structures of the local and global social context is seldom made explicit and usually appears only in terms of the notions of knowledge and ideology (van Dijk 1998). Thus, despite a large number of empirical studies on discourse and power, the details of the multidisciplinary *theory* of CDA that should relate discourse and action to cognition and society are still on the agenda.

Second, there is still a gap between more linguistically oriented studies of text and talk and the various social and political approaches. The first often ignore concepts and theories in sociology and political science on power abuse and inequality, whereas the second seldom engage in detailed discourse analysis. Integration of various approaches is therefore very important to arrive at a satisfactory form of multidisciplinary CDA.

Third, there are still large areas of critical research that remain virtually unexplored, such as the study of dominant or resistant social-class discourse and of many other discourse genres.

Finally, we need a more explicit analysis of the very notion of what it means to be “critical” in CDA and more generally in scholarship – for example, in terms of legitimacy, violation of human rights, and the basic democratic norms and values of equality and justice. It is ultimately in those terms that CDA may and should act as a force against the discursive abuse of power.

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# 23 Computer-Assisted Methods of Analyzing Textual and Intertextual Competence

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MICHAEL STUBBS

## 0 Introduction

When we read or hear a text, we may find the language familiar or not, and correspondingly easy or difficult to follow. Difficulties in understanding a written or spoken text – such as a set of instructions, a textbook, a lecture, or a story in a conversation or a novel – can have many causes. However, by and large, we find a text easy to understand if it consists of familiar topics being talked about in ways that are familiar from other texts. In a word, understanding depends on both our textual and our intertextual competence. If everything is totally familiar, of course, the text will strike us as boring or full of clichés. But there are limits to the rate at which we can take in new information, and we can understand connected text only if we are able to relate it to what we have heard in the past, and to predict, at least partly, what is likely to be said. Conversely, we find a text difficult to understand if it is lexically and semantically dense: that is, if there is too little repetition of vocabulary, and if too many of the words are unfamiliar or are used in unusual combinations.

All texts are interpreted against an intertextual background of norms of language use, which are expressed largely in recurring multi-word combinations. These norms can be identified by the computer-assisted analysis of large corpora, and we can then compare what occurs in individual texts with what frequently occurs in large numbers of texts of different kinds. For texts of all kinds, our linguistic competence therefore depends partly on our knowledge of norms of general language use. For some texts – especially literary texts – our understanding also depends on our knowledge of how to read texts both literally and metaphorically, and this requires different aspects of intertextual competence.

I will therefore give examples from two very different texts that illustrate these two aspects of linguistic and literary competence: a short fragment from a factual text, which I will analyze in some detail, and a fragment from a famous short story, which I will comment on more briefly. These examples also illustrate what can – and cannot – be analyzed successfully with replicable computer-assisted methods.

In discussing these two texts, I will be drawing on many ideas that are widely discussed in the literature. In order not to break up the text and corpus analysis too much, I have collected together many of the major references to this large body of work in endnotes.

## 1 Terms and Data

A major advantage of computer-assisted text and corpus analysis is that replicable methods can be used to analyse public data and that any analysis can therefore be corroborated (or refuted) in subsequent independent analyses by other scholars. This requires initial definitions of some basic terms and a description of the data as follows.

A *text* is any stretch of naturally occurring language in use, spoken or written, produced for some real communicative purpose. A *corpus* is a large computer-readable collection of texts. No corpus can fully represent the whole language, but it can be designed to sample major dimensions of language variation, such as spoken and written, casual and formal, fiction and non-fiction, British and American, intended for different age groups, intended for experts or lay persons, and so on. Since 2000, a “large” reference corpus has usually meant one that contains hundreds of millions of running words (word tokens) sampled from thousands of different texts.

I have taken frequency data on words and phrases from the British National Corpus (BNC), which consists of 100 million words of contemporary British English from over 4,000 text samples. It can be accessed via various user interfaces (e.g., British National Corpus 2007–, 2008–). Comparative American English data are available from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (2008–), which consists (in 2012) of 425 million words of written texts from 1990 to 2011, and from the Corpus of Historical American English (2010–), which consists (in 2012) of 400 million words of written texts from 1810 to 2009.

A *lemma* (lexeme) is a class of *word forms*: for example, the lemma *BE* (upper-case italic) can be realized by the forms *am, are, is, was, were, be, being, and been* (lower-case italic). A *node* (a word form, lemma, or other pattern) co-occurs with *collocates* (word forms or lemmas) within a given *span* of word forms, for example 4:4 (four words to left and right). Position in the span can be given as N–1 (one word to the left of the node), N+3 (three words to the right), and so on. Corpus work has shown that different forms of a lemma often have quite different collocates. A *collocation* is a purely lexical and non-directional relation: a node–collocate pair that occurs at least once in a corpus. Usually it is frequent co-occurrences that are of interest, and typical collocates of a node are given in diamond brackets, for word forms or lemmas, or for a set of semantically related words.

- (1) *untold* <N+1: *damage, misery, ...; millions, riches, ...*>  
 (2) *LAUNCH* <*campaign, programme, scheme ...*>

These two examples are discussed below. Such sets are usually open-ended, but quantitative measures can filter out idiosyncratic collocates and reveal the typical cases. The simplest measure is raw frequency, but statistics can be used to take into account the difference between what was expected and what is observed. If two words are themselves very frequent, they might co-occur simply by chance. Conversely, if a word is itself infrequent, the collocations in which it occurs cannot be frequent. For example, taking a case in (17) below, the word *window* is frequent (over 9,900 occurrences in the BNC) and the word *pane* is infrequent (125 occurrences). It follows logically that the phrase *window pane* cannot be very frequent, but around 20 per cent of the occurrences of *pane* (24 occurrences) are in this phrase. If we were using only raw frequency as a search criterion (as opposed to relative frequency), we would miss this strong collocational tendency.<sup>1</sup>

A *prosody* is a feature that extends over more than one unit in a linear string. A *semantic prosody* (Sinclair 1996) is a meaning that extends over a span of words and that signals the speaker's evaluation of some topic.<sup>2</sup> Meanings are in single quotes.

- (3) *CAUSE* <"unpleasant things," e.g., *problems, damage, chaos, etc.*>  
 (4) *PROVIDE* <"valuable things," e.g., *help, employment, food, housing, etc.*, including "verbal things," e.g., *answers, data, information, etc.*>

Finally, it is usual to distinguish between *cohesion*<sup>3</sup> and *coherence* (e.g., Brown and Yule 1983: 24–5, 194–9; Widdowson 1979: 146). Cohesion refers to linguistic features (such as lexical repetition and anaphora) that are observable in the surface structure of the text and that can therefore be recognized by computer software. Coherence refers to textual relations that are inferred but that are not explicitly expressed. Consider the real-world knowledge required to understand an (invented) sequence such as *The fridge is practically empty. Shall we go out for dinner?*

## 2 Lexical Norms in a Non-fiction Text

Sinclair (1991: 108) summarizes one of the main findings of corpus analysis as follows:<sup>4</sup> "By far the majority of text is made of the occurrence of common words in common patterns, or in slight variations of those common patterns." As my first example, I will illustrate this finding by analyzing the intertextual relations between a text fragment and typical language use, as documented in the BNC, and thereby illustrate how textual cohesion depends on typical collocations and their variants.

The following text fragment is from a book on the environment published in 1990 in the UK.<sup>5</sup>

- (5) Here the Green Party has launched its Euro-election campaign. Its manifesto, "Don't Let Your World Turn Grey", argues that the emergence of the Single European Market from 1992 will cause untold environmental damage. It derides the vision of Europe as "310 million shoppers in a supermarket". The Greens want a much greater degree of self-reliance, with "local goods for local needs". They say they would abandon the Chunnel, nuclear power stations, the Common Agricultural Policy and agrochemicals. The imagination boggles at the scale of the task they are setting themselves.

I discussed text fragment (5) in my chapter (Stubbs 2001a) in the first edition of the *Handbook*. In the earlier chapter I mainly used frequency data from a 56-million-word subcorpus of the COBUILD (Collins Birmingham University International Language Database) corpus, which included fiction and non-fiction books, newspapers, and samples of spoken English. In the current chapter I have reanalyzed all the examples using entirely different corpus data and more recent software.

This provides more precise but not significantly different findings, and illustrates an important advantage of corpus analysis: findings can be corroborated (or of course refuted) by independent data. A central criterion of scientific method is replicability. It should be possible for anyone working independently with the same methods and the same or different data to check the findings. It is rare to do exactly the same as some previous analyst, and this is usually not very interesting. (In any case, if you tell a computer program to do exactly what it did before, it will simply do exactly what it did before.) It is usually more interesting to do the same experiment on different data, or a different experiment on the same data. In corpus study, we are not really interested in the probabilities of occurrence that we happen to find in a specific corpus: the BNC is only one sample of English. It is much more interesting to see whether the findings can be generalized to other independent samples of language in use.

Lexical cohesion partly consists of chains of words that are repeated or that are chosen from within semantic sets. In the case of (5):

- (6) Green, Grey, Greens; Euro-, European, Europe; Party, election, campaign, manifesto; Market, shoppers, supermarket, goods; local

It has often been objected that such lexical chains are merely "an epiphenomenon of coherence of content" (Morgan and Sellner 1980: 179–80) and therefore of no linguistic interest. It is clear that some words co-occur in texts because some things co-occur in the real world.<sup>6</sup> For example, texts about nuclear power are likely to contain words such as *electricity, energy, fission, fuel, generate, heat, pollution, radioactive, reactor, uranium*, and so on and possibly phrases such as *climate change, fossil fuel, global warming, greenhouse gases, nuclear waste disposal, power grid*, and so on. These are not invented examples: they all came from typing "nuclear power" into a Web search engine and taking examples from the short text extracts that appeared as the results.

However, corpus data show that lexical cohesion is both a reflection of content and a result of conventional collocations. For example, in (5) we have:

(7) ... its Euro-election campaign. Its manifesto ...

It is conventional to talk of an *election manifesto* (though phrases such as *election agenda* also occur). In the BNC, three content words occur much more frequently than any others immediately before *manifesto* (which occurs 756 times):

*manifesto* <N-1: *election* 85, *communist* 33, *party* 25>

This illustrates a common pattern: a few collocations make up a large percentage of all occurrences of *manifesto* (in this case three occurrences account for almost 20 per cent). It also illustrates an important semantic principle: in the phrase *party manifesto*, we know that *party* means "political party" and not "birthday party." It is not the words that tell us the meaning of the phrase but the phrase that tells us the meaning of the constituent words.

Textual cohesion also partly consists of the stringing together and overlapping of phrasal units. In (5), some of these units are fixed multi-word phrases:

(8) the Green Party; the Single European Market; the Common  
Agricultural Policy; nuclear power stations

Other units are variants of frequent combinations. That is, certain words greatly increase the probability that other words will occur. These norms of co-occurrence can be investigated only via the frequency of collocations in large corpora. Again in (5), we have:

(9) ... has launched its Euro-election campaign

The lemma *LAUNCH* co-occurs with restricted sets of semantically related words. Speakers might initially think intuitively of phrases such as *launched a satellite*, *lifeboats were launched*. However, the top 20 noun collocates (in descending frequency, span 5:5) in the BNC are:

*LAUNCH* <*campaign, attack, year, appeal, week, scheme, programme, product, government, initiative, company, series, attacks, range, police, bid, investigation, uk, offensive, system*>

These collocates are largely abstract nouns involving a plan (*scheme, programme*), which may be commercial (*product, company*) or military (*attack, offensive*). Collocates such as *satellite* and *missile* do of course occur but are much less frequent. Many occurrences also have a time reference (*year, week*), especially a reference to a first, new, or recent launch, and/or, as in (9), a *has*-form that indicates the present relevance of a recent event.

Extract (5) contains another good example of a frequent variable pattern and illustrates not only that collocations consist of co-occurring word forms but also that

they are more abstract units that consist of co-occurring lemmas and/or semantically related words.

(10) ... cause untold environmental damage

Corpus data show that the most frequent collocates of *CAUSE* are overwhelmingly unpleasant. *CAUSE* (as a verb) occurs around 20,250 times in the BNC. In a span of 5:5, the most frequent nouns with their frequencies, are

*CAUSE* <damage 1141, problems 1046, death 375, trouble 327, harm 315, injury 282, concern 255, loss 249, problem 229, pain 212>

The example of *CAUSE* (verb and noun) is discussed in more detail in Stubbs (1995), where I looked at its collocates in a different 425,000-word corpus of texts about environmental issues. Frequent collocates were

*CAUSE* <blindness, damage, danger, depletion, harm, loss, ozone, problems, radiation, warming>

In addition, *CAUSE* co-occurs not only with predictable lemmas but also often in the syntactic structure verb + adjective + noun, such as

*causing unnecessary suffering, cause serious injury, caused great concern*

The instance in (5) is *cause untold ... damage*. In turn, *untold* is usually followed by an abstract noun denoting something bad and unpleasant, or a large number and/or a large amount of money:

*untold* <damage, misery, harm, wealth, problems, riches, pleasure, time, sacrifices>

Nouns with positive connotations do occur after *untold*, but then a different verb is used (e.g., *brought untold joy, derive untold pleasure*).

Other lexical sequences in (5) illustrate more or less restricted phraseological patterns. For example, (11) is very restricted whereas (12), (13), and (14) are more variable but still easily detectable in corpus data.

(11) ... the imagination boggles at

*BOGGLE* is not a frequent word: there are around 50 relevant occurrences in the BNC (some instances are names). It occurs in very restricted collocations: 40 co-occurrences with *minds(s)* plus two with the semantically related *imagination*.

(12) ... a much greater degree of self-reliance

In the BNC there are hundreds of examples of the pattern

*a + (adverb +) quantity adjective + degree of + abstract noun*

The most frequent adjectives are *greater* and *high*, as in *a far greater degree of clarity, a high degree of support*. After *greater*, almost all the nouns express positive ideas (e.g., *autonomy, freedom, success*).

(13) ... the scale of the task

The words *the scale of the* are typically followed by abstract nouns, most frequently by *far problem(s)* plus nouns specifying types of problem (e.g., *damage, disaster, violence*) or nouns that refer back to a general discourse topic (e.g., *operation, project, task*). Logically, *the scale* could be large or small, but *the scale of the* is often used of something large, bad, or both, as in:

*shocked by the scale of the devastation*

*police appeared seriously to have underestimated the scale of the violence*

If we read that *the scale of the accident was covered up*, we know that the accident was large and serious, not small and trivial.

(14) ... the task they are setting themselves

In (5), *the task* has no single anaphoric referent. *Task* is often used as a metalinguistic label to encapsulate a preceding stretch of text. Typical collocates of *SET ONESELF* are abstract nouns, such as *aim, challenge, deadline, goal, objective, standards, target, and task*. Adjectives include *ambitious, challenging, demanding, exacting, new, and punishing*. Here are two examples from the BNC. The first collocates *campaign, launched, set itself, ambitious, and target* plus a recent time reference (*this week*). The second collocates identical or semantically related words: *set himself, high, target, and objectives*. Both make explicit the effort involved (*trying to ..., managed to achieve most of ...*).

*The RSPB campaign launched this week has set itself the ambitious target of trying to ...*

*Given the very high target he had set himself, he managed to achieve most of his objectives.*

There is a full semantic pattern, which is realized by slightly variable lexis. If you say that someone has set themselves a task (goal, objective, target, etc.), you imply that they are hoping to achieve something that is significant and that may require considerable effort.

The units that I am identifying also overlap with each other and this contributes further to textual cohesion. Hunston and Francis (1998: 68) and Hunston (2008) call this *pattern flow*, as in:

(15) ... the scale of the task – the task they are setting themselves

In summary: in (5) the expectations generated by the individual words and phrases combine to make the text semantically cohesive. Some references to the meaning “large size” are explicit (*310 million, greater*). Others are implicit in the lexical norms of general language use: *untold, boggles, and the scale of the* all usually co-occur with large numbers or large amounts. If a campaign is *launched*, the implication is that it is a major event, and a reference to *the task they are setting themselves* implies that the task is not only large but also difficult to achieve.

Our intuition that a text is idiomatic is largely determined by relations between co-occurring words and the resulting textual cohesion, and a great deal of this syntagmatic patterning can be identified with computer assistance. Speakers have a strong preference for familiar combinations of lexis and syntax, which explains why non-native speakers can speak perfectly grammatically but still sound non-native. Language use sounds natural and idiomatic when it expresses recurrent meanings in familiar, but variable, collocations. As Halliday (1978: 4) puts it: “a great deal of discourse is more or less routinized,” because we “express the same opinions over and over again.”

### 3 Methods of Observation

My comparison of an individual text fragment (5) with patterns in a corpus illustrates an empirical method of showing that some aspects of meaning are public, in the sense that the evidence for them is the recurrence of patterns across many independent texts. Such results can be independently replicated by different researchers who have access to the same or equivalent data.<sup>7</sup>

In an individual text, neither repeated syntagmatic relations nor any paradigmatic relations at all are observable. However, a concordance makes visible repeated events: frequent syntagmatic co-occurrences, and constraints on the paradigmatic choices. The co-occurrences are visible on the horizontal (syntagmatic) axis of the individual concordance lines. Paradigmatic regularities – what frequently recurs – are equally visible on the vertical axis, especially if the concordance lines are reordered alphabetically to left or right. To make this point more explicit, consider again a sentence from (5):

(16) Here the Green Party has launched its Euro-election campaign.

The BNC has 124 occurrences of *launched* followed within three words by *campaign*. I selected 20 at random and alphabetized them to the right.

01 Tory, she launched a campaign against Conservative economic policy  
 02 e as they launched a campaign against the republic to try to halt t  
 03 ation has launched a campaign for more cycleways in the capital. Ba  
 04 this week launched a campaign to crack down on so-called “thirsty b  
 05 ature has launched a campaign to end the trade in rhinoceros produc

06 force has launched a campaign to get a simple message across to cyc  
 07 ardot has launched a campaign to have France's 35 million dogs and  
 08 ation has launched a campaign to keep him at the County Ground. The  
 09 yesterday launched a campaign to repair their shattered morale. The  
 10 puter has launched a major campaign to attract Sun 3, Sun-386i and  
 11 case, he launched a national campaign for transsexual rights. On W  
 12 (FoE) has launched a new campaign against pollution by warning the  
 13 lice have launched a new campaign to crackdown on motorists who're  
 14 ists have launched a vigorous campaign to reinforce the constitutio  
 15 yesterday launched a worldwide campaign to boycott products from Mr  
 16 AIRY has launched a £1.5m campaign to halt a decline in doorstep m  
 17 ment that launched an international campaign to save tropical fores  
 18 hok Kumar launched his campaign to retain Langabruigh pledging 'I'm  
 19 cy (MMD), launched its campaign for the October 1991 presidential a  
 20 icularly, launched their Campaign For Unbleached Paper. And in that

This simple display technique makes it possible to visualize patterns across large data sets. We can see that campaigns are often described as “important” (*major, international, etc.*), there is often a reference to the launching being recent, and so on.

For a long time in mainstream linguistics, from approximately the mid-1960s to the 1990s, it was widely accepted that performance data are affected by “memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors” (Chomsky 1965: 3), with the associated implication that much language use is idiosyncratic. However, quantitative work with large corpora automatically excludes idiosyncratic instances in favor of what is central and typical. A general-reference corpus is designed to sample various text types and is therefore a sample not merely of actual utterances by one individual language user but also of the language use of many speakers. Behavior is directly observable only in a very rough and ready way, but a corpus is not itself the behavior. It is a record of behavior that can be searched for patterns that are not directly observable by the naked eye (compare devices such as telescopes, microscopes, and x-rays). This point is developed by Popper (1994: 7).

An elegant defense and detailed study of such patterns is provided by Burrows (1987: 2–3) who talks of “evidence to which the unassisted human mind could never gain consistent, conscious access. Computer-based concordances, supported by statistical analysis, now make it possible to enter hitherto inaccessible regions of the language [that] defy the most accurate memory and the finest powers of discrimination.”

## 4 Lexical Norms in Different Text Types

Corpus data can reveal other facts about language use that are not accessible to introspection. Almost all the examples of the collocation *launched – campaign* in the BNC come from similar text types – news media of different kinds, and this shows that we have to distinguish between frequency in a general corpus and probability in an individual text in a specific text type. In the BNC as a whole, *launched an attack* is much

more frequent than *launched a boat*, but, if the text is about a rescue at sea, we might well expect a sentence such as:

*Scarborough lifeboat was launched yesterday to go to the aid of a motor cruiser.*

The probability of a given collocation is usually relatively stable when averaged across large general corpora, but this is not the same as the probability of a single event in a specific text. Within texts, linguistic events are not independent of each other (unlike successive flips of a coin), and content words are not distributed evenly but occur in bursts. In addition, within different text types, different topics are reflected in different collocations. For example, the verb lemma *LAUNCH* co-occurs with different noun collocates in different subcorpora of the BNC. The collocate *attack* is frequent in many text types. However, in fiction, it is missiles, space shuttles, and boats that are likely to be launched, along with assaults and offensives (and the phrase *launched into a description of ...* also occurs). In academic prose, things launched are likely to be campaigns, initiatives, offensives, programs, and projects. In newspapers in general, things launched are likely to be appeals, bids, campaigns, inquiries, and investigations. In the sports sections of newspapers, it is appeals, bids, careers, drives, and schemes.<sup>8</sup>

However – as I have illustrated above – many collocational facts are linguistic and cannot be explained on the grounds of content or real-world knowledge. Such combinations are idiomatic, but not “idioms,” because, although they frequently occur, they are not entirely fixed and/or they are relatively semantically transparent. More accurately, such idiomatic combinations pose no problem for decoding, but they do pose a problem for encoding: speakers just have to know that expected combinations are *brought untold joy* but *caused untold damage*. Fillmore, Kay, and O’Connor (1988: 504–5), Makkai (1972), and Mel’čuk (1998: 25ff) draw this distinction between idioms of decoding and encoding.

Whereas much linguistics, as conceived by Saussure and Chomsky, was concerned with what speakers can (potentially) say, corpus linguistics is concerned with what speakers (actually) do say. In an influential article, Hymes (1972) argued that a significant component of communicative competence is our tacit knowledge of the probabilities of patterns of language use, and proposed a way of avoiding the oversimplified polarization made by Chomsky (1965) between competence and performance. He not only discussed whether certain sentences were formally possible (= grammatical) but also distinguished further whether certain utterances are psycholinguistically feasible or sociolinguistically appropriate. In addition, not all possibilities are actually realized, and Hymes proposed a further distinction between the possible and the actual: what, in reality, with high probability, is said or written. In an update of the theory, Hymes (1992: 52) noted the contribution of routinized extended lexical units to the stability of text. Given corpus-assisted methods, Hymes’s proposals can now be studied in empirical and quantitative detail.

## 5 Lexical Norms in a Literary Text: Process and Product

In this section, I discuss a very different text fragment in order to illustrate aspects of intertextuality that are certainly not characteristic of everyday language use but

that – for precisely that reason – illustrate points about textual and intertextual competence that are only partly accessible to the quasi-automatic methods I used on the fragment of non-fiction text in (5).

The analysis of (5) is limited in two ways. First, the analysis might seem to imply that a text is a fixed product. However, a text is reinterpreted every time it is read, which means that the distinction between process and product is at best a gross simplification. The fact that words can be interpreted in very different ways is exploited in complex literary texts, and we therefore have to distinguish between the objective features of the text (which can be identified by computer software) and their subjective reception by the reader. Second, the analysis of (5) illustrates that any text consists of a mosaic of variable collocations and lexico-grammatical patterns that have been frequently used by other speakers in the past. The phraseology we use is never entirely our own but is a response to patterns of general language use. In that sense, all language use is intertextual. However, literary texts exploit additional aspects of intertextuality and of the relation between what is in the text and what is in the mind of the reader.<sup>9</sup>

The examples below are from a famous short story (of 15,625 words), *The Dead*, the last and longest of 15 stories in James Joyce's *Dubliners*, published in 1914. The story takes place in the early 1900s, within a period of a few hours in midwinter. It starts at an annual dance and dinner, held shortly after Christmas at the home of two of Gabriel Conroy's elderly aunts. There are conversations, singing, and dancing. Gabriel's emotions alternate between social confidence and insecurity. He is a teacher and, because of his better education, he feels superior to his aunts and other guests, some of whom he finds "vulgar" and "ignorant." But he is also nervous of being seen as an "utter failure" in his conversation with the maid and in his after-dinner speech. After the party, Gabriel and his wife Gretta go to a hotel where they have booked a room for the night. His wife is in a "strange mood" and collapses in tears on the bed. A song that was sung at the party has reminded her of her childhood sweetheart, a boy named Michael Furey. (It reminds her of having heard the same text much earlier in her life!) Despite being very ill, her sweetheart stood in the cold and the rain outside her window and died a week later, at the age of 17: "I think he died for me," says Gretta. More realistically, he presumably died of consumption (tuberculosis). The story ends as Gabriel discovers that there are things about his wife's past that he has never suspected, and that she has experienced emotions that he never will.

The final paragraph is one of the most famous in English-language literature:

- (17) A few light taps upon the pane made him turn to the window. It had begun to snow again. He watched sleepily the flakes, silver and dark, falling obliquely against the lamplight. The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward. Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen and, farther westward, softly falling into the dark mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling, too, upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. It lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses and headstones, on the spears of the little gate, on the barren thorns. His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead.

Predictable everyday phraseology is, of course, also found in literary texts. For example, a sentence in (17) begins:

(18) The time had come ...

Readers will probably recognize (consciously or not) that this is a familiar way of talking about an important decision point.<sup>10</sup> There are 84 occurrences in the BNC. The most frequent verb to the left is *decided*. Others are *thought, felt, knew*.

```
she had decided the time had come to be more open
the Communists decided that the time had come to get rid of him
he decided that the time had come to marry his sweetheart
Napoleon decided that the time had come to redraw the map of Italy
shareholders decided the time had come to sell the company
I decided the time had come to stop dithering
reluctantly decided that the time had come to visit my doctor
```

The sentence in (18) continues:

(19) The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward.

Readers will probably now further expect (consciously or not) that such a journey will be long or difficult in some way.<sup>11</sup> In the BNC several occurrences of *set out on + journey* include journeys that are evaluated as significant and/or metaphorical rather than literal:

```
set out on his last heroic journey
set out on their journey into adult life
set out on a journey where faith [...] would be the guiding light
set out on a journey to the centre of their own inner world
```

However, a reader with basic literary competence should also recognize the signals that (17) has to be interpreted differently from everyday language use. One does not normally hear “snow falling faintly through the universe.” And a competent reader should notice the high density of repetition. The last words repeat the first words of the story: “the dead.” They do not, of course, have the same meaning on each occasion. The first time around, they are the title of the story, not quite a part of the story but a way of referring to it by its name. Other repetitions include:

(20) snow ... falling obliquely ... snow ... falling ... falling softly ... softly falling ...  
falling ... snow ... falling faintly ... faintly falling

(21) journey westward ... farther westward

- (22) on every part of the dark central plain  
 on the treeless hills  
 on the crooked crosses and headstones  
 on the spears of the little gate  
 on the barren thorns  
 upon the Bog of Allen  
 upon every part of the lonely churchyard  
 upon all the living and the dead.

Such repetitions are a conventional signal that certain words are to be interpreted symbolically. Once we realize this, we have to reinterpret the use of the word *snow* earlier in the story. It occurs 20 times:

01 n the mat, scraping the snow from his goloshes, while Lily led his  
 02 room. A light fringe of snow lay like a cape on the shoulders of hi  
 03 aking noise through the snow-stiffened frieze, a cold, fragrant air  
 04 "she'd walk home in the snow if she were let." Mrs. Conroy laughed  
 05 n through the park! The snow would be lying on the branches of the  
 06 s, were standing in the snow on the quay outside, gazing up at the  
 07 rees were weighted with snow. The Wellington Monument wore a gleami  
 08 wore a gleaming cap of snow that flashed westward over the white f  
 09 ap. He pointed down the snow-covered quay from where the sound of s  
 10 y Jane, "we haven't had snow like it for thirty years; and I read t  
 11 the newspapers that the snow is general all over Ireland." "I love  
 12 " "I love the look of snow," said Aunt Julia sadly. "So do I," s  
 13 tmas unless we have the snow on the ground." "But poor Mr. D'Arcy  
 14 'Arcy doesn't like the snow," said Aunt Kate, smiling. Mr. D'Arcy  
 15 streaks and patches of snow lay on the roofs, on the parapets of t  
 16 on which lay patches of snow. Then he nodded familiarly to it and w  
 17 along the river in the snow. Poor Aunt Julia! She, too, would soon  
 18 window. It had begun to snow again. He watched sleepily the flakes,  
 19 newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland. It was f  
 20 slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe a

When we read the story for the first time, we probably read line 1 simply as a literal naturalistic detail: Gabriel is simply scraping the snow from his outdoor shoes as he arrives at the party. On subsequent readings, once we have given the word *snow* both literal and symbolic meanings, we might also notice its distribution in the text. It is repeated several times immediately before significant points in the narrative: four times when Gabriel and his wife arrive at the party, three times immediately before Gabriel's speech, and five times immediately before the song is mentioned toward the end. A simple, but important, logical point is that a reader's understanding of a text is different on first and subsequent readings, since their understanding depends not just on the text but on their memory of the text.<sup>12</sup> As Lothe (2000: 157) puts it: "we read [a story] differently depending on how well we are acquainted with ... the text itself."

The story contains many other repeated motifs. Gabriel is nervous at the party: his "trembling fingers tapped the cold pane of the window." Gretta hears gravel thrown

against her window by Michael Furey. The “light taps [of snow] upon the pane” make Gabriel turn to the window. Again, the significance of the earlier occurrences cannot be understood on first reading but only on subsequent readings, once the repetitions have signaled that some words and phrases have both literal and symbolic meanings.

We also interpret *The Dead* differently according to whether we read it as an independent story or as the last of the 15 stories in *Dubliners*, which contain intertextual references to each other. Joyce described his own intentions in writing *Dubliners* in a letter to a publisher: he wanted to write about the “moral history” of his country, to show the inhabitants of Dublin as paralyzed and unable to act. All the stories treat this theme in one way or another, by presenting characters who want to escape their boring lives but cannot. Some intertextual references between the stories are quite specific. For example, a theme of *Dubliners* is that characters see things in a confused way. At the party, Gabriel’s eyes are “irritated by the floor, which glittered with beeswax under the heavy chandelier.” In an earlier story (*A Little Cloud*), a character enters a bar: “his sight was confused by the shining of many red and green wine-glasses.” It is unlikely that software could be programmed to recognize such intertextual links, since what are repeated are semantically related words, not a fixed or slightly variable unit. Software can, however, draw attention to the frequency of the word *eyes* in the stories: it is among the top 20 content words in *Dubliners* and occurs in every story, in several stories in the final sentences. The word *snow* occurs only in *The Dead*.

There are a few intertextual references to other artistic works: to the balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet* (Michael Furey stands outside Gretta’s window), to Robert Browning’s poetry (Gabriel fears that his allusions to this notoriously difficult poetry will “be above the heads of his hearers”), to the Three Graces and the judgment of Paris (Gabriel’s Aunt Julia does not understand the reference), and to the song *The Lass of Aughrim*, which so affects Gretta. The final paragraph of the story, (17) above, contains what presumably most readers would recognize as Christian symbols, especially given the preceding and following words *churchyard* and *soul*:

(23) crosses ... spears ... thorns

The final paragraph is – of course – ambiguous. The previous paragraph tells us that Gabriel “had approached that region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead. ... His own identity was fading out ... the solid world itself ... was dissolving and dwindling.” The implication could be that Gabriel is spiritually dead, or alternatively that he has decided to travel west to his Irish identity. The image of the snow falling all over Ireland – including Michael Furey’s graveyard – could represent a paralyzing blanket covering Ireland or something that unifies the country: the snow on a monument “flashe[s] westward” (concordance line 8), and the Christian symbols could represent resurrection.

## 6 Conclusion

In discussing textual analysis and textual interpretation, it is not possible to distinguish clearly between product and process. My discussion of text (5), an excerpt from a non-fiction book on the environment, has shown that textual understanding depends on

a speaker's familiarity with idiomatic phrases in the language as a whole and in text types. My discussion of text (17), an excerpt from a literary short story, has shown that textual understanding also depends on a speaker's familiarity with other texts and on general knowledge of cultural symbols. A theory of textual interpretation must take into account what is in the text itself, what is in other texts, and what is in the mind (memory) of the reader. Computer-assisted search techniques can systematically identify and present textual and intertextual evidence. Indeed such techniques are essential in identifying and visualizing patterns "to which the unassisted human mind could never gain consistent, conscious access" (Burrows 1987: 2–3). Nevertheless, computer software can find only what is in texts and corpora, not what is in the mind of the reader. We can observe (and count) features of texts, but different methods are required to investigate what is in readers' minds, either as their memories of texts they have previously read or of their more general knowledge of cultural symbols.

## NOTES

- 1 Early studies of syntagmatic lexical relations were carried out by Bally (1909) for French, Porzig (1934) for German, and Firth (1957) and Palmer (1933) for English. Since the 1980s, many articles have used computer-assisted methods to identify recurrent collocations and phrasal units in large corpora. A modern classic is by Sinclair (1991). Cowie (1999) provides a useful review and discussion of principles. Statistical tests for word frequency and collocational attraction are discussed by Baron, Rayson, and Archer (2009), Clear (1993), Evert (2008), Manning and Schütze (1999), Stefanowitsch and Gries (2003), and Stubbs (1995).
- 2 The concept of evaluative semantic prosody, which expresses the communicative purpose of an utterance, was first proposed by Sinclair (1991: 74–5, 112) and has since been discussed by many others (e.g., Hunston 2007; Louw 1993; Partington 2004; Stewart 2010; Stubbs 2001b; Tognini-Bonelli 2001).
- 3 The classic account of cohesion in English is by Halliday and Hasan (1976). However, they have only four pages on collocation, which they regard as "the most problematical part of lexical cohesion" (284). The role of collocations in text cohesion is discussed by Kjellmer (1991) and Sinclair (1996), who provide detailed examples of the lexical, grammatical, and semantic relations that make such extended lexical units cohesive. The large extent of predictable word combinations in normal language use is shown by Erman and Warren (2000), and the surprisingly frequent co-occurrence of antonyms in running text is shown by Fellbaum (1995) and Justeson and Katz (1991). In a study of a large (280 million words) corpus from a national British up-market daily newspaper, Jones (2002) finds that almost one sentence in 200 contains both members of an antonymous pair from a selected list of 56. This is certainly an underestimate, since his list does not include many other pairs, not to mention other contrasts between singulars and plurals, past and present tense, and so on.
- 4 During the heyday of Chomskyan linguistics, which emphasized linguistic creativity, only a few linguists (e.g., Bolinger 1976)

- recognized the extent of conventionalized language use and the essential role of memory in idiomatic native speaker competence. Pawley and Syder (1983) argued that native speakers know hundreds of thousands of extended lexico-semantic units whose lexical content is wholly or partly fixed and that function as conventional labels for culturally recognized concepts. Within the tradition of corpus analysis, a cultural interpretation of recurrent phrasal units is proposed by Francis (1993), who discusses “the ways in which we typically evaluate situations” and the “typical meanings that human communication encodes” (Francis 1993: 155, 141). Similarly, Moon (1998: 259) argues that semi-fixed phrases express stereotyped ideas in a way that avoids explicit evaluation but encodes culturally shared schemata.
- 5 The book is *A Year in the Greenhouse* by John Elkington, published in 1990 in London by Victor Gollancz.
  - 6 The most famous sociological discussion of how speakers’ expectations contribute to the construction of a taken-for-granted everyday reality is by Berger and Luckmann (1966). The “mass of below-conscious expectations” about the normality of the world, which contribute to our understanding of coherent discourse and therefore the relation between phraseology and real-world knowledge, is also discussed by Brown and Yule (1983: 62).
  - 7 Similar analyses of other texts are provided by Allerton (2004) and Stubbs (2001b: 108–17).
  - 8 Yang (1986) studies the percentage of vocabulary from different semantic fields in different text types, and distinguishes between technical words, which are frequent in texts on a specific topic but not evenly distributed across academic texts in general, and sub-technical words (e.g., *accuracy, basis, decrease, effect, factor, result*), which are both frequent and evenly distributed in academic texts, independent of their specialized topic. In a similar way, Coxhead (2000) studies texts from academic journals and textbooks from four main areas (arts, commerce, law, and natural science). She calculates how often a word occurs (its frequency) and how many different texts in the corpus it occurs in (its range) in order to identify vocabulary that characterizes academic texts, irrespective of their academic discipline. In a development of this work, Paquot (2010) discusses the role of collocations in organizing academic text.
  - 9 The concept of intertext was initially mainly discussed within literary theory. Allen (2000) usefully discusses the way in which literary texts form a huge interconnected network and outlines work by major theorists (such as Michael Bakhtin, Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, and Umberto Eco). More recently, many linguistic studies of intertextuality in both fiction and non-fiction texts have appeared: see Hanks (2013: ch. 9) and Hodges (this volume).
  - 10 This phraseology has been parodied by Lewis Carroll in his poem “The Walrus and the Carpenter” from *Through the Looking-Glass*.
 

“The time has come,” the Walrus said,  
 “To talk of many things:  
 Of shoes – and ships – and sealing-wax –  
 Of cabbages – and kings –  
 And why the sea is boiling hot –  
 And whether pigs have wings.”
  - 11 Further points about predictable phraseology and intertextuality in a

- literary text are discussed by Stubbs (2005).
- 12 Joyce makes a tongue-in-cheek reference to his own symbolist technique. When he leaves the party, Gabriel sees a woman at the top of the stairs but does not immediately recognize her as his wife: "There was grace and mystery in her attitude as if she were a symbol of something. He asked himself what is a woman standing on the stairs in the shadow, listening to distant music, a symbol of."

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# 24 Register Variation

## *A Corpus Approach*

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### 0 Introduction

Registers are language varieties associated with a particular configuration of situational characteristics and purposes. All languages have linguistic variants that express similar meanings, and, together with various pragmatic and information-packaging factors, register is another important predictor of patterns of linguistic variation. In many cases, registers are named varieties within a culture, such as novels, memos, book reviews, and lectures. However, registers can be defined at any level of generality, and more specialized registers may not have widely used names. For example, *academic prose* is a very general register, while *methodology sections in experimental psychology articles* is a highly specified register.

There have been numerous studies that describe the situational parameters that are important for studies of discourse. As early as the 1930s, Firth (1935) identified crucial components of speech situations. More recent and particularly well known is Hymes's (1974) framework for studying the ethnography of communication. In addition, a number of other anthropologists and sociolinguists have proposed frameworks or identified particularly important characteristics that can be applied to identifying registers (e.g., Basso 1974; Biber 1994; Brown and Fraser 1979; Crystal and Davy 1969; Duranti 1985). Throughout these discussions, the important characteristics that are identified include the participants, their relationships, and their attitudes toward the communication; the setting, including factors such as the extent to which time and place are shared by the participants and the level of formality; the channel of communication; the production and processing circumstances (e.g., amount of time available); the purpose of the communication; and the topic or subject matter. A register can be defined by its particular combination of values for each of these characteristics.

Along with situational characteristics, two other important aspects of register description are identification of the pervasive linguistic features associated with the

register and analysis of the functional relationships between the situational context and linguistic features. For example, because face-to-face conversation requires at least two speakers, takes place in real time, and often has a goal of building personal relationships, first-person pronouns, second-person pronouns, and questions are commonly used within this register. In contrast, academic writing is produced by one or more authors, does not take place in real time, and aims to provide information, often within space limitations. Thus, the linguistic features common in conversation (e.g., discourse markers) are rare in academic writing, while features such as noun–noun sequences (which convey a great deal of information in a limited space) are a common feature of academic writing (Biber and Conrad 2009: ch. 5).

Many investigations of register use a corpus-based approach, in which large, representative collections of texts from a register are examined through the aid of computers. The computer allows the researcher to count linguistic patterns more quickly and also mitigates researcher fatigue (and mistakes). A corpus approach usually also entails quantitative analysis, allowing researchers to study a greater number of texts, more features, and more interconnections between features than was previously feasible. It also allows researchers to see the central tendencies and amount of variability within individual registers, and to compare register features statistically; it therefore allows researchers to identify pervasive patterns in registers. However, qualitative analysis is always a necessary step in order to interpret the relationship between the use of linguistic features and their function in a particular situational context (see Biber and Conrad 2009: ch. 3).

Early register studies, such as Ferguson (1983), tended not to use computers in their analysis, but, starting in the mid-1990s, register studies using a corpus approach began to blossom (e.g., Bruthiaux 1996), and by the 2000s the approach was firmly established. Examples of recent corpus analyses of single spoken registers include Barbieri (2005), Basturkmen (2002), and McCarthy and Carter (2004). Analyses of written registers include Connor and Upton (2004) and Hyland and Tse (2005). Analysis of registers has also been conducted for languages other than English, such as sports reporting in French (Deulofeu 2000). In addition to describing single registers, studies have also made comparisons across registers. These comparative studies have shown that there are systematic and important linguistic differences across registers, referred to as the patterns of *register variation*. Biber and Conrad (2009: see especially app. A) provide an extensive survey of empirical register studies, including both descriptions of single registers and more comprehensive analyses of register variation.

In addition, a comparative register perspective is important for studies of linguistic variation, undertaken to predict the choice among linguistic variants (e.g., particle movement with phrasal verbs; dative alternation; *of* versus *'s* genitive). Many traditional linguistic investigations have disregarded register differences, attempting to generalize descriptions of linguistic variation to a language as a whole. However, findings from such analyses are often inadequate and even misleading (see Biber 2012a). We discuss and illustrate the importance of register for studies of linguistic variation in Section 1.

Section 2 shifts to more comprehensive descriptions of the registers themselves, showing how multidimensional analyses of register variation enable descriptions of a target register relative to a wide range of other registers.

# 1 A Register Perspective on Traditional Linguistic Investigations

In general, any functional description of a linguistic feature will *not* be valid for the language as a whole. Rather, characteristics of the textual environment interact with register differences, so that strong patterns of use in one register often represent only weak patterns in other registers. For example, it is generally known that passive-voice verbs are much more prevalent in academic writing than in conversation: approximately 25 percent of all verb phrases are passive in academic writing, versus only about 2 percent for verbs in conversation (Biber 2012a: 31). There are also specific verbs that are used especially frequently with passive voice. For example, the verbs *BE + made, given, used, found, seen* all occur over 300 times per million words as passives in academic writing (Biber *et al.* 1999: 478). The interesting consideration for our purposes here is that these lexical-grammatical preferences can vary dramatically by register. Thus, for example, the verb *FIND* is frequent in both conversation and academic writing, but it has opposite preferences for active versus passive voice: almost half of all occurrences of *find* are passive in academic writing, while less than 1 percent of the occurrences of *find* are passive in conversation (Biber 2012a: 31). It turns out that similar register differences exist for most cases of linguistic variation. The following subsections illustrate such differences for several different linguistic levels.

## 1.1 Register variation in lexical descriptions

It is easy to demonstrate the importance of register variation for lexical analysis by contrasting the use of near-synonymous words. (See, e.g., Biber, Conrad, and Reppen 1998: chs. 2 and 4 on *big, large, and great; little vs. small; and begin vs. start*. See also Kennedy 1991 on *between* and *through*, and Biber, Conrad, and Reppen 1994 on *certain* and *sure*.)

We illustrate this association here by considering the use of *downtoners* (based on the analyses reported in Biber *et al.* 1999: ch. 7). Downtoners are adverbs that scale down the effect of a modified item, most often a following adjective. For example:

- (1) It did look *pretty* bad. (conversation)<sup>1</sup>
- (2) The mother came away *somewhat* bewildered. (news reportage)
- (3) Different laboratories have adopted *slightly* different formulations. (academic prose)

Downtoners show that the modified item is not to be taken in its strongest sense. For example, in (1)–(3) above, *the way it looked, the mother, and formulations* do not have the full qualities of *bad, bewildered, and different*.

Many downtoners are roughly synonymous in meaning. For example, *pretty, somewhat, and slightly* could be interchanged in sentences (1)–(3) above with little change in meaning. However, it turns out that the most common downtoners have quite different distributions across registers. For the illustration here, we restrict our comparison

to two registers defined in relatively general terms: conversation (American English only) and academic prose. According to Biber *et al.* (1999: 567), the downtoner *pretty* is very common in conversation (over 400 times per million words), while all other downtoners are quite rare. In contrast, academic prose uses a wider range of common downtoners, although none of them is extremely frequent. For example, *relatively*, *rather*, *fairly*, and *slightly* are all used around 100 times per million words.

Further analysis shows that downtoners are also used for different purposes in conversation and academic prose. For example, the downtoner *pretty* in conversation often occurs as a modifier of evaluative adjectives, as in *pretty good*, *pretty bad*, *pretty cool*, *pretty easy*, and *pretty sure*. In contrast, downtoners in academic prose occur with a much wider range of descriptive adjectives. For example, the downtoner *fairly* occurs repeatedly with adjectives such as *resistant*, *consistent*, *constant*, *simple*, *obvious*, *common*, *recent*, and *direct*. Many of the downtoner + adjective collocations in academic prose mark the extent of comparison between two items (e.g., *slightly smaller*, *somewhat lower*). In addition, several downtoners in academic prose commonly occur as modifiers of the adjective *different*, specifying the amount of difference (as in *rather different*, *slightly different*, *somewhat different*, etc.).

## 1.2 Register variation in phraseology descriptions

Register studies on phraseology can be seen as an extension of lexical research to multi-word units, often called *formulaic expressions* or *lexical bundles* (e.g., *on the other hand*). Phraseology research has focused on the frequency, form, and function of formulaic language in different registers as well as the degree to which multi-word units are fixed (a single string, such as *on the other hand*) or have variable slots (e.g., *it is \* that [it is clear that, it is possible that]*).

Biber *et al.* (1999: ch. 13) investigated the frequency of multi-word units (*lexical bundles*) across registers and found that conversation contains more recurrent three- and four-word sequences than academic writing. This greater use of formulaic language in conversation is most likely related to the online processing required in this register. Some of the more common lexical bundles in conversation and academic writing can be found in Table 24.1 and Table 24.2.

Tables 24.1 and 24.2 also illustrate a general lexico-grammatical register difference: a preference of verb phrase (VP)-based bundles in conversation and noun phrase (NP)-based bundles in academic prose (Biber, Conrad, and Cortes 2004). In contrast, the register of classroom teaching uses both NP-based lexical bundles and VP-based bundles, reflecting its informational purposes combined with the fact that it is produced in real-time speech (see Biber, Conrad, and Cortes 2004).

A functional framework for investigating multi-word units was established by Biber, Conrad, and Cortes (2004); it includes three major functional classes: referential, stance, and discourse-organizing. Lexical bundles that serve as referential expressions are defined as bundles that “make direct reference to physical or abstract entities, or to the textual context itself, either to identify the entity or to single out some particular attribute of the entity as especially important” (Biber, Conrad, and Cortes 2004: 384). Stance bundles most often refer to the speaker’s knowledge of or attitude toward the information in the following proposition. Finally, discourse organizers are defined as

**Table 24.1** Highly frequent lexical bundles in conversation.

<i>Phraseological feature</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Personal pronoun + lexical verb phrase	<i>I don't know what<sup>a</sup></i> <i>I don't want to<sup>a</sup></i> <i>I was going to<sup>a</sup></i>
Yes-no question fragments	<i>do you want to<sup>a</sup></i> <i>are you going to<sup>a</sup></i>
Wh-question fragments	<i>what are you doing<sup>b</sup></i> <i>what do you mean<sup>b</sup></i> <i>what do you think<sup>b</sup></i> <i>what do you want<sup>b</sup></i>

<sup>a</sup>Over 100 per 1 million words; <sup>b</sup>over 40 per 1 million words.

Adapted from Biber *et al.* 1999: ch. 13.

“relationships between prior and coming discourse” (Biber, Conrad, and Cortes 2004: 384). Biber, Conrad, and Cortes (2004) found that stance (e.g., *I don't want to*) and discourse-organizing bundles (e.g., *let's have a look*) were much more frequent in conversation, while referential bundles (e.g., *in the case of*) were much more frequent in writing. These preferences are related to the different functions that characterize the two registers. Building on this analysis, Nesi and Basturkmen (2006) investigated multi-word sequences used for the purpose of cohesion in academic writing. Hyland (2008) similarly proposed three functional categories of bundles for his study on research articles and dissertations: research-oriented bundles (some of which would correspond to referential bundles), text-oriented bundles (which mostly correspond to discourse-orienting bundles), and participant-oriented bundles (which correspond loosely to stance bundles).

Finally, register differences even influence the extent to which phraseology is fixed or variable. Renouf and Sinclair (1991) introduced the concept of *collocational frameworks* or discontinuous sequences of function words (e.g., *a/n \* of*). Biber (2009) investigated register differences in the use of such discontinuous sequences, using a bottom-up

**Table 24.2** Highly frequent lexical bundles in academic writing.

<i>Phraseological feature</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Noun phrase with <i>of</i> -phrase fragment	<i>the end of the<sup>b</sup></i> <i>one of the most<sup>b</sup></i>
Prepositional phrase with embedded <i>of</i> -phrase fragment	<i>in the case of<sup>a</sup></i>
Other prepositional phrase fragments	<i>the relationship between the<sup>a</sup></i>

<sup>a</sup>Over 100 per 1 million words; <sup>b</sup>over 40 per 1 million words.

Adapted from Biber *et al.* 1999: ch. 13.

(“corpus-driven”) approach. For example, in the sequence *on the other hand*, all of the words (*on*, *the*, *other*, and *hand*) occur over 50 percent of the time with the other three within the same sequence, so it is considered relatively fixed. In contrast, in the sequence *it is necessary to*, *necessary* only occurs 10 percent of the time with the other three words, so the slot is considered variable. That is, numerous alternative adjectives commonly occur in the third slot of this frame (e.g., *possible*, *likely*, *important*, *essential*).

Biber (2009) found that variable-slot bundles were more frequent in academic writing while conversation had more fixed (continuous) sequences. For example, the most frequent bundles in conversation were sequences such as *I don't know* \*. In contrast, the two most frequent patterns in academic writing were *the* \* *of the* and *in the* \* *of*, with numerous nouns being substituted into the variable slots. One reason for the differences in the structure of bundles in speech and writing is related to the online processing of speech versus the pre-planned and edited nature of writing.

### 1.3 Register variation in grammatical descriptions

Similar to lexical analysis, investigations of grammatical features require a register perspective to fully describe the actual patterns of use. Most grammatical features are distributed in very different ways across registers. For example, Biber, Gray, and Poonpon (2011) investigated the use of dependent phrases (e.g., prepositional phrases, appositive noun phrases) and dependent clauses (e.g., relative clauses, complement clauses) in speech and academic writing. The results revealed that spoken discourse contains significantly more clausal elaboration, whereas the discourse of academic prose uses significantly more phrases. This can be seen in the following example from conversation, in which the dependent *clauses* are underlined:

Gayle: See we didn't know what we were gonna be doing and if Karen did go into labor and we had to leave early or something when we got back and we wanted to be able to do it. And they wouldn't take their van cause Bob wanted to smoke and uh, Ed said he said he'd stop but he can't smoke in the van. (Biber, Gray, and Poonpon 2011: 24–5)

and in the following example from academic prose, in which the dependent *phrases* modifying nouns are underlined:

We expected that the use of different transformations would have significant effects on our perceptions of spatial patterns in kelp holdfast assemblages. (Biber, Gray, and Poonpon 2011: 27)

There are numerous book-length treatments of grammatical structures from a corpus-based register perspective; for example, Mindt (2011) on adjective complementation; Hoffmann (2005) on complex prepositions; Hunston and Francis (2000) on pattern grammar; Rohdenburg and Mondorf (2003) on grammatical variation; and Lindquist and Mair (2004) on grammaticalization. The *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (Biber *et al.* 1999) uses corpus data to document the systematic patterns

of variation for a wide range of grammatical features across four major registers: conversation, academic writing, news, and fiction. The importance of a register perspective can be highlighted by considering the distribution and use of roughly equivalent structures (such as *that*-clauses vs. *to*-clauses; see Biber, Conrad, and Reppen 1998: chs. 3 and 4). Here, we consider differences in the use of *that*-clauses with the complementizer *that* retained versus omitted (based on analyses reported in Biber *et al.* 1999: 680–3).

In most *that*-clauses, the complementizer can be freely omitted with no substantial change in meaning. For example, compare:

I hope *I'm not embarrassing you.* (conversation)

and

I hope *that Paul tells him off.* (conversation)

Different registers have different overall norms for *that*-retention versus omission: in conversation, *that*-omission is the typical case, with the complementizer being omitted in approximately 85 percent of all occurrences. At the other extreme, academic prose almost always retains the complementizer *that*.

These overall distributional patterns correspond to the differing production circumstances, purposes, and levels of formality found across registers. Conversations are spoken and produced online; they typically have involved, interpersonal purposes; and they are casual and informal in tone. These characteristics are associated with omission of *that* as the norm. Academic prose has the opposite characteristics: careful production circumstances; an expository, informational purpose; and a formal tone. In addition, published academic writing can be subject to even further revision by editors and copy-editors. Correspondingly, *that*-retention is the norm in academic prose.

Textual factors influencing the choice between omission and retention can be divided into two groups. The first is *textual factors favoring the omission of that*. The omission of *that* is favored when the grammatical characteristics of the surrounding discourse conform to the most common uses of *that*-clauses. In such cases, listeners and readers can anticipate the presence of a *that*-clause without the explicit marking provided by the *that* complementizer. Two of the most important typical characteristics are:

- the use of *think* or *say* as the main clause verb (these are by far the two most common verbs that take a *that*-clause);
- the occurrence of co-referential subjects in the main clause and the *that*-clause (which is more common than the occurrence of non-co-referential subjects) (e.g., *I think I should put it back up*).

The second group is *textual factors favoring the retention of that*. The retention of *that* is favored with grammatical characteristics that are not typical of *that*-clauses, making these structures difficult to process if the *that* were omitted. Three of the most important such factors are:

- the use of coordinated *that*-clauses;

He would have argued that philosophy is nothing but the ancilla of theology and that the principles of Thomas's *Summa contra Gentiles* are irrefutable for a Christian.

- the use of a passive-voice verb in the main clause;

It was found that the rate of atrophy of frog muscles was very sensitive to the environmental conditions.

- the presence of an intervening noun phrase between the main clause verb and the *that*-clause.

I persuaded myself that something awful might happen.

For the present discussion, the most interesting aspect of these discourse factors is that they are mediated by register considerations. That is, textual factors are most influential when they operate *counter* to the overall register norm, so the same factors can have different effects in different registers. For instance, because conversation has a strong register norm favoring the omission of *that*, the discourse factors favoring omission have little influence in that register. In contrast, the factors favoring *that*-retention are very powerful in conversation because they run counter to the overall register norm. For example:

with coordinated *that*-clauses:

I'm sure *they think I'm crazy* **and** *that I'm in love with him or something.*

with a passive-voice verb in the matrix clause:

I **was told** *that Pete was pissed.*

with an intervening noun phrase between the matrix clause verb and the *that*-clause:

I promised **her** *that I wouldn't play it.*

News reportage shows the opposite tendencies: the overall register norm favors *that*-retention, and thus the contextual factors favoring retention have comparatively little influence. In contrast, the factors favoring *that*-omission are relatively influential in news. Thus, the following sentences from news reportage illustrate how the discourse factors of common main verbs and co-referential subjects favor the omission of *that* in newspaper writing:

After a month she said (0) *she couldn't cope with it.*

He thought (0) *he was being attacked.*

It is perhaps important to note that, even more than published academic writing, news reportage is subject to revision by copy-editors.

## 1.4 *Register variation in prosodic descriptions*

Prosody research investigates factors such as intonation contours (e.g., falling, rising, level), pitch level (e.g., high, mid, low), and prominence (sentence stress) within discourse. Due to the labor-intensive process of hand-coding prosodic features, few large

corpora have been analyzed from this perspective. Notable exceptions include the London-Lund corpus and the Lancaster/IBM Spoken English Corpus, both developed in the 1980s. More recently, the Hong Kong Corpus of Spoken English (Cheng, Greaves, and Warren 2008) was developed specifically for the analysis of intonation across multiple registers.

While a number of researchers have conducted quantitative research on prosodic features in particular situational contexts (see, e.g., Pickering 1999; Wennerstrom 1997, 2001), most have not adopted a corpus approach. Among those studies using a corpus approach, the clearest distinctions in intonation, pitch level, and prominence have been made between monologic and dialogic speech rather than between specific registers. One of the main functional differences in intonation use between these two general registers is in the management of turn-taking. For example, in dialogic interaction, high, rising intonation functions to exert pressure on the speaker to reply or to indicate speaker interest (Benus, Gravano, and Hirschberg 2007; Gravano and Hirschberg 2009) while falling intonation is used to signal turn closure (Gravano and Hirschberg 2009; Wichmann 2000). In contrast, in monologic discourse, rising intonation is used to show continuation of a topic or to signal shared knowledge (Cheng 2004; Nevalainen 1992), while falling intonation expresses new information and topic closure (Cheng 2004; Wichmann 2000). Level intonation seems to be used more frequently in monologic discourse, to mark continuation of a topic or to mark a focus on the language being used (Cheng, Greaves, and Warren 2008; Nevalainen 1992). Cheng, Greaves, and Warren (2008) also found a greater use of rising versus falling-rising intonation by speakers in a dominant role in registers where asymmetrical relationships exist (e.g., supervisors in office talk).

Differences in the function of relatively high- or low-level pitch across registers also reflect the different communicative purposes of monologic and dialogic discourse. While both registers use high pitch to mark contrasts and topic changes or topic shifts, disagreements with the previous speaker and gaining the floor are two functions of high pitch unique to dialogic registers (Wichmann 2000). By contrast, high pitch is used in monologic speech as a “paratone” (Wichmann 2000). A paratone can be considered as an intonational paragraph that marks shifts in major topics within discourse, and a higher relative pitch is used at the beginning of the paratone (Brown and Yule 1983). Low pitch has been found to be used in both monologic and dialogic discourse to mark given information, but it is associated with yielding the floor in dialogic registers and with the end of a paratone unit in monologic registers (Cheng, Greaves, and Warren 2008; Wichmann 2000).

Although register-specific use of prominence has not been investigated widely, Kaufman (2002) shows how the use of prominence on negative statements varies across registers. Biber (2012b) and Biber and Staples (2014) investigated the use of prominence in stance-complement clauses in the native-speaker portion of the Hong Kong Corpus of Spoken English. The verbs *think* and *know* both commonly control stance-complement clauses (Biber *et al.* 1999). Since prominence (high pitch, length, and volume) is generally used to identify informational focus, it would be assumed that stance is not marked with prosodic prominence. Thus, the prominent lexical items (marked in bold) in the first two below examples express referential rather than stance information; in contrast, the stance verbs *think* and *know* are not prosodically prominent:

A: Is there any **strong pressure** within the department for people to get **higher degrees**?

B: I don't know about **pressure**. But certainly there's **funding** available. I think **all** permanent members of staff can get their **fees** paid.

The exception is when the verb expresses a specific mental state or event in addition to a general epistemic evaluation, as in:

but she is **very annoying**. I mean **she** – well I **think** she thinks we're **stupid**.

Prominence on *think* in the example above highlights the uncertainty of the proposition but also marks it as an actual mental state. The degree to which verbs controlling complement clauses were marked with prominence varied across registers of the Hong Kong Corpus of Spoken English. While conversation and interviews marked both *think* and *know* with prominence almost half the time they were used, in lectures, speakers marked prominence on these verbs only about 35 percent of the time. It may be that the monologic nature of lectures and the lecturer's power in this situational context means that there are fewer chances for negotiation of stance and thus less need to mark stance as prominently as in more dialogic contexts.

### ***1.5 Register variation in discourse-organization descriptions***

The structure and organization of discourse-level units has also been investigated within and across registers. Two main corpus-based approaches have recently been developed (see Biber, Connor, and Upton 2007: ch. 1): top down, involving manual coding of discourse units, and bottom up, involving corpus-driven analysis.

The first, a top-down approach, involves manually coding discourse-level units (*moves*) within texts and then using a computer to identify the patterns across texts. Moves are defined as portions of a text that have specific communicative functions (Swales 1981). The top-down corpus approach allows researchers to easily investigate characteristics of discourse units, such as their length and especially the lexico-grammatical features typically used in those units.

As an example, Biber, Connor, and Upton (2007: ch. 3) manually identified the moves in direct mail letters. Then particular lexico-grammatical features that convey stance were examined across the different move types. For example, modals of possibility, permission, and ability were found to be most frequent in Move 1 (get attention) and Move 3 (solicit response). One of the purposes of both of these moves is to make the reader feel empowered to make a difference: "YOU *can* be the one to open the door" (from Move 1) and "It *may* help a family stay together" (from Move 3). The corpus-based approach was essential for both locating moves once they had been hand-coded and identifying the lexico-grammatical features of interest within each move.

A second example of this type is Kanoksilapatham (2007), which combines move analysis with multidimensional analysis (described in Section 2.1) to investigate the lexico-grammatical characteristics of moves in the register of biochemistry research articles. The results show that different move types are associated with different grammatical features, reflecting their varied communicative functions. For example, the

move in the literature review that identifies the “gap” in the research is characterized by a dense use of long words, nouns, and attributive adjectives. On the other hand, the move describing materials in methods sections is characterized by shorter words and a strong preference for numerals and technical jargon.

In contrast to the top-down approach, the bottom-up approach uses quantitative analysis to automatically identify topical discourse units (by computer) (see Biber, Connor, and Upton 2007: ch. 6). Texts are divided into discourse-level units by determining shifts in vocabulary patterns. These *vocabulary-based discourse units* are identified by investigating the similarities and differences of surrounding words to distinguish textual boundaries. Vocabulary-based discourse unit analysis has been combined with multidimensional analysis (see Section 2.1) to describe the discourse organization of particular registers, and to identify different subregisters within those more general categories. For example, Biber, Connor, and Upton (2007: ch. 7) describe the discourse organization of biology research articles, identifying subregisters such as *current evaluation* and *procedural description* (see also Biber and Jones 2005). Csomay (2005) identifies vocabulary-based discourse units in university classroom discourse to describe the different phases of lectures across various disciplines. Instructors from all disciplines used language that functioned to show contextual references and provide directives at the beginning of the lecture. Business and engineering teachers maintained this orientation across vocabulary-based discourse units throughout class sessions, while teachers in education, the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences shifted more quickly into a discourse style with a more conceptual informational focus.

## 2 The Multidimensional Approach to Register Variation

A major issue for discourse studies since the early 1970s has concerned the relationship between spoken and written language. Early research on this question tended to make global generalizations about the linguistic differences between speech and writing. For example, researchers such as O'Donnell (1974) and Olson (1977) argued that written language generally differs from speech in being more structurally complex, elaborated, and/or explicit. In reaction to such studies, several researchers (e.g., Beaman 1984; Chafe and Danielewicz 1986; Tannen 1982) argued that it is misleading to generalize about overall differences between speech and writing because communicative task is also an important predictor of linguistic variation; therefore, equivalent communicative tasks should be compared to isolate the existence of mode differences.

Multidimensional analyses of register variation (e.g., Biber 1986, 1988) took this concern one step further by analyzing linguistic variation among the range of registers within each mode, in addition to comparing registers across the spoken and written modes. Further, these analyses included consideration of a wide range of linguistic characteristics, identifying the way that these features configured themselves into underlying “dimensions” of variation. These studies show that particular spoken and written registers are distinguished to differing extents along each dimension.

## 2.1 *Overview of the multidimensional approach*

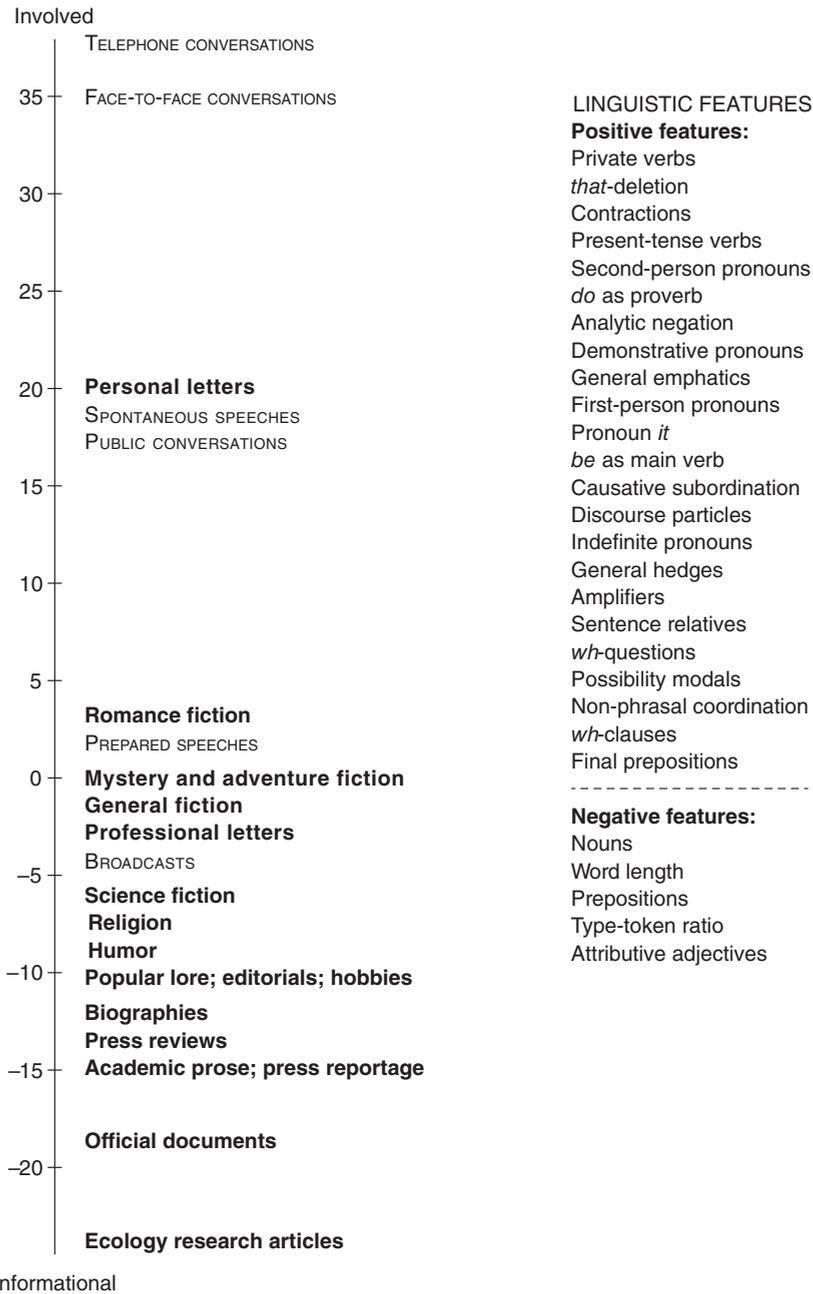
The multidimensional approach to register variation was developed to provide comprehensive descriptions of the patterns of register variation in a language. A multidimensional analysis includes two major components: (1) identification of the underlying linguistic parameters, or *dimensions*, of variation; and (2) specification of the linguistic similarities and differences between registers with respect to those dimensions.

Methodologically, the multidimensional approach has three major distinguishing characteristics: (1) the use of computer-based text corpora to provide a broad representation of the registers in a language; (2) the use of computational tools to identify linguistic features in texts; and (3) the use of multivariate statistical techniques to analyze the co-occurrence relations between linguistic features, thereby identifying underlying *dimensions* of variation in a language. Multidimensional studies have consistently shown that there are systematic patterns of variation among registers; that these patterns can be analyzed in terms of the underlying dimensions of variation; and that it is necessary to recognize the existence of a multidimensional space (rather than a single parameter) to adequately describe the relations between registers.

The first step in a multidimensional analysis is to obtain a corpus of texts representing a wide range of registers. If there are no pre-existing corpora, texts must be collected and entered into a computer. The texts in these corpora are then automatically analyzed (or “tagged”) for linguistic features representing several major grammatical and functional characteristics, such as tense and aspect markers, place and time adverbials, pronouns and nominal forms, prepositional phrases, adjectives, adverbs, lexical classes (e.g., hedges, emphatics, speech-act verbs), modals, passives, dependent clauses, coordination, and questions. All texts are post-edited interactively to correct mis-tags.

Next, the frequency of each linguistic feature in each text is counted. (All counts are normalized to their occurrence per 1,000 words of text.) A statistical factor analysis is then computed to identify the co-occurrence patterns between linguistic features – that is, the dimensions. These dimensions are subsequently interpreted in terms of the communicative functions shared by the co-occurring features. Interpretive labels are posited for each dimension, such as “involved versus informational production” and “narrative versus non-narrative concerns.” In addition, a dimension score for each text is computed by summing the major linguistic features grouped on each dimension; this score provides a cumulative characterization of a text with respect to the co-occurrence pattern underlying a dimension. Then, the mean dimension scores for each register are compared to analyze the salient linguistic similarities and differences between registers.

To illustrate, consider English Dimension 1 in Figure 24.1. This dimension is defined by two groups of co-occurring linguistic features, listed to the right of the figure. The positive group (above the line) consists of a large number of features, including first- and second-person pronouns, questions, “private” verbs (such as *think* or *know*), and contractions. The negative group has fewer features, including nouns, attributive adjectives, and prepositional phrases. The statistical analysis shows that these groups have a complementary relationship and thus constitute a single dimension. When a text has frequent occurrences of “positive” features, it will tend to have few occurrences of “negative” features, and vice versa.



**Figure 24.1** Mean scores of English Dimension 1 for 23 registers: “Involved versus Informational Production.”  $F = 111.9, p < .0001, r^2 = 84.3\%$ .

When dimension scores are computed for English Dimension 1, conversation texts are shown to make the most frequent use of the “positive” features. Figure 24.1 plots the Dimension 1 score for several English registers, providing a graphical representation of the relations between registers with respect to each group of linguistic features. Conversation texts, with the largest positive Dimension score, tend to have frequent occurrences of first- and second-person pronouns, questions, stance verbs, hedges, and the other features above the line; at the same time, relative to the other registers, conversation texts have notably few occurrences of nouns, adjectives, prepositional phrases, and long words. At the other extreme, registers such as official documents and academic prose have the largest negative score, showing that they are marked by use of the opposite linguistic characteristics: very frequent occurrences of nouns, adjectives, prepositional phrases, and long words combined with notably few occurrences of first- and second-person pronouns, questions, stance verbs, and so on.

Considering both the defining linguistic features together with the distribution registers, each dimension can be interpreted in functional terms. Thus, the positive group of linguistic features on English Dimension 1, associated most notably with conversation, is interpreted as reflecting interactiveness, high involvement, and online production. For example, interactiveness and involvement are reflected in the frequent use of *you* and *I* and in the private verbs (e.g., *think, feel*) that convey the thoughts and feelings of the participants, as well as many other features. The reduced and vague forms – such as contractions, *that* deletions, and general emphatics and hedges – are typical of language produced under real-time constraints. The negative linguistic features, associated most notably with informational exposition, are interpreted as reflecting careful production and an informational focus. That is, as exemplified below, nouns, prepositional phrases, and attributive adjectives all function to convey densely packed information, and the higher type-token ratio and longer words reflect a precise and often specialized choice of words. Such densely informational and precise text *is* nearly impossible to produce without time for planning and revision.

As noted earlier, one of the advantages of a comparative register perspective is to understand the linguistic characteristics of a particular register relative to a representative range of registers in the language. This advantage can be illustrated with respect to the specific register of research articles in biology (in the subdiscipline of ecology). Figure 24.1 shows that this register is extremely marked on Dimension 1, with a considerably larger negative score than academic prose generally.

Even a short extract from an article shows the high density of informational features from Dimension 1 (nouns are underlined, prepositions italicized, and attributive adjectives capitalized):

There were MARKED differences *in* root growth *into* regrowth cores *among* the three communities, both *in* the distribution of roots *through* the cores and *in* the response to ELEVATED CO<sub>2</sub>. *In* the *Scirpus* community, root growth was evenly distributed *throughout* the 15-cm profile, *with* no SIGNIFICANT differences *in* root biomass *among* the 5-cm sampling intervals *within* a treatment.

All three of these features serve the purpose of densely packing the text with information about specific referents. Nouns refer to entities or concepts and are then further specified by prepositional phrases, attributive adjectives, or other nouns that function

as premodifiers (e.g., *root growth*). Clearly, the emphasis in this text is on transmitting information precisely and concisely, not on interactive or affective concerns.

In sum, even this one linguistic dimension identifies strong differences between spoken and written registers. It is associated with the dense use of verbs, pronouns, and dependent clauses versus phrasal discourse styles, characterized especially by complex noun-phrase structures. Consideration of the full set of dimensions shows that registers vary along multiple linguistic parameters, in association with a range of situational and communicative factors (see Biber 1988; Biber and Conrad 2009: ch. 8).

## 2.2 Register variation in more specialized domains

Early multidimensional studies focused on comparisons between spoken and written registers, but subsequent multidimensional analyses have been applied to more specialized discourse domains. For example, Conrad (1996a, 1996b) applies the multidimensional model of variation in English to a study of disciplinary texts, comparing professional research articles, university-level textbooks, and university student papers in biology and history. The multiple perspectives provided by this analysis highlight similarities between all of these academic texts versus other non-academic registers, and also identify systematic differences across the disciplines and types of texts. Reppen (1994, 1995; cf. Biber, Conrad, and Reppen 1998: ch. 7) uses multidimensional analysis for a study of the spoken and written registers used by elementary-school students in English. The study identifies and interprets the dimensions that characterize student registers, finding some dimensions with no counterparts in other multidimensional analyses (such as one interpreted as “projected scenario”; e.g., *If you could be any famous person, who would you be?*). In addition, comparison of this elementary-school student multidimensional model and the adult English model discussed in Section 2.1 provides a register perspective on the development of literacy skills.

Several of the papers in Conrad and Biber (2001) are also multidimensional analyses of specialized discourse domains, including Connor-Linton’s analysis of author style writing about nuclear arms policy, Connor-Linton and Shohamy’s multidimensional analysis of oral proficiency interviews, Biber and Finegan’s description of intratextual variation in medical research articles, and Helt’s comparison of British and American spoken English. Rey and also Biber and Burges use multidimensional analysis for diachronic comparisons of female and male language (the former across seasons of *Star Trek*; the latter in a sample of dramatic plays from the past three centuries).

There have been several other applications of multidimensional analysis to diachronic descriptions. For example, Biber and Finegan (1989, 1997) trace the development of English written registers (e.g., letters, fiction, newspapers, science prose) and speech-based registers (e.g., drama, dialogue in fiction) from 1650 to the present, along three different dimensions of variation. These studies describe a major difference in the historical evolution of popular registers (e.g., fiction, letters, drama) versus specialized expository registers (e.g., science prose and medical prose): while popular registers have followed a steady progression toward more “oral” styles (greater involvement, less nominal elaboration, less use of passive constructions), the written expository registers have evolved in the opposite direction, developing styles of expression that were completely unattested in earlier historical periods (e.g., with extremely dense use of

elaborated nominal structures and passive constructions). Biber and Finegan (1994a) use this same framework to compare the written styles of particular eighteenth-century authors (Addison, Defoe, Johnson, and Swift) across different registers.

In addition, two studies by Atkinson use the multidimensional approach to trace the evolution of academic registers in English. Atkinson (1992) combines a multidimensional approach with a detailed analysis of rhetorical patterns to study the development of five subregisters of medical academic prose from 1735 to 1985, focusing on the *Edinburgh Medical Journal*. Atkinson (1996) employs a similar integration of multidimensional and rhetorical methodologies to analyze the evolution of scientific research writing, as represented in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* from 1675 to 1975.

Even more recently, multidimensional analysis has been used as a major component of book-length register descriptions: Biber's (2006) comparison of spoken and written university registers across academic disciplines, Friginal's (2009) study of the discourse of outsourced call centers, and Quaglio's (2009) investigation of television dialogue. Xiao (2009) applies this approach to the analysis of world Englishes, comparing five international varieties (British, Filipino, Hong Kong, Indian, and Singaporean).

Finally, the multidimensional approach has also been used to investigate the patterns of register variation in languages other than English. Early studies of this type include Besnier's (1988) analysis of Nukulaelae Tuvaluan; Kim's (1990; Kim and Biber 1994) analysis of Korean; and Biber and Hared's (1992a, 1992b, 1994) analysis of Somali. These languages are compared in Biber (1995), to identify patterns of register variation that appear to hold cross-linguistically. More recently, multidimensional analysis has been applied to several other languages, including Spanish (Asención-Delaney and Collentine 2011; Biber *et al.* 2006; Parodi 2007; Venegas 2010), Taiwanese (Jang 1998), and Scottish Gaelic (Lamb 2008; cf. Meurman-Solin 1993), and most recently Brazilian Portuguese (Berber-Sardinha, Kauffmann, and Mayer-Acunzo 2014).

### 3 Conclusion

In a chapter of this size, it is impossible to give complete accounts and interpretations of register analyses. Nevertheless, the chapter has illustrated the importance of register variation for diverse aspects of discourse study – whether more traditional descriptions of lexical, phraseological, grammatical, prosodic, and discourse-organizing features or more comprehensive characterizations of registers within a language. The register perspective illustrated here has repeatedly shown that patterns of language use vary systematically with the characteristics of the situational context. As a result, attempts to characterize a language as a whole are likely to misrepresent the actual language-use patterns in any particular register.

Clearly, comparisons between registers will play an important role in any thorough description of a language. Furthermore, control of a range of registers is important for any competent speaker of a language. Thus, not only our understanding of discourse but also our understanding of language acquisition and issues within educational linguistics can benefit from the analysis of register variation.

## NOTES

1 The downtoner *pretty* is much less common in British English conversation than in American English conversation. In contrast, the adverb *quite* functioning

as a modifier is very common in British English conversation, where it often has a meaning similar to the other downtoners.

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# III The Individual, Society, and Culture

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# 25 Voices of the Speech Community *Six People I Have Learned From*

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WILLIAM LABOV

## 0 Preface

In 2009, I was asked to deliver a lecture to the American Council of Learned Societies, as part of a series of Haskins lectures celebrating “A Life of Learning.” I presented a brief history of my years of linguistic research, summing up what I learned along the way and weighing the profits from spending my life in this kind of activity.<sup>1</sup> I did not talk very much about myself. Instead, I introduced to the audience six people I had met in the course of this work, letting them speak in their own words, and then trying to sum up what I’ve learned from them. They are all great speakers of the English language, gifted with an uncommon eloquence, people larger than life, and I have found that people remember them as vividly as anything I have to say about them.

The editors of this volume believe that this effort to sum up what I have learned from people has something to contribute to the enterprise of discourse analysis, and I have agreed to contribute it in the current format. I share with them the desire to bring to the fore the true voices of speakers of the language, rarely heard in the quantitative study of linguistic variation and change. My effort in this chapter is to show how the rhetorical stance of speakers illuminates their position as leaders or exemplars of linguistic developments we are trying to understand. Some of these speakers are leaders of linguistic change; others may be heard as exponents of linguistic divergence.

Giving voice to these speakers does not imply a focus on the individual as the basic unit of analysis. Far from it; I do not believe that the individual exists as a unit of linguistic entity. On the contrary, I follow Durkheim and Saussure in viewing language as a social fact and a property of the community rather than the individual. The linguistic behavior of the individual is best understood as the product of all the social groups that he or she is a member of.

My study of New York City (2006, originally 1966) introduced several exceptional individuals like Nathan B., who could not master the (dh) variable at the level appropriate for his professional status; or the near-sighted Mollie S., who so keenly criticized r-deletion in the speech of radio broadcasters but did not detect the same forms in her own. The six people I will introduce here are not exceptional: they are archetypical of their community and their culture. I hope that bringing them forward will support the view that an understanding of a community is enhanced by listening to its strongest voices.

First, a little something about my upbringing and the people I knew early in life. I was born in Rutherford, New Jersey in 1927, far enough from New York City so that I always viewed that great metropolis from a distance. My high-school years were spent in Fort Lee, a town with a high proportion of working-class German and Italian Americans, just across the Hudson River from New York. They were the people I knew best – some the closest of friends, others in frequent conflict, but when we met in later years we recognized a common ground. I left that community behind when I attended Harvard College from 1944 to 1948. My degree was in English and Philosophy, but I studied enough chemistry to serve me well when I began work in the laboratory of a family business. For the next 11 years I made printing inks and silk-screen inks, in intimate association with the men of the factory.

As much as I enjoyed this life, there were limitations to it. No matter how clever your formulation, no matter how deep your insights into the workings of your complex product, you could not publish your ideas – these were trade secrets. In 1961, I returned to the more general perspective of academic life, and took up the study of linguistics at Columbia. This was an attractive world of intense debate on the structure of language and its history of constant change. However, I discovered that the activity was remote from the procedures I was used to. Most of the linguists I met were gathering data by introspection, asking themselves, “Can I say this?” “Can I say that?” It occurred to me that I might start a new way of doing linguistics by building the study of language on what people actually said in everyday life.

In this enterprise, I found that my years as an industrial chemist weren’t wasted. I drew from them three assets. One was a firm conviction that the real world would prove you right or wrong when the products of your work were put to the test, perhaps by harsh weather, or under the pressure of high-speed printing presses. Second was that this result depended on a certain precision of method: you could never know if you were right or wrong unless you had carefully entered in your notebook each step you had taken. The third asset was a lasting acquaintance with working-class styles of speech – ways of arguing, joking, telling stories, and passing the time during the noon hour break. These were the elements that I put to work in a field that came to be called sociolinguistics, or later on, the study of linguistic change and variation.

## **1 Donald Poole, Martha’s Vineyard**

My first chance to test this approach was on a visit to a friend on the island of Martha’s Vineyard, where I noticed a particular way of speaking that had not been reported before. It is not easy to describe in print without phonetic notation, but it may best be

described as a close-mouthed style of articulation. The vowels of *right* and *out*, which are diphthongs beginning with the sound of “ah” for most dialects, began with the jaw half-closed, as in the first vowel of *about*. It was particularly interesting because the Linguistic Atlas of New England, a generation before, had reported a very different pronunciation for Vineyarders, and the change was actually reversing the direction of history. I began to trace this sound change by recording people in many parts of the island. The first interviews I did reflected the traditional methods of dialect geography, posing questions about New England regional words and expressions. One of the first people I talked to was Donald Poole, an eighth-generation descendant of Yankee whalers and fishermen. He was one of the key figures in the little fishing town of Menemsha; in fact, I was later told that long-term summer people counted themselves as having arrived if Donald Poole said hello to them on the dock. And Donald Poole was a great speaker. You couldn’t talk to him for five minutes without being drawn into the major issues of living and the struggle to earn a living. As I listened to him, I became more and more immersed in what he was saying as well as how he was saying it.

You see you people who come down here to Martha’s Vineyard don’t understand the background of the old families on the island. Our interests run that way, our thoughts still run that way, I’m speaking now of the descendants of the old families. Now what we’re interested in the rest of America, this part over here across the water that belongs to you and we don’t have anything to do with, has forgotten all about the maritime tradition and the fact that if it hadn’t been for the interest that the early settlers of this country took in the ocean, as whalemens, fishermen, and as seamen and merchant sailors, this country couldn’t have existed, the Plymouth Colony would’ve been a failure.

It became clear that Poole was a prime exponent of Weber’s Protestant Ethic, with its strong emphasis on the importance of work as a calling. We talked about this.

WL: What reason do people have to work. ... harder than – than they have to to earn a living?

DP: I can answer that for you ‘cause I’ve already worked it out and argued the point with a good many men. It’s the satisfaction of feeling that you have accomplished something over and above the bare necessities of life. You take a pride ... of doing the best that you can according to your ability ... I don’t have to go fishing. I can quit right now ... and be comfortable. But just as long as I draw the breath of life I’ll be down in my boat in the morning, at six or half past six in the morning, bound somewhere, doing all that I can, as best as I can, to the best of my ability and knowledge ... because I take a pride in doing that, something I know and I feel that I’m doing something ... important. And I’m happier doing that than I would be sitting round to the beach.

A man with a New England conscience can’t sit still. Does that answer your question?

The particular sound change I was focusing on was exemplified in Donald Poole’s way of saying, “I take a *pride* in doin’ that.” We can refer to it as “centralization,” because at

**Table 25.1** Index of centralization.

<i>Index</i>	<i>Nucleus</i>	<i>Phonetic notation</i>	
		<i>/ay/ in right</i>	<i>/aw/ in now</i>
0	[a]	[raɪt]	[naʊ]
1	[aː]	[raːɪt]	[naːʊ]
2	[ɐ]	[rɛɪt]	[nɛʊ]
3	[ə]	[rɛɪt]	[nɛʊ]

the beginning of the diphthong, the tongue moves closer to the center of the mouth. To track this variation across many social dimensions, I created a 4-point scale of centralization, shown in Table 25.1.

Using both acoustic and auditory measurement, I was able to establish a mean centralization value of the vowels /ay/ and /aw/ for each individual. The progress of the sound change on the island seemed variable in the extreme, correlated not only with age, but also by gender, occupation, neighborhood, and ethnicity. My interviewing methods shifted accordingly to a broader range of social issues. In my interviews with fishermen, farmers, local businessmen, across three generations; with Yankees, Gay Head Indians, and Portuguese, I found a connection between the sound change and the major concerns that troubled people in everyday life. I found that the local people were under great pressure from the wealthy summer people from the mainland, who were buying up as much of the shoreline property as they could. Some younger people left the island to earn a living on the mainland, but others stayed and resisted this outside pressure. Centralization was strongest among them. Donald Poole was archetypical, for his generation. His son, Everett Poole, was even more so. He had returned from college to set up a business selling fish on the Menemsha docks, and his centralization values were the most extreme. Where his father used /ay/-2 in "I take a pride [prɑɪd] in doin' that," his son used /ay/-3 in "He tried [trɑɪd] and [trɑɪd] until he was [tɑɪrd] [vɒt] en[tɑɪrli]."

Reviewing the interviews as a whole, some expressed positive orientation toward remaining on and working on the island; others were neutral, and a small number were negative, indicating a strong motivation to leave the island. The clearest correlation found between centralization and social factors is shown as Table 25.2, which

**Table 25.2** Relation of centralization to orientation toward Martha's Vineyard.

<i>Persons</i>	<i>Orientation to the island</i>	<i>Centralization</i>	
		<i>(ay)</i>	<i>(aw)</i>
40	Positive	63	62
19	Neutral	32	42
6	Negative	09	08

associates centralization with orientation toward the island. Forty people with positive orientation had values of 62 and 63; 19 with a neutral position had values of 32 and 42; and six who were negative toward the island had centralization values of only 9 and 8.

Thus centralization emerged as a symbol of social identity, driven by an unconscious mechanism of *incrementation*, as the struggle to maintain local rights and privileges intensifies across generations. The finding (Labov 1963) has been generally accepted, frequently cited, and taken as paradigmatic for the social motivation of sound change. Studies of other small communities under outside pressure have found a similar resurgence of linguistic markers of social identity. Two linguists have revisited Martha's Vineyard to see what has happened in recent years. One (Blake and Josey 2003) found that the phenomenon was no longer present. The other (Pope *et al.* 2007) found that it was – that it had continued vigorously for some time, but showed signs of recession among the youngest speakers.

## 2 Jacob Schissel, New York City

The Martha's Vineyard study was my Master's Essay. My dissertation was an attack on a larger problem, the widespread variability in the speech of New York City, which had frequently been described as "chaotic" and "unpredictable." The problem of method became central here. New Yorkers were acutely self-conscious and consistently negative in regard to their local dialect; when any attention was paid to language, they tended to correct their pronunciation in an irregular fashion toward a form of speech, as different from New York as possible. I had to overcome this tendency if I wanted to record the vernacular which was my target – that is, the first-learned form of language that is used with friends and family when no outside observer was present. For that reason, my interview method developed techniques for eliciting narratives of personal experience, where speakers were so deeply involved in what they were saying that they paid little attention to speech. I used this instrument in a survey of the Lower East Side of New York City, building on a random sample constructed for a social science project.<sup>2</sup> In the summer of 1963, I called on the brownstone house of Jacob Schissel, 63 years old, who had recently retired from the postal service. At one point in the interview, I asked Schissel if he had ever been in a situation where he thought he was going to be killed. He said, "Yes. My brother put a knife in my head." I said, "What happened?" He said:

- a This was just–uh–a few days after my father died
- b and we were sittin' shive.
- c And the reason the fight started–
- d this was out in Coney Island–
- e and he started talk about it.
- f And my mother had just sat down to have a cup of coffee,
- g and I told him to cut it out.
- h 'Course kids, y'know, he don't hafta listen to me.
- i So that's when I grabbed his arm and twisted it up behind him.
- j When I let go his arm,

k there was a knife on the table,  
 l he just picked it up  
 m and he let me have it.  
 n And ... I started bleed-like a pig.  
 o And naturally first thing to do, run to the doctor,  
 p and the doctor just says,  
     "Just about this much more," he says,  
     "and you'd a been dead."

I have been living with this narrative for 45 years. Whether I tell it or I play the tape, it has an extraordinary force that commands the attention of an audience, large or small, creating a profound and impressive silence. In trying to understand how this and other narratives told in our interviews can transfer the experience of the speaker to the listener in such a compelling way, I have been drawn into the study of narrative itself. There are some cultural details in Schissel's story that are specific to the Jewish community: the family sits shive, that is, seven days for the dead, and the preference for silence at that time; but the issues of life and death, and how we deal with them, are universal. In 1967 I wrote a paper with Joshua Waletzky on Narrative Analysis. It provided a structural framework that is today widely used in the field of narrative studies, and is actually cited in more than half of the papers published in the journal, *Narrative Inquiry*. One of my later papers on narrative wrestles with the central question of this and many other narratives: What brings about the sudden escalation of violence, where words give way to action and aggression (Labov 1985)? I will be pursuing that issue further in my next project, a book on oral narratives of personal experience, with the title, *The Language of Life and Death*.

But what are the linguistic implications of Jacob Schissel's interview? As a speaker of the New York City vernacular, he used the traditional *r*-less pronunciation in which *guard* and *god*, *source* and *sauce* are not distinguished. In "He started talk about it," the word *started* is heard as [stɑ:tld] and the word *arm* in lines i and j is pronounced [ɑ:m]. This is one of the variable features of New York speech that I set out to study. Figure 25.1 shows the percent of consonantal [r] used by Jacob Schissel in five styles in the course of the interview: arranged along the horizontal axis: *casual speech*, as in his narratives; *careful speech*, in the main body of the interview; and with increasing focus on /r/, a *reading passage*; *word lists*; and finally *minimal pairs*, where the person is asked to read pairs like "god" and "guard," "dock" and "dark" and say for each pair whether they are the same or different. As an older, traditional user of the NYC pattern, Schissel used almost no consonantal /r/ except in reading word lists, where he pronounced /r/ 30 percent of the time, and pronouncing minimal pairs, 75 percent of the time. In itself, this tells us nothing more than that Jacob Schissel thought that he *should* pronounce /r/ as a consonant. But when we superimpose his pattern on the Lower East Side study as a whole, in Figure 25.2, we see that it is a reflection of the social and stylistic stratification that unites the city as a whole. For each style, there is social differentiation of the use of consonantal /r/. At the same time, New Yorkers agree in their evaluation of /r/. All social class groups increase consonantal /r/ with increasing attention paid to speech – middle class, upper working class, lower working class. This display of independent effects of style and social class changed the view of the urban speech community from *chaotic*

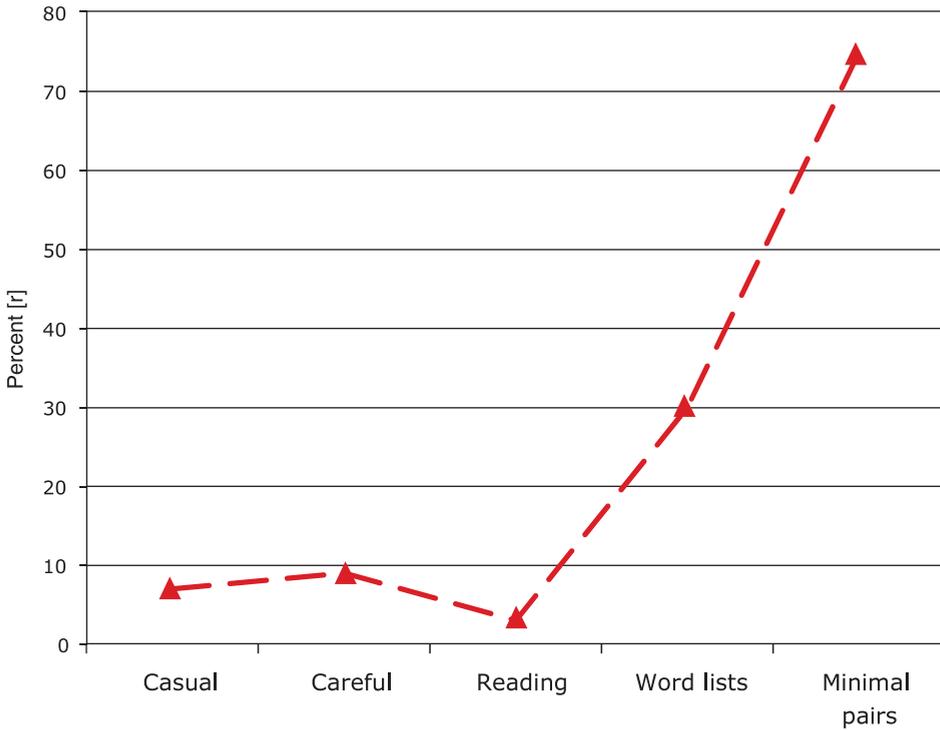


Figure 25.1 Use of consonantal /r/ by Jacob Schissel in five contextual styles.

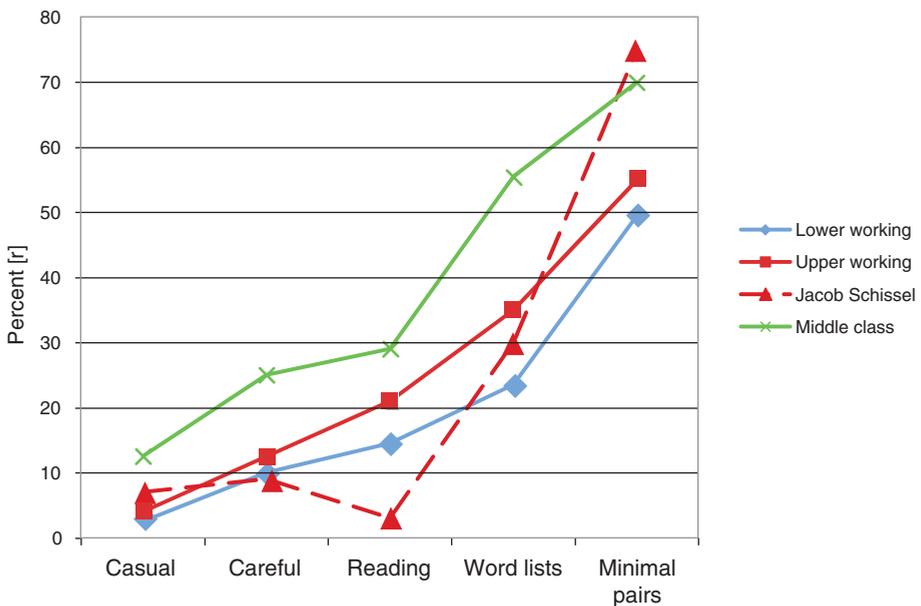


Figure 25.2 Stylistic and social stratification of /r/ in New York City.

*unpredictability to orderly heterogeneity*, and created a new paradigm for sociolinguistic inquiry. The study of (r) was combined with four other variables in my dissertation, which was published as *The Social Stratification of English in New York City* in 1966. We see in the constant slope of style shifting, a community united by consensus; yet in each context, differentiated by social class. Similar patterns have since been found in many other cities and many other languages. The study of such sociolinguistic variables has since yielded rich information on how sharply stratified a community is, the degree of social mobility, and how linguistic change moves through the social system.<sup>3</sup>

### 3 Larry Hawthorne, South Harlem

The random survey of the Lower East Side included a good percentage of African Americans. Through a number of incidental and accidental observations, I became convinced that the techniques for approaching the vernacular of white speakers didn't work well for them. The speech I recorded from the various African American subjects in the sample reflected more their accommodation to me than the speech patterns they used when they were talking to each other. At the same time I became aware that a study of the African American vernacular might be helpful in attacking one of the major problems of our society: the minority gap in academic achievement. I obtained funds from the Office of Education to approach this problem in a systematic way, and set up a team of linguists and African American field workers.<sup>4</sup> We rented a club house on 112th Street, and there interviewed members of all the named groups of African American youth in a four block area: the pre-adolescent Thunderbirds and Aces, the adolescent Jets and Cobras, the young adult Oscar Brothers. In many interviews at the club house and group sessions held in a Columbia basement we came close to solving the Observer's Paradox: that is, to observe how people behave when they are not being observed. One of the core members of the Jets was Larry Hawthorne. He was then 16 years old, one of the six best fighters of the group, a gifted storyteller and a speaker of uncommon eloquence. Here is an excerpt from an interview with Larry conducted by KC, who appeared to the Jets as an older version of themselves (the initials KC refer to his boxing name, "Kid Chocolate"). Many of the youth had become involved in the Nation of Islam, and KC was engaging Larry in a Socratic dialogue on matters of belief.

KC: Uh what happens to you after you die, do you know?

LH: Yeah, I know. After they put you in the ground, your body turns into bones an' shit.

KC: What happens to your spirit?

LH: Soon as you die, your spirit leaves you.

KC: Where does the spirit go?

LH: Well, it all depend.

KC: On what?

LH: You know, ah, like some people say if you're good an' shit, your spirit goin' to heavn, an if you be bad, your spirit goin' to hell, well bullshit, your spirit goin' to hell anyway, good or bad.

KC: Why?

- LH: Why? why? I'll tell you why. 'Cause you see, doesn't nobody know that it's s  
god, you know. 'cause I mean I have seen black gods, pink gods, white gods, all  
color gods, and don't nobody know i's really a god, and when they be sayin' if  
you good you're goin' to heaven, that's bullshit
- KC: Is that so?
- LH: You ain't goin' to no heaven. 'Cause it ain't no heaven for you to go to. [SLIDE]
- KC: Well if there's no heaven, how can there be a hell?
- LH: I mean, yeah ... hm ... well let me tell you, it ain't no hell, 'cause this is hell right  
here, you know?
- KC: So this is hell?
- LH: Yeah. This is hell right here.

As you will have observed, the game being played here is governed at each turn by the rules of logic. KC's question, "how can there be a hell?" presumes the propositions, "The God who created heaven is the one who created hell; so if there is no heaven there is no hell." Larry's logic, and his observation of the world around him, leads him to the same conclusion that Christopher Marlowe puts into the mouth of Mephistopheles in his version of *Faust*. "Why this is hell, nor am I out of it." KC pursues the matter further, pressing Larry on one of his favorite questions: Is God black or white?

- KC: But, just say that there is a god. What color is he? White or black?
- LH: Well, if it is a god ... I wouldn't know what color, I wouldn't say, couldn't  
nobody say what color he really would be
- KC: But now, jus' suppose there was a god.
- LH: Unless'n they saw him.
- KC: But just suppose there is a god. Would he be white or black? ... do you know?
- LH: ... He be white, man.
- KC: Why?
- LH: Why? I'll tell you why. 'Cause it – the average whitey out here got everything,  
you dig it? an' the nigger ain't got shit, you know, you understand? so um, for  
then, or that to happen, you know it ain't no black god that's doin' that bullshit?  
...
- KC: Yeah, I got to go for that, boy!
- LH: Dig it, that's square business, man!

I quoted this passage in an article called "The Logic of Nonstandard English" (1969b). The paper was a response to the then common view of educational psychologists that African American youth have no true language of their own – what they speak is a series of emotional cries, giant words, with no logical structure, and they must learn to speak standard English before they can learn anything else. The article has been reprinted hundreds of times, more than anything else I have written, and the quotation from Larry has been cited many more times than that.<sup>5</sup> The argument that I put forward, that African American Vernacular English is a well-formed dialect with all of the structure necessary for logical thought, was common to linguists but not to teachers and educators. The view that it argued against – that this form of speech

is nothing but a collection of bad words and mistakes, and that poor black children are mentally handicapped by it – is not dead. Indeed, a rather proper English educator, John Honey, based a whole book on the theme that Larry wasn't logical after all (1997).

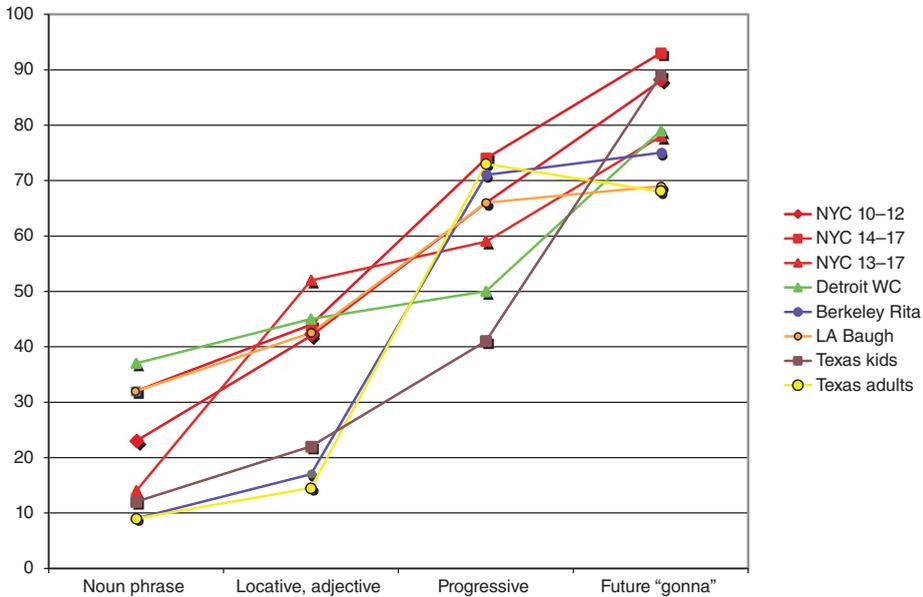
Our studies of Larry's dialect had a considerable effect on the field of linguistics. For the first time, we studied the internal linguistic factors that control variation – that is, the phonological and grammatical environment. I can best illustrate this by referring to the one variable that took the most attention, the variation in the realization of the verb and auxiliary IS. Every speaker of this dialect uses *three* different variants:

Full form	don't nobody know if it is a god
Contracted	it ain't no black god that's doin' that bullshit
Zero form	if you be bad, your spirit goin' to hell

Other dialects show only two, the full and contracted form, but not zero. Some early observers of this dialect, familiar with Caribbean Creole languages, argued that the zero form was the true dialect, and the others were importations from standard English (Bailey 1965). But we concluded from the systematic way in which the forms of it varied, according to the preceding and following elements, that the copula had a firm foundation as the full form in the underlying grammar; that contraction removed the vowel if it was unstressed, and that the zero form was a further extension of contraction that removed the consonant (Labov 1969a). These patterns of copula deletion were replicated in many other studies, showing something more astonishing: that African American Vernacular English has the same uniform grammar across the entire United States. Figure 25.3, put together by John Rickford, superimposes the results of eight studies of the effect of the following grammatical element on the deletion. The vertical axis is the percent of the zero form of IS. The horizontal axis shows the following grammatical form: a noun phrase, as in *He my brother* with the lowest percentage, then adjectives as in *he crazy*; and locatives as in *He outside*; progressive verbs, as in *He talkin' a lot*; and the future form *He gonna do it*. The solid black lines show our Harlem studies: the Thunderbirds, the Jets, and the Cobras. The dashed line is Walt Wolfram's 1967 study (see Wolfram 1969) of adolescent speakers in Detroit; the dotted line is a speaker from the Bay area; the gray circles show John Baugh's research in Pacoima, a black suburb of Los Angeles; and the white symbols are results from Bailey and Cukor-Avila's long-term study of a small town in Texas. The basic pattern is replicated throughout the United States, along with all other grammatical features of this dialect. An explanation of this pattern is still high on the agenda for the many students of change and variation who are concerned with the speech of African Americans (Baugh 1980). Even more challenging is the problem of accounting for the uniformity of the grammar of African American Vernacular English as it has formed and developed in the second half of the twentieth century (Labov and Harris 1986).

#### 4 Celeste Sullivan, 1973

My major interest in the study of language has always been on the causes of linguistic change – and particularly change from within the system, not borrowed from some



**Figure 25.3** Percent deletion of the copula and auxiliary *is* in four grammatical environments for eight studies of AAVE (from Rickford *et al.* 1991).

outside center of prestige. In New York City, a third of the vowels were engaged in such internal change. In 1970, I moved to the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, where two thirds of the vowels were changing. While the causes of such instability remained mysterious, we made some progress by changing the question from “Why does language change?” to “Who is changing the language?” An hypothesis emerged from the New York City study and two others that followed the same methods: Peter Trudgill’s work in Norwich England (1974), and Henrietta Cedergren’s study of Panama City, Panama (1973). The “curvilinear” hypothesis argued that internal linguistic change was not initiated in the highest or lowest social classes, as had previously been thought, but began in the centrally located upper working and lower middle classes.

I therefore engaged in a search for the leaders of linguistic change in Philadelphia throughout the 1970s, with long-term studies of 10 neighborhoods, stratified by social class. One of the upper-working-class neighborhoods was in South Philadelphia where we met Celeste Sullivan. She was a central figure on her block, and acted as a sponsor, introducing us to many other people. She was also a strong exponent of Philadelphia vowel shifts. But the effect of this strong local accent is submerged in the impression of a powerful personality, an arranger and controller of the world of social relations. I will introduce her to you by one of six narratives from Chapter 12 of my second volume on *Principles of Linguistic Change* (2001a) – a chapter devoted to the description of the leaders of linguistic change in Philadelphia. Here she is being interviewed by our gifted field worker Anne Bower. The story involves USO canteens for servicemen set up during World War II.

My mother used to say – I used to go to the movies and she used to send a couple of boys up the street to watch who I used to be in the movies with. (Did she really?) Oh yeah.

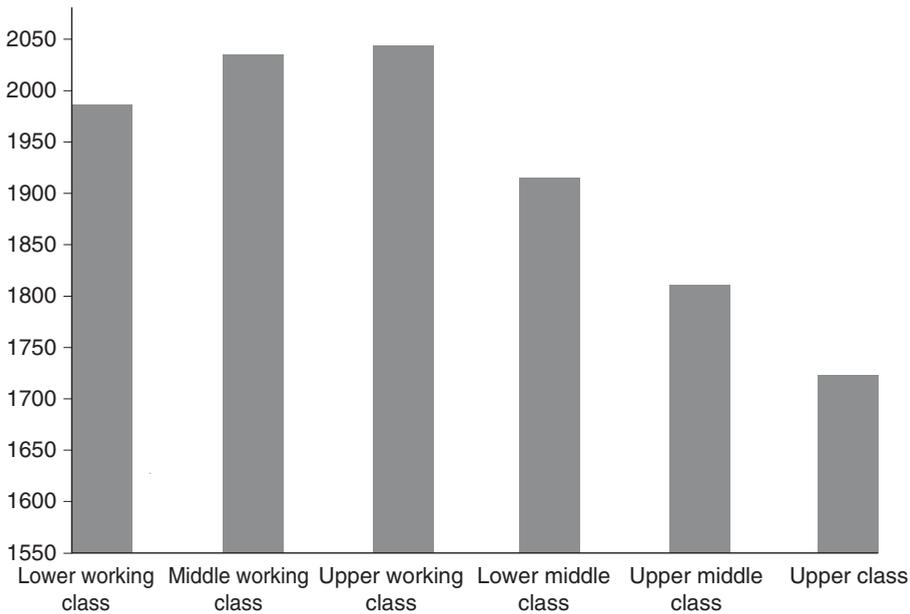
But we were in cahoots, the boys and I. That's the only way you could get out – like we'd date. I would date. And like ... my father would say, "Where you goin'?" "Well daddy now look! Georgie's gonna take me –" Georgie down the street. And daddy thought, "Oh boy, she's safe with Georgie." So Georgie would go *his* way, and I would go *my* way. And then we would meet, see, at a certain time. I'd say, "Georgie please! Please, Georgie don't do that to me! You better be there!" He'd say, "Don't worry –" 'cause his father was just as bad as my father. We would meet, and we'd come home like two nice little kids.

But I used to go dance at the canteen. (The canteen?) Yeah they had a canteen that was all service men. And you couldn't get in if you didn't have a date. And you'd have to be a service man – to take you in. But once you got in you could leave this guy, you know, and dance with everybody else. And that's what we used to do, stand in the corner. And wait for the fellas, and they'd – I'd say to one of the sailors, "Are you going in there?" And he'd say "Yeah", and I'd say "Would you take me in?" "Sure!" And they would take you – and nothing *bad* would happen in there. They really ran – the Salvation Army ran a beautiful thing. There was only coffee and doughnuts, there was no drinking, and soda, and music. All night you'd *dance, dance, dance*.

One of the most prominent features of the Philadelphia vowel system is heard in a set of words spelled with short *a*; in this narrative the most prominent examples are the words *bad* and *dance*. The vowel in which this short *a* is realized is similar to the vowel spelled "ea" in *idea*.<sup>6</sup> This sound change is long established in the city, with little difference across age groups, but strong social stratification: the lower the social class, the more extreme the shifting of short *a* away from the vowel of *cat* toward the vowel of *idea*.

An even more striking feature of the Philadelphia sound system is the vowel of *down* in "down the street" (the diphthong /aw/). Older Philadelphians begin this vowel with the sound of "cat" followed by the sound of "oh." The advanced Philadelphia form of this vowel can be approximated by pronouncing the word "day," rapidly followed by "on" (pronounced to rhyme with *awn*). As a result of this sound change, most Philadelphians pronounce the word *crown* in exactly the same way as *crayon* – the two words are homonyms.

This shift in the pronunciation of the vowel /aw/ in *down*, *south*, *out*, and so on, is a new and vigorous change in Philadelphia, negatively correlated with age. It is one of three such changes that allowed us to test the curvilinear hypothesis by examining the social distribution of the vowel. A curvilinear pattern for /aw/ did emerge as shown in Figure 25.4, confirming the hypothesis. Here the horizontal axis displays six social class groups in the Philadelphia neighborhood study (Labov 1980, 2001a). The vertical axis is an acoustic measure<sup>7</sup> which is correlated with the range of pronunciation just described. A value of 1750, the mean for the upper-class speakers at extreme right, will sound like the vowel of *cat*. Values over 2000, characteristic of the three working-class groups, correspond to a vowel beginning with the "day" sound as described above. Note that this is not a monotonic function of class: the upper working class has significantly higher values than the middle and lower working class.

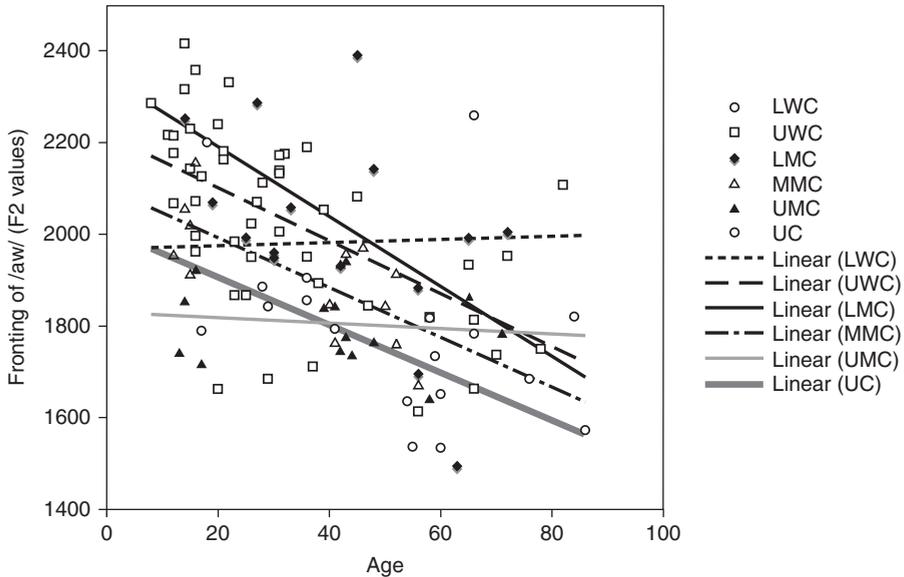


**Figure 25.4** The curvilinear pattern for social class in the fronting of /aw/ in *south, down, out*, etc. in Philadelphia.

We can locate Celeste S. in this distribution with the scattergram of Figure 25.5, displaying the mean values for this measure of /aw/ for each of 112 individual speakers in the Philadelphia Neighborhood Study. The horizontal axis is age; the vertical axis is the acoustic measure of this shift of the /aw/ vowel in *down, south*, and so on, the same as in Figure 25.4. Socioeconomic class – a measure that combines occupation, education and income – is divided into six categories, each with a different symbol. The lines are partial regression lines showing the trend for each class. The solid black line indicates the trend for the lower middle class – the most upwardly mobile section of the population. It shows the steepest rate of change and reaches the highest values among younger speakers.

In this classification, Celeste falls into the lower middle class. Her husband was a draftsman; their house was a well-maintained, remodeled row house in one of the more prosperous neighborhoods of South Philadelphia. Her individual mean for /aw/ is indicated on Figure 25.6: at 47 years old, she showed a mean of 2392 Hz. She is not the very highest in the sample, but she is considerably ahead of the predicted mean for her age group, which is below 2000.

There is much more to the story of Celeste. Figure 25.6 is a sociometric network for this block, based on who named who as friends in the interviews. Celeste is a sociometric star at the center of the network, with symmetrical arrows showing who she named and who named her. The number above her name is the /aw/ index: she is the highest. The number below her name is a communication index, which combines the density of contacts within the neighborhood with the proportion of contacts outside the neighborhood. For this measure, she is also the highest. Thus Celeste fits into



**Figure 25.5** Scattergram of the fronting of /aw/ vs. age in the Philadelphia Neighborhoods study. LWC = lower working class; MMC = middle working class; UWC = upper working class; LMC = lower middle class; UMC = upper middle class; UC = upper class.

the model of the two-step flow of influence developed by Katz and Lazarsfeld in their studies of the diffusion of innovation in Decatur, Illinois (1955). Figure 25.7 displays the model, in which information and influence do not flow evenly from the larger society to all members of the group. Rather there are a small number of individuals – variously called influentials, or opinion leaders – who receive and transmit the latest forms, fashions, ideas, and information to those in the network around them.

Celeste was not simply a conduit of information and fashion. She was a powerful force for altering the social world around her. In her narrative she deals with the heavily controlling influence of the patriarchal Italian family. She deals with her father through Georgie. And she controls Georgie as well: “You better be there!” She manipulates the rules of the canteen by negotiating with the sailors who take her in. And once inside, she organizes things as well. She told another story of how she said to a friend at the canteen, “You see that guy in the corner? I’m going to marry him.” “Oh you’re crazy! You don’t even know who he is!” But she did marry him; that was Jim Sullivan, the draftsman whose Irish name she bears.

Through the study of Celeste’s career, and a half dozen others, we began to define more closely these leaders of linguistic change. They are young women, from the second or third generation of newly arriving ethnic groups, upwardly mobile, defiant of social norms that they consider unwarranted and unjust, and quick to intervene when they judge things to be going wrong.<sup>8</sup> Essentially, they are non-conformists; non-conformity seems to be intimately involved with the incrementation of language change.

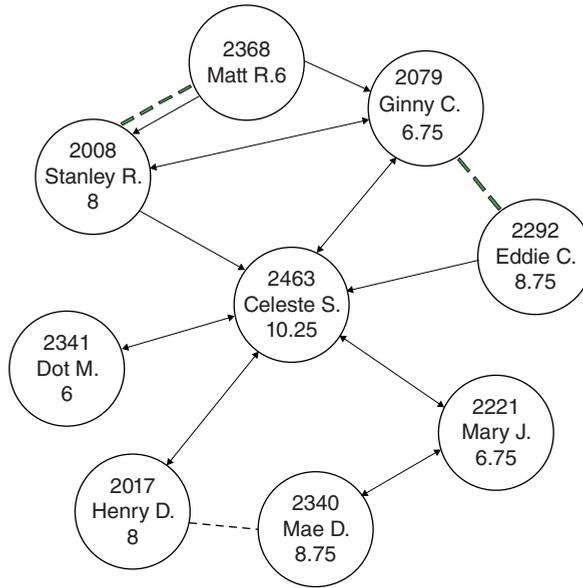


Figure 25.6 Sociometric diagram of friends mentioned on the block of Celeste S.

## 5 Jackie Garopedian, Chicago

Further explorations of linguistic change in North America found radical dialect differences in many big cities, and in the 1980s I obtained funds to assess the effect of these extreme differences on people’s ability to understand one another. The Project on Cross-Dialectal Comprehension selected three cities: Philadelphia, Chicago, and Birmingham.

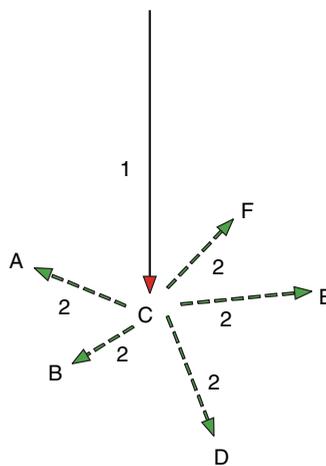


Figure 25.7 The two-step flow of influence.

My colleague Sharon Ash set out to locate and record the most advanced speakers of the local dialects of Chicago and Birmingham. She was armed with the findings of our Philadelphia study in searching for the leaders of linguistic change. In Chicago, she selected the University of Illinois, Chicago Circle, where she recorded a half dozen speakers who matched the profiles of leaders of linguistic change we had found in Philadelphia: upwardly mobile young women from newly arrived ethnic groups. From these interviews, we extracted extreme instances of sound change in each city. We constructed experiments in which we played isolated words for subjects to identify, then the same words in the context of the surrounding phrase, then once more in the full context of the original sentence. We carried out these experiments in local colleges and high schools of the three cities; in each city, subjects heard words, phrases, and sentences from their own city and from the two others.

One of these young women in Chicago was Jackie Garopedian, a 19-year-old freshman at UIC. In her speech, we found what we sought: many advanced forms of the sound changes characteristic of Chicago. In her spontaneous speech, vowels were rotated in such an extreme form that the great majority of listeners heard the words as quite different from what was intended. Table 25.3 shows five items from the experiments in which Jackie was the speaker:

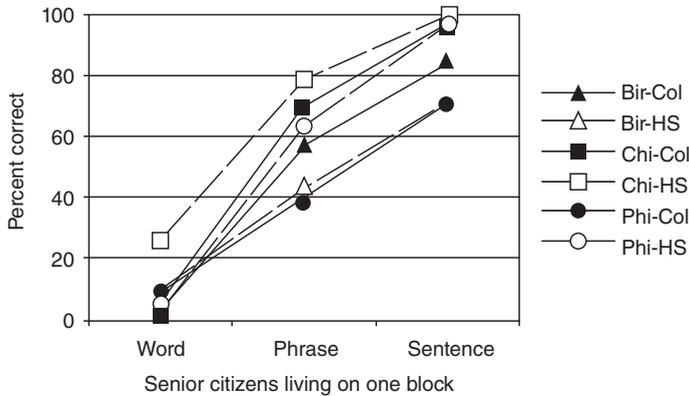
The experimental results for the first item are shown in Figure 25.8. Played as an isolated word, Jackie's *block* was perceived as *black* by less than 90 percent of each experimental group, except for the Chicago high school students, where 23 percent were correct. With increasing context, the percent correct increases sharply, but even in the full sentence, a sizable percent of the subjects refused to believe that the word was actually intended as *block*: 30 percent of Philadelphia college students and Birmingham high school students, and 20 percent of Birmingham college students.

It is clear that something radical has happened to the vowels spoken by Jackie Garopedian. In any given minute of her speech there will be many vowels that out of context would be misunderstood.<sup>9</sup> For example, here is Jackie speaking about the meaning of dreams. I've italicized the words that bear most eloquent witness to the Northern Cities Shift.

Well, I believe that if someone dreams about *death*, that it means change, positive change. Ahm, I had a dream that my mother was *dead*, and uh, although I woke up

**Table 25.3** List of items that are characteristic of sound changes in Chicago.

<i>Word intended</i>		<i>Word perceived</i>	<i>Full context spoken</i>
block	→	black	Senior citizens living on one block
socks	→	sacks	Y'hadda wear sandals. No socks.
desk	→	dusk	That's why I like that, sitting behind a desk.
steady	→	study	You were steady for a while.
buses	→	bosses	I could remember vaguely, when we had the busses with the antennas on the top.



**Figure 25.8** Percent correct identification of *block* spoken by Jackie G. in cross-dialectal comprehension gating experiments.

kind of scared, I just looked at it as a kind of change, you know, either marriage, or something, I know she just got a new *job*, she works for A.M.A., so I – *that's* why, you know I put it towards *that*, that she just got, that's what my dream was about. *Friend* of mine had a dream that um – this one guy died, and he lives downstairs from me, and she actually *saw* him in the *coffin*. And his sister *dreamt* the same dream, and his cousin *dreamt* the same dream. Three people *dreamt* the same dream about this guy. Now *that* – that kind of gets me a little scared now, 'Kay, three different people, dreaming about the same guy in the same dream ... We don't *tell* him about this dream, *not* to get him worried, but um –

Jackie's rendition of the Northern Cities vowels, in *that*, *job*, *death*, and *dreamt*, are intimately embedded in her forceful personal style. At one point in the interview, Sherry discovered that Jackie does quite a bit of bar-hopping. So she asked again about her age, and got this remarkable account.

SA: How old are you?

JG: Ah ... 19. I have a fake ID ... that uh a police officer by the way gave me, we won't mention his name.

SA: Give me the story about it.

JG: Well my girl friend goes to Illinois State University out in Normal, Illinois and met a policeman out there who gave us – he confiscated these ID's from other girls, and says, "Take this back to Chicago and put it to use." And it happens that this girl looks like me, she's got the brown eyes, the brown hair, the height, the weight, so all's I did was memorize the social security number and their address, and it's fine, it gets me everywhere. I mean I don't take it – I don't go out crazy, in this bar, like I walk out staggering, I you know. I know I have my limits.

It is clear from this and other excerpts that Jackie conforms to our model of a leader of linguistic change, a non-conformist who molds the circumstances of the world to fit her own view of what to do and how to do it.

At this point, we must confront the problem of the individual versus the community. I have presented five of them and tried to show you what I have learned from each. Yet in my view of language, it is the community, not the individual, that is the significant unit. I have presented Donald Poole, Jacob Schissel, Larry Hawthorne, and Celeste Sullivan as archetypical of the communities they represent. They do have individual styles and particular traits of speaking, but what we learn most from them is their projection of community norms. In this respect, Jackie Garapedian raises a problem. We selected her as an individual who is likely to represent a new change in progress. But what community does she represent and what change is in progress? Is her speech the realization of a community process, or is she an exceptional individual?

First, it is important to note that the sound changes in her speech pattern are not isolated events. They are locked into a tight structure in which one change triggers another in a complete rotation. It begins with a raising and fronting of short *a*, similar to that which was heard in Philadelphia *bad* and *dance*. In Northern Cities like Chicago this shift affects *every* word with short *a*, including *bat*, *cat*, *that*, *attitude*, and *animadversion*.<sup>10</sup> With all short *a* words out of the way, short *o* moves into the short *a* space, as heard in Jackie's *block* and *socks*. Next, short *e* words move toward short *u*, as heard in her *desk* and *steady*, and short *u* in *busses* shifts toward the vowel of *bosses* ("long open o"). The wheel comes full circle when we see that Jackie's pronunciation of *stalk* is mistaken by others for *stock*, the short *o* class of *block* and *socks* which we noted at the beginning. Figure 25.9 shows the rotation of these vowels in Jackie's phonetic space.<sup>11</sup>

The sound shifts of Figure 25.9 are not idiosyncratic to Jackie's speech. Exploratory studies of Chicago in the 1960s had shown the first two stages among the short vowels *a* and *o*. Most of the sound shifts in the history of English have been changes in the pronunciation of long vowels, not the short ones. But after a thousand years of stability, sometime in the middle of the twentieth century, the English short vowels of Chicago began to shift their relative positions in the pattern of Figure 25.9, which we named the *Northern Cities Shift* (Labov, Yaeger, and Steiner 1972). Granted that Jackie represented the main tendencies of Chicago speech, the question remains, how large is the speech community that she represents?

We confronted this problem in constructing the next big project, the *Atlas of North American English*. The first report on the pronunciation of English dialects was the Linguistic Atlas of New England in 1934, but as late as the 1990s, studies in American dialect geography had not succeeded in extending our view of English vowels and consonants much beyond the eastern states. The country was too big, and linguistic change too fast, to obtain by current methods a view of the whole at any one time. Sherry Ash,

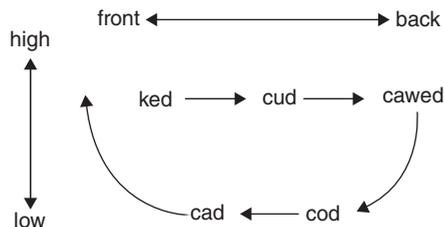
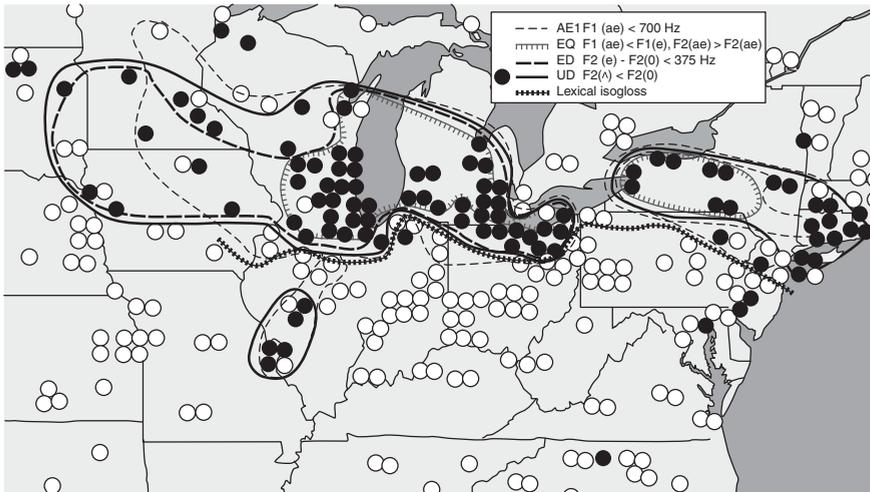


Figure 25.9 Rotation of Northern Cities Shift vowels in phonetic space.



**Figure 25.10** The Inland North as defined by the Northern Cities Shift. Black circles and solid black isogloss = UD measure: the vowel of *cuđ* is further back than the vowel of *cod*. ED, EQ, and AE1 are other acoustic measures of the Northern Cities Shift. ON = area where *on* rhymes with *awn*. OW = area where the vowel of *go* is not fronted. Lexical isogloss = southern limit of northern agricultural vocabulary, reflecting nineteenth-century Yankee settlement patterns.

Charles Boberg, and I decided to solve this problem by conducting a telephone survey of all cities over 50,000 population. The first two people to answer their phone and say they were born and raised in that city would represent the speech pattern of that city. Our first question was whether such a method would find any speakers as extreme as Jackie Garapedian. Our second question was whether such speakers would be found outside of the few big cities where it had been reported.<sup>12</sup>

The answer to both questions was a surprising yes. The Atlas survey of 768 subjects found many speakers with patterns as extreme as Jackie Garapedian or more so (Labov, Ash, and Boberg 2006). Furthermore, the Northern Cities Shift was not a special feature of Chicago English. The Northern Cities Shift occupies a vast area around the Great Lakes: Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, Toledo, Flint, Grand Rapids, Chicago, Joliet, Kenosha, Milwaukee. The Atlas shows that the Northern Cities Shift extends over a territory of 88,000 square miles affecting some 134,000,000 people. Given the great mobility of the American population, and the intense exposure of the population to a relatively uniform media, one might have expected a pepper-and-salt pattern with small evidence of regional differences. Figure 25.10 shows how uniform the results actually are. The black circles are speakers who show the pattern of Jackie Garapedian's pronunciation where *busses* is heard as *bosses* and *block* is heard as *black*. The mean measurements of the vowel in *busses* and *cut* reflect a pronunciation further back in the mouth than the vowel in *block* and *cot*. The empty circles show just the opposite relations of the two word classes: *busses* and *cut* are further front than *bother* and *cot*. The distribution of black circles north of the boundary and empty circles south of the boundary is almost perfect.<sup>13</sup>

Figure 25.10 superimposes the boundaries of three other acoustic measures of the Northern Cities Shift and several other boundaries of Northern speech. Perhaps the

most remarkable fact is that these limits of current pronunciation also coincide with the lexical boundary that marks the southern limit of Northern vocabulary — largely agricultural terms that reflect the Yankee settlement pattern of the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>14</sup> A major problem that now confronts us is to explain why the sound changes that began in the middle of the twentieth century stop short on the boundaries established a century earlier.

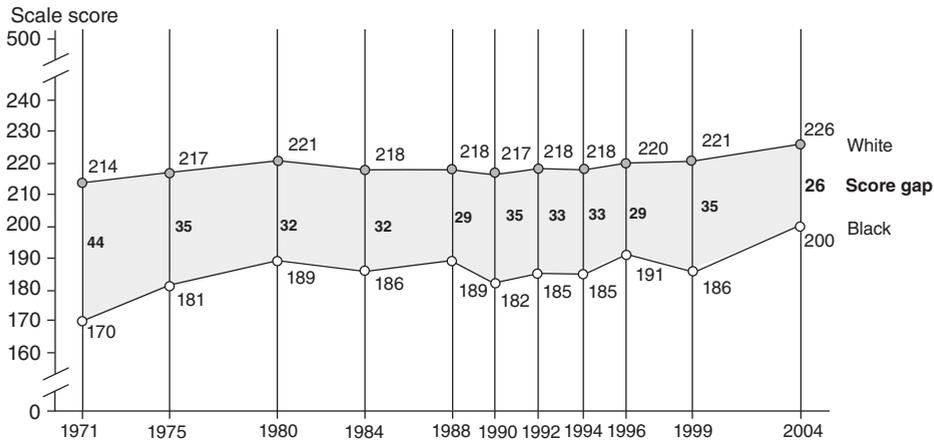
A clue may be found when we note that the underlying linguistic change in western New York State coincided with the social upheaval associated with the building of the Erie Canal. The ensuing rapid population development was followed by the great religious ferment of the second Great Awakening and the formation of the Republican Party on an anti-slavery platform in the 1850s. We may also want to deal with the fact that the Northern dialect region of Figure 25.10 matches closely the territory of the Blue States as defined in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections. The third volume of *Principles of Linguistic Change* (Labov in press) deals with this and other issues concerning the origins, the governing principles, and the driving forces behind the Northern Cities Shift.

## 6 Latasha Harris, West Philadelphia

As I noted before, the archetypical exponents of linguistic change in progress are marked by that characteristic feature of mainstream America: upward social mobility. Not only do they have better jobs than their parents, but until recently they could expect their children to have better lives than their own. In my study of the Lower East Side of New York City, this was true of all groups except African Americans, who generally showed downward social mobility. And nothing that I had done arrested that tendency. Though I had learned a great deal from Larry Hawthorne, he did not learn much from me, and as the years went by, the rates of violent death, incarceration, and poverty increased for African American residents of the city centers. As a member of the National Academy of Sciences, I was appointed to a committee on Preventing Reading Difficulties Among Young Children, where I learned a good deal about reading research, but found that none of the current methods were effective in closing the minority gap in reading achievement (Figure 25.11).

The black/white differential showed little change from the time I worked with Larry Hawthorne to 2004. One question ever present in my mind was whether linguistic research could be useful where other methods had failed. In 1997, with the initial help of funding from the Office of Education legislated by Senator Specter, I began research within the schools on ways to use our knowledge of African American youth to raise reading levels in low-income elementary schools. Some of that information had to do with dialect differences, and how they affected reading. More important is what I had learned from Larry Hawthorne, the Jets, and the Cobras on their experience, attitudes, and ways of thinking, in particular their deep distrust of the school as an institution, and their resentment of the unfairness of the everyday practice of a racist society.

Over a period of 10 years, I developed a tutorial program for training undergraduate tutors in local schools, which was tested on a national scale, for struggling readers who were white, African American, and Latino (Labov 2001b; Labov and Baker 2010).



**Figure 25.11** NAEP fourth-grade scores showing minority gap in reading achievement, 1971–2004. US Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), various years, 1971–2008, long-term trend reading assessments.

This program known as *The Reading Road* puts to work our knowledge of the alphabet, our knowledge of children’s language, and our knowledge of children’s interests, concerns, and problems. To learn more about the language and experience of the children involved, over 500 were interviewed and recorded in the second, third, and fourth grades. We used what we had learned about how to get people to talk freely about things that really mattered to them, with such questions as, “Did you ever get blamed for something you didn’t do?” “Did you ever have a dream that really scared you?” The sixth speaker I would like to present to you, someone from whom I learned a great deal about language and about life, is Latasha Harris, an African American girl in a West Philadelphia school.

Well, I used to be bad – I used to be bad in first grade and kindergarten. And then when they come to second grade and stuff they always blame me stuff cuz they know I always do that but I always be good in second grade. I used to be bad in first and kindergarten cuz it wasn’t really nothing to do, so I just be bad. And when they come to second grade they always blame stuff on me And like yesterday I got blamed, because some girl hit somebody and they were jumping her and thought it was me and my friends. Me and my cousin, and my friends we – they always blame stuff on us. And that – and that’s not right And I tell my mom and my mom don’t do nothing. She just said “Be good.”

Latasha is archetypical of the young, intelligent student who is getting deeper and deeper into trouble with the school system. In the second grade, she is due to get an “F” in behavior. She is not alone: a sizable number of the children we tutor are suspended and expelled for fighting. Over the years, I have tried to address this problem in the stories and graphic novels that are at the center of our instructional method. The general problem of conflict resolution is to search for a route that will conform to the rules of



**Figure 25.12** Conflict in the school yard. Jamaal, who has promised his mother to stay out of trouble, is confronted with Zeke, who is looking for trouble.

As I walked across the street, there was Zeke,  
 standing in the school yard, acting all hard.  
 I tried to walk by, but Zeke was an ace  
 at bumping into kids and then he'd make a mean face.

the school system and yet maintain the dignity and self-respect of the individual. The stories I have written do not always find that solution but they address the problem. Each of these narratives is also written to focus on the particular problem in phonemic/graphemic relations in that section of *The Reading Road*. For example, *Dealing with Zeke*, is about a boy who has promised his mother to stay out of trouble but runs into Zeke, a hard case who is looking for trouble (Figure 25.12). This is in a section of *The Reading Road* that deals with the silent-e rule: the text is loaded with words like *Zeke*, *make ace*, and *face* which require this rule for successful decoding.

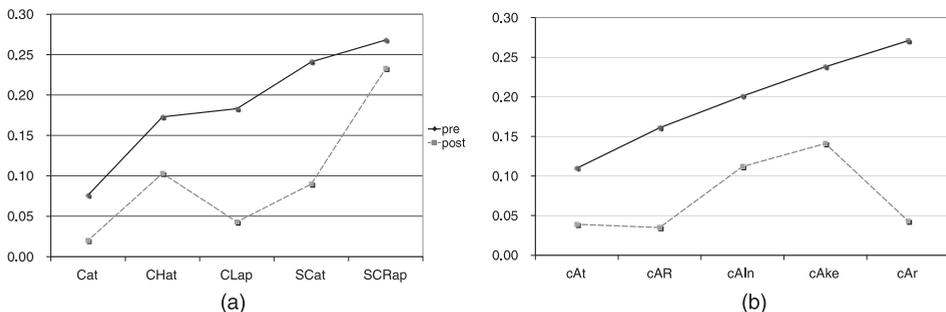
The second example is from a story I wrote in the commercial version of an intervention program PORTALS, published by Houghton Mifflin (2010). It is drawn from the actual experience of Larry Hawthorne. His disciplinary record in high school included an account of his refusal to take off his coat in class. Larry told us that he had had a hole in his pants, but he wasn't going to take off his coat or explain it to his teacher. In my version, the hero Chad has also promised his mother to stay out of trouble. On the way to school he helps a little girl to get her cat out of a thorn bush, and rips a big hole in his pants. He heads to school, hoping his coat will cover it. But (Figure 25.13) the teacher decides to make an issue of his wearing his coat in class. Later, as he sits in detention, a friend says to Chad, "Why not tell them about it?" Chad replies, "How?" The linguistic side of *Take Off Your Coat* focuses on words where /i/ and /o/ have been lengthened



**Figure 25.13** Conflict between student and teacher. Chad refuses to take off his coat, since he has a rip in his pants as a result of helping a little girl get her cat out of a thorn bush. Page from W. Labov, PORTALS (Houghton-Mifflin 2010) by permission of Curriculum Concepts International.

before two consonants: *wild, mild, child, blind, mind, behind*, but the underlying subtext focuses on the unfairness that Latasha sees in her everyday experience in school.

Most of the stories are more upbeat than this, and find a solution to the problem in one way or another. The issues are open to debate and discussion in comprehension questions posed by the program. They engage the interest and the energies of the struggling readers, and coupled with a linguistically informed sequence of instruction, one can expect good results. Figure 25.14 is a record of improvement in reading skills for Latasha's cadre of African American children in Philadelphia, the same year that she was tutored. The upper line is the rate of errors in the pre-test for the range of phonic



**Figure 25.14** Reduction of decoding errors for African American struggling readers, 2001–2, in Philadelphia, pre- and post-test (N=135). (a) Syllable onsets. (b) Vowel nuclei.

structures that have to be decoded for (a) the onset or consonantal beginning of the syllable, and (b) the vowel portion. The lower line shows the reduction in the error rate after 24 hours of tutoring.

I hope that our efforts to promote conflict resolution will have the same good success as our efforts to advance decoding skills. But we lost Latasha: her F in behavior got her expelled. And listening more carefully to what Latasha has to say tells us something about the deeper reasons. In answer to the question, "Did you ever get into a fight with a kid bigger than you?" Latasha answered:

Well my brother's dead right? And my brother used to smoke cigarettes and, it was some little girl she a fake Muslim. She said "That's why your brother dead cuz [sucks teeth] he was smoking cigarettes on the corner and stuff having – um – guns and stuff." And my brother do not have guns. All the people they say my brother was a peacemaker and they kept on talking about me – they talk – they kept on talking about my brother and [sucks teeth] I – I just gotta fight with 'em.

A little later on, Latasha gave us a further reflection on how she viewed the world around her.

That's why I wanna be in some other world – not other world, but I wanna be in some o – some other country cuz around my way [sucks teeth] it's – it's drama around my way. . . and a lot of people don't like it around there . . . I'm not a scared of 'em but I just want to move . . . Like my brother and my cousin dead and they kept on talking about them [sucks teeth] so I gotta fight with 'em.

Latasha was seven years old. She wore a necklace with pictures of her brother and her cousin who had been shot dead the year before. The graphic novels that I have written are intended to make contact with the problems of her everyday life, but they do not extend to the full measure of grim reality. You have heard one answer to the question, why do these little girls behave so badly? Latasha obeys a deep human imperative; to keep faith with the dead. Who are we to put a higher value on the school's peculiar rule: report every problem to the teacher and never raise a hand in anger?

I do not have an answer to this question, but it is omnipresent in our efforts to recreate children's confidence in an educational system that has abandoned them in isolation and despair.

This work is a part of a program, strongly rooted at the University of Pennsylvania, to apply academic research to the solution of community problems. It reflects the philosophy that the state of our knowledge is most clearly defined by our success or failure in attempting to change the world around us. This view came with me from my early experience in the industrial world, but is also reinforced by my participation in the Netter Center for Community Partnership at Penn. That is not to say that all academic pursuit should be driven by application. Certainly there are many fields of study that are motivated simply by our desire to know: not only in cosmology and mathematics, but in my own field, to discover the mysterious forces that drive the Northern Cities Shift and are responsible for the continued renewal of linguistic change. But given the

opportunity to apply our knowledge, and lead a useful life, I would return to the voice of Donald Poole. When I asked him one time to define happiness, he said,

What is happiness? Oh that's very easy, young man, that's very easy indeed. I've thought about this very deeply and my wife and I have discussed it a great deal. A lot depends in the first place how you define success. Happiness and success should go together ... and what is a successful life to me ... may not be to you. But I believe, and I live, the theory, that a man can be the most successful, and also, the most happy, if he's doing the type of work which he ... enjoys. Every day's work is not work, it's not really a challenge, but it's a *pleasure* to do something that you enjoy doing and you feel that you know something about and that you can continue to learn something. In other words, it's uh—if I can make it clear to you, happiness consists mostly, other things being equal, of having the ability when you go to bed at night, think back of what you've done during the day, feeling that you have accomplished something useful, ah, I brush aside the point that you must provide for your family, which we're all supposed to do ... that uh, perhaps that, yes I'm sure that enters into happiness. But uh ... a man has to live with himself. And nobody knows himself like he does, what goes through your mind in the course of a day. If you go to bed at night, and you feel more or less satisfied and contented that you've done the best you could, you've been fairly successful and things have turned out fairly well for you during the day, what's wrong with that, isn't that happiness?

In talking about my life of learning, I have not mentioned what I have learned from books, which is considerable, or my indebtedness to those who studied language change in earlier centuries, which is large, and not even what I learned from my own professor, Uriel Weinreich, which turns out to be more than I would have imagined. Instead, I have chosen to introduce you to six people from outside of university life. These people are more than objects of inquiry. I am not playing the part of a doctor, introducing you to my patients, nor a lawyer introducing you to my clients. These are people I have learned from. They are a small sample of many thousands. I have chosen them because they each possess an uncommon eloquence, each in their own way masters of the English language that allows them to share with us their experience in life and their view of the world. Over the years, their words have had a profound effect on me. I do not know when it happened. I suppose that like most linguists, I was always in love with language. But somewhere in this business of listening to people I found that I have fallen in love with humanity. If this talk has succeeded, you will, to some small degree, have done so as well.

## NOTES

1 This chapter is adapted from an essay written for the Haskins Prize lecture of the American Council of Learned Societies in 2009. For the insights of this chapter, I must acknowledge gratefully the contributions of my

colleagues and fellow workers, as well as the six people who are the main focus. The voices of the speakers quoted here can be heard on the original version at [www.acls.org/publications/audio/labov/default](http://www.acls.org/publications/audio/labov/default).

- aspx?id=4462. I would also like to acknowledge the support of the Linguistics Program of the National Science Foundation for 11 research grants in from 1970 to 2005, as well as support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Spencer Foundation, the Office of Education.
- 2 *Delinquency and Opportunity* by Cloward and Ohlin (1960).
  - 3 The second edition of the 1966 book, published in 2006, contains an additional Chapter 15 with a description of 37 studies of urban communities that followed a similar approach to the speech community.
  - 4 The linguists were graduate students at Columbia – Paul Cohen and Benji Wald, and Joshua Waletzky who was then a senior at Horace Mann High School. The field workers were Clarence Robins and John Lewis (“κκ”), one of the early people interviewed by Clarence in the South Harlem study.
  - 5 The article is also condensed as “Academic ignorance and black intelligence” in the *Atlantic Monthly* (1971: 59–67).
  - 6 The raising and tensing of this vowel, as described here, is common in many American dialects for words with short *a* before the nasal consonants *m* and *n*. In Philadelphia, the set of words which show this vowel are a specific subset including *half, fast, bath; mad, bad, glad* (but not *sad*); *ham, dance* (but not *am, bank, ran*). The social impact of this pronunciation is entirely due to how far the sound is tensed and raised, rather than in which words the raising occurs, a pattern uniform throughout the city.
  - 7 The “second formant” of the vowel, ranging from 1000 Hz to 2000 Hz, which is associated with the fronting of the vowel in the range of pronunciation described above.
  - 8 My confidence in this description is reinforced by the portraits of the leaders of linguistic change in the Arabic of Cairo, independently formulated by Niloofar Haeri (1996). She describes a series of women who defied the pressures to conformity from family and society, asserting their independence socially and economically.
  - 9 It is common for people (both linguists and non-linguists) to think that in everyday speech, context will act to prevent misunderstandings. But our study of natural misunderstandings shows that a full 25 percent are the results of sound changes in progress. It appears that people have a strong tendency to think that language works better than it does.
  - 10 Jackie’s version of the stressed word *that* is often mistaken by people from other areas as two words: *the act*.
  - 11 The dimensions “front-back” and “high-low” refer to the position of the tongue as the vowel is pronounced. In front vowels, the front part of the tongue is raised toward the hard palate; in back vowels, it is the back part of the tongue. High and low refer to how far the tongue (and jaw) are raised. In the study of spontaneous speech, these dimensions are measured by the acoustic correlates of tongue positions.
  - 12 The exploratory studies in the early 1970s reported elements of the Northern Cities Shift in Rochester, Syracuse, Detroit, and Chicago (Labov *et al.* 1972).
  - 13 The five black circles in the St Louis area lie in the “St Louis corridor,” the path along I-55 by which Chicago influence on St Louis speech may be traced for most measures of the Northern Cities Shift. All other areas south of the boundaries shown here are part of the Midland dialect area, totally resistant to such influence.
  - 14 Based on Carver 1990’s compilation of data from the Dictionary of American Regional English (1985).

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# 26 Language Ideologies

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SUSAN U. PHILIPS

## 0 Introduction

Since the 1990s the topic of language ideology has been a major substantive focus of research in linguistic anthropology. This research was given impetus by two edited collections that demonstrated an emerging coherence in theory, method and substance around the topic of language ideology (Kroskrity 2000; Schieffelin, Woolard, and Kroskrity 1998). Research on language ideology over the past several decades has recently been reviewed by Irvine (2011).

The term “language ideologies” refers to people’s ideas about language and speech. Such ideologies concern both what language is like and what it should be like. The use of the term ideologies, rather than more neutral terms such as culture, beliefs, attitudes, or interpretive frameworks, points to a theoretical commitment to the idea that people’s views about language are shaped by political and economic interests, and by relations of domination and subordination, as noted by Philips (1998b). Research on language ideologies is important to discourse analysis because of the widespread and relatively uncontested view that language ideologies regiment discourse. As Jane Hill notes, “linguistic ideologies shape and constrain discourse, and thus shape and constrain the reproduction of other kinds of ideologies, such as ideologies of gender, race, and class” (2008: 33). In other words, a direct causal relation between ideas about language and actual use of language in interaction is posited. Language ideologies constrain what people actually do with language.

The key point of the research on language ideologies, then, is that human consciousness about language enables us to exert control over speech in ways that directly affect the use of language in interaction. Ideas about language then ultimately affect the form of languages, dialects, and registers. Such ideas about language are socially positioned and socially organized, both in their distribution and in their activation in language use.

Language ideologies are often part of broader ideological projects to which language has been appropriated. This means they are affected not only by what it is possible to be conscious of, but also by the reasoning in such broader ideologies. The Women's Liberation Movement's generation of a gendered language ideology consistent with feminist goals is an example of this. The involvement of language in nation-state-formation projects has been the most important source of the language ideologies examined in the scholarly literature. A good deal of this literature has focused on codes, particularly whole languages, and on the belief that a nation needs a national language spoken by all in order to create cohesion within the nation. This idea has played a role in the imposition of standardized national languages on linguistic minorities and on their resistance to such imposition. It has also created a warrant for the imposition of national languages on colonized populations as part of the effort to incorporate such people into the colonizing nation-state. Much analysis has focused in particular on the multiple diverse language ideologies in recent language revitalization movements among formerly colonized indigenous peoples.

The majority of code-focused works on language ideologies provide accounts of the cultural and political associations people have with one language or variety rather than another. It is clear that the concept of languages as multiple countable bounded entities is very widespread and readily comprehensible as a form of consciousness. Fader (2009) suggests that language mixing is less commonly documented and apparently less commonly recognized and valued.

There has been less work done on language ideologies in actual discourse than work on group-associated codes, and those language ideologies that have been documented have often been implicit rather than explicit and been made explicit by the researcher. Work on actual planned institutional discourses raises awareness of the profound conscious control humans have over talk, including its organization into routinized genres with specific turn economies and strict regulation of topic.

Considerable attention has also been given to discourse analysis revealing language ideologies in powerful institutions that articulate with nation-state governments, particularly legal, religious, and educational institutions. Here too language is subordinated to institutional goals that treat language instrumentally and emphasize the transformation of the identities and outlooks of individuals caught up in institutional practices. In studies of institutional language ideologies the scholarly focus has been more on actual discourse rather than on language varieties.

In the discussion to follow attention will first focus on the theoretical foundations and sources of intellectual influence that have given research on language ideologies some of its coherence. The Women's Movement of the 1970s is then used to show how discussions of gendered language ideologies that moved into academia transformed thinking about language ideology in ways that became integral to later studies of language ideologies in linguistic anthropology. This movement also serves as an example of the way in which language gets recruited into larger political and cultural projects, in the discussion that follows on such recruitment. Attention then focuses on the central substantive issue in research on language ideologies, which is the nature and role of language ideologies in nation-building projects of one kind or another. First we consider how language ideologies play a role in constituting group identities within nation-states. Finally we consider how language ideologies enter into the constituting of the major national institutional complexes of education, law, and religion.

## 1 Theoretical Roots

The most specific influential stimulus for the emergence of language ideologies as a topic that a number of people have come to address came from two papers by Michael Silverstein (1979, 1981). Silverstein (1979) took the position that linguistic change is the outcome of language ideology, or articulated beliefs about language, and language structure, as well as being the result of relatively unconscious autonomous processes. Conscious awareness of aspects of language, he argued, plays a role in linguistic change, and some aspects of language structure are more accessible to conscious awareness than others. Silverstein (1981) identified a set of factors that enable awareness of language. Of those factors, "continuous segmentability" has been the property of language that other scholars have taken up most explicitly. Silverstein argued that bounded and continuous segments of speech, where meaning could be understood to be contained within the segment, more easily came to awareness than kinds of meaning that were constituted through linguistic processes that were not continuous. "Thus any word-stem, prefix or suffix, word, continuous phrase, or even whole sentence is a continuously segmentable element" (Silverstein 1981: 3). Dialect differences that convey speaker identity do not have this continuous quality, but are instead comprised of many discrete sources of variation. Many syntactic processes also lack this continuous quality when they draw on multiple discontinuous processes. For example, the English passive lacks this property of continuous segmentability in its creation of meaning. It involves not only a change in word order or the movement of groups of words, but also the addition of new material, as in the shift from "The girl sang the song" to "The song was sung by the girl."

When these two papers by Silverstein were taken together, the implication was that the more conscious and aware a speaker was of a property of language, the more easily that property could be controlled and manipulated by the speaker so that both in an immediate situation and over time, those properties that could be more easily controlled would "behave" differently than those properties that were less easily controlled. And indeed there was early evidence that this was in fact the case. Notably Errington (1985) argued that the aspects of Javanese honorifics about which speakers were most aware and explicit (in this case second-person pronoun alternatives expressing degrees of respect) were undergoing more rapid change than other aspects of the Javanese honorific system. Relatedly Shibamoto (1987) showed that lexical and morphological features of Tokyo women's speech in everyday use were reproduced in soap opera scripts. Variable syntactic features of their everyday speech were not reproduced in the soap opera scripts. The lexical and morphological features were part of language ideology about what characterized women's speech, while the syntactic features were not. Note that this discussion focuses on aspects of language that are internal to the structure of language. The literature we will consider below focuses more although not exclusively on whole languages and on language ideologies about them.

In later writing Silverstein (1993) further pursued the issue of consciousness in discussion of metapragmatics or talk about talk. He proposed that the most salient form of talk about talk was what he called referentialist metapragmatics, including speech act verbs. Reported speech of others was recognized as a widespread example of this broader category (Lucy 1993). This focus is grounded in semantic properties of lexical items, but it does concern language use in interaction or discourse.

There are other aspects of discourse for which we have great evidence of conscious awareness, evaluation, and planning. These include awareness of turn economies, speech genres, topics, and the sequencing of genres and topics. These aspects of discourse have not, however, been addressed very often within a language ideologies framework, with its focus on properties of linguistic codes. There is evidence that such aspects of discourse can be ideologized: the women's movement was, for example, concerned with equalizing the frequency and length of turns at talk and topic control between women and men. However, aspects of discourse need not be ideologized or verbally articulated for there to be conscious awareness of them. And regimentation of properties of discourse can involve varying degrees and kinds of consciousness, as Hill's (2008) discussion of white racist discourse makes clear. Minimally there is a need to distinguish and not conflate awareness, articulation of awareness, and actual regimentation or control over aspects of language. Regimentation in turn may or may not be evidence of either awareness or deliberate control over language use.

Silverstein's (1979) approach to language ideologies was in some ways apolitical. He focused on aspects of cognitive awareness, rather than on sociocultural and political processes that played a role in bringing particular features of language structure and use into the foreground for speakers. Nevertheless Silverstein's concept of ideology was contemporary in many respects. Marx had a negative concept of ideology as consisting of ideas that kept people functioning in ways that were against their own interest, often implicit ideas that needed to be critiqued in order for people to realize their own best interest. Marx also juxtaposed ideology and science, with the idea that science was evidentially superior and could reveal the truth that would replace the lies of ideology. Silverstein subscribed to a more contemporary and relativistic view of ideology, acknowledging that neither folk/native/local views of language nor scientific/scholarly views about language can automatically be discredited or valorized.

A second influential and more obviously politicized impetus for the emergence of a shared agenda for the study of language ideologies came from anthropological analyses of the political economy of language. This body of work posited a causal relationship between the political economic organization of a nation-state and attitudes toward languages in that nation. Basically this research tradition found that economically disadvantaged persons have less prestige and so do the codes they use, while economically advantaged persons have more prestige and therefore so do the codes they use. In Woolard's (1989) analysis of the status of Catalan in Spain, for example, she found that even though Spanish was the national language, Catalan and its speakers had considerable prestige in the Spanish region of Catalonia because of the regional economic prosperity of that area. Scholars working in this tradition were influenced by political economists like Andre Gundar Frank and Emmanuel Wallerstein who argued that a global capitalist economic order had emerged over the last 500 years in which wealth moved from economic peripheries to centers. The peripheries tended to have the economically disadvantaged speakers of disvalued languages in them. Some researchers who worked in this tradition (e.g., Gal 1979; Hill 1985) drew heavily on Labovian sociolinguistic interview methodology and Labovian ideas about language attitudes (see Labov, this volume). At the same time they provided fascinating accounts of very culturally specific local ideas about languages that were different from, or more locally grounded than, those captured by variationist studies of dominant European languages. These political economic sociolinguists both moved on to and led research that

focus on language ideologies (e.g., Kroskrity 2000; Schieffelin, Woolard, and Kroskrity 1998), but now with a difference. As with Silverstein, and integrating his ideas with their own, a now wider range of scholars documented language ideologies and their direct effect on languages as an end in itself. With some exceptions (e.g., Heller 2007; McElhinny 2007) the causal role of political economic relations has become part of the background for the study of language ideologies, rather than the analytical focus that it was in earlier work. The perceptual salience of “languages,” that is, the common ideological belief in wholly distinct linguistic systems, was both asserted and taken for granted in this work.

## 2 Sociolinguistic Responses to Language Ideology in the Women’s Movement

A third source of influence integrated into studies of language ideologies was the substantial research on explicit ideas about women’s and men’s speech stimulated by the Women’s Liberation Movement in the 1970s. This movement provided a powerful example of how the reinterpretation of ideas about (men and women’s) language use could contribute to a larger ideological project. The academic analysis that the movement stimulated contributed to the development of a Marx-influenced model of language ideology that shaped the work on the topic to come.

The Women’s Liberation Movement in the US fundamentally involved an ideological critique of the domination of women by men and an effort to achieve gender equality. Ideas about gender and language were part of this critique in consciousness raising groups and in the publications of this white middle-class grass roots movement. A key issue for women was men’s domination of talk, initially men’s domination of talk in the protest movement against the war in Viet Nam. This domination was seen to be bolstered by explicit language ideologies that negated the value of women’s speech. Such views were found in so-called scientific writings as well as elsewhere, as illustrated, for example, by Otto Jespersen’s (1922) characterization of women’s talk as trivial, revealing the ideologically driven nature of science. Men’s domination of talk was the motive for women to separate themselves from men in consciousness raising groups so that they could talk freely and not be interrupted. The structure of the English language itself was also a target of claims of gender inequality. Analyses by non-linguist movement participants focused on the greater number of pejorative vocabulary items referring to women and on the erasure of women in the use of masculine nouns (e.g., chairman) and pronouns (i.e., he) to refer to either women or men.

In Lakoff’s (1973) famous paper on “Language and Woman’s Place,” she was following the women’s movement in similarly offering an ideological critique, albeit one that could be more precise about specific linguistic features by virtue of her linguistic training. Like movement analysts, she distinguished between language structure and language use, emphasizing the same properties of lexical items as movement critics had. She also more innovatively focused on features of women’s speech ideologically conceptualized as “polite,” which she argued caused the speech to be experienced as powerless. The implications for change were clear: if women lose polite features

such as tag questions and intensifiers, their speech will be more powerful (have more credibility, be taken more seriously) and women will no longer be dominated by men in interaction. It is unfortunate that gender and language scholars in recent decades have come to rather dismissively refer to Lakoff's position as a "deficit" view of women's language. This view fails to recognize how in tune Lakoff's position was with the women's movement of the time, how motivated women were to be heard, and how welcome was this bringing to conscious awareness of features that could be changed once they were conscious. Feminists who subscribed to such views were willing to set aside features of polite style to be heard if that was what it took.

The body of research on ideas about women's and men's speech provided a model for later analyses of language ideologies in which ideological critiques mixed the explicit and the implicit and rendered the implicit explicit for the specific purpose of gaining control over language use to bring about social change. From the analyses of language ideologies about women's speech we see how the aspects of language structure and use that are the foci of language ideologies are driven not just by what can be brought to conscious awareness, but rather more selectively by what is at issue in larger political projects into which language is drawn.

Ideologically laden claims stimulated by the women's movement about how women's and men's speech differed led to considerable research distinguishing ideology from behavior. This research questioned whether any claims about women's speech were true. The empirical examination of recordings of women's and men's speech led to further conscious awareness of aspects of language structure not initially recognized, as reflected for example in conceptual refinements to concepts of tag questions and interruptions. Yet in more recent decades the empirical examination of the relation between language ideologies and behavior has largely been set aside, again with exceptions (e.g., Chernela 2013; Philips 1991).

In the Women's Movement, Marxist ideas about ideology laid the groundwork for their incorporation into later studies of language ideologies. Ideological critique of ruling class ideology that kept a working class in its place was central for Marx. Feminist theorists replaced class with gender in this model, viewing male ideology about females as keeping them in their place, setting aside the economic domination that Marx saw as the basis for ideological domination. This approach to ideology laid the groundwork for a similar general setting aside of Marxist-inspired political economic theory in studies of language ideologies. Marx argued that a dominant ideology would dialectically give rise to resistance and critique that would provide an alternative interpretive perspective. This idea was reflected in the feminist idea that male ideological dominance gave rise to an alternative resistant interpretive perspective among feminists, including feminist interpretations of gender ideologies about language. The application of Marx to feminist studies of gender and language laid a foundation for the later view that all language ideologies are socially positioned. Language ideologies enter into relations of domination and subordination that are embedded in political struggles. The more general view that any given language ideology exists within a field of multiple language ideologies (Gal 1998) which partly define it can also be traced to this line of thinking.

Most importantly, the movement of ideas about language out of the grass roots women's movement and into academia anticipated much later analysis of how language can be appropriated to larger, primarily nationalist, political projects through language ideologies. These nationalist projects determine the aspects of language

structure and use that are the focus of language ideologies from among those aspects that are perceptually available or subject to conscious awareness. In addition, the experience with language ideologies about gender showed clearly how such ideologies can determine behavior. Gendered nouns and the use of gendered pronouns were transformed and many women changed their use of language in ways that enabled them to have greater impact in the activities in which they participated. This work also created a climate in which often implicit political critique of language ideologies became a respectable intellectual activity. It is particularly important that some feminist critique took the form of making implicit language ideology explicit. This ratified the idea that it was reasonable to speak of an implicit language ideology, not just an explicit language ideology.

### **3 The Recruitment of Language to Political and Cultural Projects**

Language ideologies are always understood to refer to more than just language. They always entail local conceptualizations of social categories, social activities, and the phenomenological or experiential worlds associated with them. And for some scholars language ideologies are also about the exercise of power, relations of domination, subordination, struggle, and transformation. From a slightly different point of view, what we readily recognize as “language ideologies” are actually often about something other than language culturally and occur in situations where language as a topic is ideologically appropriated by and put to use in larger political projects. We have already encountered language ideologies about gendered speech in the United States as an example where language was recruited to a feminist critique of male–female relations in the Women’s Liberation Movement. This language-oriented feminist critique had a great deal in common with other American social-identity-based language-oriented political critiques, for example, critiques of terms for ethnic minorities, the physically disabled, and the mentally disabled as pejorative and stigmatizing. At the heart of these critiques is the idea that by replacing pejorative terms with neutral or positive terms we will change people’s attitudes and treatment toward the groups at issue.

The most influential and widespread political projects to which languages are ideologically recruited are those of nation-building (Blommaert 1999; Blommaert and Verschueren 1998; Inoue 2006; Irvine and Gal 2000; Philips 2000). Scholars both perceive people producing language ideologies to be engaged in nation-building and are themselves fascinated with the phenomenon of nation-building, one of the great global ideological projects of the current and past several centuries. One of the key appeals of the paper “Language Ideology and Linguistic Differentiation” by Irvine and Gal (2000) is that it deals conceptually with social identity categories that orient to the nation-state in ways that are widely shared among linguistic and cultural anthropologists. Group identity categories in analyses of language ideologies that have nation-states as a point of reference or a point of departure include: nation-states themselves, ethnic/linguistic minorities within nation-states, colonizers, and colonized in colonial nation-state

formation projects and postcolonial newly independent nation-states. Regions, tribes, and villages are also understood as existing within nation-states in ways that impinge upon them politically, including in the form of the imposition of language ideologies. Irvine and Gal also offer a rare broadly comparative perspective that enables comparisons to be made between and among ethnic minorities in Eastern European nations and tribes in African nations, and to find commonalities across nations in processes of the formation of language ideologies. Situations of language shift and the language ideologies associated with them are also typically understood in terms of nation-state formation and colonialism. Moreover the kinds of powerful institutional domains that generate language ideologies through their work, particularly law and education, are understood ideologically as arms of the state and as functioning in nation-state specific conditions. The third institutional domain that has yielded documentation of language ideologies, namely Christian religion, is generally also treated as occurring within a specific nation-state, even though its organization may be transnational.

In the discussion to follow we will first look at analyses of language ideologies related to group identities that are meaningful within a nation-state framework, and then turn to analyses in powerful institutional contexts.

## **4 Language Ideologies and Social Categories in Nation-State Formation**

### ***4.1 Nation-state language ideology***

As has already been noted, the idea that a nation-state should have a national language is the most important and influential form of language ideology that has been documented in research on language ideology. All European scholarly disciplines that deal with language have been influenced by this ideology (e.g., Silverstein 2000). The idea of boundable and multiple nation-state formations, and the idea of languages as autonomous/boundable and multiple, developed together historically in Western Europe. One basic tenet of the ideology that each country needs a national language is that ideally there should be only one standard language that functions as a national language. This one language should be a prestigious dialect of a language spoken and written by many within the country, as many authors have noted (e.g., Blommaert and Verschueren 1998; Silverstein 1996). Various factors can contribute to the prestige and spread of a language, including economic factors (Gal 1979; Woolard 1989), and thus also to how a non-national language will be treated in government policy. The national language is also the language in which citizens are expected to become literate. Use of a national language is typically prescribed by law for specific institutional domains, particularly government, education, and law. In the hierarchically organized bureaucracies of such institutions, the higher the level of activity within the bureaucracy, the more likely it is that by law the national language must be spoken, while lower levels are allowed to be sustained in other dialects and languages. There can also be discursive regimes that further develop how a good citizen or politician should speak (Bate 2009; Bauman and Briggs 2003).

Often the speakers of minority and indigenous languages experience denigration of their first language, as in racist treatments of language (Hill 2008). Pressure is put on speakers of non-national languages to eliminate or constrain their use. The most dramatic example of this is the boarding schools to which North American Indian reservation children were sent, where children were whipped for speaking their native languages. There can also be systematic and ultimately institutionalized resistance to such erasure too, as in the promotion of Ebonics (Black English, or African American Vernacular English) as the first language of learning for African American children, and in the sponsorship of minority languages by the European Union.

## 4.2 Colonialism

National language ideology has also been part of European colonialism. Here a basic part of the exercise of colonial power has been the ideological assumption that the people colonized should learn the colonial language. This learning is facilitated by massive educational efforts to change the language spoken and to introduce literacy where it did not exist (e.g., Eisenlohr 2006; House 2002; Messing 2007; Nevins 2004). This was considered central to what was conceptualized as a “civilizing” mission, including preparation for independent nation-statehood. Colonialism has also involved the documentation of local languages (Irvine 1993) and their appropriation as a means to improving governance or control over local populations (Cohn 1996). Such appropriation was also for scholarly purposes (Cohn 1996; Errington 2008), as for example in the role of the study of Sanskrit in the intellectual development of historical linguistics.

## 4.3 New nations

Where former colonies have achieved independence, as in India, Africa, and the Pacific, and where areas with other kinds of political entities have otherwise taken up nation-state formation, as for example in China and Japan, governments of recently formed nation-states typically foster some similar idea of the need for a national language. The language planning literature of the 1960s looks in retrospect to be an influential source of language ideology urging the development and implementation of criteria for choosing and developing national languages. While the chosen language has often been the language of the colonizer (e.g., Eisenlohr 2006), sometimes it is an indigenous language of wider communication, as with Swahili in Tanzania (Fabian 1991), or Indonesian, an adaptation of Malaysian, in Indonesia (Errington 1998; Kuipers 1998). Nation-statehood typically also involves maintenance of colonial forms of government, the legal complex of police, courts, and prison, and schools. All of these institutional forms are used by the state to implement national language policies, as they have been used in Europe. In former colonial contexts, the variety of Christian religion practiced by the colonizers typically continues to have some kind of presence that can also involve the continued promulgation of European derived language ideologies (e.g., Philips 2007).

#### 4.4 *Language revitalization*

Today, the analysis of language ideologies in contexts of language shift and language revitalization is one of the most active areas of research (e.g., Kroskrity and Field 2010; Messing 2007). Languages that are threatened with extinction have typically been reduced in functional range as a result of colonial and national language ideologies and related government language policies. This literature generally recognizes that negative ideologies about a language or its use or the people who use it all have direct impact on use, constraining it. There must be positive language ideologies asserting the value of threatened languages and their use in order for them to be maintained and expanded in their functional range. In this area of research, analyses of positive and negative language ideologies abound, and have clear implications for the well-being of the languages at issue.

A key concern ideologically in research in revitalization contexts is what activities should be carried out in order to revitalize the language? How will language be taught? What is the pedagogical theory (House 2002; Jaffe 1999) that can lead to actual language revitalization? The way in which this issue is addressed varies depending on the context in which a language is viewed as threatened with extinction. In Native American language revitalization, there has been discussion of whether this task should go to schools, or stay more within the community, and in some cases in the home. While some were debating the topic, the schools have basically taken on this area of endeavor. Meek (2010) argues that schools produce a particular way of talking that is unlike how language is used in the community of Kaska Athabascan speakers she works with. For Hawaiians the key to success for revitalization was seen as centering in the support of the state education system. This system has supported the development of a K-12 immersion program throughout the state for whoever wanted it for their children. Hawaiian activists are still trying to develop ways to sustain a speech community in the Hawaiian language after children leave school. In European Celtic situations school programs dominate the revitalization efforts.

Other topics in revitalization work that can also be seen as areas of language ideological debate and will be familiar across widely varying circumstances include: (1) choice of dialect within a language, (2) how to address the variability in a language and its discourses while teaching it, especially in contexts of strong language purism traditions (e.g., Jaffe 1999), (3) choice of orthography (e.g., Schieffelin and Doucet 1998), (4) how much to integrate cultural and language revitalizations. All of these issues are very emotionally loaded and subject to political contestation.

There is also work on the revitalization of local dialects that have been bouncing back in Western European situations, re-expanding their use in domains where a standard dialect had been established through schooling, as in Italy (Cavanaugh 2009) and Norway (Strand 2012). These movements seem very similar in nature to the support of the Corsican language on Corsica described by Jaffe (1999). Such re-uptake of local varieties has been attributed partly to economic prosperity of the regions where the revivals have taken place. These local movements have also been influenced by ideological and economic sponsorship of the European Union. They involve a strong and broad-based interest in talking about the dialects and appreciating their nature, and also often seem to involve programs on the radio and television (Jaffe 1999; Strand 2012) that may be local or national where the dialects are the whole program topic.

## 4.5 Change

The enduring interest in nation-state formation has also yielded exciting work on how language ideologies change over time, how they emerge and are transformed in relation to nation-state transformations, often within an ideological framework of “modernization” (Inoue 2006; Kroskrity and Field 2010; Makihara and Schieffelin 2007; Weidman 2007; Woolard 2002, 2004).

## 4.6 Multilingualism

Collectively this work has transformed our understanding of multilingualism. Before this language ideological research, multilingualism was conceptualized primarily in terms of domains of use and code-switching: Who uses which language for what social purpose and at what grammatical junctures and for what reasons do people engage in code-switching? The more recent work has brought out a very great range of kinds of associations that speakers have with the multiple languages in their spheres of use. In an early paper that contributes to this topic, Hanks (1986) showed how colonial documents addressed to Spanish colonizers by Mayans used Mayan language elements that Mayans associated with power and prestige. They did this to persuade their interlocutors, even though those colonizers would not necessarily have been able to recognize those elements for what they were. A particularly influential piece that illustrates the phenomenon of cultural and emotional associations differing for different languages in multilingual contexts is Hill’s (1995) analysis of code-switching in a narrative told by one of her Mexicano research consultants about how his son died. Hill convincingly demonstrates how the use of the Mexicano language is associated with morally good scenes, actions, and actors, while the use of Spanish is associated with morally bad or threatening scenes, actors, and actions in this story. In Kulick’s (1992) work on the Taiap language he shows how the indigenous language is denigrated by its speakers while Tok Pisin, the creole that is a language of wider communication in New Guinea, is relatively highly valued in part through the association of the former with women and the latter with men. Social contexts and genres of discourse associated with men such as church speech were positively valued while those associated with women such as interactions with children were disvalued. Finally Chernela (2013) describes how in the Vaupes Basin of Brazil, an area known for widespread multilingualism, speakers adhere strictly to the idea that they must speak their father’s language, although they can learn to comprehend their mother’s language, so that conversations in which co-interactants conceptualize people as speaking different languages to each other are widespread.

These examples attest to the robustness of “whole language” language ideologies in which languages are treated by sociolinguists and their subjects as both boundable entities and as multiple. This is true even when there is a great deal of syncretism of languages in one way or another in all of these examples. These examples also suggest the cultural power in the qualities associated with different languages and they enable us to see the political, moral, and social pressures that can be brought to bear on language choices in discourse.

## 5 Language Ideologies in Powerful Institutional Complexes

The areas of work discussed so far focus on categories of collective identities that are meaningful within a concept of the nation-state and address the kind of linguistic ideological work such groups are engaged in. What we conceptualize as institutional complexes are also typically represented as functioning within nation-states. Recent work on language ideologies in institutional domains has tended to focus on several key complexes, notably education, law, and religion.

Methodologically work in institutional complexes often relies on fine-grained analysis of recordings of discourse from key sites such as classrooms, courtrooms, and church services. In addition, analyses of language ideologies in such situations often focus on what is implicit in patterns of language use in these contexts according to the analyst, rather than focusing on what is explicit in the words of co-interactants. And attention is also often devoted to aspects of language use other than language form.

Law, education, and religion have certain features in common. First, each of these three institutional areas is conceptualized as an arm of the state or as articulating with the state in some way. At the same time, each institutional sphere is conceptualized by lay people and scholars alike as both interactionally and conceptually semi-autonomous from what goes on outside it. Thus primary and secondary educational institutions are understood to prepare people to be functioning citizens of nation-states, and to be the vehicle for state hegemony over the nation. Both federal and state legal systems (police, courts, and prisons) are understood to be the branches of the state that exert direct physical control over its citizens. Religious institutions have more complex relations with governments. Part of every state's legal and education systems has been influenced by religion to some degree. Religions vary in the extent to which they are understood to be state religions. Christian religion is conceptualized as independent of the state in some Western European nations, particularly Protestant nations, yet outsiders would describe those states as Protestant in the way other states are Catholic.

Second, the authority of those in control of talk is based on their specialized institutional knowledge. Each institutional complex is understood to have an institution-specific interpretive perspective controlled by those who are specialists in institutional knowledge. In all of these institutions the fundamental view of language is "instrumentalist" in that language is understood to be under the control of speakers and to be used strategically to serve the purposes of the institution. What matters is how language must be deployed in order to carry out the activity of the institution. Through language use the interpretive framework of the institution is imposed on all who participate in it. Language is used to transform the identities of participants and their actions into terms that are meaningful to the institution at hand. All of this shows that humans are capable of exercising very tight conscious control over their speech in terms of regulation of turns at talk, topic management, and the maintenance of situation-specific identities. There is also tight control over replication of the "same" institutional acts through the routinization of speech genres such as lessons, trials, and church services, and therefore tight control over the cultural reproduction of institutions. Each institutional complex sustains what Bauman and Briggs (2003) referred to as a "discourse regime." Law and

religion can be thought of as sustained through institutionally specific speech registers (Agha 2007), and they encourage a concept of speech registers that recognize the way in which linguistic form and speech genre are understood to be mutually interdependent.

Third, in powerful institutions, the ideological role of language is generally although not always subordinated to the role of the institution. Only some of the time is there an explicit focus on language. For example, in my study of judges' use of language in taking guilty pleas (Philips 1998a), when the judges talked about how they did the procedure, they focused on what they said in order to meet the requirements of criminal, procedural, and evidence law. Judges with highly variable interactional routines collectively saw themselves as accommodating the procedure to each individual before them. Judges with more routinized procedures saw this tailoring of the procedure to the individual as unnecessary to meet the constraints of the written law. The judges talked about "varying" the procedure versus doing it the "same" way each time. Some students of language ideology would call this a language ideology, but it is predominantly a legal ideology in which language is conceptualized very instrumentally, and as to be made to realize very specific legal ideas. In contrast to this relatively subordinated role for language there is, for example, a very specific ideology of language in evidence law. Here the law is very clear that what one can directly witness, including witnessing visually, is much more reliable than what one is merely told by others, while some forms of what one is told are also more reliable than other forms.

## 5.1 Education

Of the three institutional complexes considered here, the primary and secondary educational complex is the one most clearly recognized as an arm of the state. Education is also the institutional complex in which language ideologies are most explicit and most code focused. Through ideologically explicit "language policies" the state assigns to education systems the role of configuring the languages of the nation-state. For the sake of sustaining a coherent nation, one language spoken by all, and only one "standardized" dialectal variety of that language should be spoken and written within the nation-state. The most fundamental role of schools is to bring this about (Cameron 2012; Lippi-Green 1997). This view apparently originated in Europe, but it spread throughout the world through European colonialism. The idea that English should be the language of wider communication throughout the world projects such an ideology to the global level. This ideology is normative, prescriptive, and purist. In the recent great blossoming of language revitalization research, this state-driven role for schools is recognized as a key force in the elimination of the threatened languages that activists and scholars want to see revived or sustained.

Research on language ideologies in schools also recognizes that such ideologies can play a role in the transformation of social identities. Identities can be destabilized through schooling when an effort is made to transform both children's and adults' ways of using language (Wortham 2001). Readers may recognize that this is the language ideologies version of one of the most heralded claims for schools – that they can play a role in transforming the class position of students by supposedly offering a "level playing field" for achievement.

## 5.2 *Law*

“Transformation” is also a salient theme in discussions of language ideologies in legal institutional contexts. Legal anthropology has conceptualized dispute resolution as the transformation of disputes for several decades. Largely implicit language ideologies among legal practitioners view legal language as able to transform people, social acts, and law itself. Mertz (2007) shows how law students’ ways of thinking and talking about people and acts are made to undergo transformation in law school classes as morality is backgrounded and legal framings are foregrounded in discussion of Supreme Court cases. Richland (2008) describes how Hopi legal practitioners are transforming Hopi law by introducing talk about Hopi-specific traditional issues in conflicts discussed in Hopi courts dominated by Anglo-American law. Deckert (2010) describes how young children who may have been sexually abused are successfully transformed or fail to be transformed into potential trial witnesses through their answers to questions to them about what happened.

## 5.3 *Religion*

Studies of language ideologies in religious contexts also emphasize the transformative nature of such institutional discourses (e.g., Bauman 1983). In part because recent studies have focused more on Christian evangelical denominations than on other kinds of religious groups, considerable attention has been given to the role of ideas about language in the transformation of a person from what evangelicals view as a non-Christian to what they view as a Christian. Harding’s (2000) study of Jerry Falwell’s church, in which she shows how his evangelists literally revel in the idea that one becomes a Christian by talking in a distinctly Christian way is an example of this phenomenon. Both Robbins (2007) and Schieffelin (2000) also document evangelical situations in New Guinea in which missionization transforms not only talk but ideation. Schieffelin (1996) takes this idea one step further by showing how the Christianization process leads to the introduction of new linguistic forms developed to capture the new evidential/epistemological experience of the Kaluli people. While the idea that one becomes a Christian through talking like a Christian may be largely implicit in actual religious discourse, as opposed to its explicitness in scholarly analysis, there are also very specific language ideologies in Protestant Christianity. The most salient such ideology is that the knowledge of the Word of God is central to becoming a Christian and the Bible IS the Word of God.

I have suggested that the ideological theme of transformation is present in all three institutional domains considered so far, but of the three it is most salient in the religious domain. This idea is very widespread in American language ideologies. We saw the idea that the person could be transformed through changing the way she talked in the Women’s Liberation Movement discussed earlier. Carr (2011) has documented its centrality to therapeutic discourses and shown how culturally and historically broad this discourse is.

## 5.4 *Other discourse domains*

Writing on genres of political discourse also has language ideological dimensions, although from a cross-cultural perspective the domain of politics is less clearly defined than other institutional domains. Clear ideas about what political oratory should be like are nevertheless common cross-culturally. One broad comparative contrast exists between “plain” transparent broadly, accessible political speech of the kind preferred in the United States, where metaphor is suspect (e.g., Philips 2011), and rhetorically rich poetic speech preferred in many non-Western traditions (e.g., Bate 2009). The ideologically driven nature of the expression of agency in political speech (Duranti 1994) and in the exercise of control more generally (Ahearn 2001) is another important theme in work on political discourse.

There is also work focused on language ideologies involved in the general constitution of the nation-state and the impact of that constituting. Inoue (2006) addresses a kind of moral panic concerning how young women talked during the period of the modernization of the Japanese state. Bauman and Briggs (2003) discuss a variety of elite discourses about language that contributed to a public consciousness of modernity and citizenship in the constitution of European nation-states over the last several hundred years.

## 6 Conclusion

The topic of language ideologies has been a productive one in a variety of ways. Researchers have built on a basic recognition that humans have conscious awareness of certain aspects of language that makes it possible to exert control over talk. This control can ultimately affect the structure of language. In research on the language ideologies about group social categories involved in nation-state formation, we find that whole languages, dialects, and registers can be expanded or contracted in their range of use. Such expansion and contraction is influenced by the cultural associations people have with various linguistic varieties and by their perceived status relative to the constitution of nation-states. In the powerful institutions that are part of the state or closely linked to it, the view is widespread that people’s identities can be transformed by immersing them in institution-specific discourses.

There are several key issues that continue to call for attention in this area of study. We have yet to deal with distinguishing among different kinds of awareness of language and the different ways in which awareness can be expressed in human behavior. For example, I may not be able to tell you what the features of a dialect are, yet still be able to recognize it as associated with a particular region. I may also be able to mimic or reproduce it. These are different kinds of awareness and they are different from awareness of a word or morpheme. Yet each is enough to enable some forms of control over the variety at issue. The literature on language ideologies can be understood as a reaction against the older view that language is largely unconscious, and therefore not subject to ideologization or control. This view would have it that those processes that are

not subject to conscious control have greater influence over the shape of discourse and language than those processes that are subject to awareness. There is then a need to give more care and attention to the interplay between the conscious and the unconscious in the shaping of discourse and language.

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# 27 Discourse and Racism

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RUTH WODAK AND MARTIN REISIGL

## 0 Introduction

Discourse plays a crucial role in the creation and reproduction of racism. Racism, as both social practice and ideology, manifests itself discursively. On the one hand, racist attitudes and beliefs are produced and promoted by means of discourse, and discriminatory practices are prepared, promulgated, and legitimated through discourse. On the other hand, discourse serves to criticize and argue against racist opinions and practices, that is, to pursue anti-racist strategies. In our chapter, we adopt Garner's description (2010: 18):

Racism is a multifaceted social phenomenon, with different levels and overlapping forms. It involves attitudes, actions, processes and unequal power relations. It is based on the interpretation of the idea of "race", hierarchical social relations and the forms of discrimination that flow from this.

In the following, we focus on important aspects of connections between discourse and racism. After briefly reviewing relevant concepts of "race" and "racism" (Section 1), we discuss five discourse analytic approaches to racism (Section 2), including an illustration of our own *discourse-historical approach* by the analysis of a political poster taken from a radical right-wing populist election campaign in the city of Vienna in 2010 (Austria). Our conclusion poses questions that still remain unanswered (Section 3).

## 1 Concepts of "Race" and "Racism"

"Racism" can be defined as a stigmatizing flag word that is frequently instrumentalized as a political "fighting word" with a polysemic meaning. Most commonly, the concept

refers to social discrimination (Reisigl 2007a) based on practices of racialization, that is, semiotic practices that construct social relations in terms of race categories (Banton 1977; Murji and Solomos 2005).

If not defined adequately, the terms “racism” and “racist” risk becoming analytically weak categories being used for too many and also quite different phenomena. Nowadays, we encounter a “genetic,” “biological,” “cultural,” “ethnopluralist,” “institutional” and “everyday racism,” a “xeno-racism,” a “racism at the top,” an “elite racism,” a “racism in the midst,” an “old” and a “new” or “neo-racism,” a “positive racism,” and even a “non-egalitarian” and a “differentialist racism” (Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 5–10). Moreover, the specter of a new “cultural or culturalist racism” is also invoked as a feature of present-day patterns of social exclusion, related to the existence of a more deeply rooted structural racism pervading some of the key institutions of contemporary society (such as those regarding politics, the media, work, education, housing, and state services). Despite the obvious impossibility of clearly definable “races,” racism is still flourishing in Europe and beyond – thanks to discriminatory discourses and related ideologies and policies.

Even for geneticists and biologists, the concept of “race,” in reference to human beings, is not linked to biological reality; it presents a scientific artifact (e.g., Jacquard 1996: 20). From a social functional point of view, “race” is a social construction. On the one hand, it has been used as a legitimating ideological tool to construct hegemonic collective identities and scapegoats: in this way, the concept of “race” can rationalize the claim of collective as well as individual superiority, and it can be used to exercise power, to oppress and exploit specific social groups. Often, “race” is employed to deny specific groups access to relevant resources, to work, welfare services, benefits, housing, and political rights. On the other hand, some targeted groups have adopted the idea of “race” and reversed it: to construct an alternative, positive self-identity, as a basis for political resistance (see Mecheril and Scherschel 2009: 53; Miles 1993: 28), and to fight for more political autonomy, equality, and participation.

From a linguistic point of view, the term “race” has no precise etymological history. The Italian “razza,” the Spanish “raza,” the Portuguese “raça” and the French “race” have been documented occasionally from the thirteenth century onwards, and with more frequent occurrences since the sixteenth century, when the term also appeared in English. It has, at different times, entered different semantic fields such as, (1) the field of ordinal and classificational notions (that include such words as “genus,” “species,” and “varietas”); (2) the field that includes social and political group denominations (such as “nation” and “Volk,” and, more rarely, “dynasty,” “ruling house,” “generation,” “class,” and “family”); and (3) the field that includes notions referring to language groups and language families<sup>1</sup> (such as “Germanen”/“Teutons” and “Slavs”) (see Conze and Sommer 1984: 135).

The commonsense meanings of “race” with regard to human beings (up to the eighteenth century) were mainly associated with membership of a specific dynasty. The term primarily denoted “nobility” and “quality,” and had no reference to biological criteria. However, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, pseudo-biological and anthropological systematizations accommodated its meaning to overgeneralized, phenotypic features designated to categorize people, from all continents and countries. The idea of “race” was slowly incorporated into politico-historical literature and then transferred to the terminology of human history.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the concept, with its specific historical and national attributes, was linked to social Darwinism and became a buzzword outside the natural sciences. "Race theorists" started to interpret history as a "racial struggle" in which only the fittest "races" would (have the right to) survive. They employed "race" as a political catchword almost synonymous with the words "nation" and "Volk" for the purposes of their bio-political programs of "racial cleansing," eugenics, and birth control.

The radicalized "race" theory of the German antisemites and National Socialists in the tradition of Arthur de Gobineau, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and Georg Ritter von Schönerer syncretically linked religious, nationalist, economist, culturalist, and biologicistic antisemitism,<sup>2</sup> which then served as *the* ideology to legitimize systematic, industrialized genocide.

It was this use of "race theory" "that stimulated a more thorough critical appraisal of the idea of 'race' in Europe and North America and the creation of the concept of racism in the 1930s" (Miles 1993: 29).<sup>3</sup> Since 1945, use of the term "race" in German-language countries has been taboo. In France, the expression "relations de race" would also be regarded as racist (Wieviorka 1994: 173). On the other hand, the term "race relations" is still used in the United Kingdom and the United States. Research about racism should take into account these differences in language use. Misinterpretations may lead to difficulties in translation and even to mistakes in shaping different analytical categories when dealing with issues of racism (see Wieviorka 1994: 173).

Many approaches from different disciplines have reflected on the material, economic, social, political, sociopsychological, cognitive, and other causes for the continuing existence of racism and attempted explanations (for an overview see Garner 2010: 1–33; Poliakov *et al.* 1992: 145–96; Zenger 1997: 99–164; for a more detailed synopsis see Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 10–19). Like Miles (1994: 207), we recognize the multiple determination of racism. No mono-causal approach is able to grasp the entire complexity of racist discrimination. Racialization is criss-crossed by ethnic, national, gender, class, and other social constructions and divisions. Thus, viewing "race" or "racialization" as an isolated determinant of social relations remains short-sighted. Multidimensional analysis is required in order to develop promising anti-racist strategies: such an analysis necessarily requires accounting for similar and overlapping phenomena, like anti-semitism, nationalism, ethnicism, and sexism, as well as for problems of intersectional and compound discrimination (Makkonen 2002: 1).

We consider racism to be discrimination against racialized social groups or racialized imagined communities. Racism includes the following practices and processes in which discourse plays a crucial role (see also Rommelspacher 2009: 29):

- 1 Two types of differences, that is, natural and cultural differences, are marked and stereotypically generalized, as well as polarized, in order to construct homogenous groups or communities of persons (*marking of natural and cultural differences, group-internal homogenization, and polarization*).
- 2 These two types of differences are connected via the naturalization of cultural differences. This implies that fictitious or real, usually visible, more or less unchangeable features are linked – as allegedly natural traits – with social, cultural, or mental characteristics (*naturalization of cultural differences*).

- 3 This naturalizing social construction is accompanied by the hierarchization and negative evaluation of the racialized Other (*hierarchization and negative evaluation*).
- 4 Naturalized hierarchization and negative evaluation subsequently serve to *justify and legitimize power differences, (economic) exploitation and various practices of social as well as political exclusion* (Priester 2003: 250).

## 2 Discourse Analytical Approaches to Racism

### 2.1 *Prejudices and stereotypes as a basis of racism*

Racism is based on prejudices and stereotypes. Uta Quasthoff was one of the first to study prejudiced discourse. She regards *prejudices* as mental states (normally) including negative attitudes toward social groups as well as corresponding stereotypic convictions (1973, 1978, 1980, 1987, 1989, 1998). According to Quasthoff, a *stereotype* is the verbal expression of a certain belief directed toward a social group or an individual member of that group and shared to a high degree in a particular culture (see Quasthoff 1987: 786, 1978). It takes the form of an oversimplified and generalizing judgment that attributes or denies, usually with an emotionally biased tendency, particular qualities or behavioral patterns to a certain class of persons (Quasthoff 1973: 28).

Quasthoff's investigations cover various kinds of social prejudices and stereotypes – not only racist and nationalist ones.<sup>4</sup> According to Quasthoff (1973), the sentence is the linguistic unit most amenable to her type of analysis. However, Quasthoff (1987: 786, 1989: 183) emphasizes that although “the grammatical unit of the linguistic description of stereotypes is the sentence, [that] does not mean that stereotypes empirically have to appear in the form of complete sentences. It solely implies that the semantic unit of a stereotype is a proposition, i.e. reference and predication, as opposed to a certain form of reference as such.”

Since 1973, Quasthoff has conducted empirical analysis of stereotypes in very different kinds of discourse, among others, in everyday argumentation (Quasthoff 1978, 1998) and narratives (Quasthoff 1980), thus broadening her linguistic horizons to social prejudice and transcending the single-sentence perspective. When, for example, she applied Toulmin's argumentation schema (1969) to the micro-structural level of argumentation, Quasthoff concluded that stereotypes do not exclusively, or even primarily, appear as warrants. If they are used to support a claim, they appear normally as a backing (Quasthoff 1978: 27). Moreover, stereotypes can themselves be either data or claims, supported, in their turn, by other kinds of propositions (for a detailed overview of the concept of stereotype see Reisigl 2008 and 2009).

### 2.2 *The sociocognitive approach to racism*

The model of prejudice developed by Teun van Dijk is partially based on socio-psychological considerations similar to those of Quasthoff. According to van Dijk, prejudice is a socially

shared form of social representation in group members, acquired during processes of socialization and transformed and enacted in social communication and interaction. Such ethnic attitudes have social functions, e.g. to protect the interests of the in-group. Their cognitive structures and the strategies of their use reflect these social functions. (van Dijk 1984: 13)<sup>5</sup>

Van Dijk focuses on the “rationalization and justification of discriminatory acts against minority groups” in much more detail than Quasthoff (van Dijk 1984: 13). He designates the categories used to rationalize prejudice against minority groups as “the 7 Ds of Discrimination.” They are dominance, differentiation, distance, diffusion, diversion, depersonalization or destruction, and daily discrimination. These strategies serve in various ways to legitimize and enact the distinction of “the other” – for example, by dominating minority groups, by excluding them from social activities, and even by destroying and murdering them (van Dijk 1984: 40; see also van Dijk, this volume).

Since the 1990s, van Dijk has conducted a series of important case studies on “elite racism” and racism in the press as well as in politics. Van Dijk (2004: 351–2) distinguishes between two forms of racist discourse: (1) Racist discourse directed *at* ethnically different Others is produced by dominant group members who verbally interact with members of dominated groups. This form of racist discourse (often realized as “everyday racism”) can be explicit and direct, or more subtle and indirect. It involves all levels of language use from intonation to pragmatics and nonverbal communication. (2) Racist discourse *about* ethnically different Others is normally directed toward other dominant group members. This form of discriminatory discourse may become visible both in informal everyday conversations and in “elite discourse” (van Dijk 2008). It can be found in parliamentary debates, TV shows, movies, news reports, editorials, textbooks, scholarly publications, laws, and treaties. It evolves at all levels of text and talk (including visuals) and around the two overall strategies of negative other-presentation and positive self-presentation (van Dijk 2004: 352).

Van Dijk identifies three main topic clusters in racist discourses relating to minorities and migrants: topics emphasizing the differences of Others, and hence their distance from the we-group; topics emphasizing that the behavior of Others is deviant and breaches the norms and rules of the ingroup; and topics referring to “them” in terms of a threat (van Dijk 2004: 352–3). Moreover, van Dijk (2004: 354) focuses on the generic formats typical of racist discourses: racist everyday stories differ from prototypical stories in various respects. Their complicating action usually relates to foreign neighbors, whereas orientation refers to the narrator and her or his we-group. The resolution is often left out, in order to put emphasis on the unsolved (alleged) problem with Others. In parliamentary debates, editorials, and scientific articles involving argumentation against the Other, authoritative sources are frequently referred to in order to support racist prejudices with an *argumentum ad verecundiam*. In addition, negative other-presentation in/on the press, film, TV, or the Internet is often connected with visual salience (important position in the layout, suggestive illustrations, and tables), whereas negative information about the racism of ingroup members is frequently backgrounded. Moreover, van Dijk stresses the difficulty of minority groups and minority journalists in getting access to leading media (e.g., van Dijk 2004: 354, 2005).

### 2.3 *Collective symbols, discourse strands, and dispositives supporting racism*

Siegfried Jäger and the Duisburg group are the most prominent discourse analysts in Germany dealing with the links between racism and discourse (see S. Jäger 1992, 2012; M. Jäger 1996; S. Jäger and M. Jäger 1992; M. Jäger and S. Jäger 2007; S. Jäger and Januschek 1992; S. Jäger and Link 1993; Kalpaka and Rätzzel 1986; Link 1990, 1992). Their research was triggered largely by the violent racism emerging after 1992, when new and stricter immigration laws were implemented in Germany. Simultaneously, the unification of West Germany and the former communist East Germany resulted in the eruption of racist violence against many foreigners, who were physically attacked and whose asylum homes were set afire. This violence is *inter alia* connected to the fact that German unification continues to pose cultural and economic problems for many Germans, especially in times of internationally far-reaching economic crises, and so foreigners constitute convenient scapegoats for these problems.

In various respects, the Duisburg group follows and extends the research of van Dijk. Most of the studies focus on discourse semantics, and especially on the uncovering of “collective symbols” that are tied together in “discourse strands,” which are best explained as thematically interrelated sequences of homogeneous “discourse fragments” (S. Jäger 2012: 80–1).<sup>6</sup> These fragments appear on different “discourse levels” (i.e., science, politics, media, education, everyday life, business life, administration). “Collective symbols” function as “cultural stereotypes,” in the form of metaphorical symbols and synecdoches that are immediately understood by members of the same speech community (see Link 1990, 1992). “Water,” natural disasters like “avalanches” and “flood disasters,” military activities like “invasions,” all persuasively representing “immigration” or “migrants” as something that has to be “dammed,” are examples of collective symbols, just as are the “ship” metaphor, symbolizing the effects of immigration as those on an “overcrowded boat,” and the “house and door” metaphor that depicts the ingroup’s (e.g., “national”) territory as a “house” or “building” and the stopping of immigration as “bolting the door.”

More recently, S. Jäger has started to include the Foucauldian concept of “dispositive” into his discourse analytical framework (S. Jäger and Maier 2009). A dispositive is a heterogeneous ensemble of interrelated discursive and non-discursive practices and materializations that together serve to realize a (collective) plan by relating discourse, knowledge, and power to each other (M. Jäger and S. Jäger 2007: 103ff.). “Institutional racism” functions as an administrative dispositive, with stable elements of racism, including discursive practices, for example, laws and legal regulations, and non-discursive practices, for example, coercive deportation, as well as objectivations, for example, buildings such as prisons or surveillance cameras (M. Jäger and S. Jäger 2007: 105ff.).

Besides studying everyday racism, the Duisburg group frequently conducts media analyses, specifically of the leading German tabloid *Bildzeitung* (e.g., M. Jäger and S. Jäger 2007: 73–93), which runs large campaigns against foreigners and thus contributes to the normalization of racist attitudes “in the midst,” but also of the conservative broadsheet *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, the regional daily newspapers *Frankfurter Rundschau*, *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Rheinische Post*, and the liberal weekly

*Der Spiegel*. M. Jäger *et al.* (1998) illustrate how most of the papers tend toward singularization and individualization of (alleged) German perpetrators and toward collectivization of “foreigners” who have (allegedly) committed a criminal offense. They emphasize that “foreign perpetrators” are frequently marked by reference to their national or ethnic origin. The Duisburg group also focuses on media impeding integration: in this context, the group studies the German media coverage of the so-called “headscarf debate” (S. Jäger and Halm 2007) and the conflict about the cartoons depicting the prophet Muhammed first published in the conservative Danish daily *Jyllands-Posten* in September 2005 (M. Jäger and S. Jäger 2007: 109–60; see also Triandafyllidou, Wodak, and M. Krzyżanowski 2009). This type of critical media analysis can be embedded into the framework of a dispositive analysis, since media function as dispositives.

## 2.4 Discursive psychology of racism

Margaret Wetherell and Jonathan Potter (1992: 70) argue that attitudes and stereotypes are not simply mediated via cognition; rather discourse is actively constitutive of both social and psychological processes, and thus also of racist prejudices. Following Billig (1978, 1985, 1988) and Billig *et al.* (1988), they posit that racism should be viewed as a series of ideological effects with flexible, fluid, and varying content (Wetherell and Potter 1992: 59). Racist discourses should therefore be viewed not as static and homogeneous, but as dynamic and contradictory. Even the same person can voice contradictory opinions and ideological fragments within the same discursive event.

Like the Duisburg group and the discourse-historical approach (Section 2.5), the Loughborough Group stresses the context dependency of racist discourse. They define their task as “mapping the language of racism” in New Zealand, and draw up a “racist topography” by charting themes and ideologies through exploration of the layered texture of racist practices and representations that make up part of the hegemony taken for granted in this particular society. They detect many ideological dilemmas and the manifest and latent argumentation patterns (Wetherell and Potter 1992: 178ff., 208ff.).

Somewhat similar to Link’s concept of “*interdiscourse*” (which refers to the shared culture and traditions of a society that are entrenched as systems of collective symbols) is the Loughborough concept of “interpretative repertoire”:

broadly discernible clusters of terms, descriptions and figures of speech often assembled around metaphors or vivid images ... systems of signification and ... the building blocks used for manufacturing versions of actions, self and social structures in talk ... some of the resources for making evaluations, constructing factual versions and performing particular actions. (Wetherell and Potter 1992: 90)

Over recent years, Wetherell and her colleagues have strengthened their efforts of methodological self-reflection. They have particularly become interested in the genre of research interviews as forms of social interaction and knowledge production, especially with respect to attitudes toward “race” and ethnicity (Wetherell 2004). Their interviews show that racializing and ethnicizing attitudes, as a part of the “lived ideology”

of interviewees, are often more contradictory and disorganized than is assumed by social scientists. These empirical findings lead to a re-evaluation of the theoretical concept of "prejudice." Among other things, Wetherell identifies various ideological roles of prejudice for white New Zealanders (i.e., Pakeha): their function to distract somebody from actual problems, to justify or rationalize individual behavior, to construct a positive identity, and so forth (Wetherell 2012).

## 2.5 *The discourse-historical approach*

One of the most salient distinguishing features of the discourse-historical approach, in comparison to the four approaches already mentioned, is its endeavor to work interdisciplinarily, multi-methodologically and on the basis of a variety of different empirical data as well as background information. Depending on the object of investigation, it attempts to transcend the purely linguistic dimension and to include, systematically, the historical, political, sociological, and/or psychological dimension(s) in the analysis and interpretation of a specific discursive event (see, e.g., Matouschek, Wodak, and Janussek 1995; Mitten and Wodak 1993; Reisigl 2011; Reisigl and Wodak 2001, 2009; van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999; Wodak 1986, 1991a, 1991b, 1996b, 2011a, 2011b, 2015; Wodak *et al.* 1990, 2009).

In accordance with other approaches devoted to Critical Discourse Analysis (see van Dijk, this volume), the discourse-historical approach perceives both written and spoken discourse as a form of social practice (Fairclough and Wodak 1997; Wodak 1996a). "Discourse" is understood as a complex of interrelated context-dependent semiotic acts (in the sense of semiotic tokens) that are situated within specific fields of social action and belong to conventionalized genres and subgenres (in the sense of semiotic types). They are socially constituted, socially constitutive, and related to a macro-topic. They are linked to argumentation about validity claims, such as truth and normative validity, involving several social actors who have different points of view (Reisigl and Wodak 2009: 89).

"Fields of action" (Girnth 1996) are conceived of as segments of social reality which frame a discourse according to institutionalized functions. In the area of political action, we distinguish between the functions of legislation, the formation of public attitudes, opinions and will, the development of party-internal consent, the interparty formation of attitudes, opinions and will, the organization of international/interstate relations, advertising and vote-getting, governing as well as executing and administrating, and controlling as well as expressing (oppositional) dissent (see Figure 27.1). A "discourse" about a specific topic can have its starting point within one field of action and "spread" to other fields. Discourses cross between fields, overlap, refer to each other, or are in some other way functionally linked with each other (some of these relationships are described as "textual chains," "intertextuality," "interdiscursivity," "orders of discourse," or "hybridity;" see Fairclough 2010: 94ff., 102ff., 117, 180; Reisigl and Wodak 2009: 92).

Discursive practices are socially constitutive in a number of ways: first, they play a decisive role in the production of certain social conditions. Discourses serve to construct collective subjects like "races," nations and ethnicities. Second, they reproduce



or justify a certain social status quo and the “racialized,” “nationalized,” and “ethnified” identities related to it. Third, they are instrumental in transforming the status quo and the “racializing concepts,” nationalities, and ethnicities related to it. Fourth, discursive practices have an effect on the dismantling or even destruction of the status quo and the racist, nationalist, and ethnicist concepts related to it. According to these general aims, one can distinguish between the constructive, perpetuating, transformational, and destructive macro-functions of discourses.

The discourse-historical approach relies on a concept of “context” which takes into account:

- 1 the immediate language, or text-internal co-text and co-discourse, of utterances and the local interactive processes of negotiation and conflict management;
- 2 the intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres, and discourses;
- 3 the language-external social/sociological variables and institutional frames of a specific “context of situation;” and
- 4 the broader sociopolitical and historical context that the discursive practices are related to (for more details see Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 41).

There are several discursive components that can be identified when racialized people are discriminated against. They can be analyzed with respect to five types of discursive strategies, which are all employed for positive self- and negative other-presentation. By “strategy” we generally mean a more or less accurate and more or less intentional plan of practices (including discursive practices) adopted to achieve a certain aim.

- 1 First, *nomination strategies* construct and represent social actors, for example, ingroups and outgroups, via membership categorization devices, including making reference by tropes, such as naturalizing and depersonalizing metaphors and metonymy, as well as by synecdoche (see Zimmerman 1990).
- 2 Second, social actors as individuals, group members, or groups are depicted by predication. *Predicational strategies* may be realized as stereotypical attributions of negative and positive traits in the linguistic form of implicit or explicit predicates.
- 3 Third, there are *argumentation strategies* via which positive and negative characteristics are legitimized and racist discrimination against racialized Others is justified, usually by employing various fallacies.
- 4 Fourth, speakers express their involvement in discourse and express their point of view via *perspectivation, framing, or discourse representation*.
- 5 Fifth, there are *intensifying strategies* on the one hand, and *mitigation strategies* on the other. Both qualify and modify the illocutionary force of racist, antisemitic, nationalist, sexist, or ethnicist utterances (for more details see Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 44–85).

In a series of research projects on discourses about immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in Austria, the UK, and elsewhere, this approach to discourse has been combined with corpus linguistics and the analysis of visual communication (e.g., Baker *et al.* 2008; Delanty, Wodak, and Jones 2011; KhosraviNik 2010; Krzyżanowski and Wodak

2009; Richardson 2004; Richardson and Wodak 2009a; Richardson and Wodak 2009b; Wodak 2011c, 2011d, 2015; Wodak and Richardson 2013).

In the following, we illustrate the discourse-historical approach with an example of political discourse taken from an election campaign in Vienna in 2010. This was launched by the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) – a radical right-wing populist party that has for decades capitalized on polarizing campaigns directed against both “the establishment” and ruling “elite,” and against “foreigners,” particularly Muslims, who are attacked from a nationalist, ethnicist, and racist point of view. The FPÖ’s former leader was Jörg Haider (Wodak and Pelinka 2002). Since 2005, Heinz-Christian Strache has been the party’s chairman. In August 2010, a provocative poster was distributed across Vienna (see Figure 27.2).



**Figure 27.2** Poster used by the FPÖ during the Vienna election campaign of 2010, with English translation.

© FPÖ; see also [www.helge.at/2010/08/reines-wiener-blut](http://www.helge.at/2010/08/reines-wiener-blut), © Helge Fahrenberger.

The poster is situated in the action field of political advertising.<sup>7</sup> On the left, we encounter a portrait of H. C. Strache, including a series of positive visual predications. Strache looks youthful and casual and is wearing a white shirt, unbuttoned at the top. His bright light-blue eyes address the viewers as potential voters. The figure of the politician is not positioned at eye level with the viewers, but slightly above. Strache, who was trained as a dental technician before becoming a professional politician, smiles with spotless white teeth. His complexion is suntanned and his hair tidy and brown.

At the top, on the poster's right, we find the party logo consisting of two elements: the party acronym FPÖ, standing for "*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*," meaning "Austria's Liberal Party," and the predication "*Die soziale Heimatpartei*," meaning "The Social Homeland-Party." The logo emphasizes the self-presentation of the party as liberal, social, and homeland oriented. These three predications fulfill the principle of multiple addressing. The party acronym satisfies traditional FPÖ voters and simultaneously represents the whole party. The attribute "social" is a positive signal to socialist voters who are dissatisfied with the social-democratic party. The German high-value term "*Heimat*" is intended to evoke patriotic feelings of belonging to the local community. It is primarily used by conservative people who are oriented toward traditional rural values and refuse geographic mobility, including immigration, which is often framed as intrusion disturbing the old-established community of the "real Austrians." The party logo is blue, white, and red. The red letter "Ö" (standing for "*Österreich*," i.e., Austria) forms the logo's center. It encircles an open white oval, thus symbolizing the Austrian flag and its colors (red, white, red). Blue represents the main color of the party (see Köhler and Wodak 2011: 70). The FPÖ is also referred to in terms of the color metaphor and synecdoche "*die Blauen*" ("the blues").

Beneath the logo, on the right, straddling the horizontal red line, there is a rhyme in red letters: "*Mehr MUT für unser 'Wiener Blut'*" ("More Courage for our 'Viennese Blood'"). And slightly beneath the rhyme, in black, we read: "Too much of the Foreign is not good for anybody." ("*Zu viel Fremdes tut niemandem gut.*"). The red message is more than twice as big as the line in black. The black message slopes slightly and is bordered by a black line that fades on the right side. Viewers are reminded of a postmark. Postmarks represent authoritative certification. In this sense, the illocutionary force of the black assertion is visually intensified.

However, it is the red message with its reference to "Viennese blood" which provoked huge public protest and accusations of racism. The rhyming speech act is an elliptical appeal in slogan-like nominal style, constructing a "we-group" characterized by its blood. The blood is specified as having the quality of being "Viennese." The biologizing metaphor of the blood with its localizing predication "Viennese" is ambiguous. Its use follows the principle of "calculated ambivalence," which is typical of party programs and populist rhetoric aiming at multiple diverse groups of recipients (see Engel and Wodak 2009; Klein 1996: 206f; Reislgl 2002: 170ff).

First, the blood, which is also visually symbolized by the red letters, stands for and, in this context, clearly implies biological descent, kinship, and ancestry. The opposition of "our Viennese blood" and the depersonalizing metonymy "too much of the Foreign" contributes to the naturalizing and homogenizing construction of a Viennese we-group allegedly threatened by too many foreign immigrants. The producers of the poster took precautions against a too literal biologist reading of "Viennese blood." The inverted commas mitigate the potentially racist meaning of the appeal.

Second, “Viennese blood” stands for Viennese culture, since “*Wiener Blut*” – and this is intertextually recoverable from the collocation – is the title of the well-known waltz and operetta by Johann Strauss (junior). Strauss and his music are identity brands for Austrian and particularly for Viennese culture. In this respect, the red and black catch-phrases construct an opposition between the Viennese and foreign culture, the latter being a threat to the former. However, it is worth looking at the respective text of Strauss’s operetta. The refrain starts as follows: “*Wiener Blut, / Wiener Blut! Eign’er Saft, / Voller Kraft, / Voller Glut. / Wiener Blut, / sel’nes Gut, / Du erhebst, / Du belebst / Unser’n Mut!*” (“Viennese blood, / Viennese blood! / Special sap / full of force, / full of fire. / Viennese blood, / exceptional good, / You turn on, / You liven up / Our courage!”). Contextualizing these lines within the plot of the operetta, it is obvious that boiling “Viennese blood” is considered to be responsible for various love affairs and embroilments, and that several of the operetta’s protagonists are “blue-blooded,” that is, aristocrats. In addition, we learn that the FPÖ’s claim for “more courage” can be linked intertextually to the libretto of the operetta, where Viennese blood is said to “liven up our courage.”

Yet it is clear that the FPÖ poster recontextualizes the motifs of “courage” and “Viennese blood” quite differently: here audacity is no longer connected to amorous passion and desire. The request for “more courage for our Viennese blood” presupposes that, nowadays, political opponents are not brave enough to engage in protection of the “Viennese essence” (both in its biologist and culturalist senses). The request and appeal suggest that the FPÖ, in contrast to the other political parties, is ready to defend this “Viennese essence” against “too much of the Foreign” and that it should thus be elected. The nominal ellipsis at the bottom of the poster, written in a mixture of upper- and lower-case white letters, concludes with the claim: “Therefore, Yes for HC Strache.” (“*Deshalb Ja zu HC Strache*”). The claim is visually supplemented by a circle marked with a seemingly hand-drawn red cross. In fact, the central message of the whole poster relies on the following argumentation scheme: “You should vote Strache and the FPÖ, because he and his party are more courageous than their political opponents and will stand up for “Viennese blood” and “defend us” against “too much of the Foreign.”

The statement “Too much of the Foreign is not good for anybody” has the form of a generalizing assertive speech act. The assertion functions as an indirect warning to everybody. It refers to the relationship between “Own” and “Foreign.” It appears somehow harmless, because it is linguistically mitigated by “too much.” That is to say: the assertion suggests that “one/everybody” can be exposed to a certain amount of “Foreign.” At this point, the question remains: What do Strache and the FPÖ consider being “too much of the Foreign”? The answer is not explicitly given in the poster, but rather intertextually in other election campaign material that contains anti-foreigner and particularly anti-Muslim statements and sentiments. One particular intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between the poster and other FPÖ election campaign material deserves attention.

Strache employs all the new communication formats and modes for his political propaganda (see also Wodak, Mral, and KhosraviNik 2013). Over the last few years, several right-wing populist rap songs have been recorded featuring Strache as a rapper. In the Viennese election campaign of 2010, a song with the title “*Wiener Blut*” (“Viennese blood”) addressed younger voters. This song recycled a song with the same title by the well-known Austrian popstar Falco. Strache’s rap contains the slightly extended

slogan: “Too much of the Red and too much of the Foreign, / neither is good for anybody! / Thus the slogan goes: / More courage for our ‘Viennese blood’” (“*Zu viel Rot und zu viel Fremdes, / beides tut niemand gut! / Deshalb lautet die Parole: / Mehr Mut für unser ‘Wiener Blut’*”). In contrast to the poster, the song’s text specifies a warning against “too much of the Foreign.” Strache claims that Islamists are intruding, that the Social Democrats intend to install a minaret with a muezzin in the town center of Vienna, that Istanbul’s customs would become naturalized in Vienna and that criminal gangs of foreigners are terrorizing “our children,” and so forth. This fear mongering had its intended effect: in the Viennese election, the FPÖ got 25.8 percent of the votes – 11 percent more than in 2005. In a public opinion poll after the election, 68 percent of the respondents who voted for the FPÖ argued that they did so because the FPÖ engages actively against migration (see Köhler and Wodak 2011: 73).

### 3 Conclusions

In this chapter, we have provided a necessarily brief overview of conceptions of “race” and “racism” as well as a synopsis of five discourse analytical approaches to the phenomenon of racism, and an illustration of the discourse-historical approach. We have argued that racism is a multifaceted and theoretically complex phenomenon that relates to many questions, such as: Which specific forms of “genetic,” “culturalist,” and “institutional racism” do we face nowadays and what leads to them? How do these different forms of racism manifest themselves in the specific discourses in various regions of the world? Is it possible to distinguish racism from other discriminatory phenomena like antisemitism, nationalism, ethnicism, and sexism? Which analytical – including discourse analytical – criteria can be used to distinguish between these different “-isms” and to identify intersectional as well as compound discrimination?

As early as the 1930s and during World War II, *critical theory* (e.g., Adorno 1973, 1993; Adorno *et al.* 1950; Horkheimer 1992; Outlaw 1990) combined neo-Marxism, politically committed psychoanalysis and sociopsychology in the attempt to answer some of the questions listed above. Critical theory relates economic, political, and cultural structures, as well as social dynamics, to the character of a person that has been formed through childhood socialization. Thus, it does not merely describe racist, and especially antisemitic, prejudice, but primarily attempts to explain it. Adorno (1973: 8) regarded insights into character structure as the best possible protection from the tendency to ascribe constant traits to individuals as “innate” or “racially determined.” Moreover, Adorno (1973: 8) claimed that a specific character structure – an authoritarian personality – makes an individual susceptible to anti-democratic propaganda, especially under difficult social and economic conditions.

Many of the insights of early critical theory remain relevant to this day. However, we are aware that additional factors come into play in specific contexts where racist, xenophobic, Islamophobic, or antisemitic prejudices are expressed and vulnerable social groups are discriminated against – as experienced, for example, with respect to many incidents of racist violence in Greece and Hungary, in 2012 and 2013.

Some of these factors could partly be grasped by poststructuralist and postmodern approaches. *Postmodern approaches* and the *cultural studies* perspective (e.g., Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies 1982; Bauman 1989, 1991; Gilroy 1987; Hall 1978;

Rattansi 1994; Said 1993) particularly analyze the cultural, ideological, and political construction/s of racism. They emphasize that “ethnicities, nationalisms, racism and other forms of collective identities are products of a process to be conceptualized as a cultural politics of representation, one in which narratives, images, musical forms and popular culture more generally have a significant role” (Rattansi 1994: 74). Rejecting Western “meta-narratives” constructed around “collective subjects” like “nations,” “races,” “ethnic groups,” and “classes,” postmodern approaches emphasize that the conceptual vocabulary of “nationalism,” “racism,” “ethnicism,” and “class struggle” no longer provides an adequate basis for a clear-cut taxonomy of violent social antagonisms. Multiple subjectivities and identifications, they argue, are changing under the “postmodern condition” of disembedding, decentering, de-essentializing, and reinventing traditions.

These developments ask for multidimensional and context-sensitive explanatory approaches beyond simple analytical dichotomies. “Racial” distinctions are being constructed and functionalized very strongly – again in the 21st century – in European Union member states and elsewhere. The emergence and rise of right-wing populist parties across the European Union as well as in the United States and the related rhetoric lead to the construction of new divisive cleavages in our heterogeneous and super-diverse societies – a social change triggered by fear of Islam (particularly since 9/11), by migration and globalization, by the financial crisis that began in 2007, and by many other developments. However, these factors do not entirely explain the emergence of racism, xenophobia, and antisemitism in relatively rich states like Austria, Denmark, Switzerland, or Finland, after 1989, and specifically in the second decade of the 21st century. In these states, old discriminatory ideologies and sentiments are reactivated (see Wodak and Richardson 2013) and integrated with new prejudices. Within these complex processes, communication via new and globalizing mass media is a key element. These media support the dissemination of a politics of hate and fear quickly to various parts of the world. Future research on discourse and racism will have to account specifically for their role in the discursive construction and reproduction as well as deconstruction of the racialized “Other.”

## NOTES

- 1 The contribution of philology and linguistics to the construction and taxonomy of “races” and to the legitimation of racism was an infamous one (e.g., Hutton 1999; Hutton 2005; Knobloch 2005). Philology and linguistics are (co-)responsible (1) for the confusion of language relationship and speaker relationship, (2) for the discriminatory hierarchy of languages and language types, and (3) for the metaphorical, naturalizing description of languages as organisms, which provided the basis for the connection and approximation of race and language classifications (see Römer 1989: 41ff.).
- 2 The terms “antisemitism” and “antisemitic,” which cover the entire range of religious, economist, nationalist, socialist, Marxist, culturalist, and racist prejudicial aversion and aggression against Jews, were most probably coined in 1879 by the antisemitic group surrounding the German writer Wilhelm Marr (see Nipperdey and Rürup 1972). At that time, the word “antisemitic” was

- employed as a self-descriptive, political “fighting word.” In 1935, the National Socialist ministry of propaganda (“Reichspropagandaministerium”) issued a language regulation in which it was prescribed that the term should be avoided in the press and replaced with the term “anti-Jewish” (“antijüdisch”), “for the German policy only aims at the Jews, not at the Semites as a whole” (quoted from Nipperdey and Rürup 1972: 151). Undoubtedly, the term “antisemitic” has been used in post-war Germany and Austria more often than during the National Socialist reign of terror. This is because the term has become a “stigma word” to describe others and its meaning has been expanded in the analysis of anti-Jewish prejudice of all kinds throughout history.
- 3 The term “racism” with its suffix “-ism” was probably first used in the title of an unpublished German book by Magnus Hirschfeld in 1933/4. In this book, which was translated and published in English in 1938, Hirschfeld argued against the pseudo-scientifically backed claim that there exists a hierarchy of biologically distinct “races” (see Miles 1993: 29). The actual linguistic “career” of the term started in the post-war period (Sondermann 1995: 47).
  - 4 For the concepts of “social” and “linguistic prejudice” see also Heinemann (1998).
  - 5 Van Dijk does not clearly distinguish between ethnicism, racism, and adjacent forms of discrimination (see also van Dijk *et al.* 1997), as he believes that they are fuzzy and overlapping concepts.
  - 6 A “discourse fragment” is a text or part of a text that deals with a specific topic, for example, the topic of “foreigners” and “foreigner issues” (in the widest sense) (S. Jäger 2012: 80).
  - 7 A detailed analysis of the poster can be found in Köhler and Wodak (2011: 69–73). See also Wodak and Köhler (2010).

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# 28 Code-Switching, Identity, and Globalization

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KIRA HALL AND CHAD NILEP

## 0 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Although scholarship in discourse analysis has traditionally conceptualized interaction as taking place in a single language, a growing body of research in sociocultural linguistics views multilingual interaction as a norm instead of an exception. Linguistic scholarship acknowledging the diversity of sociality amid accelerating globalization has focused on linguistic hybridity instead of uniformity, movement instead of stasis, and borders instead of interiors. This chapter seeks to address how we have arrived at this formulation through a sociohistorical account of theoretical perspectives on discursive practices associated with *code-switching*. We use the term broadly in this chapter to encompass the many kinds of language alternations that have often been subsumed under or discussed in tandem with code-switching, among them *borrowing*, *code-mixing*, *interference*, *diglossia*, *style-shifting*, *crossing*, *mock language*, *bivalency*, and *hybridity*.

Language alternation has been recognized since at least the mid-twentieth century as an important aspect of human language that should be studied. Vogt (1954), for example, suggested that bilingualism should be “of great interest to the linguist” since language contact has probably had an effect on all languages. Still, language contact in these early studies is most often portrayed as an intrusion into the monolingual interior of a bounded language. Indeed, the century-old designation of foreign-derived vocabulary as *loan words* or *borrowings* promotes the idea that languages are distinct entities: lexemes are like objects that can be adopted by another language to fill expressive needs, even if they never quite become part of the family. Einar Haugen put it this way in 1950:

Except in abnormal cases speakers have not been observed to draw freely from two languages at once. They may switch rapidly from one to the other, but at any given

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*The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Second Edition.

Edited by Deborah Tannen, Heidi E. Hamilton, and Deborah Schiffrin.

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moment they are speaking only one, ... not a mixture of the two. Mixture implies the creation of an entirely new entity and the disappearance of both constituents; it also suggests a jumbling of a more or less haphazard nature. (Haugen 1950: 211)

Haugen's defensiveness against the idea of "mixture" may be largely sociopolitical. To avoid backlash from reformers who reviled "mixed" forms and advocated language purity, he chose the term *borrowing* as the politically savvy alternative. Similar concerns motivated early researchers on code-switching to focus on its systematic and rule-governed properties as a means of countering popular perceptions of bilingual speakers as cognitively deficient, if not socially belligerent. These decisions stand as a reminder that linguistic theories are always contextualized within the politics of their day. Similarly, recent scholarship focused on the rapid movement of texts and the diversity of speakers and ways of speaking, which Reyes (2014) has called "the super-new-big," can be read in terms of the largely positive views of globalization in many segments of contemporary society, including academia.

In this chapter, we argue that the theorization of code-switching has been importantly reliant on the theorization of identity, with both transformed through escalating contact set into motion by globalization. The transnational reconfiguration of media, migration, and markets has brought together in unprecedented intensity not just languages, but also the subjectivities of the people who speak them. The metalinguistic awareness produced through this intensification has always been foundational to the sociocultural analysis of code-switching. The residents of a village in northern Norway, to borrow from Blom and Gumperz's (1972) foundational study, will perceive their dialect as constituting local identity only if they become aware that they speak differently from a social group elsewhere.

Our review describes four traditions of research that suggest divergent theoretical perspectives on the relationship between language and identity. The first, established in the 1960s and 1970s within the ethnography of communication, situates code-switching as a product of local *speech community identities*. Speakers are seen as shifting between ingroup and outgroup language varieties to establish conversational footings informed by the contrast of local vs. non-local relationships and settings. A second tradition, initiated in the 1980s in work on language and political economy, analyzes code-switching practices with reference to the contrastive *nation-state identities* constituted through processes of nationalism. This research seeks to uncover the sociolinguistic hierarchies produced through language standardization, often focusing on the language practices of minority speakers in complexly stratified societies. A third tradition of research, established in the 1990s with the discursive turn in social theory, challenges our understanding of language choice controlled by pre-existing indexical ties to identities. Scholars influenced by this critique discuss code-switching as a resource in urban minority communities for the performance of *multicultural* and *interethnic identities*. This shift set the stage for a fourth tradition of research, developed since the millennium, that focuses on *hybrid identities* as the social corollary to the language mixing brought about through accelerated globalization.

Although the initiation of these four traditions can be traced to different time periods, with associated scholars often positioning their work against the assumptions of previous generations, all of them have contributed profound insights to the analysis of code-switching that are still viable today. Our review aims to capture these insights,

while highlighting what we see to be promising directions for future research in the field.

## 1 Speech Community Identities

The concept of the “speech community” is foundational to the understanding of code-switching as an identity-based phenomenon. Scholars working within the ethnography of communication, the perspective most known for advancing this concept, view the bilingual and bidialectal practices of tightly bound communities as symbolic of local vs. non-local identity contrasts. The terms “we code” and “they code” (Gumperz 1982: 66) surface in this literature as the linguistic correlate of these identity relations, with the former conjuring affective positions associated with the home, such as intimacy and solidarity, and the latter status positions, such as formality, authority, and hierarchy across relations of greater social distance. The groups that are the focus of analysis are seen as sharing similar interpretations of the social meanings indexed by language choice. Indeed, the sharing of norms and expectations for language behavior is precisely what constitutes a speech community in the ethnography of communication model; hence our use of the term *speech community identities* to characterize how subjectivity is discussed within this tradition.

This section provides a review of some of the tradition’s earliest texts, with an eye to how authors position code-switching as a product of an increasingly mobile society. The local communities that populate these discussions may appear far removed from processes of globalization, yet the linguistic reflexivity that informs language choice is almost always inspired by translocal movement of some sort, whether economic, ideological, or physical. Indeed, this early work often suggests the so-called “identity crisis” that globalization theorists later came to characterize as symptomatic of late modernity. As the tightly bound locales of previous generations became more porous and identification was dislodged from the usual coordinates of time and space, the speakers in these texts, like the subjects of “detraditionalization” in Giddens’s (1991) theorization of modernity, became increasingly reflexive about their self-identity and the expressive practices that constitute it. Far from diminishing the importance of identity to everyday life, the coexistence of different language varieties provides more resources for its articulation.

### 1.1 *Situational and metaphorical switching*

Sociocultural linguists generally trace the source of contemporary code-switching theory to Blom and Gumperz’s (1972) analysis of the use of two varieties of Norwegian: the standard dialect Bokmål and the local dialect Ranamål. This foundational text can also be read as a study of shifting relations of language and identity in a period of post-war migration, even if it is rarely recognized for this in literature reviews. Blom and Gumperz observe alternating uses of Bokmål and Ranamål by three categories of speakers in the Norwegian village of Hemnesberget: (1) artisans and workers, (2) wholesale-retail merchants and plant managers, and (3) service personnel, among them

professionals who relocated to the village to secure work (1972: 419). Speakers in each of these categories situate themselves differently on a local/non-local continuum, with immigrant shop owners, physicians, and educators in the latter category often preferring pan-Norwegian middle-class values to those of the “local team.” But all of these speakers, as members of the same speech community, share an orientation to both varieties as resources for identification along this continuum. Indeed, in Blom and Gumperz’s reading, identity is the only viable explanation for why villagers would continue to treat two mutually intelligible varieties as distinct: “The dialect and the standard remain separate because of the cultural identities they communicate and the social values implied therein” (417).

By attending to social change and its effect on linguistic practice, Blom and Gumperz depart from earlier dialectology research that focuses on non-mobile subjects as carriers of dialect authenticity. Even core members of Blom and Gumperz’s first category – the workmen who rarely leave town and “show a strong sense of local identification” (418) – formulate their language practices in reaction to the mobility that surrounds them. As Hemnesberget was bypassed by economic reconstruction after World War II, local residents found themselves on “an island of tradition in a sea of change” (410). They experienced the world around them, and the varieties of speaking associated with it, in their daily interactions with people from elsewhere: shop owners and professionals from other urban centers, and even college students returning home. This mixture of peoples and dialects produce heightened reflexivity toward what Blom and Gumperz identify as the “social meaning” of language, leading locals to revisit their dialect metadiscursively as a point of pride, not habit.

Blom and Gumperz use the term *situational switching* to describe language alternations that reinforce a regular association between language choice and social events, such as when a community member uses standard Norwegian to deliver a classroom lecture but the local dialect to discuss personal matters with a friend. This kind of switch, which establishes a sequential relationship between two language varieties and two respective communicative contexts, extends Fishman’s (1967; cf. Ferguson 1959) understanding of institutionalized bilingualism in diglossic societies. Where diglossia views the use of “high” or “low” varieties as dictated by the social settings of church, home, and government, Blom and Gumperz explore code-switching at the level of interpersonal interaction, offering a more dynamic portrait of its materialization.

Even more critically, Blom and Gumperz do not see language choice as dictated by the situation; rather, speakers *produce* the situation through the code-switch. Their work set into motion a complex interrogation of bilingual behavior as both context dependent and context producing. Indeed, the idea that context is signaled through linguistic resources became the heart of Gumperz’s (1982) later theorization of *contextualization cues*. In this formulation, language choice is just one of many “surface features of message form” (131) that have the potential to signal new contexts in which an utterance should be understood, paralleling the use of lexical, intonational, or prosodic markers in monolingual discourse. Blom and Gumperz (1972) analyze code-switching as an agentive act, even if “patterned and predictable on the basis of certain features of the local social system” (409). The use of an alternative linguistic variety can establish a new situation, whether defined by formality, kinds of activities, settings, or relevant aspects of a speaker’s identity. In brief, code choice has the potential to change the definition of what the authors call “participants’ mutual rights and obligations” (425).

Blom and Gumperz additionally attempt to account for those instances in which different language varieties are selected within a single social event, such as when two Hemnesberget residents involved in an official transaction use the local dialect to inquire about family affairs. Because this alternation adds a second frame to the interaction and compels listeners to attend to two interpretive contexts in the same social event, Blom and Gumperz refer to this practice as *metaphorical switching*. The distinction between situational and metaphorical alternation has been the source of some critique (Auer 1995; Myers-Scotton 1993), but the latter term is meant to underscore how speakers make use of multiple language varieties to allude to more than one social relationship within the same situation. In the example above, the two residents switch between local and standard to enact dual relationships of intimacy and formality by recalling other settings without changing the goal of the current exchange.

The import of Blom and Gumperz's theorization of metaphorical switching for the study of language and identity cannot be overstated. Goffman (1981) builds on their work when formulating his concept of *footing* for the roles and stances that individuals take up within monolingual interaction. For Goffman, footing and code-switching are parallel phenomena in that they both enable the simultaneous display of multiple social roles. As Goffman puts it: "In talk it seems routine that, while firmly standing on two feet, we jump up and down on another" (155). Recalling the idea of switching codes, Goffman uses the metaphor of "changing hats" to describe how speakers shift to secondary social roles while remaining in a primary one, such as when President Nixon breaks from the formal routine of a bill-signing ceremony to comment on UPI reporter Helen Thomas wearing slacks. Once discourse was seen as having the potential to establish a twofold relationship to the social world within a single conversation or even turn of phrase, speakers were viewed as having the ability to signal dual social positions in what Woolard calls "virtual simultaneity" (1999: 16). In her reading of the literature, Blom and Gumperz's work advanced an understanding of social identities as "simultaneously inhabitable" (17), inspiring attention to the way speakers make use of language alternatives to "create, invoke, or strategically maintain ambiguity between two possible identities" (16).

## 1.2 *The markedness model*

One of the most influential uptakes of Blom and Gumperz's theorization of code-switching as a resource for identity is Myers-Scotton's *markedness model* (1983, 1993). Building on the idea that different linguistic forms are associated with different identities and that social norms restrict the selection of linguistic variables, her analysis invokes the concept of *linguistic markedness* to explain code-switching behavior. Like other work during this period, Myers-Scotton's model relies on the assumption that there are locally shared understandings of indexical links between specific languages and social meaning. Members of a multilingual speech community must share an understanding of the function of each language; if they did not, interlocutors would be unable to make sense of particular instances of code-switching. Most critically, speakers expect certain language varieties but not others to be used in a particular interaction. They may choose to follow or contest these unmarked norms, but either

decision “negotiate[s] a particular identity ... *in relation to* other participants in the exchange” (1993: 152).

Myers-Scotton’s (1993) analysis draws from multiple fieldwork sites in Kenya and other parts of eastern Africa to establish a highly agentive portrait of speakers as producers of “intentional meaning” (56). The markedness model posits that speakers are rational actors who use the linguistic form that is indexical of the social role they wish to present in a particular interaction. Code choice is operationalized by maxims subsumed under a *negotiation principle*: speakers negotiate identity by changing what she calls “rights-and-obligation sets” that exist between participants and are indexed by language varieties (152). Myers-Scotton’s use of the term *identity* is thus meant to illuminate “this limited sense” (152) of interpersonal negotiation, even if controlled by broader expectations of markedness. Her discussions are largely responsible for the development of a new lexicon in sociolinguistics for describing speaker agency, bringing terms like *negotiation*, *choice*, and *strategy* to the fore of analysis.

Although not highlighted in the explanation of the markedness model, the effects of globalization – or more specifically, the movement of people and commodities – are visible across Myers-Scotton’s data. Even her early 1983 formulation describes the negotiation maxims through examples of global movement: the educated Kru man who speaks only English after returning from an overseas study trip (120); the Marathi taxi driver who refuses to speak Hindi with a Western tourist (121–2); the disfluent foreigner who compels listeners to suspend their markedness expectations (125). The region-wide lingua franca, Swahili, and the even more broadly shared English, feature frequently in her work as indices of non-local identities and as means to assert hierarchy or deny solidarity.

Myers-Scotton views her work as dynamic for analyzing code choice as a function of negotiation, not situation. Yet the markedness model has been extensively critiqued as deterministic, precisely because it fails to incorporate Gumperz’s idea of language choice as context-producing. Scholars have objected to the model’s reliance on a static understanding of discursive meaning controlled by considerations that precede interaction. Auer (1995, 1998), drawing from insights in Conversation Analysis, calls for more attention to the sequential aspects of interaction that may influence language alternation, such as turn-taking. Meeuwis and Blommaert (1994), drawing from insights in linguistic anthropology, contest the model’s claim to universal validity and its neglect of community-specific ethnographic details. Certainly, empirical studies rarely find consistent, broadly shared understandings of the indexical link between language and social role. Even where particular activities are associated with language varieties, “the correlation is never strong enough to predict language choice in more than a probabilistic way” (Auer 1995: 118). One supposes that such ideological mismatches are even more common as speakers and texts move from one setting to another in periods of accelerated globalization. A model that assumes relatively static relationships between language varieties and social identities is unable to analyze, or even recognize, social change in progress.

Woolard (2005) suggests that a strength of Myers-Scotton’s model lies not in its use of markedness but in its development of the notion of indexicality. The markedness model predicts that speakers will tend to use unmarked codes, and identifies unmarked codes as languages most frequently used in some social setting – a fundamentally circular definition. But repeated use in particular settings establishes the language as an index,

a sign that gets its meaning from a connection with what it represents. As Woolard writes, "Through the accumulation of use in particular kinds of social relations, [language varieties] come to index or invoke those relations, taking on an air of natural association with them" (81). Myers-Scotton makes this relationship the basis of her theory to explain why certain forms are chosen and not others in the negotiation of interpersonal identity. But her work also reveals that these same relationships are the backbone of social inequality. Through repeated use in particular settings, certain linguistic forms, together with the people who use them, become naturalized in ways that support social hierarchy. This process is the focus of a second tradition of research that analyzes everyday language practice as both reflecting and producing broader political relations.

## 2 Nation-State Identities

The study of language and political economy emerged during the 1980s from parallel currents in several fields. Neo-Marxist scholars across the social sciences were increasingly interested in the symbolic and linguistic aspects of unequally distributed economic and political power. Where philosophers during the eighteenth century had posited an essential unity between language, nationality, and the state, twentieth-century studies viewed this unity as a product of ideology propagated by state institutions, among them publishing (Anderson 1983) and education (Bourdieu 1977). These theoretical discussions of inequality resonated with empirical sociolinguistic research on the stratification of privileged linguistic forms along class, gender, or ethnic lines. Inspired by these connections, a new generation of scholars took as their subject the investigation of boundaries between linguistic and social groupings within the nation-state. According to Gal (1988), code-switching served in these analyses as a clear example of "systematic, linguistically striking, and socially meaningful linguistic variation" (245). Scholars in this tradition did not simply affirm the theoretical arguments advanced in social theory; rather, they viewed sociolinguistic research as providing an important corrective to some of the more grandiose claims circulating across academia. The strength of this tradition lies in its combined use of sociopolitical theory, conversational data, and detailed ethnography to understand language choice as an ideologically motivated and historically situated response to the state's prioritization of certain language varieties over others.

Scholars of language and political economy seek to explain the ways that languages function in diverse settings both as markers and as constitutive elements of social structures. Identity is viewed as emerging within the stratifying systems of standardization associated with European-inspired models of nationalism. Where researchers in the earlier tradition deepened their investigation of identity as an interactional achievement, these scholars examined the historical contexts and political ideologies that made social identities inhabitable in the first place. Critical to this undertaking is the examination of everyday practice as a site for the production of social hierarchy. Language choice can reflect the understanding of "self" versus "other" within broad political, historical, and economic contexts, but it can also construct more localized groupings of

ethnicity, gender, or social class within these larger contexts. We have chosen the term *nation-state identities* as shorthand for the treatment of subjectivity in this tradition.

## 2.1 Language and political consciousness

As Gal (1988) outlines in a review of the literature, some of the earliest research in language and political economy investigates what Marxist scholars label “consciousness”: individuals’ understanding of the relationship between groups within the state, including their own position in relation to those groups. Because certain language varieties are legitimated and promoted by the state or other powerful political entities, the use of non-standard or non-local varieties may instantiate what Hill, drawing from her research among Mexicano (Nahuatl) speakers in Mexico, calls “the symbolic practice of a structural position” (1985: 735). For peasant communities in the Malinche volcano region, Mexicano is the language of the community, while Spanish is associated with external forces of Puebla City and the Mexican state, money, and the market. Evil characters in Mexicano myths use Spanish, and speaking Spanish to outsiders is a clear signal of social distance. Even so, within Mexicano speech, Spanish loan words function as markers of power, “the register of Mexicano through which important men mark their identity” and the authority of their discourse (727).

Hill adopts Bakhtin’s notion of “double voicing” to explain these apparently contradictory uses of Spanish. Examples such as (1) below, taken from the beginning of a story about a local hero, demonstrate the complexity of Spanish loan word incorporation into Mexicano discourse practices. (Spanish loans are underlined.)

- (1) *Nicmolhuil̄z cē cuento de in nēc antepasado ōcmihtahuiliāyah in*  
 I will tell a story of that ancestor (that) they used to tell  
*tochcoltzit̄zihuān nēca tiempo ōmovivirhuiliaya īpan Mal̄ntz̄n cē*  
 our grandfathers about that time when there lived on the Malinche a  
*cē persona itōca ōcnombrarohqueh Pillo.*  
 a person his name they named him Pillo.

(Hill 1985: 730)

In addition to referential meaning, the use of Spanish loan words conveys seriousness and power, a connotation that comes from the place of the Spanish language in broader Mexican society. As Hill explains, the use of multiple Spanish loan words such as *cuento* (story) and *tiempo* (time) is appropriate to a serious telling. But Spanish loan words can also be fully embedded in Mexicano syntax and morphology, as in the words *ōmovivirhuiliaya* (“there lived”) and *ōcnombrarohqueh* (“he was named”). Hill argues that such incorporations show speakers’ consciousness of ethnic and class positioning. The power-laden connotations of Spanish loan words are themselves an element of the Mexicano system of discourse; the same words would connote no such thing in Spanish discourse. It is the relationship between the Mexicano and Spanish languages in Mexican society – and by extension the position of Mexicano identity in that society’s ethnic hierarchy – that creates the connotative meaning.

At times, Hill notes, the relationship between Mexicano and Spanish languages and the ambivalent position it creates for the Mexicano speakers who use loan words as emblems of power comes to the surface. Mixed forms, such as Spanish loan words with Mexicano phonology or Mexicano lexical items with Spanish phonology, thus constitute what Hill calls a “translinguistic battlefield, upon which two ways of speaking struggle for dominance” (731). Although some scholars have taken pains to differentiate code-switching from borrowing, Hill’s analysis illustrates how it can be informative to examine these behaviors together, without regard for their separability on grammatical or other bases. For Hill, these bilingual strategies, which differ across groups of Mexicano laborers, evidence the struggle to maintain Mexicano identity in an increasingly dominant Spanish-based capitalism, revealing “the role of human linguistic capacities in the dynamic of the world system” (725).

## 2.2 *Language as symbolic domination*

Where Hill views sociolinguistics as enhancing the Marxist theorization of consciousness, Woolard (1985) sees it as providing an important intervention into Bourdieu’s (1977) theorization of language and social class. Bourdieu’s highly influential work argues that certain forms of language – principally the national languages and standard varieties promoted through education and other practices of the state – endow their users with symbolic capital. These preferred varieties gain legitimacy from their use in powerful institutions and thus take on an authority that is recognized even by speakers who do not control the prestige variety. This produces an asymmetry in knowledge and evaluation, as those who do not speak the preferred forms recognize the authority associated with them and depreciate their own language practices in what Bourdieu (1982) labels *symbolic domination*.

Woolard’s work on language choice in Catalonia complicates Bourdieu’s theory. The Catalan language, which is politically marginalized in Spain, held high social prestige in Catalonia because of its association with the upper and upper-middle classes. Bourdieu uses a metaphor of “price formation” to explain the dominance of privileged languages and varieties. Since not all speakers control the prestige variety, it becomes a scarce resource that gives those who do speak it greater access to labor positions. However, Woolard notes that this price-formation metaphor breaks down when economic and political sources of prestige compete, as they do in Catalonia. Situations of *covert prestige* (Labov 1972), where non-standard varieties are highly valued, similarly challenge the metaphor of a single market value. Woolard introduces the term *alternative marketplace* to account for this breadth of linguistic valuation systems.

Case studies such as Woolard’s inspired deeper ethnographic investigation of *language ideologies*, the beliefs held by speakers about the values of particular language behaviors. As Gal (1988) points out, the values that code-switching indexes are the result of specific forces that are both historical and local. To illustrate this specificity, Gal compares the position of the German language in two different settings. In Transylvania after World War II and through the 1970s, German speakers held a privileged position relative to Romanian speakers since their language abilities linked them to West Germany. Code-switching was fairly rare in Transylvania among German-Romanian bilinguals, who mainly spoke prestigious German. In contrast,

Gal (1979) found frequent code-switching among German–Hungarian bilinguals during the 1970s in Austria, where historically Hungarian-speaking peasants were increasingly using German and working in the capitalist economy. “In a pattern exactly the reverse of the German–Transylvanian practice, the Hungarians in Austria insert in their Hungarian conversations the language of state power as a claim to expertise and social authority” (Gal 1988: 254).

### 2.3 *Language and intersectionality*

Gal moves the study of language and political economy beyond the bounds of the nation-state in her consideration of the prestige granted to certain languages “within the context of a world system” (1988: 260). But she also sets into motion an examination of identity as emergent across localized intersections of ethnicity, class, and gender. For Gal, the prestige granted to German speakers in Romania illustrates that researchers cannot assume the class-based marginalization of ethnic minorities. Rather, the relationship between class and ethnicity, as well as other categories, must be analyzed as forged within localized sociopolitical histories.

These kinds of intersections are the focus of Urciuoli’s (1991) research on Spanish–English bilinguals in New York with ties to Puerto Rico. Urciuoli found that for New York Puerto Ricans, code-switching with English-speaking African Americans on the Lower East Side of Manhattan is a very different experience from speaking with mostly white, middle-class English speakers who do not live in the community. Outside the working-class neighborhood, the opposition between working class and middle class is all important. Within the neighborhood, however, race, ethnicity, gender, and generation each exert some influence on language choice and patterns of interaction. Moreover, although it is acceptable for bilinguals to speak Spanish in the presence of African Americans and for African Americans to use Spanish, the use of both languages together – what people from the neighborhood call “mixing” – has a more complicated ideological position. Informants suggest that languages should be maintained as separate, an ideology that they seem to share with US government and educational authorities. One informant told Urciuoli, “If you start a sentence in Spanish, you should finish in Spanish” (300). When Urciuoli pointed out to him that in fact people from the neighborhood routinely switch between Spanish and English, he continued, “That’s just around here, everyone does it around here” (300). The idea of “around here” is an identity position that takes in not just location but also ethnicity, class, and minority patterns of interaction. People from the neighborhood do code-switch among intimates, but they argue that the practice is improper, and they are careful not to do it around white, middle-class “Americans.”

Heller (1999) attributes such self-denigration of code-switching to a pervasive ideology of “parallel bilingualism” fostered by institutions of the modern nation-state. Her ethnography of a French-language high school in English-dominant Ontario reveals how micro-linguistic practices in the educational system reproduce the idea that languages are discrete and bounded systems that need to be kept separate. Yet even if state power and political economic distinctions exert influence over patterns of behavior and identity, these influences are mediated by local history. This is seen in the bilingual practices of students in the same French-language high school when they hold

conversations in domains characterized by less surveillance. Research in language and political economy thus reveals that the identity positions of bilingual subjects are locally specific as well as politically contingent. This perspective is assumed for a third tradition of scholarship that analyzes code-switching as a contribution to the postmodern theorization of identity, the subject of our next section.

### 3 Multicultural and Interethnic Identities

The 1990s was an explosive decade for the theorization of identity, as scholars began to challenge static understandings of selfhood that riddled a previous generation of research. This shift, which ushered in nothing short of a sea change within linguistics in the way identity is viewed, can be attributed to a diversity of factors, only some of which can be recounted here. Postmodern challenges to the authoritative voice of the analyst coincided with the rise of digital communication, multiculturalism, deconstructionism, and the poststructuralist valorization of discourse as the site for the production of subjectivity. These developments all presented challenges to psychological understandings of the self as singular and unified. Critical gender theorists such as Butler (1990) advanced the idea that identity is performative: it produces itself anew by reiterating what is already discursively intelligible. For sociocultural linguists, this perspective forced closer attention to how subjectivity might emerge within the constraints and allowances of interaction. As Bucholtz and Hall (2004a, 2004b, 2005) suggest in their reviews of this period, identity began to be viewed as a discursive construct that is both multiple and partial, materializing within the binds of everyday discourse.

During the same decade, a burgeoning body of research on the globalized new economy began to theorize identity as fragmented by processes associated with late modernity. The expansion and intensification of international exchange severed the connection between identity and locale that had been previously assumed. Whether discussed in terms of “detraditionalization” (Giddens 1991), “liquid modernity” (Bauman 2000), or “network society” (Castells 1996), identity had lost its deictic grounding in the temporal and spatial fixities that constituted an earlier era, including the nation-state. The full force of these theorizations did not surface in the code-switching literature until after the millennium, but their reflexes can be seen in early sociolinguistic work on urban diasporic communities and minority groups constituted through transnational migration.

Noteworthy in this regard are two influential ethnographies published in the mid-1990s that launched quite divergent views of ethnicity as a social construct: Zentella’s (1997) *Growing Up Bilingual* and Rampton’s (1995) *Crossing: Language and Ethnicity among Adolescents*. Both perspectives are importantly informed by the discursive turn in social theory and offer highly contextualized discussions of identity as an interactional achievement, even if their conceptualization of ethnicity at the turn of the century differs. This ethnographically based generation of research offered renewed attention to the concern with language ideologies, advancing the idea that language contact brought about by global movement leads to heightened reflexivity toward the indexical links between language and identity.



- 4 how you go, where, with who you go out, who you go with –  
 5 – *con quien sale-s*, if you – *si tú (es)tá(s) jangueando con un muchacho*,  
 ('who you go out with') ('if you're hanging out with a boy')  
 6 *Ah que si "ese/h/ tu novio," "Will you go out?"*  
 ('Oh that if "that's your boyfriend"')

(Zentella 1997: 99–100)

Zentella identifies several conversational functions and footing shifts behind the language alternations that appear in this passage. The use of Spanish in lines 5 and 6 indicates indirect and direct quotation. The use of the English discourse marker "you know" serves as a check for understanding or agreement. In line 2 and again in line 5, each language is used to repeat the same information as a point of emphasis. Delia uses each of these "special effects" to add vibrancy or structure to her narrative. At the same time, however, the very fact that two languages are used says something about Delia's identity as a Puerto Rican and a New Yorker. As Zentella puts it, "Weaving together both languages made a graphic statement about Delia's dual New York City–Puerto Rico identity, and highlighted particular conversational strategies at the same time" (100).

### 3.2 Language crossing

Shortly before Zentella (1997) published *Growing Up Bilingual*, Rampton (1995) published *Crossing*, a highly influential ethnography of code-switching practices associated with urban youth in a multi-racial neighborhood in the South Midlands of England. While both texts view ethnicity as a complex product of discursive exchange, they ground their work in quite different (and some may say opposing) theoretical paradigms. Zentella, inspired by an American-based multicultural feminism, is keenly sensitive to the lived experience of racism as it materializes in the New York Puerto Rican community, especially to the public derogation of bilingual practices such as Spanglish. Rampton, in contrast, focuses on linguistic movement across ethnic borders to capture how urban youth in late industrial Britain negotiate a collaborative sense of multi-racial community, hence our use of the term *interethnic identities*.

Rampton introduces the concept of *language crossing* in his ethnography to account for "the use of language varieties associated with social or ethnic groups that the speaker does not normally 'belong' to" (14). Much work on bilingualism, including Zentella's ethnography, focuses on single ethnic communities whose members have been socialized from childhood into the use of two or more languages. Crossing tends to fall out of such studies, since it is often produced through the truncated, if not stereotypical, use of an outgroup linguistic variety. But for Rampton, such practices represent challenges to the absolutist discourses of race and nation that inform a previous generation of speakers as well as researchers. With the requirement of language ownership off the table, he is able to stress the performative dimensions of race, detailing how British-born adolescents of Anglo, Afro-Caribbean, and South Asian descent cross

variously into Panjabi, Creole, and stylized Indian English in their everyday interactions. Much as drag denaturalizes the expected link between biological sex and social gender (Butler 1990), Rampton's crossers destabilize commonsense assumptions about inherited ethnicity. Indeed, Rampton suggests that this peer group – youth who view ethnic identity as negotiated rather than fixed – is exemplary of “new ethnicities” arising at the periphery of late twentieth-century Britain.

Rampton's argument accordingly mounts a strong critique of the way the “we-code” has been operationalized in studies of code-switching. In his data, linguistic solidarity does not derive from membership in a bounded ethnic group, but rather from an interethnic sensibility produced through boundary disruption. Anglo students use Panjabi obscenity to tease fellow students, but they use stylized Asian English to portray them as incompetent or immature. In the following example, two students of South Asian background rebuke younger students for running during break time, using stylized Asian English with exaggerated pronunciation.

- (3) 1 Sukhbir: STOP RUNNING AROUND YOU GAYS  
 2 [(laughs))  
 3 Mohan: [EH (.) THIS IS NOT MIDDLE (SCHOOL) no more (1.0)  
 [aɪ dɪs ɪz ɪpɒt<sup>h</sup> mɪð nɔ̃ mɔː]  
 4 this is a respective (2.0)  
 [dɪs ɪz ə .ɪspektɪv]  
 5 (school)  
 6 Mohan: school (.) yes (.) took the words out my mouth (4.5)

(Rampton 1995: 144–5)

Students across this youth community collaborate on the appropriate placement of linguistic varieties, orienting to a shared code that supersedes any one ethnic group. They jointly recognize, for example, that Panjabi is used for joking, while stylized Asian English is used for social hierarchy. While Rampton acknowledges that many of these uses rely on stereotypes of minority communities, he presents a more positive view of racialization than evidenced in studies that portray ESL speakers in London as victims of linguistic discrimination, such as Gumperz's (e.g., Gumperz, Jupp, and Roberts 1979) early work on *crosswalk*.

Subsequent work on crossing, particularly work produced by American scholars, provides less optimistic accounts of its place in systems of racialization. Lo's (1999) examination of a diverse peer group in Los Angeles in which “interethnic interactions are frequent” (461) shows how speakers can disagree about the metadiscursive meaning of crossing behavior and sociohistorically embedded language forms, leading to code-switching behavior that is not reciprocated. Hill (1998) stresses the need for a fuller consideration of the sociohistorical ideologies that inform crossing behavior. Her analysis of “Mock Spanish” – the humorous deployment of Spanish by English-speaking Anglos in the American southwest – demonstrates that this cross-ethnic usage is controlled by the American racialization of Mexicans as violent, cheap, and vulgar. Bucholtz (1999) counters Rampton's claim that crossing builds interethnic alliances

with an analysis of cross-racial African American Vernacular English produced by a white high-school student in California. Because the white student's narrative recalls a long-standing association of blackness with hyperphysical masculinity, it does not break down racial categories but rather upholds them. Surely, the linking of stylized Asian English with pejorative appellations such as "you gays" in Rampton's own example above could be analyzed in similar terms, given the long-standing colonial stereotype of the effeminate South Asian.

Regardless of how these scholars see the potential for outgroup linguistic tokens to subvert the social order, all of them view ethnicity as a complex product of discursive interaction. As the 1990s reached conclusion, identities could no longer be conceptualized as discrete and homogenous, nor could the languages associated with them. This had profound consequences for the analysis of code-switching, setting into motion a fourth tradition of scholarship that supplants the idea of distinct codes with an analytics of linguistic hybridity.

## 4 Hybrid Identities

Analysis of multilingual discourse in the first two decades of the twenty-first century challenges the understanding of languages as concrete, bounded entities. Research during the 1990s complicated received notions of identity and its connection to language behavior by focusing on the intersection of sociological categories (such as ethnicity and class in Urciuoli 1991) or illuminating behavior across such categories (Rampton 1995). More recently, scholars have approached this connection by challenging our understanding of languages as whole, cohesive objects. Work at the turn of the century has argued that monolingualism is an ideological apparition, objectified in the rise of European nation-states during the nineteenth century.

Recent research relies on a notion of *hybrid identities*, the image or self-image of people at national and linguistic margins. Scholars writing about the "superdiversity" of language in digital environments and metropolitan areas (e.g., Blommaert and Rampton 2011) tend to approach social mixture as given, not achieved, treating its materialization in discourse as normative for interaction in the new global economy. This research may include the analysis of speakers who transgress traditional sociolinguistic boundaries, taking as its focus the border-crossing practices marginalized in previous generations of scholarship. But other research in this tradition critiques the very idea of linguistic boundaries in the first place. For many scholars, even the terms *switching* and *crossing* misleadingly imply movement across discrete categories of language and identity. What unites research in this fourth tradition, then, is the analysis of language as fluid, mixed, and relatively unbounded, even if scholars differ on what this fluidity means for the analysis of social identity. This section provides a review of some of the key terms born of this tradition, among them *bivalency*, *transidiomatic practices*, *metrolingualism*, and *superdiversity*. The discussions in which these terms are embedded call attention to the hybridity of language by shifting the focus of analysis to speaker repertoires, discourse hybrids, and the mobility of linguistic resources. The hybrid identities often left implicit behind these discourse practices are an important area for new research and theory.

## 4.1 Bivalency

Kathryn Woolard's (1999) influential essay on "simultaneity and bivalency" is a turning point toward analysis of discourse at what an earlier generation of scholars viewed as linguistic margins. Woolard argues that by insisting on a point where one language switches off and another switches on, studies of code-switching that underplay its complexity contribute to an image of monolingualism as normal, and to a misidentification of bilingual discourse as anomalous. Woolard's work recalls Grosjean's (1989) warning regarding cognitive and neurolinguistic studies of bilingualism. As Grosjean's holistic model suggested that the linguistic ability of multilingual individuals is not simply two incomplete copies of (monolingual) grammatical competence, Woolard's analysis of simultaneity shows that bilingual discourse is not two monolinguals in one text. Rather, by strategically employing the forms and practices available through multiple language systems, bilingual speakers can produce multi-functional discourses that can be understood in multiple ways simultaneously. This includes the use of *bivalent* forms – words or other linguistic elements that belong to more than one language, such as cognates or loan words – or forms traditionally discussed as *interference* – elements from various lexical, morphological, phonetic, or syntactic systems.

Woolard illustrates bivalency in the catch phrase of a Catalan comedian named Eugenio. His habitual opening line, "*El saben aquel ...*" (Do you know the one ...) begins with a Catalan word, *el*, and ends with Castilian Spanish, *aquel*. The middle word, though, exists in both languages. This bivalent word serves as the hinge that yokes the two languages together and makes it impossible to tell precisely where the switch from Catalan to Castilian occurs. Such bivalent forms challenge the commonsense notion that languages are separate systems and that speakers must choose either one or the other. This indeterminacy was crucial to Eugenio's subversive humor in late twentieth-century Catalan, where the choice of one or the other language suggested a speaker's positions on issues of Catalonian autonomy and the Spanish state. Speakers can also draw on elements of "different" languages simultaneously through a process of interference, as when a Galician speaker pronounces Castilian sentences with Galician prosody (Alvarez-Cáccamo 1990). Where earlier researchers overlooked bivalent forms in favor of distinct codes or relegated talk of interference to prescriptive discourses, Woolard argues that they should receive equal attention in sociolinguistic analysis. By deploying within a single utterance elements indexically linked to more than one language, speakers can invoke multiple identity positions simultaneously.

Bakhtin's (1981) work on heteroglossia and hybridity, cited heavily in Woolard's article, has become increasingly critical to this tradition's rethinking of the hybrid roots of all language practice, including monolingualism. Woolard reminds us that for Bakhtin, "language is heteroglot from top to bottom" (291). Since a language exists only through its use by people across time, it contains within it the contradictions of different individuals, groups, and historical moments. Writing almost a century before code-switching scholars embraced hybridity as paradigmatic, Bakhtin criticizes the tendency in linguistics to consider the "neutral signification" (281) of particular utterances and to view languages as discrete entities. Rather, he suggests that an attempt to understand "actual meaning" must be aware of the multiple, contradictory significances that all discourse contains. Far from being marginal or erroneous, bivalency and interference allow speakers to draw from and to present multiple languages at the same time.

Woolard's call to place hybridity and simultaneity within theoretical approaches to discourse inspired various scholars to move such practices from the margins to the center of research.

## 4.2 *Transidiomatic practice and metrolingualism*

Despite perceptions in the era of globalization that space is compressed or transcended, discourses are nevertheless produced and perceived in a particular setting – albeit not always the same one. Studies of globalization across the social sciences highlight several consequences of recent social and economic arrangements that are important to the analysis of language, society, and culture. Scholars such as Rubdy and Alsagoff (2013) trace effects of globalization on linguistic and cultural hybridity (see also García and Wei 2013 on *translanguaging*). Increased speed, volume, and intensity of communication have contributed to a sense of connection not only with local communities but also with interlocutors across what were previously perceived as barriers of space and time. Jacquemet's (2005, 2009) work points out that despite the apparent "deterritorialization" (Tomlinson 1999) of language within globalization, all language behavior takes place in some locality: "Since all human practices are embodied and physically located in a particular lifeworld, the dynamics of deterritorialization produce processes of reterritorialization: the anchoring and recontextualizing of global cultural processes into their everyday life" (Jacquemet 2005: 263). Jacquemet analyzes *transidiomatic practices*, new forms of interaction drawing from multiple languages. Examples include workplaces where speakers of multiple languages interact with one another, or multilingual individuals' engagement with "globally" circulating texts such as television broadcasts or popular music. The presence of multiple languages in the same space can give rise to what Jacquemet calls *recombinant identities*, a sense of simultaneous identification with multiple groups across transnational territories.

Jacquemet's (2009) analysis of asylum hearings shows how transidiomatic practices can conflict with ideologies of bounded languages tied to discrete nation-states. Interviewers transcribe the complex explanations offered by applicants for refugee status into a text written in the national language of the receiving nation, stripping out ambiguities and multiple voices in a way that erases evidence of lived experience and may present the applicants as less credible candidates for refugee status. Blommaert (2009) likewise illustrates how the ideologies of national language impinge on the lives of asylum seekers. He describes the case of "Joseph," a young man from Rwanda who was not fluent in Kinyarwanda or French, but spoke elements from several languages in a style that Blommaert labels *truncated multilingualism*. After his parents died, Joseph lived near the border of the Democratic Republic of Congo with his uncle who spoke Runyankole. The British Home Office reasoned that since Joseph also spoke this language, he was likely Ugandan rather than Rwandan, and therefore was ineligible for asylum. Blommaert argues that rather than focusing on languages as discrete objects centered on nation-states, analysis should consider the speech resources of individuals, reflective of lived experience and patterns of interaction.

Otsuji and Pennycook's *metrolingualism* (2010) attempts to move beyond monolingualism or multilingualism by treating discourse as a fluid practice, but one that exists within ideologies of fixity. Language users reuse and remix elements in order to

create positions for themselves relative to the nation-state or other regimes of language and culture. Speakers' relations to these ideological positionings are complex: the same individual may sometimes treat a national language as a monolithic entity coterminous with the nation-state, while at other times mixing elements from a diverse language repertoire to constitute a cosmopolitan identity or to construct a local group.

Otsuji and Pennycook illustrate this complex mixture of elements in social positioning with a conversation among James, Heather, and Adam, non-Japanese people who work together in Australia at a firm that often does business with customers in Japan. Speaking Japanese, James notes that he recently bought “ワインを16本” (16 bottles of wine). Heather responds with the English back channel, “Yeah,” while Adam continues in Japanese, asking “どこからもらったの?” (Where did you get them from?). Although this type of code-switching behavior is common in multilingual settings, this conversation occurs in a corporate setting in Australia where none of the participants has Japanese ethnicity or citizenship. Likewise the topic – buying Australian wines – is not particularly tied to Japan or the Japanese language. In this case, the languages used appear not to be tied to specific indexicalities of speaker identity or discourse topic, but licensed by the speakers' presence in a workplace where mixed-language discourse is common. Otsuji and Pennycook suggest that the occurrence of such exchanges, not licensed by ethnic or territorial “ownership” of languages, points to increasingly complex mappings between forms of language and notions of similarity or difference. This work suggests that rather than displaying plural identities indexed to multiple, discrete languages, contemporary speakers draw from hybrid repertoires to “play with and negotiate identities through language” (246).

A spirit of play in the negotiation of identities is also visible in Nilep's (2009) work with foreign language learners in Japan. Members of Hippo Family Club learn several foreign languages at the same time. For the club's middle-class learners, drawing from multiple languages within a single utterance indexes not a lack of competence in the languages being learned, but a growing mastery of the club's own discourse style. Nilep argues that members see the club and themselves as transcending the nation, an image he calls *cosmopolitan citizenship*: “Cosmopolitan citizenship is imagined as a relationship with fellow club members that transcends states, borders, and cultures. As members come to see themselves as part of the club, and to see the club as transnational, they see themselves as cosmopolitan by virtue of membership” (222). Both cosmopolitan citizenship and metrolingualism recognize the fixed associations of languages as systems, but remix their elements in playful ways to create fluid identities.

### 4.3 Superdiversity

Recent research undertakes to move beyond the model of code-switching altogether by engaging with Vertovec's (2007) concept of *superdiversity*. Superdiversity displaces *multiculturalism* as the presence of distinct cultures drawn from two or more ethnic, religious, or local groups. Instead, it suggests that analyses should consider the multiple dimensions of ethnic, economic, gender, age, education, and citizen or immigrant statuses co-present in urban populations. Just as much contemporary work in sociocultural anthropology transcends earlier visions of cultures as bounded entities (Appadurai 1996, among others), research on *language and superdiversity* attempts to

move beyond the ideas of languages as bounded systems and speech communities as groups with unified norms of language behavior. Like much of the work discussed throughout this chapter, Blommaert and Rampton (2011) argue for empirical investigation of context and meaning as language users construct and signal it. In this respect, language and superdiversity comprise an agenda and label for the investigation of what we describe above as elements in hybrid repertoires.

The intensification of global movement has necessitated a repositioning of hybridity to the center of analysis and theory. Blommaert describes language and superdiversity as a “paradigmatically different approach” (2010: 20). Given the research presented in this review, however, it is not exactly clear how language and superdiversity exemplifies a new paradigm. Reyes (2014) suggests that the approach may reflect a change in scholars’ attitudes as much as their data. Moore (2013), writing from the perspective of an established tradition of research on language contact in indigenous communities, suggests that issues which coalesce in this approach – including performativity, verbal artistry, metapragmatic reflexivity, and various types of language “mixing” – have been studied for at least 30 years. Language and gender research, for example, has long emphasized the intersectionality advocated by superdiversity theorists, from Barrett’s (1999) work on the “polyphonous” style-shifting of African American drag performances to Hall’s (2009) work on the multiple indexical meanings attached to Hindi and English in a transnational NGO. Blommaert (2013: 24) compares language and superdiversity to quantum theory’s relationship to Newtonian physics. Perhaps a better comparison is the “raisin bread model” of cosmic expansion. This analogy explains how it is possible for all bodies in the universe to be moving away from one another by imagining the metric expansion of space as a rising loaf of raisin bread, and gravitational bodies as the raisins which separate as the loaf expands. Like the raisin bread model, language and superdiversity is useful as a metaphor for explaining and a lens for re-examining existing theory, but it does not fundamentally change scholarly paradigms.

## 5 Conclusions

In writing this review, we have necessarily had to present reductive characterizations of the richly complex work associated with these four traditions of scholarship. Nevertheless, we have attempted to show how each trajectory contributes to a holistic understanding of code-switching as social practice. Two trends become apparent from the history presented here. First is a shift in focus from linguistic systems toward language users. The earliest research in the field viewed languages as discrete systems in contact. Studies under the heading of code-switching or related terms shifted analysis toward the people at the edges of communities and languages and then to discourse practices straddling such edges. Much recent work centers on repertoires drawn from lived experiences that may disrupt presumed connections between language, community, and spaces.

The second trend is in the analysis of links between forms of language and subjectivity. If the term *superdiversity* describes language under accelerated globalization, then *hypersubjectivity* may be its counterpoint for identity, as Hall (2014) suggests in a recent

commentary on language and anxiety in globalization. Globalization theorists often use the prefix *hyper-* to underscore the intensification of processes already at play in diminishing the role and reach of the nation-state. Economists, for instance, have emphasized how the global economic system is shaped by the “hypermobility” of capital, information, and labor (cf. Sassen 2000). The term *hypersubjectivity* invites us to consider how processes of identification are also shifting as a result of movement along these same channels. Each of the four traditions discussed in this chapter vividly illustrates the heightened attention given to indexical relations in periods of intensified language contact. In the early analysis of speech community identities, encounters with others led to reflexivity about local varieties and the construction of “we codes” and “they codes.” Work on nation-state identities shifted focus to marginalized factions within the national “we” group, illuminating the ideological construction of similarity and difference in the process. Language research in diasporic communities revealed how identity is produced metadiscursively in sites of intensified multicultural and interethnic contact. Current work on hybrid repertoires must also consider what these combinations of discourse mean for the theorization of identity: How are new ideologies of self and other constituted through the commodification of language in new service economies (capital), the rapid circulation of discourse across distant social groups (information), and the expansion of urban workforces to include previously unacquainted peoples (labor)? Such analyses should not neglect discourses seen as monolingual, since views of linguistic hybridity are inevitably formulated in relation to ideologies of monolingualism.

## NOTES

- 1 Kira Hall and Chad Nilep contributed equally to this chapter. We are grateful to our colleagues for their suggestions in the development of the argument expressed here, especially Donna Goldstein, Marco Jacquemet, Adrienne Lo, Angela Reyes, Deborah Tannen, Kathryn Woolard, and Ana Celia Zentella. The chapter has also benefitted from stimulating discussions in Kira Hall’s 2014 seminar “Linguistic Hybridity”; special thanks goes to participants Adriana Alvarez, Velda Khoo, Abigail Larson, Dawa Lokyitsang, Joseph Manietta, Antonio Rodriguez, and Tyanna Slobe for providing insightful readings of earlier drafts of the chapter.

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# 29 Cross-cultural and Intercultural Communication and Discourse Analysis

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SCOTT F. KIESLING

## 0 The Cultural and the Discursive

Discourse analysis has been central to linguistically rigorous studies of cross-cultural communication since the beginning of both subfields (for a historical overview, see Monaghan 2012). In this chapter, I will highlight some of the most important themes arising from this work, especially ways that cross-cultural discourse analysis has informed discourse theory and practice. For a more in-depth view of the field, see Paulston *et al.* (2012). First, a word about the terms “cross-cultural” and “intercultural,” the use of which may cause confusion. Etymologically the main difference is that “inter” implies being between, while “cross” implies a bridging from one side to the other. This difference would suggest that intercultural communication is more about meeting in the middle, while cross-cultural communication focuses on one side “crossing over” to the other. It has also been suggested (e.g., by Gudykunst 2003: 175–6) that cross-cultural work is done when two cultures are compared while intercultural work is done when two cultures come in contact. Ideally both distinctions would be used, but in practice the use of the terms cross-cultural or intercultural seems to be one of convention and the terms are used interchangeably (as Gudykunst 2003: 175 also points out). “Multicultural” is another term often used, although this term generally refers to more of a mix of cultures than one culture. Finally, the term “interethnic” has also been used (Gumperz 1982a), replacing the term “culture” with “ethnic;” this approach is very much focused on interaction between people of different ethnic backgrounds, although the term “ethnic” presents similar problems as “culture,” problems that I explore below. In the end, the term used by an author is often a matter of convention and scholarly tradition. In this chapter I will attempt to use each term in order to keep distinction among these three terms, such that cross-cultural implies comparing

cultures and intercultural suggests the analysis of people from two or more cultures talking to one another.

One of the reasons for this lack of clarity is the problem of defining and delimiting “a culture,” both in the abstract and the specific, just as there are different ways of defining and delimiting “discourse.” I therefore begin the chapter with a consideration of how different discourse analytic traditions have considered culture. In the main body of the chapter, I organize approaches to cross-cultural and intercultural discourse by four main themes: politeness, discourse strategies, narrative, and societal power, including some ways that methods of intercultural and cross-cultural discourse analysis have been applied to some practical problems.

## 1 Ways of Thinking about Culture

As Piller (2012) points out, the idea of “a culture” is an ideological construction; that is, there are other ways that people might be organized and categorized besides culture. One can see this construction in the ways that “cultures” vary in time, space, and scale. There are cultures of cities, states, countries, and even continents or subcontinents. As well, people will talk of a “company culture” or a “workplace culture” and even (socio-economic) “class cultures.” This variability in reference for the term “culture” shows that a culture can also be conceived of more as a group practice rather than as an attribute of “a people,” as will be discussed below. In addition, through different eras, the idea of what culture or “a culture” can be has changed, as have the kinds of groups that might have a culture, depending on the ideologies and politics of the moment. These shifts can especially be seen in the idea of the cultures of nations, as will be described in the next section.

Nations are a fairly new invention. As most famously pointed out by Anderson (2006), while there have always been polities and empires, the nation-state emerged in Europe near the end of the second millennium. Especially from about the eighteenth century with the French and American revolutions, the essential rationale for the polity changed from being one of simply the divine right of kings or simple military power to an “imagined community,” in which citizens shared some essential trait even though they would never know all of their fellow citizens. The sharing of a language, argues Anderson, was one of the most important ways that this development took place. Thus, people in France came to feel they shared a Frenchness because they identified as speaking some form of the French language. So it is not surprising that many identified “cultures” are also nations, and languages. This is an important common ideology in many countries, so even if it is in some sense “constructed,” as researchers we need to assume that many if not most speakers orient to it in some way, and think of cultures in the sense of nations.

There are some cultures that tend to be associated with groups larger or smaller than a nation, such as when people refer to “Arabic culture” or even a pan-Latin American culture. This change in scale points out how malleable “culture” is to the observer’s frame of reference. Presumably people in Addis Ababa see their culture as different from the one in Damascus and Casablanca, but to a native of Tokyo they all are assumed to share a language and a culture.

This shift in scale shows that cultures as static analytic objects are most likely untenable unless defined in a more dynamic way. One such way is to think of culture as a bundle of practices.

In this view, rather than a property of a pre-defined group of people, culture is seen as something more organic, as a collection of social practices encompassing things like how houses are built, marriages are accomplished, children are raised, institutions created, and so on. Discourse is a practice too, in the sense that it is something that is done repeatedly. This approach to culture also asks how different styles of practice are meaningful, and why members of a particular culture will desire to distinguish themselves by using practices symbolically in different ways. A simple example from many cultures is to interrogate differential gender practices in dress, which are not randomly distributed but are almost always affected by notions such as sexuality and marriage. The idea of seeing cultures as bundles of meaningful practices is useful and more realistic than seeing them as coterminous with countries or a people's observable traits such as skin color, but still runs into trouble because differences in practices can be relative, subjective, and gradient. So, even when cultures are considered to be based on shared practices, hard boundaries must be imposed upon what counts as "a culture."

In defining hard boundaries for cultures, we are again engaging in an ideological rather than strictly descriptive endeavor, even if we use practices to define and sort the cultures. As Scollon, Scollon, and Jones (2012: 2) point out in their excellent discussion of the problems of defining and using the term culture, any single person is going to have multiple "cultures" to compare, so that while two people may differ due to ethnicity, they may have in common generational cultures, professional cultures, and even cultures of a more narrow location such as a city they both currently live in. This problem again points to the role of the researchers in assuming what is relevant when looking at an interaction or other observed behavior. With these caveats in mind, in the next section I outline some of the most important ways that discourse analysis has been used to approach cross-cultural and intercultural interactions.

## **2 Basic Methodological Distinctions, and Traps**

In the following sections, I outline approaches and methods that make similar assumptions about what is being compared or what interaction is, or that use similar methods. Many approaches cross these artificially designated categories, but I believe it is a useful way to understand the field. Other organizations include Piller's (2012: 8) three-way division: (1) comparative analyses of two or more cultures, (2) analyses of interactions between speakers from different cultural backgrounds, and (3) the discursive creation of culture. In (1) comparative analyses, cultures are assumed to exist and then some interactional aspect of them is compared, a possibility running through all of the ways of approaching cross-cultural interaction discussed below. Piller provides an example of a comparison between British and Italian interactional strategies used when there is an airline "service failure." Interactional analyses in (2) are arguably the most dominant studies, and are especially identified with the work of John Gumperz, Deborah Tannen, and their students (Gumperz 1982a, 1982b; Tannen 1984) discussed below. Finally, if (3) culture is assumed to be a construct, many studies look at how language is used to

create and typify “a culture,” both in talk and writing (or in other media, such as videos posted on YouTube). This kind of typification can take place through assumptions about culture (e.g., advice to travelers about whether people in a particular country tend to be punctual). It can also create culture; for example, Johnstone (2011) shows how typifications of speakers of the local variety of English in Pittsburgh create not only a popularly imagined dialect, but also a culture of the people who use the dialect.

One more kind of cross-cultural study is the typological study, in which cultures are not directly compared one to one but in which cultures are typologized into larger categories. One very common way of doing this is to distinguish cultures on a continuum from “high context” to “low context.” This view was first proposed by Hall (1966), and is widely assumed to be a valid description of cross-cultural differences. Hall explains the distinction as follows:

A high-context communication or message is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. A low-context communication is just the opposite; i.e., the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code. (1966: 79)

This is an extremely attractive and simple model that has the benefit of appealing to some other ideologies about culture, especially the distinction between “collectivist” cultures (which are meant to correlate with high-context cultures) and “individualist” cultures assumed to be closer to those of Western Europe and former Western European colonies such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

One must approach such typologies with considerable skepticism, even those (such as the “contexting” model just described) that are widely repeated in textbooks on cross-cultural interaction. One reason for such wariness is the reification of cultures into very simple categories; cultures (to the extent that they exist) are diverse and varied, and the idea that they can be placed relative to each other on one measure (or even worse that only one such dichotomy is relevant to communication) is dubious. In addition, even though such typologies are normally presented as continua, in use these continua tend to fairly quickly devolve into binary categories, with few cultures landing in the middle.

The most serious problem, however, is that such typologies are difficult to operationalize and thus empirically test. Cardon (2008) presents a thorough review and critique of the sparse empirical research on the contexting model. He finds that when studies are undertaken to test the contexting model, they are often inadequate in terms of methods. However, studies with strong methodology find little support for the contexting model. In short, even though “contexting is the most important communication theory in IBTC [Intercultural Business and Technical Communication],” he shows that “the theory was never described by Hall with any empirical rigor, and no known research involving any instrument or measure of contexting validates it. Furthermore, studies that seem to have challenged contexting have gone unnoticed in subsequent research.” (2008: 422)

The danger, then, is to assume ahead of time that a culture or interactional style will manifest in a particular way and then find discourse features that support that presupposition while ignoring those that don’t – a classic confirmation bias (a term summarized and demonstrated in a review by Nickerson 1998). In what follows, I survey some

of the main research strands in cross-cultural and intercultural discourse that have more empirical support. I organize the approaches in terms of the sociolinguistic objects they take as primitives or near primitives. These approaches are:

- politeness;
- discourse strategies;
- narrative; and
- the exercise and reproduction of societal power, or challenges to it.

Before arriving at these approaches, however, herewith a short discussion on the relationship between the individual and intentionality in cross-cultural and intercultural work.

### 3 Individuals and Intention

Several approaches to cross-cultural and intercultural discourse focus on how cultures conceive of the individual and intentionality. Foley (1997) collects these differences under the idea that cultures differ in the underlying conception of “personhood,” where “the person is a social concept made up of one’s rights and obligations, and hence varies cross culturally” (1997: 263). Foley makes the distinction between societies that have a more egocentric orientation and those that tend to sociocentric orientations to personhood. The egocentric orientation is individualist and the person a bounded entity separable from other persons. In contrast, more sociocentric-focused cultures see personhood as defined “according to the position a particular human being occupies” (1997: 266). Foley notes, and I emphasize, that there is tremendous variety in how these orientations are realized and there are aspects of every society that can be seen to be the opposite of the main orientation. However, in terms of ideologies of personhood, there is a definite cline from those that see the person as an autonomous individual to those that see the role a person plays in society as the defining characteristic of their personhood. One of the reasons that Foley’s categorization is more robust than Hall’s is that Foley makes his distinction based on a wide-ranging number of studies based on empirical data. More egocentric cultures include the ideologies of Anglo and Northern European cultures, while many traditional cultures, such as the Balinese culture of Indonesia (Geertz 1983) and the Ilongot culture (Rosaldo 1982), exhibit sociocentric orientations. In both the Balinese and Ilongot cultures, a person is recognized by his or her place or role in the social fabric rather than by their personality or other “inherent” qualities. Note that these cultures are quite different: Balinese culture is very hierarchical while the Ilongot are egalitarian. Such ideologies significantly affect the ways that speakers interact; the Ilongot tend to perform and expect speech required of their position. The same is true of the Balinese, although in their case the forms of speech are rigidly prescribed based on hierarchy.

The egocentric–sociocentric distinction is not intended to be used to classify cultures, as even within different cultures people will be more or less socio- and egocentric. The main point is to realize that while the dominant Western egocentric view of the person is often how students first approach the question of cross-cultural interaction, while several approaches to discourse analysis view interaction as more contingent. As such, the approaches and theories described below vary in their assumptions about the

autonomy of the individual. The first I consider beginning in the next section, Politeness, has an egocentric view built into its dominant theory.

### **3.1 *Politeness across cultures***

Politeness research has evolved considerably in the past 40 years, and is a robust field of study apart from intercultural studies (there is a journal devoted exclusively to its study, the *Journal of Politeness Research*). Although there are a number of different politeness frameworks that outline strategies for achieving speech acts, Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory dominates the field; even those scholars who eschew it must engage with this perspective on politeness. Other frameworks include Lakoff's (1973) (which influenced that of Brown and Levinson) and Leech's (1983). Both Lakoff and Leech provide maxims for politeness in the spirit of Grice's (1975) conversational maxims. For example, Lakoff's Maxims of Politeness were (1) Don't Impose, (2) Give Options, and (3) Make your receiver feel good. Lakoff pointed out that politeness is a project in balancing all three of these even when they are in conflict. These maxims prefigure the strategies outlined in Brown and Levinson's theory, which I turn to now.

Brown and Levinson's politeness theory views each speech act as potentially face threatening, where face is divided into positive face (the threat a speech act presents to a person's self-worth or image), and negative face (the threat a speech act presents to a person's ability to act independently, without obligation to others). Politeness comprises the various ways that these face threats can be ameliorated in interaction. The most basic are to be indirect, use positive politeness, or use negative politeness. Indirectness is as discussed above, in which the "intended" speech act is not overt but accomplished through inference about a different speech act that is used. So, to reduce a face threat to negative face, an order may be framed in terms of a request – an employer may say to an employee "Can you send me that report by 5pm?" To reduce a threat to positive face, an invitation refusal may take the form of a statement about what one is doing that prevents an acceptance – someone might say "Sorry I can't, I'm washing my hair tonight," to use a classic American date-request refusal. While this theory claims that the ideas of positive and negative face are universal, as are the motivations for politeness in face, it can be used to suggest that some cultures orient more toward the use of positive politeness strategies, some more toward negative politeness, some more toward indirectness. For example, it is often said that US Anglo culture, from the perspective of those from northern Europe such as England and Germany, is very positive-politeness focused ("back-slapping"), whereas Americans see Germans and other northern Europeans as cold and "stand-offish" in their focus on negative politeness. Although not approaching the problem from a strictly politeness perspective, Tannen (1982), using interview and questionnaire data, shows how Greek culture is more focused on indirectness than American culture. In the questionnaires, speakers from Greek, Greek-American, and American backgrounds were asked for their interpretation of a response to a question, and given a choice of a more or less indirect interpretation. Americans tended to choose the more direct one. Daun (1984) shows how immigrants to Sweden find the Swedes to be cold and stand-offish because they are insufficiently focused on positive politeness. (Daun does not necessarily use the politeness framework, but the claims made in the article can be framed in this manner.)

Scollon, Scollon, and Jones (2012) use similar concepts to outline subtle and interlocking differences in rhetorical styles between Hong Kong and the United States. They reconsider face in terms of involvement and independence, with the involvement type of face defined as being “concerned with the person’s right and need to be considered a normal, contributing, or supporting member of society.” Independence face “emphasizes the individuality of the participants” (2012: 48). They argue for a relationship between the kind of arguments strategy used by speakers and their face orientation to those they are speaking with: A more inductive rhetorical strategy (providing evidence that then leads to a conclusion) is used with independence face orientations. On the other hand, if the speakers have a more involvement face orientation, they will use a more deductive strategy (stating the thesis and then giving evidence). The Hong Kong strategies tend to be more inductive, while Western speakers tend to expect a more deductive strategy; Scollon, Scollon, and Jones argue that this has to do with the different face orientations of the two societies. Brown and Levinson also recognize strategies of conventionalized politeness. Conventionalized politeness comprises linguistic items – words and phrases – that have no other meaning except to express consideration, such as “please” and “thank you” in English. Ide (1989) suggests that some cultures rely more on this conventionalized politeness than others, and that in such cultures one is polite by “simply” using the proper forms in the proper context based especially on role (although see Fukada and Asato 2004 for an opposing view). This view is similar to what Watts (2003) means by “politic” forms – those that are expected for the interaction but are not attributable to the politeness of the speaker him- or herself.

While politeness studies have done some work comparing politeness strategies in different cultures (e.g., Sifianou 1999), their most important contribution to the study of cross-cultural interaction is to provide a useful vocabulary of concepts for discussing such differences. Once there are concepts such as positive and negative face, and strategies that can be clearly related to them, there is a framework for comparison that allows for discourse patterns of different cultures to be compared and clusters of values to be found. The same is true for the approaches that focus on other kinds of discourse strategies, to which I turn now.

### 3.2 *Discourse strategies*

The most prominent strategy-based linguistic approach to intercultural communication is Interactional Sociolinguistics (see Gumperz 1982a, 1982b this volume; Schiffrin 1994: 97–133; Tannen 1984). This approach focuses on contextualization cues: linguistic items that tacitly indicate how utterances should be taken and what is going on. These cues are related to overall strategies and goals of interactants engaging in conversation. When people share cues, it helps them to build involvement with each other; when cues are not shared, it can lead to awkwardness, interpretations of rudeness, and in high-stakes speech events such as job interviews or trials, much more serious consequences (as described below). Strategies tend to be divided into those that focus on attaining power, solidarity, or a combination of both. Three of the most discussed contextualization cues are intonation, turn-taking, and silence.

Gumperz (1982a) provides an analysis of the use of rising and falling intonation in British and Pakistani offers. In one of his best known examples, Gumperz is asked to

help in a cafeteria setting in the UK in which the Anglo customers find the Pakistani servers to be rude. It becomes clear that the Pakistani workers are using falling intonation when making their offers to serve, so rather than "Gravy?" they say "Gravy." The Anglos interpret this falling intonation to mean something like "take it or leave it I don't care." However, this is typically how offers are formulated in the workers' culture. For them, then, the falling intonation does not index the same intention as for the Anglos.

Tannen (1984, 2012) expanded Gumperz's work by bringing in Lakoff's (1973: 92) notion of communicative style, which is a person's culturally influenced individual pattern of using and interpreting contextualization cues. Tannen shows that turns taken in interaction can also function as a contextualization cue. She analyzes a conversation among Californians, New Yorkers, and one English woman to show that their turn-taking conventions are very different. The New Yorkers all have what she calls a "high involvement style" which, among other things, evinces a fast and often overlapping turn-taking pattern. The opposite style – "high considerateness" – shows less overlap and longer turns. Tannen shows that many of the non-New Yorkers find the high involvement style to be rude, and feel they have trouble engaging in the conversation. However, those who share the style and the turn-taking pattern end up feeling connected to the other New Yorkers. The New Yorkers thus interpret the high involvement style as expressing solidarity and an enthusiasm for talking to the other person, while those with the opposite "high considerateness" style see the overlap as a power play to prevent them from speaking. At the same time, New Yorkers evaluate the high considerateness style negatively as well, in this case, that the speaker is somehow not interested in the conversation or at least not interested in her or his interlocutors. In addition, because Californians expect more time between turns, they talk less and the New Yorkers become frustrated with their lack of holding up their end of the conversation, and talk more to compensate, thus creating a pattern of "complementary schismogenesis" (Bateson 1972), in which both speakers' solutions to the problem tend to make it worse. Thus the overlap is a contextualization cue interpreted not in isolation but in the context of a focus on solidarity (the high involvement style) or power (the high considerateness style).

Philips (1976) analyzes interaction in classrooms that have Warm Springs Native American students and those that have predominantly Anglo speakers in the Northwest of the US. She shows that Native American students participate in class discussions less than Anglo students, are more reluctant speak out of turn than Anglo students, and do not compete for the floor as much as Anglo students; moreover, talk is more evenly distributed in their classroom than in Anglo classrooms. Philips argues that in general Native American culture gives more respect and control to the speaker who currently is speaking. The Native American speakers, then, are exhibiting even more considerateness than the high considerateness style identified by Tannen.

Similar findings are articulated for the Athabaskan people in Alaska (Scollon and Scollon 1981). They begin by noting that "From the Athabaskan point of view what is usually experienced is that English speakers talk all the time, or talk too much. From the English point of view Athabaskans are said not to like to talk, or to be silent" (1981: 12). However, the Scollons show that whereas these views overgeneralize, they have a grain of truth. In fact, the difference has to do with what silence and volubility mean in the two cultures: for English speakers, talk is a way to reduce social distance, while for

Athabaskans, lots of talk is indicative of a pre-existing close intimate relationship. This situation leads to similar complementary schismogenesis as in the example involving New Yorkers and Californians.

Finally, the opposite of overlap – silence – has been shown to be an important contextualization cue as well, in a number of studies (see Nakane 2012 for an extensive review). In many European societies, silence in interaction can be taken in many ways, but most of them are negative – showing uncertainty, weakness, distance, even rudeness. However, many cultures expect significant pauses in talk, especially in particular circumstances. Australian Aboriginal cultures (Eades 2000; Mushin and Gardner 2009; Walsh 1997) tend to expect extensive silence between turns at talk, and do not interpret such silences as uncomfortable or rude. Basso (1970) shows that silence is expected in many situations in Apache culture that are unexpected from many other cultures, such as between strangers and between relatives and friends who have not seen each other for a long time. In general, silence among Apaches is expected in social situations that are uncertain or unpredictable, in contrast to the European focus on talking to “get to know” someone. There is thus a wide cultural variability in the expectations of the lack of talk and its meaning. Many such differences can be attributed to wider ideas about interaction, most often to the extent to which attention to other speakers must be constantly maintained and enthusiastically promoted.

Note that these strategy-focused approaches tend to suggest that people from a culture have a particular predisposition to acting in a certain way, based on ideologies of personhood and values of social organization (e.g., a relative focus on hierarchy or solidarity). But we could view the use of strategies in a different way, so that there isn't a directionality from societal values to linguistic strategies. Thus, we could see these strategies as constitutive of the culture and its ideologies. That is, the culture doesn't necessarily have an ideology of personhood or value of social organization separate from the strategies that tend to be used among the people of that culture but their talk actually helps to create and reify those ideologies and values. This view is one that could be characterized as consistent with social theorists such as Giddens (1979), in which concepts like ideologies and values are not given to speakers, or socialized into them, and then reacted on by those speakers. Rather, ideologies and values are dialectically manufactured through what speakers assume other speakers value and through the evidence they provide for others by their very use of those strategies. For example, the high involvement speakers who overlap in Tannen's work are not just reflecting an understanding of the importance of solidarity in their culture, but are enacting and creating that value by using their high involvement style.

While Politeness Theory and this aspect of Interactional Sociolinguistics tend to focus on the strategies of individuals in conversation, other approaches, and another concern of Interactional Sociolinguistics, focus on speakers' expectations about the definition of the activity or event that is currently in play. This focus on “what is going on” has been a particular focus of Interactional Sociolinguistics, operationalized through the notion of “frame” and “framing.” A frame is in fact often defined as basically “what is going on,” whether that is something like a consultation, a report, a meeting, or flirting (see Tannen and Wallat 1993 for a further discussion). The interactional frame is one aspect of an interaction that contextualization cues can indicate, so if different cultures tend to have different ways of doing similar frames, then there can be a mismatch in the kinds of contextualization cues used for those frames and confusion or rudeness may ensue.

For example, one group of people may consider small talk about personal matters to be an important part of the beginning of a business meeting, while others may find that this kind of talk is irrelevant and in fact is a different frame. Watanabe (1993) shows that Japanese and American students have different ways of framing group discussion in a classroom setting. For example, she shows that Japanese discussants worked out the order for turn-taking and other mechanics before beginning the discussion proper, while the Americans just jumped right into the discussion. In addition, in the group discussion the Japanese and American students were asked to give reasons for studying abroad. The Japanese students tended to frame their reasons chronologically, as if telling a story while the Americans were not likely to have a story even if they related past events. Watanabe provides the example of two women who gave a similar reason: they first went to the other country with their family, because of their father's work. But the American woman presents it as a single event: "Because my Dad went over to Japan to set up exchange programs" (Watanabe 1993: 236). The Japanese woman, in contrast, provides more detail, beginning when she was a small child, and using story elements such as internal dialogue. Watanabe's study shows that frames are valuable concepts for analyzing cross-cultural communication. Frames can help account for differences in how activities are structured and interpreted in different cultures and potentially allow for the analysis of misunderstandings.

Another approach predating the framing paradigm is the Ethnography of Speaking (also known as the Ethnography of Communication). Although not specifically using the terms "cross-cultural" or "intercultural," the research program discussed in this tradition was explicitly stated to be comparative. As outlined originally by Hymes (1972, 1974), it was meant to be an etic way of comparing similar speech events in different cultures, and is more of a descriptive tool than a theoretical one. While less work specifically follows Hymes's theory, it is a valuable framework that could be used more widely because of its categorical rigor. Hymes (1972) defines a speech event as activities in which speech is not incidental to the activity but is constitutive of it (he gives examples of gossip and a telephone conversation). Within speech events, he articulates eight components, each with varying kinds of subcomponents, which form a SPEAKING acronym: Situation, Participants, Ends, Act Sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms, and Genre. These components have been revised by a number of researchers, especially Bonvillain (2003). But the essential method remains, and is useful for cross-cultural comparisons. To the extent possible, then, apples are compared to apples. In addition, the SPEAKING mnemonic is a useful checklist when doing such a comparison. For example, the data for Watanabe's study could be approached using the SPEAKING mnemonic. It would then be seen that the Act sequence is different in the two cultures, and that the Norms of interaction are different in terms of turn-taking behavior. For a review of the Ethnography of Speaking, including an extended example, see Kiesling (2012), who compares community meetings held by the Kuna of Panama (as described by Sherzer 1987) and college fraternity members in the United States. While these are two very different cultures, Kiesling shows that they have many aspects of their meetings in common, a fact that might not have been noticed if the analysis had been less systematic.

Both the Ethnography of Speaking and Interactional Sociolinguistics have the advantage of providing principled ways of gathering data and making comparisons. By doing so, language is kept in its context of use, rather than being moved to highly abstract

principles. That is, we don't necessarily claim that Japanese speakers always take turns differently from Americans, but we can investigate a number of speech events (meetings, conversations with friends, service encounters, etc.) to see if such a generalization holds at least across the same kind of speech event. And if we want to make larger strategic claims, such as Japanese are more focused on deference to a speaker than Americans, sufficient valid data to support such a claim can be gathered. The ideal analysis is not therefore one which uses one of these approaches but combines approaches depending on what kind of question is being asked about intercultural or cross-cultural interactions. One kind of activity that has received extensive attention is storytelling.

### 3.3 *Stories across cultures*

One of the most robust areas of study for discourse analysis is narratives, and this area has also been studied cross-culturally. As noted by De Fina and Johnstone (this volume), there are a number of approaches to studying narrative, but in general they tend to focus either on the structure of the narrative or the content, or the relationship between them. In structural analyses, researchers investigate how narratives are organized. The most pervasive of these approaches is Labov and Waletzky's (1967) division of narratives into abstract, orientation, complicating action, resolution, and coda, and Labov's (1972) discussion of the syntax of these different parts of the narrative. One approach to cross-cultural study, then, is to investigate to what extent this structure is shared across cultures. Holmes (1998) shows that the patterns of narrative structure differ between speakers of the two main ethnic groups in New Zealand: Pakehas (people generally of English or European descent) and native Maoris. The Maori narratives tended to be less explicit, and were more likely to leave out the evaluation component of the narratives, suggesting that they viewed these elements as self-evident more often than the Pakehas.

Berman (1998) shows an even more intricate interaction between narrative structure and culture in her analysis of Javanese women's narratives. In comparing the narratives in her corpus to the Labovian structure identified for English, she uncovers differences from the pattern described by Labov in which it is not necessarily that speakers omit sections such as abstract and orientation, but that these sections are not required as much because of the overall functioning of discourse and participation in the community she studied. More specifically, elements such as abstract and orientation are not as necessary in this community because the point of the story is often to share events that most of the interactants actually already know about, and the point is to open the story to be told in a more collaborative manner than in the single-performer mode that Labov describes. This means that even the evaluation section is different in Javanese, because the importance of the story is not to tell something unusual, but to find ways to weave the utterances of different speakers together into one story. This finding can be interpreted in light of the sociocentric–egocentric distinction discussed above, with the Javanese (and Maori, for that matter) stories evincing a more sociocentric pattern while the English stories evince a more egocentric one. It should be noted, however, that some stories in Berman's corpus, most notably those of older and higher status individuals, are much more like those described by Labov and Waltesky. Such a finding shows

the variability of discourse forms within a culture; nevertheless, the patterning of that variability is implicated in the cultural value of age and status in Javanese culture.

Thus, narratives are themselves robust places where culture is communicated and reinscribed. The content of stories, and especially how they position the teller or protagonist and evaluate the figures in the narrative, can be telling. Holmes (1998) provides a particularly vivid example. Her study compares the stories told by New Zealand men and women from Pakeha and Maori backgrounds. She finds that the kinds of stories represent some important cultural differences in expectations for the two genders. The Pakeha women's stories presented the teller as people who "conformed to society's norms, who often lacked confidence in themselves, and who were constructed as helpless victims of accidental circumstances or institutional exploitation" (1998: 12). Maori women, on the other hand, presented an identity of a "strong, self-secure, confident person." The Pakeha men tended to tell stories that presented them as "the knowledgeable, competent hero, who solves problems, overcomes adversities, and demonstrates control in a range of situations" (1998: 20). The Maori men, on the other hand, presented themselves as "laughable, incompetent, naive, and unheroic" (1998: 20).

Narratives are important because they often encode the values of a culture, and show other members of the culture what is valued. Most importantly, stories must have a point, and in a cross-cultural setting, some listeners may not "get the point" if they don't share the structural and content expectation of the teller. As for many other situations described above, there are differences in unspoken expectations. This difference can happen in situations where cultures exhibit unequal power as well, with important consequences, as discussed in the next section.

### **3.4 Societal power**

People come to discourse with recognized cultural identities, often hierarchically ordered. How does this affect their interactions? How does the discourse create power differences? As the examples below show, discourse is especially inflected with power in certain critical domains of cultures; here we will consider politics, business interaction, the law, and education. It is especially in these domains that discourse can reinforce cultural ideologies through the kinds of presuppositions made in discourse. These kinds of power differences are largely the purview of a subfield known as Critical Discourse Analysis. Fairclough (1992) argues that many approaches to discourse assume a vague context and "background knowledge," but do not necessarily consider how such background knowledge might be structured or why, or even how discourse might help reinforce and construct such background knowledge. For example, Hodges (2011) shows how background knowledge about how wars are supposed to be fought was used by the United States President George W. Bush beginning in 2001 to argue for a "war on terror." This rhetoric drew on the standard narrative of war, complete with fronts, potential surrender, possible defeats, and national pride and survival. Hodges shows how not just knowledge of what war is like, but intertextuality with famous wartime texts such as speeches by Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, and Franklin D. Roosevelt are used to build the power of the narrative and thus persuade a nation to take military action overseas and accept limits to liberty at home. For example, Hodges cites the reference to a precipitating event to justify war. In this case Bush's

"Since September 11" resonates with the well-known (to Americans) line of Franklin Roosevelt after Pearl Harbor: "Yesterday, December 7, 1941 – a date which will live in infamy." Hodges cites five such intertextual patterns that run not only through these two presidents but most if not all war rhetoric. Such repetition of intertextuality is one way that dominant discourse creates culture as well as power in society.

Expectations about how people of different identities are supposed to interact can also reinforce cultural ideologies of inequality. Fant (2012) provides a striking example of this kind of work in a business context. He investigated how employees of several multinational corporations with offices in Denmark, Sweden, Mexico, and Venezuela talked about people of the nationalities not their own. All were employees who had experience working with other nationalities. He finds widespread complementary themes about how the groups interacted. For example, Latin Americans were "bad organizers" and "polite," while Scandinavians were "good organizers" and "blunt or rude" (2012: 278). These generalizations tended to be shared by both sides, and although Fant always asked about traits of the other group and those of the respondent, almost invariably a comparison was made. It is through such comparisons – which are shared by talking to others about experiences – that groups gain generalizations in communities. Once these generalizations begin, confirmatory biases begin to take place, as people remember interactions that fit the generalization but are less likely to remember those that do not.

Finally, the interactional norms of a dominant culture can disadvantage subaltern groups who do not share these norms. This observation has been a particularly important topic for the fields of education and the law, which boast the most robust body of research for intercultural communication focusing on power. In education, many studies have pointed out a mismatch between pupils' "home" interactional norms and classroom norms. For example, Philips's (1976) study discussed above is one such work. In that study, the differences between the Anglo and Native American interactional patterns in the classroom disadvantage the Native American students because the Anglo students' interactional patterns were more in line with what was expected by the teachers, and the Anglo students had more opportunity to participate in class discussions (however, the Native American students were more likely to interact in small groups with other students).

The classic study in this vein is Heath's (1983) *Ways With Words*, in which she described interactional patterns of three communities and compared them to how children in these communities interacted in the classroom. She also investigated how the children's teachers responded to these interactional patterns. Heath found that the children from the two low-income communities used interactional patterns from their homes in the classroom, and that these patterns were significantly different from the norms expected by their teachers. For example, the children from "Trackton" tended to hold the floor more, talk to friends, and talk while the teacher was talking, which Heath found was common for interactions at home. But the teachers heard these patterns as rude and disrespectful. Heath argued that this had the effect of making the teachers have not only negative impressions of the students, but also of them having low expectations of their work.

As Godley (2012) points out, more recent work in educational studies has built on and complicated the earlier work. These newer studies suggest that students are not always using interactional patterns simply because of their background, but also because of the ways that they want to be perceived (although how they want to be perceived can also

be influenced by their culture!). In other words, they are constructing their culture and identities by using the interaction norms rather than the other way around. An example of this is so-called “acting white” by African American students, which is often strongly sanctioned by black peers (see Fordham 1999; Godley and Minnici 2008; Ogbu 1999). Wortham (2004) provides a striking instance in which one student goes from being a “model student” to a “problem student” over the course of a school year, but very little about her interactional pattern in the classroom changes. Because the classroom encourages discussion, at the beginning of the year the student, Tyisha, was welcomed when she voiced her opinion. However, as the school year progressed, other students learned how to make arguments while Tyisha’s contributions did not change. While they were initially welcomed, the teacher increasingly saw Tyisha’s contributions to be based too much on her own opinion and not full arguments. Thus “relative to the teachers’ expectations and to other students’ increasingly successful participation, it looked as if Tyisha was acting differently” (2004: 173) and she eventually becomes identified as an “outcast” and a “problem student.” The important point about this is that it is not Tyisha’s culture that necessarily leads to this, but a complex interaction between her style (which may be culturally based), the teachers, and her peers that end up leading to her characterization as a “problem.” This case is thus a cautionary tale to not jump to a cultural explanation with every problematic interaction. At the same time, one must not throw the baby out with the bathwater and completely ignore the possibility of cultural interactional patterns.

Interactional norms have also been shown in law and law enforcement situations to favor people from dominant groups. Eades (2000) shows that presuppositions about the meaning of silence and agreement have had important, and negative, consequences for Aboriginal people in Australia who have been in the courtroom. As described above, longer stretches of silence are the norm for Aboriginal Australians than Anglo Australians. Accordingly, when an Aboriginal person is being interviewed by police or examined in a courtroom, such silences can be interpreted as indicating uncertainty or even disingenuousness. She also identifies an interaction pattern among Aboriginal people of “gratuitous concurrence,” in which Aboriginal people tend to agree with statements made by interlocutors (even if they don’t really). Of course in these same situations, agreeing with, for example, a prosecutor or opposing counsel is dangerous, no matter how impolite. Eades (2004, 2008) shows how knowledge of such differences was used by government solicitors to discredit Aboriginal witnesses. In this case, some Aboriginal boys were detained by police officers for no apparent reason; the officers then drove them out of town and abandoned them. The police were charged with abduction. In the trial, the defense attorneys positioned the boys (who were prosecution witnesses) as criminals and unreliable witnesses. One way of showing they were unreliable witnesses was to catch them in inconsistent answers, answers which Eades argues are influenced by the Aboriginal practice of gratuitous concurrence, in which speakers are predisposed to agree to statements of their interlocutors even if they don’t fully believe them.

As in the education cases, then, there are instances where interaction can be used by the powerful group to position speakers from a non-dominant group and perpetuate a power difference, or use the differences to their interactional advantage (an important possibility in an adversarial legal system like Australia or the United States). Jones (2008) shows how this can be true in the legal system outside of the courtroom, especially when law enforcement personnel are interviewing suspects. She shows that

British police respond to Afro-Caribbean suspects differently than to white suspects. For example, they asked Afro-Caribbean suspects more questions beginning with *so*, a discourse marker that restricts the kinds of answers that can be given, while they gave the white subjects more opportunity to simply tell their version of events. Other differences included repeating questions to Afro-Caribbean suspects more often than to white suspects even after answers, thus implicitly suggesting the answers were not believed. In this situation, discourse is being used differently to different cultural groups, and positioning them in a less powerful position.

These applications give a sense of the kinds of important applied work that can be done by using discourse analysis in intercultural communication. Other such domains include business communication (Hooker 2012; Yamada 1997) and the medical interview/exam (Angelelli 2012). These applications highlight the significance of discourse analysis in intercultural and cross-cultural research – difference, and the perception of difference, is not merely theoretical, but has important consequences for people’s lives.

## 4 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted a number of methods for doing such analysis, as well as pointing out some of the pitfalls. These pitfalls include assuming that differences in interactional styles are automatically the result of cultural differences, and especially assuming that people from different cultures will necessarily have interactional differences. It is quite easy to fall into confirmation bias, especially when doing qualitative work that so often typifies discourse analysis. This is not to say that these methods should not be used, but to caution researchers from claiming too much based on single cases, and picking and choosing aspects of “cultures” that align with the styles found, while ignoring aspects, or even data, that do not fit the story. For example, while in general we might say that American culture does not value much silence in interaction, the mainstream white middle-class culture expects silence in a number of situations that working class or non-white cultures may not. I end, then, with a plea for all researchers to be cautious of automatically treating any difference in terms of culture (or any other identity category such as gender or race or class). A number of methods and possibilities have been outlined above, and they should all be exploited when attempting to determine whether culture – however it is conceived – is used as an explanation for the discourse patterns of interlocutors. A strength of all the approaches outlined here is that they have methods that tend to guard against confirmation bias, because they require data – mainly in the form of actual interactions – to provide evidence of their generalization. This rigor is one of the biggest advantages of using discourse analytic methods for cross-cultural and intercultural communication research.

Clearly, then, the methods of discourse analysis outlined here and in other chapters of this handbook are valuable tools in analyzing cross-cultural and intercultural interactions. They provide methods for rigorous comparison, and a robust vocabulary of concepts that can be planned for comparison *a priori*, so that there is less likelihood of finding what one expects. At the same time, there are many ways in which cross-cultural and intercultural interactions can inform discourse analysis. The most obvious

is that by viewing many cultures and languages, the field moves toward a richer understanding of what is universal and what is cultural specific, and the parameters for any variation. In addition, because discourse analysis is probing behaviors that are so automatic and taken for granted, cross-cultural interactions become valuable because they highlight those assumptions, as shown especially by Gumperz, Tannen, and their students such as Watanabe. This work highlights the importance of such subtle things as timing and framing, which are much easier to see when they are brought to light by contrast. In the end, it is important to remember that in many ways culture and discourse are inseparable. Without talk and interaction, we would not have cultures, and our cultures inform and are created through our everyday conversations.

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# 30 Discourse and Gender

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## 0 Introduction

The study of discourse and gender is an interdisciplinary endeavor undertaken by scholars in linguistics, anthropology, communications, social psychology, education, literature, and other disciplines. At its heart is a focus on, first, the linguistic resources individuals draw on to present themselves as gendered beings in relation to other aspects of the self within the constraints of their communities, more or less conforming to or resisting these constraints; and, second, the discursive construction of gender and its many components through words and images. Given the complexity of gender as a social phenomenon, the study of gender and discourse requires attention to cultural influences that favor gendered ways of speaking and of negotiating both connection and power; the fluidity of gender as a performance and the societal constraints on gender performances; and the multiple interrelations among gender, discourse, and social meaning.

In what follows we first discuss the early work that inaugurated and established the field of gender and language research. We then describe research that focuses on the talk – or text – of women and men, including developments in theorizing the relationship between gender and discourse. The next section presents recent themes and trends, including research on the intersectionality of race, class, sexuality, and gender, as well as gender diversity in discourse; the consideration of sexuality and other facets of identity in the study of gender and discourse; discursive differences within, as well as between, groups; and how normative identities and practices are supported or opposed. We conclude with research on computer-mediated discourse, wherein new forms of previously described patterns have been identified.

## 1 Laying the Foundation: Early Gender and Language Research

The year 1975 was key in launching the field of language and gender. That year saw the publication of three books that proved pivotal: Robin Lakoff's *Language and Woman's Place* (the first part of which had appeared in *Language and Society* two years earlier [1973a]), Mary Ritchie Key's *Male/Female Language*, and Barrie Thorne and Nancy Henley's edited volume *Language and Sex: Difference and Dominance*. These pioneering works emerged during the second wave feminist movement of the 1970s,<sup>1</sup> as scholars began to question both the identification of male norms as human norms, and the biological determination of women's and men's behavior. (The rejection of the latter is reflected in the term typically used to characterize and castigate it, "essentialism.") A conceptual split was posited between biological "sex" and sociocultural constructs of "gender," although "gender" is now used conventionally for both. Early language and gender research focused on documenting empirical differences between women's and men's speech, especially in cross-sex interaction; describing women's speech in particular; and, for many, identifying the role of language in creating and maintaining social inequality between women and men.

The goal of uncovering the role of language in maintaining gender inequality is evident in the field's foundational text, Robin Lakoff's *Language and Woman's Place*, one of the first to call attention to gender differences in ways of speaking. Lakoff describes her book as "an attempt to provide diagnostic evidence from language use for one type of inequity that has been claimed to exist in our society: that between the roles of men and women" (1975: 4). She posits a cycle that begins with the unequal role of women and men in society, resulting in differential gender socialization by which girls learn to use a "nonforceful style," thus conforming to social norms of womanhood. The use of "women's language," in turn, denies women access to power, thus reinforcing social inequality. Lakoff identified linguistic forms by which "women's language" weakens or mitigates the force of an utterance: "weaker" expletives ("oh, dear" versus "damn"); "trivializing" adjectives ("divine" versus "great"); tag questions used when expressing speakers' opinions ("The way prices are rising is horrendous, isn't it?"); rising intonation in declaratives (as seen in the second part of the sequence, "What's for dinner?" "Roast beef?"); and mitigated requests ("Would you please close the door?" versus "Close the door") (1975: 10–18). Women, she noted, are in a double bind: they cannot be both a good woman and a good person. If they speak "women's language," they are seen as weak and ineffective, but if they don't, they are seen as unfeminine and therefore unlikeable.

Lakoff's work launched the exploration of gender and discourse. In keeping with the introspective method typical of her field, theoretical linguistics, Lakoff based her insights on her own observations and intuition. Subsequent studies applied her framework to a range of data and either confirmed her observations or found exceptions in particular contexts. Leaper and Robnett (2011) performed a meta-analysis of 29 studies that examined, among other linguistic features, "four forms of tentative language" as described by Lakoff: expressions of uncertainty, including disclaimers ("I'm not sure if this is right, but ...") and qualifiers (*somewhat*); hedges, including "prefatory remarks" ("I guess") and modifiers ("kind of"); tag questions; and the intensifiers *very*,

so, and *really* (130). The results revealed a “small” but “statistically significant” difference, indicating that women were “somewhat more likely than men to use tentative speech.” Some methodological and contextual moderators increased this effect: observation length (longer versus shorter), student status (undergraduates versus adults), group size (groups versus dyads), and physical setting (research lab versus other settings).

The enduring relevance of Lakoff’s work is demonstrated and explored in Bucholtz (2004), which consists of Lakoff’s full text along with commentaries by major researchers in the field. These commentaries emphasize that Lakoff’s account of “women’s language” does not represent the way each individual woman speaks, nor did it purport to. Rather, it represents the norms by which women are expected to speak (and many do), or what Bucholtz and Hall (1995: 6) call “the precise hegemonic notions of gender-appropriate language use,” which represents “the idealized language of middle-class European American women.” Since features of “women’s language” are not intrinsically linked with gender, individuals and groups may draw on these features as resources for specific purposes. For example, Hall (1995) demonstrates that phone-sex workers use features of “women’s language” to construct the gendered identity required for economic gain in their occupation.

As Lakoff herself did, concurrent and subsequent research looked to language for reflections of unequal gender relations, illustrating the frequently reiterated observation that the personal is political. For example, Zimmerman and West’s (1975) early findings that men interrupt women in conversation more than the reverse instigated numerous studies of interruption, which produced mixed results (e.g., Ahrens 1997; Beattie 1981; Esposito 1979; Greenwood 1996; West 1984; see James and Clarke 1993 for a survey of studies through the 1980s). Fishman (1983) examined naturally occurring conversations tape-recorded by three heterosexual couples in their homes, and found that the women performed more of the conversational “support work” required to sustain conversational interaction: they produced more listening cues (*mhm, uhuh*); asked more questions; used *you know* and attention-getting beginnings (“This is interesting”) more frequently to encourage a response; and actively pursued topics raised by the men. In contrast, men were more likely to not respond to turns and topics initiated by the women, and to make more declarative statements. Fishman argues that women’s supportive role in private conversations reflects and reproduces sex-based hierarchies of power within the public sphere.

## 2 Gender Differences as Discursive Strategies

The early focus on women’s speech, sex discrimination through language, and asymmetrical power relations was maintained in two influential edited volumes: McConnell-Ginet, Borker, and Furman’s *Women and Language in Literature and Society* (1980) and Thorne, Kramarae, and Henley’s *Language, Gender and Society* (1983). However, several chapters in these volumes represent another major strand of research in discourse and gender, influenced by anthropological linguist John Gumperz and sociologist Erving Goffman.

Ethnographic work influenced by Goffman explores gender and discourse as a component of social interaction. Drawing on Goffman's (1967) concept of face (the individual's public "image of self," which consists of "approved social attributes" that must be continually maintained and protected [5]) and Lakoff's (1973b) theory of politeness, Brown (1980, 1990) examined politeness phenomena in a Mayan community. While finding that Tenejapan women used strategies that were qualitatively more polite than those used by men, Brown (1980) nonetheless questions the claim that women are more polite because they are "culturally relegated to a secondary status relative to men" (112). Rather, she suggests: "What is missing from accounts of women's speech is an account of the choices being made and the reasons for the choices" (113). For example, women tended to use irony and rhetorical questions in place of direct criticism ("Just why would you know how to sew?" implying "Of course you wouldn't"), which both deemphasized negative messages and emphasized ingroup solidarity (125). They used more speech particles not only to weaken, but also to strengthen, utterances. In addition (much as Lakoff originally observed), although both women and men used hedging particles in cases of genuine doubt, only women used them to hedge the expression of their own feelings ("I just really am sad then because of it, perhaps") (126). In contrast, Brown claimed, the men's communicative style was characterized by a lack of attention to face, and the presence of such features as sex-related joking and a "preaching/declaiming style" (129). She explains, moreover, that women's and men's linguistic choices are "communicative strategies"; that is, humans are "rational actors" who choose linguistic options to achieve certain socially motivated ends in particular circumstances (113). As McConnell-Ginet (1988: 85) observes, Brown's contribution was crucial because it overtly shifted the framework "from a system one acquires ... to a set of strategies one develops to manage social interactions."

Goffman's influence is also seen in the pioneering ethnographic work of Goodwin (1978, 1980, 1990), based on fieldwork among African American children in a Philadelphia neighborhood. Goodwin found that girls and boys in same-sex play groups created different social organizations through the directive-response sequences they used while coordinating task activities: the boys created hierarchical structures, whereas the girls created more apparently egalitarian structures. For example, the boys negotiated status by giving and resisting direct directives ("I want the pliers!") (Goodwin 1990: 103), whereas the girls constructed joint activities by phrasing directives as suggestions rather than commands ("Let's go around Subs and Suds") (1990: 110). Importantly, she also found that whereas girls at same-sex play typically phrased directives as suggestions starting with "Let's," they also used "bald directives," like those commonly used by boys, in particular contexts, such as when another child, often a boy, had violated the rules of play ("Don't paint that table" [119]) or when taking the role of mother addressing a child while playing house. Goodwin thereby emphasizes that gender-related variations in language use are context-sensitive and multifaceted.

Maltz and Borker (1982), in a volume edited by Gumperz, surveyed research on gendered patterns of language use, prominently including Goodwin's, and concluded that difficulties in cross-sex communication could be understood within the framework Gumperz (1982) developed for understanding cross-cultural communication. In this framework, negative outcomes (including not only apparent conflict but also misperceptions of speakers' abilities and intentions) stem from differences in women's and men's habits and assumptions about how to participate in conversation. For example,

in considering the finding that women tend to use more minimal responses (*mhm, uhuh, yeah*) than men, Maltz and Borker suggest that women tend to use these responses to indicate "I'm listening," whereas men tend to use them to indicate "I agree." The reason, then, that women tend to use more of these utterances is that they are listening more often than men are agreeing. Maltz and Borker suggest that women and men acquire such different conversational habits during childhood and adolescence as they play in same-sex groups.

### 3 Analyzing and Theorizing Gender and Discourse

The publication of Deborah Tannen's *You Just Don't Understand* in 1990 can be seen as ushering in the next phase of discourse and gender research, based on the attention this book received both within and outside the field. During the 1990s and beyond, it served (as Lakoff's *Language and Woman's Place* had before) as the point of departure for numerous studies, both as a touchstone for developing further research and as a *bête noir* against which to define arguments. As with Lakoff, it continues to inspire and be applied in current research. Written for a general rather than an academic audience, this book combined a range of scholarly work with everyday conversational examples to support and expand Maltz and Borker's (1982) claim that conversations between women and men could be understood, metaphorically, as cross-cultural communication. (Both before and after 1990, Tannen published scholarly essays on the topic, a number of which are collected in her 1996 book *Gender and Discourse*; however, it is *You Just Don't Understand* that is most often cited and responded to.)

Combining Gumperz's cross-cultural perspective (which later came to be known as Interactional Sociolinguistics), Lakoff's framework of gender-related communicative style and politeness, and her own prior work on conversational style, Tannen posited that gender-related patterns of discourse form a coherent web motivated by women's and men's approaches to social relationships. She concluded that linguistic strategies that have been found to characterize women's and men's speech could be understood as serving interactional goals: whereas all speakers continually negotiate relative connection (how close or distant are they, or do they want to be) as well as status (who's up, who's down), conversational rituals learned by girls and maintained by women tend to focus on the connection dimension, while rituals learned by boys and maintained by men tend to focus on the status dimension. Citing prior research, including Goodwin's, on girls' and boys' socialization, Tannen noted that girls and women are often sensitive to being left out or pushed away, whereas boys and men are often sensitive to being put down or pushed around. Conversational rituals associated with each gender, then, tend to serve those sensitivities.

Communicative strategies associated with women, accordingly, are often based on symmetry. For example, Tannen (1990) describes a conversational ritual common among women, "displaying similarities and matching experiences" (77), which may take the form of "troubles talk." Supporting this finding, Coates (1996, 2013a: 43) notes that "reciprocal self-disclosure" characterizes talk between women friends. This mirroring is realized linguistically through the repetition of syntactic patterns and key words and phrases, and also frequently involves matching troubles. Tannen notes that

bonding through talk about troubles is a common activity for women throughout the world. The contrast is not that boys and men don't seek bonding but rather that they often accomplish it in different ways. For example, Tannen (1990, 1994, 1996b, 1998) shows that many conversational rituals common among men are based on ritual opposition or "agonism." Thus boys and men may show affection by teasing or playfully insulting each other, and may explore ideas by "playing devil's advocate," that is, by offering challenges, counter-challenges, and vigorous debate. Just as troubles talk appears among women cross-culturally, men in disparate parts of the world engage in a "war of words," in which they "vie with one another to devise clever insults, topping each other both in the intensity of the insult and the skill of the insulter" (Tannen 1998: 194). Tannen stresses that it is the use of *ritualized* opposition, or agonism, that is associated with boys and men; thus, little boys frequently play-fight as a favored game. Though little girls rarely fight for fun, girls and women certainly fight in the literal sense; they fight when they mean it (197).

During the 1990s, many scholars routinely classified research into two categories: a "power" or "dominance" approach which focused on social inequality as the source of gendered patterns of language use and a "cultural" or "difference" approach which focused on sex-separate socialization as the source of differences. This characterization of research, initially proposed by Henley and Kramarae (1991), was, to a great extent, disciplinary: the research they labeled as "dominance," including their own, stemmed from the fields of communication and sociology, whereas the research they labeled as "difference," predominantly that of Maltz and Borker (1982) and Tannen (1990), stemmed from anthropology (in the case of Maltz and Borker) or linguistics (in the case of Tannen). The distinction was used primarily to fault the "difference" approach for, purportedly, not incorporating into analysis, or even denying, the societal subjugation of women. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013: 50) argue for a balanced approach, because "[e]ach of these emphases points to important aspects of gender practice" so that "no single approach can tell the entire story, and a focus on one approach will miss important things, and thus distort the overall picture. A focus on difference ... tends to dislodge dominance and structures of male privilege. A focus on dominance, on the other hand, tends to downplay the importance of difference in experience and beliefs."

Tannen and other linguists have argued that the difference-dominance distinction is fundamentally spurious, because the two dynamics are inextricably intertwined. They point out, moreover, that research relegated to the "difference" camp grows out of Interactional Sociolinguistics, a theoretical framework founded on the assumption that social relations such as dominance and subordination are in part constructed and reinforced in interaction. Indeed, a concern with social inequality and injustice motivates and drives Gumperz's (1982) foundational work. As early studies by Brown (1980) and Goodwin (1980) demonstrate, the meanings or functions of linguistic features depend on their immediate context of use. Interpretations about dominance and solidarity relations are context-specific as well.

In clarifying and complexifying the ways that gender patterns dovetail with the universal human goals of balancing the simultaneous yet often conflicting needs to negotiate both status (including dominance) and connection, Tannen (1996b) posits a grid in which a horizontal axis runs between the poles of connection and distance while a vertical axis runs between the poles of hierarchy and equality. She suggests that all utterances fall somewhere on the grid. Furthermore, she stresses, individual utterances

are often ambiguous: they may create either connection or hierarchy. They also are often polysemous: they may create both at once. Tannen (1989, 1993) uses interruption as a paradigm case of ambiguity and polysemy. Beginning to speak when another holds the floor may seem to be (and has been taken by researchers to be) a self-evident display of conversational dominance, usurping another's speaking rights. However, there are many for whom talking-along is not an interruption but rather what Tannen calls "cooperative overlap": a way of showing enthusiastic listenership and eager participation. That is precisely what she found in her early analysis of conversational style (Tannen 2005). If one participant expects cooperative overlapping, but the other expects one person to speak at a time, the latter may perceive an intended cooperative overlap as interruption and stop speaking. In this case, the interruption, and the impression of dominance, resulted from the ambiguity of speaking-along rather than from an attempt to dominate. A situation of polysemy obtains when those for whom speaking-along is a sign of eager participation may in fact interrupt and try to wrest the floor from a current speaker, confident that their conversational partner will do the same and grab it back. In that case, speaking-along "means" both dominance and solidarity. In other words, Tannen's approach doesn't deny the effect and impact of dominance through interruption, but it demonstrates that the effect of dominance may not always result from an intention to dominate, because the same linguistic features can serve either or both status (or dominance) and connection. (This perspective on interruption is reprised in a chapter of *You Just Don't Understand*.)

Elsewhere Tannen (2014) demonstrates that understanding women's and men's differing conversational rituals, growing out of their divergent conversational goals, can result in dominance in family interaction. Ochs and Taylor (1992) identify a ritual that typifies dinner-table conversation in many American families: individuals tell what happened to them during the day. The authors found that children's self-reported behavior was the most frequently judged by others. Fathers were the most frequent critics of others' behavior, and rarely had their own behavior criticized or judged. Mothers had their self-reported actions held up for judgment as often as they judged their children's. The result was a family power structure with fathers at the top, children at the bottom, and mothers in the middle. Tannen observes that mothers' self-reports of daily problems is a kind of troubles talk, typically intended to create solidarity, which men often misread as a request to offer advice. Seen this way, the resulting power imbalance might stem in part from the interaction of divergent gendered conversational rituals.

Tannen (1996b) further demonstrates the inextricability of difference and dominance in her analysis of workplace communication, where she demonstrates that language strategies used by those in positions of authority are not simply ways of exercising power but are ways of balancing the simultaneous but potentially conflicting needs for status and connection – ways she identifies, following Goffman (1977), as "sex-class" linked, that is, associated with the class of women and the class of men, where "class" derives from Bertrand Russell's notion of logical types. To illustrate, she compares two instances of small talk between status unequals. In one interaction, two men who are discussing a computer glitch negotiate status and connection through challenges; bonding against women; and alternating displays of helping, expertise, and independence (needing no help). The women's conversation occurred while the highest-status woman was telling a story to two lower ranking colleagues. When a female mail clerk

entered, the speaker stopped her story and complimented the mail clerk on her blouse, and the others joined in. The complimenting ritual served as a resource for including the clerk and attending to her as a person, thus creating connection; however, it also reflected and reproduced relative status because it was the highest-status person who controlled the framing of the interaction, and the lowest-status person who became the focus of gaze. Thus, status was reflected and reinforced by the alignments the speakers created through talk – alignments that were associated with the speakers' respective sex classes: negotiating status and connection through challenges and mock insults was less available as a resource to the women, and doing so through the exchange of compliments on clothing and discussion of shopping and fashion was less available as a resource to the men.

A related theoretical perspective is provided by Ochs (1992), who argues that gender-related ways of speaking do not directly express gender but rather "index" gender by creating stances that are associated in a given culture with women or with men (in Goffman's [1977] terms, with the "class" of women and the "class" of men). In other words, the relationship between language and gender is indirect and indexically mediated: linguistic features directly communicate acts in certain contexts (e.g., the act of telling someone what to do) and simultaneously constitute stances (e.g., depending on how the directive is worded, uncertainty). The performance of these acts in ways that create stances associated with (i.e., indexing) sociocultural expectations and beliefs about gender thereby help constitute a speaker's gendered identity.

Individuals, moreover, will speak very differently given the stances occasioned by particular contexts. Thus Kendall (1999, forthcoming) observed, in an ethnographic analysis of a woman's self-recorded discourse at home and at work, that the woman issued directives differently in the two contexts. The directives she issued to subordinates in her role as manager at work tended to be indirect ("You might want to mention that to them, and see what they say about it"), but when she was talking to her 10-year-old daughter at home, her directives tended to be direct ("Shake this up"). Goodwin (2006) followed up her fieldwork among African American children in Philadelphia with a study of ethnically diverse girls' "games of stance, status and exclusion" (in the words of the book's subtitle), as video- and audio-taped in a southern California school playground. While in many ways reinforcing her earlier oft-cited findings that girls negotiate inclusion and exclusion (as distinguished from boys' negotiation of relative status), she also emphasizes their negotiation and exercise of status, as when they "challenge the boys' right to dominate the soccer field" or "assert their power over younger girls" (28).

These studies support the observation that links among talk, discursive practices, and social meanings are accomplished within "communities of practice," which Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992: 464) define as groupings of people who "come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor." They argue that linguistic practices and their social meanings emerge within these communities: "Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations – in short, practices – emerge in the course of this mutual endeavor." Expanding their earlier work, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2007) urge gender and discourse scholars to extend this focus by locating "communities of practice in relation to a world beyond – to other communities of practice, to social networks, to institutions (e.g., schools, churches, prisons), and to more global imagined communities (e.g., nations, women).

Consonant with these theoretical frameworks is a social constructivist paradigm that has prevailed in gender and language research. Scholars now generally agree that our conceptualization of gender, and the behaviors associated with it, result from sociohistorical processes, such that gendered identities are interactionally achieved. These processes have been called “displaying,” “doing,” or “performing” gender. Judith Butler’s (1990, 1993, 2004) theory of performativity has been particularly influential. According to Butler (1993), individuals perform gender “through the repetition or citation of a prior, authoritative set of practices” (227). This perspective is reminiscent of Goffman’s (1976) pioneering work showing that the gendered self is accomplished in print advertisements through the display of postures that both ritualize women’s subordination and are conventionally associated with their gender, such as the “bashful knee bend,” receiving help and instruction, and smiling more frequently and more expansively than men.

#### 4 The Intersectionality of Identities: Race, Class, and Sexuality

Butler’s (and Goffman’s) performative paradigm is relevant to research on the intersectionality of identities, a perspective that stresses the interrelationship among race, class, sexuality, and gender. The concept of intersectionality stems from Crenshaw’s (1989, 1991) work on anti-discrimination law. Crenshaw (1991) argues that “intersectional identities such as women of color” (1242) are necessary for understanding male violence against women because “the experiences of women of color are frequently the product of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism” (1243). In gender and language research, Morgan (2007) urges scholars to “address intersectionality, where race, class, sexuality and gender interrelate for some women and do not act as independent forms of oppression” (119). She argues that accounts of women’s language based solely on the speech of middle-class white women establish a normative basis against which black and working-class women’s speech is judged anomalous, with resultant negative stereotypes. Morgan cites early work by Mitchell-Kernan (1971), who demonstrated that African American women often participate in conversational signifying (ritual insults), loud-talking, marking, and other linguistic practices previously attributed to men (Abrahams 1962; Kochman 1969). However, black women confront ideologies not only of race but also of gender. The black women’s “[s]ignifying and loud talking styles simply didn’t stand a chance as an example of the good woman” (125). In other words, they find themselves in a position similar to Lakoff’s double bind: a black woman cannot be both a “good black person” and a “good woman.”

Mendoza-Denton (2008) examines the daily lives of young Latinas in the Norteña and Sureña (North/South) youth gangs in California. She describes how their “innovative use of speech, bodily practices, and symbolic exchanges” simultaneously signal their “gang affiliations and ideologies” and “their connections to larger social processes of nationalism, racial/ethnic consciousness, and gender identity” (294). One of their communicative practices is “clowning”: ritualized routines involving playful insults,

outrageous statements, and one-upmanship (69), all verbal strategies associated in the literature with boys and men. Mendoza-Denton describes “an instance of cross-gender and cross-subcultural misrecognition” involving clowning: she and some gang girls attended a film festival on a college campus. As they were heading out, they picked up a male college student who needed a ride. The girls entertained him with a clowning session, and were dismayed that he bolted from the car as soon as they stopped. When Mendoza-Denton told the girls, “You guys scared him,” they were genuinely surprised. She surmises that the hapless young man perceived the incident as “potty-mouths threatening an unsuspecting stranger who had never had female sexual joking jabbed in his direction” (72). Mendoza-Denton concludes that “clowning, bragging, and braggadocio,” being dependent on shared frames, are “precisely the kinds of speech routines that might lead to instances of misrecognition and stereotyping” – and may even be a source of some high-school teachers’ complaints about “gang-related threats” (73).

Race and ethnicity are co-constructed in discourse with other aspects of social identities such as class, gender, and/or sexuality (e.g., Bucholtz 1999; Gaudio 2001; Goodwin and Alim 2010; Jacobs-Huey 2006; Mendoza-Denton 2008). In some communities, ideologies of race and gender link blackness with masculinity (Bucholtz 1999) and whiteness with femininity (Chun 2011). In her ethnography of a multi-ethnic high school, Chun finds that the students label people and practices in racial terms that are often linked with gender and class. For example, they characterize some female students by using the local image of a “prep girl,” an embodiment of “middle-class white hyper-femininity” (413), which the students discursively construct through “white girl stylization” consisting of high falsetto and final vowel lengthening (“oh my go::sh”) [408]; high falsetto and rising intonation (“Miss Smith? Okay? Okay we were reading Romeo and Juliet?” [407]); and “dramatically stylized performances” of the phrase, “oh my *god* everybody.” Prep girls are also represented as engaging in “narcissistic discourse about their bodies (hair, nails, breasts)” and “‘talking shit’ about others” (413).

Other strands of research linking gender and race consider conversational patterns in specific contexts. For example, Rahman (2011) describes how four African American female comedians discursively construct performance identities that will alleviate harassment from male audience members in mixed-gender African American audiences. The female comedians employ solidarity-based features and practices associated with language among close female friends, including stances of confidence sharing and “friend-as-advisor” (323); gendered terms used to directly address female audience members; and African American forms of indirectness as described by Green (2002), Jacobs-Huey (2006), and Morgan (1998, 2002). For example, Adele Givens opens her act by ignoring the men and complimenting the women, referring to them as “queens” and addressing them as “ladies”: “I am so glad y’all decided to join the Queens of Comedy tonight! So glad to see so many queens in the house with me tonight! Now, ladies, ...” (Rahman 2011: 323). In this way, the comedians establish their identities as both African American and female, appeal to the female audience members, and discourage potential negative reactions from men by casting them “in the role of onlookers at an event for women” (333).

Also based, in part, on poststructuralist approaches, many analyses of gender and discourse have focused on the interrelation between gender and sexuality. Included here are studies demonstrating the interactional achievement of multiple femininities

and masculinities, as well as the construction of both same-sex and heterosexual sexualities, particularly in relation to normative and non-normative groups and practices.

Beginning in the 1940s, the earliest work on language and sexual orientation focused on words and pronouns used by gay, lesbian, and transgendered groups (Cameron and Kulick 2003; Kulick 2000; Leap 1995, this volume). In *Word's Out: Gay Men's English*, Leap (1996) considered how gay men employ linguistic practices in conversational interaction, narratives, and text. In 1997, Queer Theory was introduced into the study of gender and discourse with Livia and Hall's *Queerly Phrased: Language, Gender, and Sexuality*. "Queer Theory" represents various approaches that are driven by a critical focus on heteronormativity, that is, "the discursive construction of certain forms of heterosexuality as natural, normal or preferable" (Motschenbacher and Stegu 2013: 520). In conjunction with Queer Theory, the study of gender and sexuality was explicitly launched in 2003 with Cameron and Kulick's *Language and Sexuality*, and reached another landmark with the 2012 inaugural issue of the *Journal of Language and Sexuality*. The study of sexuality for this journal and other scholarship is not limited to, though it includes, sexual orientation or same-sex practices. Rather, sexuality includes "everything that arguably makes sexuality sexuality: namely fantasy, repression, pleasure, fear and the unconscious" (Cameron and Kulick 2003: 10).

Gender theorists have increasingly incorporated sexuality into discussions of gender and discourse, recognizing that gender and sexuality are intertwined in complex ways. Individuals' gender identities encompass not only biological sex (e.g., female, male) but also sexual identity (e.g., transgendered, gay, straight, bisexual); masculinity and femininity in self-presentation; and desire in terms of attraction, and who and what one desires. There are numerous interrelations among these components of identity, which produce a plethora of individual gendered identities, particularly when incorporating other social facets, such as class, age, ethnicity, and nation. The components of gender and sexual identities, and their interrelations, vary culturally and historically, and are based on particular perspectives and beliefs, such as whether same-sex desire is possible; for example, if a biologically female individual desires other females, is this same-sex desire or is the desiring subject actually a male in a female body?

Although individuals enact agency in their discursive creations of identities, these performances are constrained. As Butler put it, gender is accomplished within a "rigid regulatory frame" that limits and constrains this construction (1993: 33). This regulation "operates as a condition of cultural intelligibility for any person" (Butler 2004: 52) by defining categories (such as male and female) and delimiting what is deemed "normal" through a "process of normalization" (55). Social categories entail both gender and sexuality, and are socially constructed and culturally relative, changing over time. Within cultures, shifts in labeling reflect and (re)produce sociocultural changes in ideologies or beliefs; for example, "homosexual" appeared as a pathology in the medical domain, but was replaced by "gay" as an ingroup term in the early twentieth century (Cameron and Kulick 2003). Individuals construct their gendered selves in relation to the categories that are culturally available to them. The *hijras* of India (Hall and O'Donovan 1996), *travesti* of Brazil (Kulick 1998), and *kathoey* of Thailand (Totman 2004) do not accept the primarily Western categories and labels for cross-sex versus same-sex relations. In fact, they do not consider their sexual partners to be "homosexual" in a Western sense.

Gender and sexual identities are achieved locally in interaction. Hall (2011) examines a meeting of a Hindi- and English-speaking support group in New Delhi, India,

intended for “women who are attracted to women” (385). In these interactions, two identities emerge: “lesbians” and “boys.” The lesbians orient themselves to a model in which same-sex desire is viable; the boys are male-identified women who orient to the “other-sex model of eroticism” in which men desire women and women desire men. Although all participants in the meetings are middle class, these orientations are associated with the West and with rural India, respectively. The Indian “boys” do not consider themselves to be women or a third gender. Instead, they plan to eventually convert their female bodies to male bodies through sexual reassignment surgery, thus preserving the ideology that only men (not women) desire women. In the group meetings Hall considers, the lesbians attempt to convince the boys to accept same-sex desire and, thus, avoid the necessity of transforming their bodies through sexual reassignment surgery. The “boys” discursively construct their masculine-based subjectivity by using grammatically masculine self-reference (395) and by assuming an adversarial stance that is “indexical of masculinity more generally” (397). They create this oppositional stance by using impolite language associated with the lower-class and “authentic Indianness”; displaying “stereotypically masculine emotions, such as anger” (391); engaging in “verbal oneupmanship” (397); and by using Hindi, which, in this context, is “ideologically associated with male speakers.” Thus Hall demonstrates that participants linguistically perform gender in relation to other social categories and that these performances depend upon class-based sexualities.

## 5 Identity and Discourses of Gender

Studies of the interrelationship of gender and sexuality reveal that heterosexualities as well as same-sex sexualities are discursively constructed (as individuals construct masculinity as well as femininity). Much of the work on masculinity considers how individuals construct normative and non-normative masculinities. Coates (2013b) demonstrates that speakers discursively produce “a range of heterosexualities” in everyday talk (538). Furthermore, using Cameron and Kulick’s (2006: 165) concept of the “heteronormative hierarchy,” Coates (2013b) demonstrates that the conversational participants she discusses do not construct all forms of heterosexuality as equal: “Heterosexual relationships which are not monogamous, which do not produce children (and therefore do not establish the normative nuclear family) and which do not conform to conventional gender roles are less favoured” (542).

Individuals not only produce heterosexualities in interaction but also create gendered identities by positioning themselves within specific discourses of heterosexuality. In a study of the naturally occurring, self-recorded interactions of two separate heterosexual couples, Kendall (2007) demonstrates that the two women in these couples negotiate the forms and meanings of their parental and work-related identities through the positions they discursively take up themselves and make available to their husbands within traditional and feminist discourses of work and family. Both couples were committed to sharing child-rearing and work responsibilities equally. One couple ensured this by arranging their work schedules so that each enjoyed one full day every week as primary caregiver. Yet, in their discourse, the women position their husbands as breadwinners in the work sphere and themselves as primary caregivers

in the domestic sphere. For example, when talking with a friend, one of the women refers to her employment as optional, contingent on the cost of daycare, revealing her assumption that the husband's salary, which is not optional, supports the family. The mother in the other couple (the one wherein each works four days in order to have a fifth day as primary caretaker) claims the position of main parent by frequently questioning her husband's parenting. In one instance, for example, she tells their two-year-old daughter to take out of her mouth a cough drop that the father had given her. The mother expresses disapproval by saying, "Yuck!" When the child asks, "Whas' that?," her mother tells her, "It's a cough drop. You don't want that anyway." The father then defends his action by saying that the child wanted the cough drop. The mother heaves a disapproving sigh but says no more. The father again defends himself by saying, "It CAN'T hurt her," to which the mother responds, "Well, it can choke her." In these and many other examples, Kendall shows that whereas their ideologies support parental equality, the women's discourse supports traditional gendered roles.

Just as Kendall's and others' studies of women's discourse have yielded an increasingly nuanced understanding of women's lives and feminine identities, Kiesling's (e.g., 2005, 2011) body of work on the discourse of members of an American men's college fraternity demonstrates how masculinities, too, are multifaceted, and are constructed in discourse. Kiesling tape-recorded individual interviews with, and group interaction among, fraternity members in contexts ranging from formal fraternity meetings to casual drinking at a bar. Citing earlier findings about the centrality of power to men's talk, Kiesling (1997) examines the discourse of a formal fraternity election meeting to develop a more nuanced analysis of power in interaction. When arguing for their preferred candidates, each fraternity member has access to different discursive resources (e.g., joking) dependent, in part, on their history within the fraternity (e.g., referring to past events). Through these discursive strategies and other linguistic features of talk (e.g., mitigating opinions rather than stating them as fact in imperative statements), they draw upon different processes of power: physical, economic, knowledge, structural, nurturant, and demeanor.

In later work, Kiesling and others scholars examine how masculinity itself is constructed, drawing from the work of sociologist R. W. Connell (2005) who argues that there are multiple, competing masculinities, some preferred over others, including hegemonic and subordinated masculinities. In an analysis of the magazine *Men's Health*, Boni (2002) explains how hegemonic masculinities are constructed through text and images as heteronormative: real men desire women and are thus not feminine and not gay. Kiesling (2004) shows that the fraternity members in his study use the word "dude" to create a stance of "cool solidarity," which functions to balance two potentially contradictory "discourses of modern American masculinity" (282): a discourse of masculine solidarity, referring to the "close social bonds between men" that are encouraged between fraternity members; and the discourse of heterosexism, the need to not be "perceived as gay by other men" (283). The stance of "cool solidarity" combines both the intimacy and distance of the solidarity dimension, indexing "young Anglo masculinity"; thus, "dude" indirectly indexes masculinity through this stance (286).

Notions of face and politeness continue to figure prominently in research on gender and discourse. Here, too, the range of discursive strategies analyzed has broadened to include not only mitigated language and indirectness but also what has come to

be referred to as “impoliteness.” (Note that this term is now used to refer to discursive practices that would be called “impolite” in common parlance, whereas Lakoff’s [1973a, 1973b, 1975] and Brown and Levinson’s [1987] use of the term “politeness” is not really about conventional notions of etiquette but rather refers to ways of serving social goals in interaction.) Scholarship on linguistic politeness and face has been particularly revealing in studies of gender and discourse in the workplace (e.g., Angouri 2011; Baxter 2010, 2014; Mullany 2006; Saito 2013; Schnurr and Mak 2011). Janet Holmes and her colleagues draw upon politeness to provide a complex portrayal of workplace discourse in New Zealand (Holmes 2005, 2006, this volume; Holmes and Marra 2011; Holmes and Stubbe 2003; Marra, Schnurr, and Holmes 2006). In the Japanese workplace, Takano (2005) finds that female leaders shift their speech styles between more honorific styles and direct styles (i.e., the plain form) in confrontational situations, whereas their male counterparts consistently employ direct styles. As part of a larger project on British business leaders, Baxter (2010) finds that women leaders use “a double-voiced discourse” in male-dominated corporations to simultaneously promote their own agendas and “pay attention to other colleagues’ points of view” in order to regulate how these others perceive them (112). They assume a warm manner; use humor, and allow themselves to be the objects of humor; and otherwise attend to the face needs of subordinates by using “mitigated commands, forms of politeness, and indirect engagement” (112). In contrast with male-dominated corporations, “Gender-Multiple corporations” promote double-voiced discourse in training future leaders as a means for “self-reflexivity,” enabling leaders to “shift constantly between action and reflection to produce a multi-faceted leadership style” (115).

## 6 Language and Gender Online

We conclude this survey of research on gender and discourse by turning to the burgeoning field of language use online. Many of the themes addressed in research focusing on women’s and men’s spoken discourse have been identified in computer-mediated discourse. Other patterns of gender and discourse are emerging in this context as well.

Scholars in the field of language and gender were among the first to examine Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC). Susan Herring was a pioneer in this area and, together with her students and colleagues, has continued to be the major researcher in it (see Herring and Androutsopoulos, this volume). In an overview of CMC research published between 1989 and 2013, Herring and Stoerger (2014) demonstrate that widespread predictions that gender would be invisible online, and therefore gender-related disparities and inequalities would disappear, were not borne out. Summarizing the findings of early research on discussion lists and newsgroups which considered the quantity of talk and the stances that males and females take up in relation to their interlocutors, they note that women tended to post shorter messages and were more likely to “qualify and justify their assertions, apologize, express appreciation, support others, and in general, adopt an ‘aligned’ stance toward their interlocutors” (570). In contrast, men tended to post relatively longer messages, were more likely to “begin and close discussions in mixed-sex groups, assert opinions strongly as ‘facts’, challenge others, use crude language (including insults and profanity), and in

general adopt an adversarial stance toward their interlocutors" (570). These patterns help explain Thomson and Murachver's (2001) finding that subjects could identify the gender of an email's author based on a combination of features.

The prediction – indeed, the hope – that CMC would be gender-neutral grew out of the assumption that it would be anonymous. The trend, however, has been in the opposite direction. Zhao, Grasmuck, and Martin (2008: 1818) note a move from anonymity to "nonymity" (i.e., the opposite of "anonymous") with the increase in popularity of social network sites on which users post photos and personal information. Moreover, recent research has continued to document that online discourse tends to replicate gender-related patterns that had previously been observed in spoken interaction, as well as the important insight that gender-related patterns vary by context. It is essential, therefore, to pay attention to the type and purpose of online discourse in order to get an accurate understanding of the relationship between gender and online discourse.

For example, the early question of who talks more, women or men, was answered differently depending on whether one examined what Tannen (1990) dubbed private or public speaking: women were found to talk more at home but less at meetings. Just so, Herring and Stoerger report that researchers looking at online discourse have observed that gender differences in participation vary by online context: women outnumber and are more active than men on social networking sites such as Facebook, the microblogging site Twitter, the consumer review site Yelp, and the online pinboard Pinterest, while men participate more frequently on music-sharing sites, the professional social networking site LinkedIn, and the social news website, Reddit. Similarly, Lam *et al.* (2011) found that women constitute only a tiny fraction of contributors to Wikipedia. Furthermore, just as studies of spoken conversation found that men's contributions at meetings are more often taken up by the group, Kelly (2012) found that men's tweets are retweeted more often than women's, especially by men, even though women post more on Twitter, and Herring *et al.* (2004) found that men's blogs are linked to and reported on in the mass media more often than women's blogs. This is not to say that men's online discourse always receives more attention; women may receive more attention, but, unfortunately, of a less desirable kind: Harding (2007) observes that women receive proportionately more online harassment, while Marwick (2013) notes that they are subjected to more threatening language when they speak up on social media sites.

Attention to all aspects of context is necessary not only to understand levels and types of participation but for analyses of online discourse itself. Thelwall, Wilkinson, and Uppal (2010), for example, found that females are more likely to give and receive comments with positive emotions on MySpace, but they found no gender differences in giving or receiving comments with negative emotions. Fullwood, Morris, and Evans (2011), examining the discourse of 40 male and 40 female MySpace users in the UK, found that women and men used gender-identified language features in their forum comments, where social interactions take place, but not in the "about me" sections, which they characterize as a "social CV" (121). The features they found to be used more often by women in forum comments were emoticons and multiple-punctuation (e.g., *wow!!!*), while men were more likely to use swear words and references to taboo subjects, such as sexual acts, as well as slang, defined as "any form of colloquial language considered distinct from standard language" (e.g., *innit, coz*).

A study of gendered patterns in the discourse of online avatars interestingly parallels key studies of spoken interaction in the observation that females use styles of

speech associated with males in particular contexts. Much like the previously cited findings by Goodwin of girls at play, and by Kendall of a mother at work and at home, Palomares and Lee (2010) found that women's discourse on graphical websites varied by context and the accordingly appropriate stances: women were more apologetic and tentative when using a female avatar but not when using a male avatar. The online context thus provides support for the insight that women and men tend to speak in gender-associated ways not because of their biological sex but to express stances associated with culturally recognizable roles.

Extending her research on the language of everyday conversation to the exchange of digital messages through texting and such synchronous platforms as IM (Instant Messaging) and gChat, Tannen (2012) describes digital analogues to gendered patterns of conversational style. Her examples illustrate women's use of emphatic punctuation, capitalization, and repetition of words, letters, or punctuation marks, which are parallel to their use of amplitude, intonation, and elongation of sounds to create emphasis and emotional valence in speaking, with parallel examples of miscommunication in cross-gender interaction. For example, a young woman who proposes, over IM, to visit her brother at college, finds his response ("Okay cool." "Dinner sounds good.") unenthusiastic, and grumbles "Good thing you sound excited ..." though she ultimately believes his insistence "Sorry, sorry, I am. I am." Tannen contrasts this misunderstanding with a more successful exchange between two women: a college student proposed dinner to a friend and former dorm-mate by texting, "Hey so I haven't seen you the ENTIRE week and I reeeally miss you!" Her friend's response began, "I miss you too!!!!!!!" The original texter explained that she didn't miss her friend all that much; she simply knew that because capitalization, exclamation marks, and repetition of letters and punctuation were expected, omitting them would give the impression of lack of enthusiasm, as happened with the brother in the prior example.

Studies of gender and discourse online are sure to proliferate as new platforms for digital interaction emerge, and as use of these devices and platforms become ever more pervasive in everyday interaction. Given the findings of research on computer-mediated discourse thus far, it seems safe to predict that the patterns observed will instantiate reiterations and adaptations of patterns documented for spoken interaction, even as new theoretical frameworks and perspectives are sure to emerge.

## 7 Conclusion

Research on language and gender has increasingly become research on gender and discourse. A movement toward the study of language within specific situated activities reflects the importance of culturally defined meanings both of linguistic strategies and of gender. It acknowledges the agency of individuals in creating gendered identities, including the options of resisting and transgressing sociocultural norms for linguistic behavior. But it also acknowledges the sociocultural constraints within which individuals make their linguistic choices, and the impact of those constraints, whether they are adhered to or departed from. In a sense, the field of gender and discourse has thus come full circle, returning to its roots in a Goffman-influenced constructivist framework as seen in the groundbreaking work of Brown, Goodwin, Lakoff, and Goffman himself.

## NOTES

- 1 Feminist writers currently recognize three waves of feminism: a first wave defined by the suffragist movement; a second wave for women's empowerment from the 1960s through the 1980s; and a third wave focused on diversity and linked with postmodernism beginning in the 1990s.

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# 31 Queer Linguistics as Critical Discourse Analysis

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WILLIAM L. LEAP

## 0 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Queer linguistics explores how language enables (and at times disguises) the intersections of sexuality, gender, race, class, and other forms of social inequality (Leap 2012; Motschenbacher 2010a). Several features make this work “queer,” including its attention to the ways in which linguistic practice lends authority to categories of sexual identity and to female/male, and heterosexual/homosexual binaries, but also its refusal to ground the analysis of linguistic practice in sexuality- (or gender)-related categories, and binaries.

At the same time, the work of queer linguistics resembles that discussed in other chapters in this handbook. Especially striking are the similarities between queer linguistics and studies of discourse that engage discursive practices, normative authority, and regulatory process – notably here, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA); see van Dijk, this volume; Wodak and Reisigl, this volume. Admittedly, queer linguistic projects do not always make use of the explicit methodologies associated with CDA when studying language, sexuality, and its broader connections. But queer linguistics and CDA agree that such inquiry must be discourse centered, and that the analysis of discourse must take the form of a critical inquiry; that is, it must engage, not obscure the conditions of the speakers’ experience as located within structures of power.

Fairclough phrases this point explicitly: CDA projects should “focus on a social wrong, in its semiotic aspect” (2012: 13). For queer linguistics, this commitment to critical inquiry – and the study of the social wrong – begins by recognizing that messages about sexuality circulate in multiple forms within and beyond the social moment, even if only some of those messages (and their forms of circulation) are immediately evident to participants and audiences (and to researchers). Other messages, and often those with greatest potency, take the form of ideological statements,

evoking “an obviousness which we cannot fail to recognize and before which we have the inevitable and natural reaction of crying ... ‘that’s obvious,’ ‘that’s right,’ ‘that’s true’” (Althusser 1971: 172). Queer linguistics is interested in how “common sense assumptions” about sexuality come to be accepted as “obvious ... right ... [and] true” and how the uncritical acceptance of those messages coincides with conditions of difference, hierarchy, and exclusion.

So while queer linguistics is interested in sexuality, the queer linguistic pursuit of these interests leads into a broader interrogation of structures of normative authority and regulatory power. This chapter reviews several examples of this language/sexuality based interrogation of normativity and regulation, to suggest the close connections between queer linguistics and CDA and to discuss some of the insights that queer linguistics bring to studies of sexual discourse and to discourse analysis as a whole.

## 1 Introducing Queer Linguistics: Queerness in Language as Desire, and More

To speak of the queer linguistic interests in sexuality and normativity is to imply that queer linguistics is an established and unified intellectual project. Truth be told, there is as much diversity of thought within queer linguistics today as there is within the fields of discourse analysis, syntactic theory, or cognitive semantics. Indeed, queerness itself has been described as an unbounded formation (Halperin 1995: 62), embedded in sexuality but also connected to other notations of experience, whose cumulative effects “dramatize incoherence in the allegedly stable relations between chromosomal sex, gender and sexual desire” (Jagose 1996: 3) and also locate queerness (and the subjects and practices aligned with it) at varying distances from sites of authority and power.

While there is no single research agenda in queer studies (and no single entity that can be called a “queer subject”), there is general agreement with the argument outlined in the opening paragraph of Sedgwick’s *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990), If sexuality is a pervasive element in human experience, any form of social analysis – including linguistic inquiry – is immediately rendered defective if it overlooks the sexual dimensions of social practice, or fails to address the broader social discourses that surround and inform a specific sexual formation. Identity-centered discussions of language and sexuality engaged those social discourses in a very limited fashion (Cameron and Kulick 2003: 74–105; Leap 2008; Levon 2010: 10–19). Cameron and Kulick broadened those discussions considerably, when they proposed that studies of language and sexuality “encompass not only sexual identity but [also] ... ‘fantasy, repression, pleasure, fear and the unconscious’” – all of which they subordinate “under the general heading of ‘desire’” (2003: 106). In effect, this proposal suggests that studies of language and desire become the anchoring theme for queer linguistics (Kulick 2003).

Cameron and Kulick’s agenda for investigating desire in language calls for studies of repression, socialization, silence, and intimacy (2003: 130). That agenda overlaps with ongoing discussions of yearning and restlessness (Giffney 2009), shame (Cvetkovitch 2003; Mundt 2007; Probyn 2005), disidentification (Muñoz 1999), and legitimacy (Lewin

2009) that mark queer theory's emerging interests in the *social* formations of affect. As Ahmed (2010) and Berlant (2011) suggest, these formations are grounded in desire, yet the experience of desire inflects unevenly once yearning, shame, disidentification, optimism, and legitimacy are matched against gender (Abe 2010; Jones 2012), race/ethnicity (Johnson 2005, 2008), age (Chao 2002), class position and regional location (Mann 2012), national identity (Levon 2010; Manalansan 2003) and other components of social background and position.

Understandably, queer linguistics is reluctant to treat desire as the sole focus for analysis of language and sexuality, just as it is reluctant to treat any component of sexuality, as a stable and enduring site of representation, even within a single text. The social experience of sexuality requires a more complex and nuanced analysis. Similarly, queer linguistics refuses to propose enduring associations between specific messages about sexuality (including claims to identity) and specific elements within a particular linguistic system. Instead, queer linguistics explores the processes through which messages about sexuality come to be associated – or gain an appearance of association – with particular forms of discursive practice.

## 2 Queer Linguistics, Sexuality, and Normative Discourse

The associations of sexual message and discursive practice cannot be explained by reference solely to discursive production and reception and its social and affective/evaluative outcomes. These associations are also informed by implicit assumptions about the sexual, assumptions that are grounded in ideological process and take the form of self-evident statements in everyday conversation and narrative. Examined carefully, these commonsense assumptions align with normative practices and regulatory authority. One of the goals of queer linguistics is to identify these assumptions and trace how their alignments with normative authority shape discussion of sexuality and issues with which sexuality is socially connected.

In a now-classic example illustrating this point, Cameron (1997) reviews the conversation of a group of white, suburbanite college students, who, while watching sports on television, began using multiple forms of derogatory reference to designate some of their classmates as “gay.” For example, references to an on-campus gay social event came up during that discussion. One of the students demeaned the event's participants by forcing them into a male vs. female binary (marked by the wearing of boutonnières vs. corsages), then answered his question by citing a popular homophobic slur (fruit):

the question is who wears the boutonnière and who wears the corsage, flip for it? Or do they both just wear flowers coz they're fruits. (Cameron 1997: 52)

Not all of the classmates that these students describe in this manner are gay-identified, however. So the students' comments are derogatory, but they also provide a point of reference through which the students may assert the authority of their own masculinity. Cameron explains: “in these speakers' understanding of gender, gay men, like women, provide a contrast group against whom masculinity can be defined.” Ironically, these

principles of contrast allow the students to engage in a behavior stereotypically associated with women's speech: gossip. But the students do so "eagerly in order to affirm in this context what is a more important norm ('men in all-male groups must unambiguously display their heterosexual orientation')" (Cameron 1997: 61).

Kiesling identifies the larger discursive principle indicated in Cameron's example as homo-sociality, a response to the competing scripts of male solidarity and obligatory heterosexuality which circulate widely in everyday life and require that closeness and intimacy between men be carefully and indirectly negotiated (2005: 695–9). As Kiesling shows, there is a hegemonic dimension of homo-sociality, but also a substantial intersectional tie: homo-social bonds carefully police strict compliance with heterosexual practice, but homo-social bonds also privilege gender, class, and racial positions. Thus members of a college fraternity studied by Kiesling use imitations of Black English Vernacular and other "race-modeled stance taking" to create a marginal oppositional subject and thereby confirm their own superior status in the now-emerging social hierarchy (Kiesling 2001). As was the case for the "gay"-identified students created by the speakers in Cameron's example, the marginalized subjects in the fraternity brothers' storytelling are assigned the status of exception; and like Cameron's TV-watching college students in Cameron's example, the fraternity brothers, now rendered non-exceptional, acquire the status of normalcy and privilege.

As these examples show, a queer linguistic critique of sexuality and normativity demonstrates that authority and hierarchy are not static, predetermined formations, but are deeply embedded within and indebted to historical and social contexts. In a series of papers, Motschenbacher (2010b, 2012a, 2012b, 2013) develops this point by exploring language use, nationalism, and sexuality in the Eurovision Song Competition (ESC).

Initially, the ESC involved pop music groups representing each of the member states of the European broadcast Union. But it has expanded in scope, to become

a Pan-European television event that annually attracts hundred millions [sic] of viewers and has become a European institution of a special kind since its inception in 1956. ... For example, with the exception of the Czech Republic, all EU member states have participated in the ESC before joining the EU (or its predecessor institutions). Therefore, one can see the ESC as a musical test for what may lie ahead in politics. If certain countries can compete in a pop music competition, they may eventually try to cooperate on a political level. (2010b: 85, 86)

Cooperation aside, the ESC is also a site where *nationally* defined entities are vying for recognition. Very similar to Kiesling's discussion of homo-social tensions in the examples cited above, each group participating in the ESC has to balance expressions of national location and pride against expressions of pan-European solidarity. Linguistic choices are important here: English is regarded as the common language of the competition, but English is not the language of performance for all groups competing in the competition. As a result, performances are more likely to contain an accumulation of linguistic options, amplified by metaphor, exaggeration, and camp, to enhance further the range of sexual (and other) meanings that the performers displayed during the competition.

But these displays of meaning were also shaped by several broader sets of discursive constraints: references to national vs. pan-European identity, references to normative or ambiguous sexual identity, and, language of performance. Messages about heteronormative sexuality occurred with greatest frequency in ESC performances displaying nationalist messages. In contrast, messages about non-normative sexualities were more likely to be displayed, even if ambiguously so, in ESC performances that foregrounded a pan-European identity and downplayed specific references to the performer's national backgrounds (2010b: 96–8). This was due in part to the demands of grammatical gender-marking, since pan-European loyalties were likely to be marked in English where ambiguities of gender/sexuality are easier to construct than in French where markedness of gender and sexuality is much more demanding.

For example, the French entry in the ESC for 2009 included the following stanza:

<i>Lyrics</i>	<i>Translation</i>
I remember <b>jolie demoiselle</b>	I remember <u>beautiful girl</u>
The last summer <b>nous</b> la tour Eiffel	The last summer, <u>us</u> the Eiffel Tower
I remember comme <b>tu</b> étais <b>belle</b>	I remember how <u>beautiful you</u> were
So beautiful with <b>your</b> sac Chanel	So beautiful with <u>your</u> Chanel handbag

(Motschenbacher 2010b: 99)

Messages about gender/sexuality are presented in French and in English in this ESC entry. However, the normative positioning associated with linguistic variant is quite different. In the French segment, the addressee is identified unambiguously as female – and as French affiliated: **une jolie, belle demoiselle**, and as someone with whom the male-bodied singer is sufficiently familiar to be able to use the intimate pronoun **tu**, rather than the more formal usage **vous**. No such specificity is associated with the English segment, where the gender and sexuality of **your** are ambiguous and so are any explicit references to English-language based memories of last summer.

A fluent speaker of French listening to these lyrics is likely to hear a French-language-based, heteronormative message about gender and sexuality. But, as Motschenbacher notes, not all people in the ESC audience are able to understand French as well as English. Those who do not understand French, and interpret the lyrics in terms of linguistic resources that are shared across the European Union, will come away with a very different impression of the song's gendered/sexual message.

Of interest to queer inquiry in such instances are the conditions that lead the songwriters or performers to retain or suspend (or attempt to do both) normative authority of national linguistic tradition in such instances. Hall (2011) provides a helpful example here when she traces the different patterns of language choice associated with two groups of same-sex identified women attending English-language based human rights/advocacy workshops in New Delhi (India). All of the women were speakers of Hindi as their first language, although they were also fluent speakers of English and used English terms as a basis of self-identification: women in the first group referred to themselves as *lesbians*, while women in the second group referred to themselves as *boys*.

How speakers choose between these English terms of self-reference coincides with statements of linguistic value while also indexing differences in the speakers' class position and other points of contrast. The women who identify as *lesbians* were primarily of middle-class background. They consider English to be a language of progressive ideas, sophistication, and Western affiliation. They prefer to use English as the language to discuss their sexuality and frame sexual identity, and they are eager to improve their English skills so that they become more adept at such discussion. Accordingly, one of the features that made the human rights workshops so attractive were the opportunities that these events provide for English language development. On the other hand, while Hindi is their first language and (like English) one of their national languages, the *lesbians* consider Hindi to be coarse and vulgar. One woman told Hall that she broke off a relationship with a woman-partner because the partner insisted on using Hindi in moments of personal intimacy. *Lesbians* will speak Hindi, but they do not consider it to be the appropriate language for framing sexual desire.

The women who identified as *boys* were primarily of working-class background. They see English as an effeminate language, whose framing of sexuality is entirely too prudish and restrained to be useful for the *boys'* interests in sexual self-expression. This valuation of English likely echoes sentiments from the colonial period, Hall suggests; if so, that is a line of sentiment that the *lesbians* have now forgotten. From the *boys'* perspective, Hindi's associations with the masculine make it the more appropriate source for developing a *boys*-centered sexual discourse. *Lesbians* agree that Hindi is a more "masculine" language; that is why *lesbians* prefer to avoid using it and why *boys* prefer to employ it. And in some cases, *boys* switch from English to Hindi mid-discussion, in order to underscore the distance from and their disagreement with assumptions about appropriate sexuality that their English-speaking lesbian colleagues are uncritically endorsing.

In one example that Hall describes (2011: 389–90), participants in one of the group meetings are considering whether sexual identity allows room for the subject to be feminine and masculine. Liz (*lesbian* identified) suggests that a subject can be female, but also construct a masculine imaginary; the problem is, society forbids female subjects to act on that imagined formation:

Liz: Is there no room to be female and yet to be masculine in that role? ... Why doesn't society allow for that?

And Jess (*boy*-identified) replies, lending support to Liz's position:

Jess: You're a woman so you have to be this this this this this.

Hearing this, and recognizing Jess's support, Liz seeks to bring Jess deeper into the discussion, asking:

Liz: Why? You're, you're also a woman, but you are attracted to other women. That's not acceptable to society, but you are being like that.

But by doing so, Liz has also named Jess as a "woman," and Jess is *boy*-identified, not woman-identified. This public act of labeling, even in the context of consensus message,

“invokes an alternative understanding of sexuality that relies on Hindi for its emotional force” (Hall 2011: 389):

Jess: *gālī detī hai. mujhe woman boltī hai.* (She insults me. She calls me woman.)

And when Liz tries to interrupt, perhaps to begin the work of repair, Jess repeats the charge, adding a final statement asserting boy independence from lesbian authority: “Now you think I am fire (to burn you up)” (Hall 2011: 389–90).

In sum, queer linguistics is interested in discourses of normativity and regulation for the same reasons that queer linguistics is interested in desire. The experience of the sexual is not predetermined and cannot be contained within any single linguistic or social domain. Perhaps, for these reasons, the experience of the sexual provides a site for expressions of normativity and regulatory power. One of the goals of queer linguistics is to interrogate those sites and those expressions. Frat boy conversations, song lyrics, and human rights workshop dialogues are only three of the sources where the sexual, the normative, and the regulatory coincide.

### 3 Queer Linguistics, Performativity, and Metaphor

Hall’s example begins as a discussion of sexual identities, but that discussion gains considerable critical potency as the analysis situates identities in relation to normative discourses with regulatory consequences. Hall’s example also indicates that attention to certain discursive properties proves to be especially useful for purposes of queer linguistic critique or normativity and regulation. This section discusses two of those discursive properties: performativity in discourse and discourse-based metaphoric formations.

#### 3.1 *Performativity*

Any discussion of performativity begins with the theory of speech acts, originally developed by Austin (1962) and popularized in queer discussion through Butler’s writings on performativity (1990). To be performative, a speech act must call into being the conditions that it names. Given Jess’s reaction to Liz’s statement, Liz’s statement can be seen as a performative speech act in the sense that Liz named Jess “woman” and, in Jess’s assessment, being named “woman” meant Jess “was” a woman – at least, in Liz’s eyes.

Of course, certain criteria connecting the discursive positioning of speakers, audience, and context to the speech act must also be satisfied in such instances. Austin refers to these as felicity conditions, and Sedgwick (1993: 4) associates them with the particular practices of audience reception that she refers to as “the interpellation of witness.” In Hall’s example, the performative naming of Jess as “woman” occurred in a group setting, not a private conversation, but still without objection from those who witnessed the speech act. Their consent may not be granted so freely the next time that Liz makes a similar statement, however. In fact, sexual meanings are never attested

performatively in quite the same way in every conversation or narrative, even if, as elements embedded within an emerging “natural history of discourse” (Silverstein and Urban 1996), performatively constructed sexual meanings are always able to claim a sense of precedence as well as a similar political consequence.

For example, discourses of openness and secrecy help determine whether sexual desires, practices, and identities may receive explicit discussion in public settings, or should remain unarticulated; they also help determine the consequences that are likely to follow if one of these options unfolds. Morrish and Sauntson (2007: 166–97) address these points when showing how the British broadsheet press positioned the alleged homosexuality of two British political officials very differently, given that one politician’s sexuality was already regarded as an “open secret” (Peter Mandelson) while the other’s sexuality was publicly denied (Michael Portillo). “Homosexuality” was at issue in both instances of broadsheet reporting. But rather than being a predetermined, stable construction, homosexuality was positioned performatively in each of these stories, yielding references that proclaimed allegations of same-sex desire but in substantially different ways.

The broadside press referenced Mandelson’s homosexuality through an “[explicit] deployment of the linguistic resources of camp” (Morrish and Sauntson 2007: 186). For example, comments like the following contained references that (performatively) feminized the subject by highlighting details of a non-masculine wardrobe or by using verbs like “scold” which have associations with feminine rather than masculine disciplinary practice:

Wearing a blue suit, pale blue shirt, and dark patterned tie, Mr. Mandelson fingered a stray lock of his hair which a troublesome breeze was toying with. (Morris, White, and Jeevan 2001)

Peter scolds anyone who tweaks his dignity. (Parris 1998: 22)

Other comments found connections between Mandelson’s career and forms of homoerotic practice, as in the reference to barebacking (condom-free anal sex) in the following statement:

What Peter Mandelson did was the political equivalent of bare-backing. (Williams 2001)

The broadside press referenced Portillo’s alleged homosexuality with “innuendo and suggestion” (Morrish and Sauntson 2007: 179), not with phrases like “pale blue shirt and patterned tie,” “scold,” or “barebacking” that indicated those references more directly. Typical of broadside press statements in this format are the following, which imply that Portillo and his Tory Party ally Bob Vivvy enjoyed a special friendship:

What sort of libertarian votes to lower the age of consent only to 18 as Portillo (and Vivvy) did. (Hill 1994: 31)

Their names are linked together so frequently that at times they appear to elide into one apocalyptic entity. (Phillips 1995: 22)

In some cases, as in the following analogy between Portillo and the lead singer of the rock group Queen, the metaphoric innuendo was not so subtle:

Like Freddy Mercury at 1985's Live Aid concert, Michael Portillo stands out as a man who does his job because he loves it. (Blundy 1994: 2)

Readers recognizing Mercury as an openly gay man likely read additional meanings into the broadside press reference to Portillo's enthusiasm. Those unaware of the biographic details and overlooking the stereotyped associations between AIDS and homosexuality would read this statement as another reference to Portillo's substantial political commitment.

Here, as in all of these examples, certain sexual meanings are performatively displayed, but readers have to provide their own "interpellation of witness" (in Sedgwick's phrasing) in order for the message to be completely displayed. These acts of audience reception are vulnerable to normativity and regulatory authority under ordinary circumstances, and are all the more so when sexual meanings and the subjects associated with them are deeply contested.

Decena (2011) addresses this point in his discussion of the sexual discourses and tacit subject reference in the Dominican diaspora. As he explains, same-sex identified men<sup>2</sup> from the Dominican Republic do not need to "come out" to family or friends: in social settings where everyone who needs to know already knows, either explicitly or tacitly, then a formal articulation of common knowledge is not required. In fact, articulating self-evident information is performatively disruptive under this system, because it undermines "the collaborative social formation that [Dominican same-sex identified men and their families] negotiate ... according to their social circumstances" (2011: 38).

Still, Dominican same-sex identified men may break this performatively constructed agreement of tacit silence if their sexuality becomes a focus for insult or challenge by co-workers, acquaintances, or rivals. They may do this by talking directly to the insult or challenge. Or, in an even more provocative counter-move, they may remain noticeably silent and unresponsive, deliberately ignoring the invectives as they pass, and disregarding any effects that invectives may have on their own self-esteem or that of the audience (2011: 139–40). What results, by Decena's description, is an inventory of performative-based "communicative practices with a polyvalent expressive potential in daily life" (2011: 142) that helps to define who Dominican same-sex identified men are, as sexual subjects in diaspora. Those definitions of subjects can only be understood in relation to the performative practices and normative discourses that make the "tacit subject" the regulatory ideal.

As Edelman explains, similar conditions help regulate a trans subject's decision to identify publicly as transgender or not to make a public identification and to maintain "stealth," that is, "[a] sustained non-disclosure of personal trans<sup>3</sup> history" (Edelman 2009: 168–9). Aaron, one of the transmen interviewed in Edelman's research, explained that he maintained stealth throughout his years as an undergraduate, but began to feel pressure to break stealth when applying to graduate programs and finally did so when he began his graduate school admission interviews. In the following passage, Aaron described how he explained this decision, and its significance, to graduate school representatives during the interview:

I ... informed them that I was telling them, not because I wanted to be an out transgender student but because ... they would want to know at the admissions interview anything major that might affect the incoming class and the student's life (and his/her ability to participate in the program) ... I also wanted to let them know so they would not feel hoodwinked and so that I could start my graduate career with the trust of my professor and let them know that I trusted them. (Edelman 2009: 176)

Aaron's decision to "break stealth" reflects a sense that reactions to his transgender status had placed him (performatively) within a field of vulnerability. Breaking stealth provided Aaron with means of building relationships of trust with graduate school faculty and colleagues. Unlike a coming-out narrative, what Aaron is describing resembles the stance of the tacit subject in Decena's description, with Aaron eager to ensure that those who need to know become fully informed.

In sum, while studies of queer performativity can be celebrations of linguistic creativity and playfulness, tracing the performative construction of subject positions like "alleged homosexual," "tacit subject," or "stealth" requires attention to regulatory process, to social and historical contexts, as well as the relevant details of sexuality. These are the entry points for queer analysis of discourse in such cases.

### 3.2 *Metaphoric formations*

The descriptive and deictic properties of metaphor also provide useful reference points for queer linguistic inquiry in such cases. Here, queer linguistics adopts the understanding of "metaphor" that is generally used in pragmatics theory, for example, "the phenomenon whereby we talk and, potentially, think about something in terms of something else" (Semino 2009: 11). But metaphors also designate relationships between the concepts through which these correspondences between things are designated (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 10). And because speakers and audiences use metaphors to create analogies and invoke contrasts, metaphors introduce discursive references to measurement, judgment and evaluation, and other features associated with the linguistics of affect and emotion (Martin and White 2005). Finally, relationships between metaphor and referent are not necessarily predetermined, requiring speakers and audiences to develop some degree of consensus in order for the metaphoric reference to be effective. Similar to deictic usage, metaphors create forms of solidarity and inclusion while also introducing boundary, distance, and hierarchy into conversation and narrative. Viewed as formations, rather than static relationships between item and referent, metaphors have considerable normative consequences.

Understandably, queer linguistics has paid much attention to metaphors of marginality, showing how depictions of marginal experience provide a basis for the ensuing discourses of analogy and contrast. Included here are discussions of "fat," whose metaphoric extensions are explored in Kulick and Meneley (2005) and in Stockton (2009), as well as recent work in critical disability studies/crip theory which interrogates discourses of naturalness and compulsory able-bodiedness associated with familiar metaphors of disability (McRurer 2006a, 2006b).

Metaphoric practices that are not associated with deeply marginal statuses also express similar messages about normativity and regulation. For example, while the

term “hot” has any number of associated meanings in general discourses on sexuality, “hot” claims a very specific referent within the comments that viewers of gay pornography post to gay porn-related chat rooms: in that context, “hot” indexes an individual whose male embodiment and personal behavior suggest a take-charge, authoritative stance. In fact, according to the viewer comments, a “hot” man is so “self-assured” that he can be party to any form of sexual or social activity without becoming a target of challenge or critique. These activities include participating in some other form of homoerotic incest or all-male gang-rape, being party to bodily mutilation and fetish practices, erotic partnering with female as well as male subjects (in some instances, within the same scene of a given film), and erotic partnering with the slim, muscular, ephebic young men commonly referred to as “twinks” in online and vernacular erotic discourse.

Importantly, a young man identified as a twink is not ordinarily identified as “hot” in online posting. However, viewers use the phrase “hot twink” to refer to a youth who is, for the moment, in close association with a man whose hotness has already been confirmed. So “hot” has a transitive property as well as a property of affiliation, and these properties allow viewers to apply references to “hotness” across boundaries of racial, ethnic, and national backgrounds, subject only to one constraint. Explicit references to the particulars of a subject’s race, ethnicity, or nationalism usually remain unmarked when a subject’s hotness is indicated. Thus viewers are likely to refer to an African American performer in a gay porn film as a “ripped, lean Black man,” or as a “hot stud,” but quite unlikely to describe him as a “hot Black man” (Leap 2009: 260–2). The normative properties of “hot” restrict that terrain to white subjects – or to subjects who must momentarily lose their racial identification in order to be admitted to that terrain. In this sense, “hot” is very similar to notions of “ability” that are the subject of critique in crip theory. Both statuses “hold out the promise of a substantive (but paradoxically always elusive) ideal (McRurer 2006a: 306), which is ultimately divisive and exclusionary.” In this sense, “hot” coincides closely with the discourses of white racism described by Jane Hill (2008). Here, however, metaphoric process integrates sexual as well as racial messages within the regulatory discourses of hierarchy and privilege.

Queer linguistics’s interest in discourse analysis focuses tightly on that integration of the sexual, the racial, and other social elements that enable and inscribe hierarchy and privilege in everyday experience. As the examples reviewed in this section have suggested, performative processes and metaphor provide useful entry points for such inquiry, while also offering reminders that performativity and metaphor themselves are inflected variably across sexual, racial, and other forms of social division.

#### **4 Queer Linguistics, Institutional Practice, and Global versus Local Voice**

Motschenbacher (2010a: 36) notes that queer interests in performativity focus primarily on sexual discourses found within “concrete interactional contexts.” In some cases, those concrete contexts extend beyond the immediate locale to include discursive

practices associated with institutional settings and discursive practices associated with global circulations and their local consequences.

#### ***4.1 Institutional practices: language and homophobia, revisited***

Earlier work on language and homophobia emphasized textual and social practices creating “words that wound” (Blumenfeld 1992); arguments that survive in campaigns intended to stamp out “hate speech” from the public domain. More recent discussions, particularly those aligned with a queer impulse, acknowledge that under the right circumstances, any text could express homophobic sentiments or be read by the audience as if it did (Leap 2010b: 182–3). Hence Peterson proposes examining the orders of discourse, not just the details of a specific discourse message, when trying to determine how forms of institutional practice – or discursive practices at any social level – “invite homophobic understandings” (2010: 259). And as he shows through a careful reading of a fundamentalist Christian activist group’s messages about homosexual parenting (Dailey 2001), homophobic sentiments can be expressed in such messages by invoking the appearance of scientific truth while avoiding the explicit trappings of hate speech.

As Peterson shows, Dailey (2001) mounts an attack on recent studies that “purport to show that children raised in gay and lesbian households fare no worse than those reared in traditional families.” The essay notes that much of this research is “compromised by methodological flaws” and is “driven by political agendas instead of an objective search for truth.” Moreover, “openly lesbian researchers sometimes conduct research with an interest in portraying homosexual parenting in a positive light.” Ordinarily, such “methodological defects” would be a “mark of substandard research” and cause such findings to be rejected, the paper suggests. But these deficiencies are in the interests of political correctness in these instances. Even so,

no amount of scholarly legerdemain contained in an accumulation of flawed studies can obscure the well-established and growing body of evidence showing that mothers and fathers provide unique and irreplaceable contributions to the raising of children. (Dailey 2001: 1)

Peterson finds no direct attacks on homosexual persons or on the idea of homosexual parenting, as such, in Dailey’s essay. The argument is framed instead by reference to an order of discourse based square within the domains of the scientific method. Studies of homosexual parenting are deemed defective, not because they endorse alternative forms of family life, but because their arguments do not measure up to the norms of scholarly performance purportedly held in high regard by the intellectual community. The appeal to this order of discourse shifts the burden of proof (and responsibility) away from Dailey and his associates. They are merely reporting the expectations that the scientific community has long advocated. The door is open for proponents of same-sex parenting to recast their arguments along the lines of objective truth. No homophobic exclusion is on display in the discursive practice outlined in Dailey’s argument. At the same time, arguments favoring homosexual parenting – as well as favoring those who create that argument and those who endorse it – are vilified without Dailey having to invoke any discourse of vilification.

## 4.2 *Global and local voice*

Decena (2011) and Hall (2011) show how forms of sexual discourse, already entrenched in a given locale, also become reconfigured under the influence of global circulation, and so may local associations with discourses of gender, race/ethnicity, class, as well as “tradition” vs. “modernity.” But existing forms of sexual discourse are not always disrupted under global influence. They may also gain additional legitimacy – as now appropriate forms of “traditional” reference – through their engagement with global practice. So what emerges under the tensions of local and global circulation are struggles over meanings and representations of sexuality, as well as (following Bakhtin 1981; Vološinov 1973: 23) struggles over the discursive practices through which those visions and representations are to be expressed – that is, a struggle over voice.

Understandably, queer linguistics projects are interested in struggles over (queer) voice that emerges in any setting. But those interests take on particular urgency in contexts of global circulation. To assume an unproblematic presence of queer voice in those settings is to ignore that global formations of inequality and difference engage local linguistic practices unpredictably (Leap 2010a: 569–71). Accordingly, queer linguistics projects ask: In what ways do queer voice(s) become attested within a specific global/local nexus? Under what conditions might queer voices emerge, and/or under what conditions might they be repressed?

I explored the significance of these questions as part of my studies of language, geography, and sexuality in Cape Town (South Africa)’s City Centre and black nearby townships during the period 1995 to 1999. During this time period, South Africa was making a transition from apartheid rule through reconciliation and into democratic government. That transition provided a background for my research project – and for the findings summarized below.

A team of same-sex identified women and men from the area’s black townships served as my research assistants for this project. Data-gathering included several activities intended to encourage respondents to talk about issues of self-description and location. Critical here was a map-making activity in which respondents drew “a map of the Cape Town area as a gay/lesbian city”<sup>4</sup> and then discussed the images of the city that their map displayed. I am going to review comments from two of these discussions below. As we will see, these discussions yielded personal stories that showed “that [they] fit in and how [they] fit in ...” to the local terrain, exactly in the sense of Modan’s (2007: 90) discussion of moral geography. In some cases respondents’ remarks confirmed that “[they] and the landscape are well matched” (Modan 2007: 90). In other cases, their comments indicated a placement within conditions that were characterized by conflict and dissidence. Often, respondents’ discussions of their maps included remarks in both categories.

One of the locations that showed up frequently on the township residents’ maps was the shebeen. Based in private homes, shebeens are recreational sites, offering their customers drinks and snacks, perhaps a dance floor and music, perhaps a pool table, but always space for sitting and talking. Shebeens served important social functions during apartheid, when access to recreational venues outside of the townships was often limited by racial restriction. Moreover, the costs of travel from township to City Centre, the entrance fees and per-drink charges in City Centre bars and pubs made those venues unaffordable even if they were accessible.

Financial conditions had not greatly changed for many township residents during the transition to democracy, and shebeens were still socially important locations. But conditions in some shebeens have always been socially unpredictable, particularly after several hours of recreational drinking. These conditions were creating problems for same-sex identified township residents, just as they did for women generally; travel to the City Centre provided an attractive alternative to these conditions, albeit an alternative with limited access, as just explained.

The women and men interviewed for this project discussed these conditions quite candidly when they talked about their claims to place within township sexual geography with me and with members of the research team. Here are two examples of those comments. Both speakers are same-sex identified women, each describing to me, in English, their efforts to respond pro-actively to shebeen-based dangers and safety.

Example (1): ... there is no response that we do to the straight people.

101 Theodora: Like, we go to [names one shebeen] as lesbians or as people. I'll go with my  
 102 friends, We go there and we relax. There are those people who are against us, but because  
 103 the owner knows us we don't have any funny reactions. We aren't against the other  
 104 people who are drinking there. It is just the straight people who have problems with us.  
 105 And it is a nice, cool, place, positive place, no problem. Then we leave [names shebeen],  
 106 and go straight through a grave yard we go to Nyanga East. In Nyanga East we go to  
 107 [name] Tavern. Even at [name] tavern, we have problems. We had problems with those  
 108 straight people. They are against us lesbians but there is no response that we do to the  
 109 straight people. We go and report to the owner of the place. If the owner doesn't like  
 110 what is happening, the owner will tell the straight people to leave or we lesbians will  
 111 leave that place. And we leave Nyanga East and we go to Crossroads.

Example (2): Your safety is in your hands.

201 Babs: OK. There is this one shebeen, it's not safe because there's a lot of skolies,  
 202 gangsters, children you know. But we discovered another one down the road here. And  
 203 that's like, you come in you buy your liquor, you sit down, you drink, you jive, and you  
 204 drink your liquor, finish it and you go home. Every kind of people is there. Your safety is  
 205 in your hands. It is up to you. Are you going to drink and be rude? Disturb other people's  
 206 company ? Because once I pinch you then it's like a heck of an argument. So you buy  
 207 your liquor and enjoy yourself, don't disturb other people. That is why I say, your safety  
 208 is in your hands.

Theodora (example [1]) was in her early twenties at the time of the interview. She grew up in the tribal homeland in the Eastern Cape and moved to the Cape Town area with her grandmother when she was eight years old. She moved away from the townships when she turned 18. During the work week, she lived in a small apartment in one of the Cape Town suburbs near to the office where she has a clerical job. She returned to the townships to see her friends on weekends.

Theodora's use of *lesbian* as a term of self-reference reflected a discursive practice that was widely attested in the townships during the 1990s. Lesbian (like gay) indicated a sense of sexuality located outside of the township, and closely connected to the City Centre and its bars, dance clubs, restaurants, book stores, cruising areas, and other institutions with lesbian/gay affiliation. In the late 1990s, the names of many of these institutions had US lesbian/gay associations: Broadway, Manhattan, the Bronx, Angels (as in Tony Kushner's theatrical hit *Angels in America*); the names of other institutions

underscored the global affiliation of the city center's lesbian/gay geography in other ways. In this sense, "lesbian" (like "gay") indexed an order of discourse (with attendant genres and styles described below) that locates the township female subject within "visions and representations" of female sexual sameness that had a global circulation and were in no sense dependent on the local constraints of the township setting.

Babs, the respondent speaking in example (2), was in her early thirties at the time of the interview. She grew up in the townships, moved into the suburbs in the early 1990s hoping "to get away" from everything, she explained. But she returned to the townships two years later because she felt more comfortable being in an all-black environment. Unlike Theodora, Babs did not identify in these township-centered comments as *lesbian* – or with any other single form of explicit reference. Babs does not even include herself and her friends within the category "every kind of people" (line 204 – compare to Theodora's "as lesbian or as people" in line 101).

Babs's usage was consistent with township-centered discursive practice, in this case, a linguistic etiquette which, similar to the southern Bantu discursive practices from which it is drawn, required an unmarked public discussion of the sexual and restricts explicit references to sexuality to a strictly private domain. In this point of etiquette, and Theodora's apparent violation of it, lay another indication of Theodora's affiliation with discourses circulating independently of township contexts rather than within them.

An additional set of evidence from these examples confirms this contrast in discursive positioning: Theodora used a first-person pronominal deixis consistently throughout her comments, referring to where "I" go with "my friends" or where "we go," while consistently citing "they" or "them" (third-person plural deixis) to indicate the ones who "are against us lesbians." Babs's use of person deixis was more decentered, for example, first person: "But we discovered another one down the road here ..." (line 202) shifts to second person "like, you come in you buy your liquor, you sit down, you drink ..." (203), to a first person–second person pairing "Because once I pinch you then it's like a heck of an argument" <sup>5</sup> (line 206), back to second person "So you buy your liquor and enjoy yourself" (line 206–7), and to a first-person evaluative voice paired with second-person subject: "That is why I say, your safety is in your hands" (line 208).

In the immediate case, the effects of these deictic shifts were confusing to me as listener (and researcher): Babs asked: "Are *you* going to drink and be rude" (line 205 – my emphasis) when she and her friends were the ones visiting the shebeen, not you, the listener. But when combined with the deictic shift, asking such questions invited the listener to join the speaker in the role of narrative agent in the indicated story line – something that Theodora's adherence to first-person reference precluded. In this sense, these properties of Babs's text can be described as double voicing (Bakhtin 1981), heightening the contrast with the monologic voice system that Theodora's remarks so consistently displayed.

Importantly, decentered person deixis and related features of double voicing are not unique to Babs's narrative style. Similar usage is attested in other narratives about sexuality and place collected for this project – but only in instances where, as here, township residents identify personal sexuality by invoking an unnamed, unmarked order of discourse. In that sense, the absence of a consistent person deixis coincides with the expectations of linguistic etiquette that preclude discussions of sexual meaning in terms of stable references and favor a more indirect, decentered approach to sexual reference. This indirect and decentered stance is very different from the stance associated with

external, globally circulating discursive practices allowing speakers to maintain single, stable references to sexual identity. Not surprisingly, the decentered person deixis did not appear in Theodora's narrative, or in any of the commentaries where township residents invoke the more concretely defined, and City Centre/globally affiliated lesbian order of discourse.

## 5 Conclusions

Motschenbacher has suggested that the "long term goal" of queer inquiry is the "reconceptualization of dominant discourses which shape gender and sexual identities." Such inquiry reflects a broader interest in "question[ing] normalized practices, including those that can be identified in academic research" (2010a: 11).

As the discussion in this chapter has shown, queer linguistics projects address this goal, and its broader interest, by focusing on four themes: (1) the normative authority associated with sexual discourses, (2) the performative and metaphoric expressions of normative authority in discursive practice, (3) normative authority and institutional practices; and (4) the tensions between global vs. local voices expressing normative authority in everyday life.

Those familiar with CDA will note similarities between some areas of queer linguistics and the CDA agenda. The fit is not identical, however. Queer linguistics is concerned with a specific type of social wrong, in the sense of Fairclough's argument. Yet the "dominant discourses which shape gender and sexual identities" and the "normative practices" through which studies of those practices are ordinarily conducted are embedded within complex systems of power and privilege; those systems will not be easily exposed, much less disrupted. To retreat into metadiscursive argument or into the dynamics of deep psychology in such instances is to ignore the material conditions of language, power, and privilege. A meaningful queer linguistics engages those conditions, and does not obscure them (Morrish and Leap 2007). As the examples reviewed in this chapter have suggested, CDA provides queer linguistics with an especially effective framework for such engagement.

## NOTES

- 1 My thanks to Deborah Tannen, Nikki Lane, David Peterson, and Brian Adams-Thies for their helpful editorial suggestions as I developed the discussion in this chapter.
- 2 No single English phrase captures the diversity of identities and statuses discussed in Decena's monograph; *same-sex identified men* is my choice of cover term for purposes of this discussion.
- 3 Broadly defined, "trans" refers to a subject who does not identify with the gender to which the subject was assigned at birth (Edelman 2009: 166).
- 4 "Gay" and "lesbian" were not categories widely used in township settings at the time of this research, and the maps of the Cape Town area that township residents produced vividly demonstrate how township sexual

sameness differed from the gay and lesbian life comfortably nested in the (white) City Centre (Leap 2005, 2008).

5 "Once I pinch you" acknowledges the disagreements that may ensue when people begin to be rude and disturb other people's company in a shebeen.

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# 32 Child Discourse

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## 0 Introduction: Placing Child Discourse in a Tradition

In the years since Ervin-Tripp and Mitchell-Kernan published the first book on child discourse (Ervin-Tripp and Mitchell-Kernan 1977), the field has moved through a series of changes. By turning to a discourse-centered approach, researchers have been able to shift focus, placing the child's learning process and productive pragmatic use at the center of their concern. The early discourse approach developed as a counter to traditional language acquisition studies, which centered on discovering how children could overcome the limitations of their incomplete grammatical system. Such studies made judgments of the child's ability to approximate to the adult norm based on direct elicitation in quasi-experimental settings. The impact of *Child Discourse* (Ervin-Tripp and Mitchell-Kernan 1977), along with *Developmental Pragmatics* (Ochs and Schieffelin 1979), began a movement toward situationally embedded activities as the domain of child language studies.

Researchers' interests began to turn away from exclusively psycholinguistic concerns with factors underlying the development of formal structures to concentrate on contextually situated learning. The discourse focus looked at children in naturally occurring settings and activities, and paid attention to their speech and communicative practice in everyday situations (Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz 1976). This research went beyond linguistic competence to what became known as the child's acquisition of communicative competence, which is seen as the knowledge that underlies socially appropriate speech. This approach was influenced by ethnography of communication (which saw communicative competence as a contrastive concept to the Chomskyan notion of linguistic competence), and involved theories of sociolinguistics, speech act usage, and conversational analysis. Although little conversational analytic work was done at that

time, by the late 1970s and 1980s there was a growing interest in children's conversational competence (McTear 1985; Ochs and Schieffelin 1979).

### ***0.1 Language socialization and the acquisition of discourse***

The ethnographic approach to acquisition served to refocus studies of children's acquisition to the problem of how language learners are able to be participating members of a social group by acquiring social and linguistic skills necessary for interaction. The term *language socialization* came to represent this new focus. As Schieffelin and Ochs (1986), who provided one of the first collections to address these concerns, commented: language socialization involves "both socialization through language and socialization to use language" (1986: 2). The focus on language-mediated interactions as the mechanism of production-reproduction is the unique contribution of language socialization to the core problem of how societies continue. In research taking this perspective (e.g., Heath 1983), both the sociocultural contexts of speaking, and the ways of speaking within specifically defined speech events of a social group or society, became primary research sites. In contrast to earlier studies of language acquisition, which focused on the acquisition of grammatical patterns, and later studies, which looked at children's speech acts, the new approach looked at speaking embedded in specific interactive situations and at the communicative, as distinct from linguistic, competence that these practices revealed (Hymes 1962).

By the mid-1980s the shift to language socialization was responsible for highlighting what it means for a young child to participate in meaningful language exchanges and to become an active agent in her or his own development, to which discourse competence was an essential key (Cook-Gumperz, Corsaro, and Streeck 1986). Children require both broad cultural knowledge about social relationships and an understanding of the social identities that define their position in a social world. Yet they also need to be active producers of the linguistic practices that construct these identities. While language socialization studies introduced the idea of studying child-centered communicative activities, interest in the later 1980s in peer speech redirected these concerns toward the child as a member of a culture that was different from that of the adult world (Corsaro 1985). As part of this rising interest in peers and peer cultures came a concern with the particular speech activities that children generate for themselves. Goodwin's (1990) *He-Said-She-Said* was an example. This ethnographic study looked at the role of children's disputes in organizing peer cultures. Within this peer context, the whole notion of conversational competence was shifted, such that children became the arbiters of their own conversational practices and rules of appropriateness.

### ***0.2 Changes in the field of child discourse studies: from 10 years ago to present-day studies***

Up to 10 years ago, when we reviewed the field of child discourse studies for the previous edition of the *Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, the field had evolved to include the following. First, with the influence of ethnography and language socialization approaches, child discourse studies had begun to focus on how using language and

acquiring language are part of what it means to become a member of a wider society (Ochs and Schieffelin 1984). In the past 10 years or so, as noted in Garrett and Baquedano-López's (2002) review, the field of language socialization studies has itself broadened to examine "language socialization processes as they unfold in institutional contexts and in a wide variety of linguistically and culturally heterogeneous settings characterized by bilingualism, multilingualism, code-switching, language shift, syncretism, and other phenomena associated with contact between languages and cultures" (2002: 339; see also Duranti, Ochs, and Schieffelin 2012; Ochs and Schieffelin 2012). As it has done so, child discourse studies have also broadened to encompass institutional settings and culturally heterogeneous settings. Second, child discourse studies began to address the question, what does it mean socially and psychologically for the child to have an ever-increasing linguistic control over her or his social environment and self-awareness? With a rising interest in Conversation Analysis (e.g., Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974) in the past 15 years or so, this question has become refocused somewhat. Rather than looking only for linguistic markers of children's developing reflexivity and self-awareness, child discourse studies now also look at speakers' multimodal *displays* of affect and attention in the moment, including those of the children themselves, and how these displays become integrated into (and themselves influence) unfolding sequences of adult-child interaction (e.g., Goodwin, Cekaite, and Goodwin 2012). Thirdly, child discourse studies had come to focus on sociolinguistic practices and on events that were meaningful from children's own point of view, such as games, teasing rituals, and pretend play routines. They explored children's developing competence in their own peer world. In the past 10 years or so, there has been a proliferation of studies of children socializing children, many of these in culturally and linguistically heterogeneous settings resulting from transnational movements and postcolonial societal changes (e.g., see Goodwin and Kyratzis 2007, 2012, 2014; Kyratzis 2004 for prior reviews).

With these issues in mind, we will review some of the most relevant studies in two main situational domains: adult-child discourse and child-child discourse. Under adult-child discourse, we review studies in pragmatics of family life, personhood, and self-identity (where space is made for the child to begin to reflect on her or his own experience), and morality in the talk of everyday life (such as dinner-table narratives, politeness routines, and other adult-child exchanges). Under child-child discourse, we review studies of disputes, teasing, and gossip events among older children and of pretend play among younger children.

## 1 Adult-Child Discourse

### 1.1 *The pragmatics of family life*

The world of the family, with its often subtle distinctions of power and authority, provides children with their earliest learning experiences of how verbal communication can affect interpersonal relationships. By participating in family life, children gain practical experience of family dynamics and how talk is used to control, to persuade, or to conceal real intentions. Family discourse, particularly at mealtimes and on other ceremonial occasions, provides the essential testing-ground where children hone their

skills as communicators. It is in the family group that children listen to and learn to construct narratives, tales that reflect past and future events (Heath 1983). And it is through the pragmatic conventions of daily conversations that the relative positioning of family members is constructed as part of daily discursive practice. In family discussion, children are able to observe how talk reflects, and at times constructs, status relationships of gender, age, and power by the ways people talk to each other and about each other. It is also through family discussion that children first become aware of relationships in a world beyond the family.

### 1.1.1 *Issues of power and control*

Ervin-Tripp, focusing on the pragmatic conventions of family talk, provides important insights into the linguistic means by which interpersonal relationships are negotiated through the daily activity of family talk. Her analysis concentrates specifically on the speech acts or activities, such as requests, directives, greetings and politeness expressions, jokes, and complaints that demonstrate control of one person over another. In a paper on "Language and power in the family," Ervin-Tripp, O'Connor, and Rosenberg (1984: 119) point out the need to distinguish between effective power, "the ability in a face-to-face interaction to get compliance from an addressee," and esteem, "as the right to receive verbal deference." In other words, there is not a direct correspondence between descriptors of status and everyday verbal behavior. Rather, by looking at everyday discourse, we become aware of the variety of factors of context, interactants, social position, and/or emotional involvement, as well as activity scene, that all enter into choices of verbal strategies, and on a situation-specific basis determine pragmatic choice. Ervin-Tripp, O'Connor, and Rosenberg (1984), for example, examine how these factors influence choice of request forms. Among other things, as Ervin-Tripp, Guo, and Lampert (1990) argue, there is a relationship between the degree of indirectness of the request, the esteem of the person to whom the request is made, the power of the speaker making the request, and the cost of the request. It is now well known that children will issue direct commands to younger children in play, while recognizing the need to be indirect to those older and with higher status in the play situation. However, such indirect strategies are not necessarily employed with parents, with whom the child has a greater emotional involvement, for parents in their turn insist at least on politeness markers as a symbol of nominal deference to their adult status (Gleason 1988; Ervin-Tripp 1976, 1977; Wootton 1997). Thus, pragmatic choices, in something as apparently simple as request forms, reveal the real complexities of the discourse knowledge necessary for children to become competent communicators in everyday settings.

The range and complexity of children's social knowledge is further revealed by the way they act out family roles in pretend play. In role-playing games, children reveal a range of understandings of the complexities of directives and requests and the power associations of different family and institutional roles (see Section 2.2.2).

The study of family directives has undergone a re-direction in the past 10 years to include a greater emphasis on the interactional unfolding of directive-response sequences, including a focus on the use of multimodal resources as well as a more active, agentive view of the child's role. Goodwin and Cekaite (2013), for example, examine multimodal transactions used to choreograph and negotiate the ongoing

progress of parent–child communicative projects (e.g., getting a child ready for bed). Such projects are “temporally anchored” and involve “the movement of bodies through social space and transitions from one activity to another” (2013: 122). Study of the interactional accomplishment of the directive–response sequence is essential; as argued by Goodwin and Cekaite, “acceptances of activity contracts and compliance with directives constitute only one possible option in response to a parental directive; children have available an arsenal of possible ways of non-complying, such as responding through bargaining, refusing, ignoring, and delaying” (2013: 130). The entire trajectory of action must be taken into account. Transitioning from one activity to another in the larger communicative project requires continuous monitoring, as well as participants’ display of “crucial information about the temporal and sequential organization of their joint participation in the current interaction” (2013: 122) through embodied as well as verbal means. These means can include gaze, touch, “reconfiguration of bodies into facing formations” (2013: 136), and “shepherding” (Cekaite 2010) the child through touch, all organized together to “align parent and child in an intercorporeal framework for mutual engagement” (Goodwin and Cekaite 2013: 136). Children’s embodied displays of affect provide crucial information about the temporal organization of their joint participation as seen in parents’ re-calibrations of directives in response to “children’s confrontational refusals”; these were quite different when compared to parental responses to children’s displays of “pleading mode” (Goodwin, Cekaite, and Goodwin 2012: 39). Through analyzing these temporally unfolding trajectories, the substantial agency which children exert can be seen; as noted by the authors, “such multimodally organized directive trajectories thus show clearly that emotion and stance are not simply add-ons to an isolated individual action, but constitute an inherent feature of temporally unfolding sequences of social interaction” (2012: 39); children’s emotion displays play a central role.

### 1.1.2 *Dinner-table talk*

A key site for looking at children’s complementary roles within the family is dinner-table conversations. Children’s discourse has been explored from the point of view of the participation frameworks of family routines and in particular looking at children’s speech strategies during dinner-table talk and narratives. Richard Watts (1991), in a study of power in family discourse, states that the distribution of power in families can be directly related to members’ success in verbal interaction, and in particular the ability to achieve and maintain the floor to complete any interactional goal. Blum-Kulka (1997), looking at family dinner-time narratives in Israeli and American middle-class families, shows that in families, children are less likely to master the more complex kinds of interruptions and only manage to gain the floor if it is conceded to them by adults. Moreover, there is cultural variation in how interruptions of another’s turn are interpreted, whether as involvement or as inappropriately taking the floor.

Ochs and Taylor (1995) documented children’s understanding of the linguistic marking of status and power relationships within families in a different way. They focused on the participation structure of dinner-time storytelling among family members. In white middle-class American families, mothers and children share reports of trouble and fathers take the role of problematizer, often negatively evaluating other members’

actions. This participation structure, in which children share, helps to construct power differentials within the family.

One way in which the child becomes aware of the social order is that it is modeled for them by the adult caretakers around them. Their place in the social ordering can differ cross-culturally or with other social-cultural factors, such as social class, family size, and birth order. As we explore in the next section, the child's identity is not a social given, not merely an expression of the social world into which she or he is born; rather it is realized through the interactive use of language.

## ***1.2 Personhood and self-identity: how children understand their own position in a social world***

How the child gains a realization of who she or he is as a person within a social and cultural world is a critical part of child discourse inquiry. Language is used by the child actively to construct a social identity and a self-awareness that comes with the self-reflexiveness made possible through the grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic resources of language.

Shatz (1994), in a diary study of her own grandson, Ricky's, language development through the first three years of his life, describes how, in acquiring a language, the child becomes a social person. She comments:

I argue that the toddler acquires in language a powerful tool for learning. By coupling language with self-reflectiveness and attention to internal states that have begun to manifest themselves, the toddler can learn in new ways about new things. She can get from others information not based on immediate experience, and she can compare her own experience of feelings and thoughts with statements of others about theirs. Thus, the world becomes many-faceted, beyond immediate experience and limited perspectives. (1994: 191)

One example describes Ricky's growing awareness of familial group membership. At age three, during a family gathering, he looked around the dinner table at everyone and said, "I think you call this a group" (Shatz 1994: 191). Statements like this one provide the child with a reflexive awareness of himself or herself as a person who is able to recognize the group and his or her own place within it. The child's growing ability to refer to his own mental states and those of others, to consider whether events are possible, and to contemplate non-immediate phenomena is assisted by a growing control over complex grammatical features like verb aspect and modality as well as use of complement verbs (Köymen and Kyratzis 2014). Shatz gives an example of Ricky's situationally embedded counterfactuals. He is able to say to his grandmother when he surprises her for a second morning without his pajamas, "You thought they was wet," as they had been the previous morning. Although this is a fairly simple utterance, Ricky's joke depended on his ability to recognize his grandmother's perspective as different from his own, and only a detailed discourse study would be able to capture such events and so account for the child's growing competence.

In a similar vein, Budwig (1990), looking at the development of agentive causality and the use of self-reference forms, points out that it is only by focusing on discursive

practice that the real range of children's usage can be appreciated. In a detailed study of six different children's developmentally changing uses of self-reference forms between two and three years of age, Budwig discovers a major difference in orientation between children who habitually use only first-person reference pronouns ("I") and those who in similar situations use two different forms, "I" and "me-my." These choices did not vary with age or gender but rather reflect what could be considered a personal difference in orientation to the world, as either experiencers/reflectors-on-reality or as actors-on-reality. The child's sense of herself or himself as a reflective person able to distinguish her or his own feelings and thoughts from others is illustrated by many of the chapters in Nelson's (1989) edited volume *Narratives from the Crib*. In this volume, researchers analyze the bedtime monologues of a two- to three-year-old child, Emily. They demonstrate how, through her night-time retellings of the day's events to herself, the little girl learns to come to terms with her feelings and her reactions to the events surrounding the arrival of her new baby brother. At the same time, she gains awareness of herself as a separate person within the nexus of her family. By examining how narratives become linguistically and pragmatically more complex, these studies provide a basis for the understanding of the relations between a growing narrative and linguistic skill and the development of the sense of personhood.

In the past 10 years, child discourse studies have focused not only on linguistic markers of self- or other-awareness, but also on multimodal displays of such awareness (e.g., children's differentiated action responses to different "looks" from caregivers in response to their sanctionable actions in a US daycare setting, Kidwell 2005). They have also looked at non-Western societies where children are socialized to learn through participating and keenly observing, often as non-addressed participants, in ongoing multi-party community activities (Rogoff 2003). For example, although Zinacantec Mayan infants are positioned as overhearers, being faced outward toward a third party and spoken for by adults, they nonetheless show their developing participant roles through various embodied means (de León 2012). Current research looks at the moment-to-moment processes by which children in a diversity of cultural settings enact participant roles of different kinds and influence trajectories of interaction through their actions and multimodal displays of affect and attention.

### 1.3 *Talk and the morality of everyday life*

As the growing child engages others within a complex set of relationships, issues of right and wrong arise. What actions mean to others, whether hurtful or supportive, and what others mean by their words and deeds, become the subject of both adult-child and peer exchanges. It is through such everyday conversations that children gain knowledge of the fabric of everyday morality, that is, of how the social world works. Talk about emotions, caring for others' feelings, recognizing your own feelings, and how to manage your body and self in socially appropriate ways all have culturally different and conventionally expected ways of expression. Such cultural differences in ways of talking about these matters range from formulaic expressions of regret for such minor infringements as bodily noises (Clancy 1986), through sanctions against overtly expressing annoyance (Briggs 1992; Scollon and Scollon 1981), through expressions of care showing concern for others and responsibility for younger siblings and other

children (as Schieffelin 1990 shows with the Kaluli), to children's use of respectful forms of address which show the obligations not only of caring for others (Nakamura 2001), but of paying respect across generations (Ochs 1988; Schieffelin 1990; Watson-Gegeo and Gegeo 1986).

### 1.3.1 *Rules and routines: moral practices in everyday social situations*

Child discourse studies focusing on moral socialization illustrate how morality is not a matter of learning to match behavior to abstract rules or principles, but rather "is embedded in and is an outcome of everyday family practices" (Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik 2007: 5) and awareness of the local possibilities for actions that follow in response to sequences of talk. That is, it is through situated action that the child becomes aware of the social ordering of relationships and grows to realize the obligations these entail (Wootton 1997). It is through participation in mundane communicative encounters that children become everyday moralists, who, by paying attention to the details of interactions and talk, hold others to the expected outcomes of what has been said.

Two large studies in the United States, one situated in Los Angeles and the other in Georgetown (see edited collections of resulting studies in Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik 2007, 2013; Tannen and Goodwin 2006), the former of these with satellite counterparts in Italy and Sweden, have focused on socialization in middle-class families in which both parents work. As noted in a review by Amy Paugh (2008), these studies illuminate "the process of socialization and how children acquire ideologies, values, and ways of being through everyday social interaction with working parents," specifically, how they acquire a "middle-class habitus with particular conceptions of work, achievement, independence, and autonomy" (2008: 105). These studies examine family interaction and the negotiation of morality in mundane everyday routines within working families such as getting children ready for bed, asking them to clean their rooms, driving them to church or school, and taking them on mundane family walks and excursions (Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik 2007). For example, Aronsson and Cekaite (2011), working in Sweden, document how families repeatedly engage in negotiating "activity contracts," which are "spoken agreements about future compliance that make children morally accountable for their future actions" (2011: 139). What is key in these negotiations and what enables them to constitute "modern childhood, marked by negotiations and self-regulation" (2011: 150), is how they are extended over time, providing a space for children to have agency, at points ratifying the end-goal and having to give accounts when they delay its execution.

This is evident in Wingard's (2006) study, which finds that parents' first mentions of homework after school in dual-earner families are strategically positioned and set the stage for later parent-child negotiations of homework and other evening family routines (2006: 592). This is also evident in Sterponi's (2003) data of Italian middle-class family mealtime conversations, in which children are requested by other family members to provide an account for behaviors indexed as sanctionable, thereby being "positioned as moral agents, responsible for their actions and at the same time they are solicited to enact their moral agency" (2003: 95).

In mundane family interactions, children can also be socialized to different orientations toward acquiring knowledge. For example, in a sequence in which a father

attempted to assist his daughter in doing her homework described by C. Goodwin (2007), the daughter consistently refused to align her body in a way which would allow the father to assist her. He eventually evaluated her behavior as not being “nice.” However, when he returned later, the two co-constructed a very different “epistemic alignment” toward one another through their bodily positions and other multimodal means. Goodwin concludes that this sequence illustrates a “range of different kinds of epistemic, moral and affective stances” that are made possible through different forms of embodied participation frameworks, as well as how these stances and participation frameworks function as crucial sites “for the constitution of human action, cognition, and moral alignment” (2007: 53, 66). M. H. Goodwin (2007b) illustrates how a particular moral stance to knowledge acquisition, the enjoyable pursuit of knowledge, can be socialized through arranging “forms of participant frameworks and positive affect” that “invite extensive and joyful elaboration of meanings” (2007b: 107). These studies illustrate how “participants constitute themselves as particular kinds of social and moral actors in the midst of mundane activities” (C. Goodwin 2007: 53), with children playing an active role in contesting how participation in these activities should be organized.

Studies of how children acquire a middle-class- and American or Western European-based ethos toward household responsibility and knowledge acquisition can be contrasted with studies which have been conducted in other societies. Regarding the development of family responsibility, Ochs and Izquierido (2009) find differences between the socialization of middle-class Los Angeles children and the socialization of children of the Matsigenka of the Peruvian Amazon and of Samoans living on the island of Upolu. For many middle-class Los Angeles children, “parents’ inconsistent assignment and follow-through of children’s practical activities is not conducive to children’s habituation of self-reliance and awareness of and responsiveness to needs of others” (2009: 408). In contrast, “Samoan and Matsigenka children from infancy are apprenticed ... into being self-reliant and helpful, to doing things at once on their own and cooperatively” (2009: 407). Regarding knowledge acquisition, Duranti and Ochs (1997) document how Samoan-American caregivers in California “may produce a syncretic blend [of US and traditional Western Samoan] teaching strategies” (1997: 31) as they coordinate homework with other household task activities. The Western Samoan teaching strategies are based on “repeated demonstration of an activity, prompting, and action imperatives” (1997: 13), while the American strategies are more child-centered.

To summarize, the studies in this section illustrate how participants’ forms of attention and participation during mundane daily activities of family life and knowledge acquisition can enact particular forms of “ethos” (Goodwin, Cekaite, and Goodwin 2012: 26) and constitute particular types of moral actors (C. Goodwin 2007), with displays of stance and emotion “constitut[ing] an inherent feature of temporally unfolding sequences of social interaction” (Goodwin, Cekaite, and Goodwin 2012: 39) and with children playing an active role. These forms can be culture specific or even family specific. Moreover, as Baquedano-López and Mangual Figueroa (2012) remind us, and as the work of Duranti and Ochs (1997) and other researchers documents, these “socializing interactions” help constitute and “occurred in a larger, complex societal context” (Baquedano-López and Mangual Figueroa 2012: 542, 543), for example, “modern childhood” (Aronsson and Cekaite 2011) in a particular national and regional context, or growing up in a community influenced by specific migration processes.

### 1.3.2 *Expressing feelings and politeness*

A critical aspect of moral learning is emotional socialization. Children develop the capacity to recognize the consequences of actions for their own and others' feelings, and learn to express these feelings in an accepted form. Mothers' and other caretakers' expressions of love, joy, annoyance, displeasure, concern, and admonishment provide their children with moral insight into human relations and how these are encoded in a discourse of feeling (e.g., Clancy 1986).

In enacting family relationships during peer play, children reveal and often over-communicate mothers' or fathers' caring talk by scolding, shouting, cajoling, and other expressions of concern for the correct behavior of others. In this way, what Cook-Gumperz (1995) has called "the discourse of mothering" not only reproduces a version of the activity but enables the child to practice the situational enactment of relationships through talk. The process of acquisition here is somewhat similar to that illustrated in earlier grammar acquisition studies, namely an overgeneralization followed by a progressive refinement of patterns governing both grammar and a discourse of feeling (Ochs 1988; Duranti 1992; Kulick and Schieffelin 2004). Schieffelin (1990) goes further in her ethnographic study of the Kaluli children by showing how children are socialized into the performance of the relationship of talk in action, by making appropriate voicing and prosody to communicate concern. That is, as Schieffelin and Ochs (1986) argue, it is not only through the correct formulaic expressions and the appropriate lexical and syntactic forms that emotion is conveyed, but through correct performance in which children may learn to display an appropriate understanding or stance vis-à-vis their own and others' actions. Clancy (1986) for example, documents how young Japanese children are socialized to enact a culturally appropriate stance of solicitousness toward a guest's needs through mothers' expressions of fear, alarm, and urgency at the child's failure to meet such needs. In a similar vein, Heath (1983) in the Trackton study and Miller (1982) in south Baltimore have shown how many working-class mothers encourage their children to engage in challenging verbal routines, even with adults, which reveal their ability to be resilient in a difficult public world. These community-based displays of toughness can be problematic for children in the multi-community-based context of school and preschool (Corsaro and Rosier 1992). In teasing routines, child and adult enter into a mutual verbal sparring exchange. These are part of a cultural nexus of challenge that enables children to rehearse the skills deemed necessary by adults to show resilience to life's adversities (Eisenberg 1986; Miller 1982). Politeness strategies constitute an alternative to verbal challenges, and may be seen as a way to avoid offense and anticipate or deflect possible difficulties (Brown and Levinson 1987). And as Brown (1993) has shown in a traditional Highland Chiapas village, women in particular engage in complex strategies such as hedging and the use of indirectness markers to manage their relations with others, and these strategies become part of young women's talk.

Although family interactions have historically been viewed as the main site of children's emotion socialization, as language socialization research has shifted its focus to include language socialization processes in institutional settings (Garrett and Baquedano-Lopez 2002), child discourse studies have also shifted to focus on how children are socialized to appropriate moral conduct and affect displays in classrooms. These studies have tended to focus more than in the past on analyses of the multimodal

resources (e.g., prosody; visible, embodied displays; eye gaze) used by participants. As observed by Moore (2008) in her analysis of “video recordings of Qur’anic school interaction” by which “Fulbe children are socialized into Qur’anic orality and literacy” (2008: 643), positioning of the body was very important to, for example, “learning to show and feel submission to God’s Word” (2008: 660). Burdelski (2010) studying preschool classrooms in Japan reported observing “politeness routines as embodied social action” (2010: 1606), for example, teachers providing tactile guidance and aligning children’s bodies so that they would make offers and bow to one another in grateful acceptance. These displays were “important means through which children were taught to display kindness, empathy, and other-oriented behaviors” (2010: 1606).

Cekaite (2012) followed the socializing interactions between teachers and a cultural “novice” (a Somali student) in a Swedish first-grade classroom as the student was engaged in literacy and math tasks. The student’s embodied affective stances of non-compliance/resistance, as well as the teachers’ (and peers’) interpretations, were all “consequential for the emergence of her ‘bad subject’, that is, her socioculturally problematic identity” (2012: 641) and were framed against a “backdrop” of “wider sociocultural ideologies, linking feeling norms to the moral work ethic” (2012: 654). In a study of very young children (toddlers aged 26–34 months) enrolled in daycare centers in California (Kyratzis 2009), children were socialized to “use your words,” being prompted with statements such as “are you saying you don’t like that?” so that peers could be made aware/respectful of their feelings. Children appropriated these caregiver-modeled statements of feeling (e.g., “I say I don’t want him do it”), but sometimes in ways that expressed negative stances toward their peers (Köymen and Kyratzis 2014), thereby subverting the school ideology. Johnson (2014), in her study of children’s corrections in a peer collaborative reading activity in a kindergarten classroom, similarly showed how children mobilize peer-based forms of social control and affect display to organize their own “learning environments” in classrooms.

These studies illustrate how children are socialized to culturally appropriate embodied affect displays in families and classrooms, and also the agency with which children take up and sometimes subvert the adult-modeled stance displays.

### 1.3.3 *Narrative accounts as everyday morality: narrative form and topic inclusion*

One of the key discourse domains in which everyday morality is most apparent are personal narratives used to justify actions, to recall past events, or to express opinions about others. Blum-Kulka (1997), in comparing family dinner-table talk, found that Israeli and American middle-class families differed in the extent to which they allowed the child to be the focus of the storytelling attention, and the extent to which parents stressed that “tall tales” or exaggerations were inappropriate. In contrast, working-class families, such as the Trackton African American working-class community that Heath (1983) studied, and the white working-class families studied by Miller (1982), valued exaggerations as a display of linguistic competence (smart talk). It is just such mismatches in the expectations about discourse practices between the home and mainstream school community that can be a source of difficulty for young children (Michaels 1991).

As Gee (1985) and Michaels (1986), among others, have shown, adults take up topics that children offer in conversation and use these to guide children toward telling stories that display a literate standard, having a beginning, a middle of complicating actions, and a highlighted ending. Discourse analysis focuses on the ways in which children give narrative sequencing to events, provide coherence to the actions in the story, and are able to attribute motives to themselves and others, as well as provide an emotional evaluation. In this way, recent study of narratives, building on Heath's (1983) original point in "Ways with Words: Language, Life, and Work in Communities and Classrooms," shows that narratives become not only a means of developing a literate sense of story, but also a means of knowing how to express feelings and thoughts in culturally acceptable ways. In this way, narrative experiences help to develop a moral sensibility about the consequences of actions for both the self and others.

In the past 10 years, narrative research using the language socialization paradigm has expanded to focus on children growing up in transnational and postcolonial settings and also to include institutional settings (Garrett and Baquedano-López 2002). For example, Fader (2001) documents how literacy practices both at home and in segregated Hasidic girls' and boys' schools in a Hasidic community in Brooklyn reinforce "gender differences at the same time that they strengthen communal borders, which separate Hasidim from other Jews and gentiles" (2001: 278). Boys "entering the first grade spend the entire day acquiring literacy in liturgical Hebrew and Yiddish and studying religious texts, all in Yiddish" (2001: 267). Girls on the other hand, study both Yiddish and English literacy in first grade and beyond; loss of Yiddish competency is viewed as more acceptable for girls, as part of their being socialized to "women's domain of responsibility," that is, "creating a home environment to support their husbands' and sons' Torah study" (2001: 266) and dealing with the local Brooklyn community (266). Baquedano-López (1997) documents how identities were socialized through narrative practices during two *doctrina* (religion) and catechism classes at a Catholic parish in Los Angeles which was moving toward English-only instruction and toward eliminating its *doctrina* classes. Baquedano-López observed that the teacher of the Spanish-medium *doctrina* class engaged in various forms of tense-aspect marking and collaborative narration practices with her students that "interactionally reaffirm[ed] membership in a particular Latino community" (1997: 43). In the English-medium catechism class, the teacher engaged in practices "where the opportunities to create a collective identity as Mexican are limited and where homogenizing and generic discourses pervade" (1997: 42). These studies document how narrative and literacy practices involving children can be both "embedded in and constitutive of larger social conditions" (Ochs and Schieffelin 2012: 17).

## 2 Child-Child Discourse

### 2.1 *The language of children as peers*

As noted, Child Discourse (Ervin-Tripp and Mitchell-Kernan 1977) along with Developmental Pragmatics (Ochs and Schieffelin 1979) began a new movement in child

language research, one of looking at situationally embedded activities organized by children themselves as the domain of child language studies and studies of the acquisition of communicative competence. Several studies noted the ingenuity of children in making use of repetition, sound play, and other aspects of “attuned poetic performance” (Cekaite *et al.* 2014: 7; de León 2007; Garvey 1977) in their play and games. However, as described by Schieffelin and Ochs (1996), in addition to looking at “children’s skill to use language,” the research began to focus on “relating children’s knowledge and performance to the social and cultural structures ..., and ideologies that give meaning and identity to a community” (1996: 252), in this case, to children’s “own peer- [or sibling-kin] group communities” (Goodwin and Kyratzis 2012: 381). Several influential *ethnographic* studies of children’s peer group interactions (e.g., Corsaro 1985; Eckert 1987; Eder 1995; Goodwin 1980, 1990, 2006; Rampton 1995; Thorne 1993) began to be conducted in this vein and illustrated how groups of children and teens in neighborhoods, school yards, and classrooms used social practices within such genres as arguments, songs, rhymes, pretend play, gossip stories, teasing, ritual abuse, jokes, and riddles, and also sanctioning of one another (Goodwin 2006: 22–3; Opie and Opie 1959), to negotiate belonging, inclusion, shared norms and meaning, and social hierarchy within the peer group. Many additional ethnographic studies followed, especially from the 1990s onward.

Many studies of older children, middle school-aged and beyond, have looked at disputes, teasing, and gossip events among peers, as these provide a means for children to negotiate alignments and hierarchy within the peer group. Younger children use pretend play and song games as venues to negotiate inclusion and peer group hierarchy. Studies of childrens’ and teens’ disputes, teasing, gossip stories, song games, and pretend play have been reviewed recently in two large literature reviews (Goodwin and Kyratzis 2012, 2014), to which the reader is referred. However, we present a review of a small number of these studies here, and then draw some conclusions about what recent child discourse research tells us about how children participate in the negotiation of norms and moral order across both adult–child and child–child interactions.

## 2.2 *Peer moral talk: how norms of the peer group are co-constructed through gossip, teasing, pretend play, and conflict talk*

### 2.2.1 *Disputes, teasing, and gossip events among older peers*

As children negotiate how they stand in relationship to one another during peer disputes, teasing, and gossip events, they make assessments (Goodwin 2007a; Goodwin and Goodwin 1987) and “take up either common or divergent stances toward the target” (Goodwin and Kyratzis 2012: 366). Through doing so, they “reference the peer group’s notion of culturally appropriate moral behavior” (Goodwin 2007a; Goodwin and Kyratzis 2012: 367; Goodwin and Kyratzis 2014). As Marjorie Goodwin has shown in the *He-Said-She-Said* accounts of children’s peer group talk (1990), members of friendship groups rely on the gossip chain to convey disapproval of others’ actions. She shows how ritualized routines become a uniquely effective way for one girl’s discontent with

the actions of another to involve the entire group in repeating or denying their participation in the gossip chain.

Through conflict and gossip talk, peers consolidate the views of the group (Eckert 1993: 40). Eckert's (1993) study, "Cooperative Competition in Adolescent 'Girl Talk,'" based on her two-and-a-half-year ethnography, documented how, in order to position themselves as having "done well" (1993: 37) in the competitive heterosexual marketplace, high-school girls portrayed themselves as having boyfriends, a social network, and "information sources" (1993: 40), as well as skill in building group consensus. In her ethnographic study following cohorts of children from fifth through seventh grades in California elementary schools, Eckert (2011) found that girls who were members of "the [popular] crowd" differentiated themselves through engaging in "flamboyant performances" (91) and *negotiations* of pairings. "Through constant discussion, negotiation, evaluation, and display, the crowd members maintain control of the whole range of norms that others can only have indirect access to" (2011: 90).

Those peer group members who construct versions of events to which the peer group ascribes are positioned more highly in the local peer group hierarchy (Goodwin and Kyratzis 2012, 2014). Evaldsson (2002) observed that, among a multi-ethnic peer group of boys in Sweden, those in the peer group who, during gossip events, displayed "proficiency in repeatedly (a) depicting the deviant character of others and (b) soliciting audience support" (219), as through making ascriptions of other boys as having cried or acted cowardly (see also Goodwin 1990), legitimated their power over other boys. Boys' caricatures of other boys allow group members to differentiate themselves and "manage those aspects of 'heterosexual attraction' and 'desire' that, from their perspectives, need to be negotiated in order to successfully appear mature" (Korobov and Bamberg 2004: 486).

Displaying claims to goods and knowledge and opposing others' claims to these plays a role in negotiating the peer group's social organization. In an adolescent friendship group of nerd girls, displays of intelligence were central to the negotiation of identity, and therefore members' claims to knowledge were often disputed (Bucholtz 2011). Lunchtime discussions among a popular clique of girls at a progressive American elementary school frequently provided opportunities for group members to "differentiate themselves in terms of their access to activities and privileges of the upper middle class" (Goodwin 2006: 172). Girls in inner-city Naples in an ethnographic study conducted by Loyd (2012) engaged in rhetorical practices of *appiccearse* (argumentation) to display "bravata," that is, "courage, boldness, and intimidation" (2012: 333) and also to "influence others' behaviors and attitudes and establish a social hierarchy" (2012: 333). One, among many, criteria that the girls used to evaluate one another was in terms of being desirable to boys and not acting like them. However, children in the "Quartieri Spagnoli" setting followed by Loyd, as well as in many other transnational and post-colonial settings in studies reviewed by Goodwin and Kyratzis (2007, 2012, 2014), could draw upon *multiple* identity categories, for example "of race, language, social class" (Goodwin and Kyratzis 2014: 522) for differentiating participants, and did not limit themselves to exploiting only gender categories.

Teasing is another genre of competitive interaction that can be used to negotiate peer group hierarchies and norms. Teasing can be differentiated from another practice that occurs within peer group gossip activity, ridicule (Eder 1995; Evaldsson 2007; Goodwin 2006). In teasing and other forms of "playful jabbing" (Loyd 2012: 330) and

verbal competition, a criticism, threat, or insult is delivered to the addressee but in a relatively safe venue that blurs the boundary between *realis* and *irrealis* and allows tensions to be expressed and managed within the group (Eder 1993, 1995; Rampton 1995; Loyd 2012; Reynolds 2007; Tetreault 2009). In US girls' peer groups, teasing can be a way of managing jealousy and bringing out differences about sensitive topics in the peer group short of direct confrontation (Eder 1991, 1993, 1995). Teasing can draw upon stereotypes (e.g., of race and gender) to differentiate participants. Reynolds (2007) following the practices of "chingarse," or teasing of a sibling-kin network of boys in a Kaqchikel-Spanish bilingual Mayan community in Guatemala observed the boys drawing upon such stereotypes as they format tied (Goodwin 1990) to one another's uses of a "cheeky greeting" that they had coined from a military salute and the greeting "Buenos días" for use as an improvised insult. Teasing and other playful genres of verbal competition demonstrate speakers' verbal skill and establish the group's social organization (Goodwin and Kyratzis 2012, 2014; Kyratzis 2004). They provide a relatively safe space for children and teens to work out tensions between "circulating discourses" of citizenship and responsibilities to peers, family, and community (Reynolds 2013: 515).

### 2.2.2 *Pretend play in young children*

Those interested in how *younger* children negotiate norms and hierarchy of the peer group have focused on studies of pretend play, song games (Minks 2013), and other genres. There are several dimensions of pretend play that provide children with resources for negotiating social and moral order within the peer group (Goodwin and Kyratzis 2007, 2012, 2014). First, assignment to membership categories (Sacks 1995) oriented to in play (e.g., roles within a family or newsreporter team) can be used as a basis for determining who is in or out of the play (Butler and Weatherall 2006; Kyratzis 2007) or whose entry can be postponed (Evaldsson and Tellgren 2009; Sheldon 1996). Moreover, there is hierarchy in pretend play roles; hence "negotiating who is to be included in the most valued roles is an important feature of social organization" (Goodwin 1990: 133). Third, there are characteristic ways of speaking and voicing associated with different roles which can differentiate participants. Directives may be a primary feature that children attend to in negotiating hierarchy through pretend play (Goodwin 1990; see also Corsaro 1985; Ervin-Tripp 1982, 1996; Mitchell-Kernan and Kernan 1977). Mothers can be portrayed as speaking with bald directives, and older children and those projecting a leadership role can be observed taking on (or being allocated) this role and using those forms (Goodwin 1990, Griswold 2007; Kyratzis 2007; Kyratzis, Mark, and Wade 2001). In addition to directive forms, there are other features that mark relative positions among roles. In register and role-play, "the father and doctor display their authority with *well* as a marker of being in charge, as well as technical vocabulary" (Ervin-Tripp 1996: 34). Newsreporters, fathers, and doctors are portrayed as highly authoritative through discourse markers and claims to having the right to change a scene or topic or deliver bad news, as in a child drawing on newsreporter register and saying "Well, that's the end of our news for today" to curtail a peer's turn as newsreporter (Kyratzis 2007; see also Andersen 1990; Ervin-Tripp 1996; and Hoyle 1998; see also chapters in Cekaite *et al.* 2014).

In addition to providing resources for negotiating power asymmetries, pretend play provides children with resources for making commentary on the adult world (Kyratzis 2004, 2007), enabling children to not only reproduce adult culture but interpret (Corsaro and Rosier 1992) and even challenge and change it through language practices within the peer group (for a review of several studies, see Goodwin and Kyratzis 2012, 2014). For example, as they explore powerful adult roles, privileged to speak with particular markers of authority, children give their renditions of which characters or social categories (e.g., male or female, child or parent) can claim the right to use those forms (de León 2007; Kyratzis 2004, 2007, 2010; Mitchell-Kernan and Kernan 1977; Paugh 2012; Schieffelin 2003). This extends to children negotiating claims to displays of affect in the course of their exploration of adult roles (e.g., parent, mother, father, child) or gender roles in pretend play (Aronsson and Thorell 1999; Cook-Gumperz 1995, 2001; Cook-Gumperz and Szymanski 2001; Kyratzis 2001, 2007; Kyratzis and Guo 2001; Nakamura 2001). In multilingual communities, children can draw (or subvert existing) domain or role associations in their play for the languages or sets of language resources which are in contact in their communities (Paugh 2005, 2012; Schieffelin 2003). As they do so, they can either reproduce or transform dominant societal discourses (e.g., Kyratzis 2010; Kyratzis, Reynolds, and Evaldsson 2010; García-Sánchez 2010; Minks 2013; Paugh 2012; Schieffelin 2003; for reviews of studies on this topic, see Goodwin and Kyratzis 2012, 2014).

In the past 10 years, child peer discourse research has focused more than ever before on children's and teens' use of genres of verbal competition, humor, and pretend play in transnational and postcolonial settings (e.g., Evaldsson and Cekaite 2010; García-Sánchez 2010; Kyratzis 2010; Kyratzis, Reynolds, and Evaldsson 2010; Minks 2013; Paugh 2012; Schieffelin 2003; Rampton 1995; Tarım and Kyratzis 2012; Zentella 1997; see Kyratzis 2004; Goodwin and Kyratzis 2007, 2012, 2014 for prior reviews). Reviewing several studies in this area, Goodwin and Kyratzis (2014) conclude that through these practices, "children and teens in everyday peer and sibling-kin group interactions play with and lay claim to social spaces, discourses, and subjectivities in ways that alternatively resist and reproduce dominant discourses that marginalize their local communities (e.g., diaspora communities in transnational societies, indigenous communities in postcolonial societies)" (Goodwin and Kyratzis 2014: 521).

### 3 Conclusion

Ten years ago, we concluded our review of child discourse studies for the previous edition of the *Handbook of Discourse Analysis* by characterizing the state of the field as follows:

As we have shown in the trajectory of themes of the chapter, increasingly, children get a sense of themselves in a wider social world ... Developmentally, children move from having to fit into the family discourse space and participant roles and identities as adults construct them in pragmatics of family life, then begin to make a space for reflecting and thinking about social worlds in personhood, and then later begin to organize others as well as themselves, in terms of social organization and morality, in peer talk ... In other words, our purpose has been to show how the field of child

discourse studies has shifted focus onto children as active constructors of their world within the domains of adult–child and peer discourse (606).

In the past 10 years, the following themes have been added to the research. First, while the influence of language socialization could be seen at that time in the researchers' focus on children's lives in a sociocultural context, in the past 10 years or so, the field of language socialization studies, and with it child discourse studies, have both broadened to examine "language socialization processes as they unfold in institutional contexts and in a wide variety of linguistically and culturally heterogeneous settings" (Garrett and Baquedano-López 2002: 339). Second, with the rising interest in Conversation Analysis in the past 15 years or so, the examination of child discourse has become refocused somewhat to look at longer trajectories of action, for example, directive–response sequences (Goodwin and Cekaite 2013), and in so doing, to attribute greater agency to children. Child discourse studies now look at how a place is made for children to exert agency as through activity contracts (e.g., Aronsson and Cekaite 2011), at how multimodal and embodied *displays* of affect and attention in the moment, including those of the children themselves, become occasioned during (and themselves influence) unfolding sequences of adult–child interaction (e.g., C. Goodwin 2007; Goodwin, Cekaite, and Goodwin 2012), as well as at how these displays become part of the changing, unfolding, emerging sociocultural contexts that embed the children's interactions in families as well as in classrooms. Thirdly, child discourse studies had come to focus on sociolinguistic practices and on speech events that were meaningful from children's own point of view, such as peer gossip, teasing, and pretend play routines, exploring children's developing competence in their own peer world. In the past 10 years or so, there has been a proliferation of studies of children socializing children, many of these in culturally and linguistically heterogeneous settings resulting from transnational movements and postcolonial societal changes (e.g., see Goodwin and Kyratzis 2007, 2012, 2014 for prior reviews). These studies illustrate how children negotiate a broad range of identity categories, "including but not limited to gender, ethnicity, language, social class, age, and friendship" (Goodwin and Kyratzis 2014: 522) as they act to "position one another in the local social group" (Goodwin and Kyratzis 2012: 367). In these interactions, children's peer communicative practices have been found to have potential to reproduce adult culture but to also "reshape social and political formations" (Minks 2013: 180; see also Paugh 2012; Kyratzis 2010; Kyratzis, Reynolds, and Evaldsson 2010; Goodwin and Kyratzis 2012, 2014; Schieffelin 2003). In all these ways, modern-day studies of child discourse attribute still greater agency to children.

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# 33 Discourse and Aging

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HEIDI E. HAMILTON AND  
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Aging is still, in a general sense, the unwritten chapter of sociolinguistics.  
(J. Coupland 2009a: 850)

## 0 Introduction

Consider Ruth Watkins, Gerald Miller, and Viola Green. Dr. Watkins is a single, 83-year-old retired university administrator. Her considerable difficulties with hearing and walking barely slow her down; her community activism centers on environmental and child welfare issues. Mr. Miller, a 95-year-old self-educated businessman, just last month stopped going to work everyday upon discovering he has pancreatic cancer. His three children, 10 grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren have decided to come together next week to help celebrate “Pa’s” full life before he dies. Mrs. Green is a 72-year-old retired kindergarten teacher who has recently moved into a private nursing home. Her children had struggled for a couple of years to keep her at home, but the confusion and wandering of Alzheimer’s disease proved to be too powerful. Mrs. Green’s current joy comes from looking through old personal papers and photographs and talking with the smiling faces of friends and family members she seems not to be able to place.

Now consider the scholar caught up in the endless fascination of exploring the interrelationships between aging and discourse: Does Dr. Watkins’s hearing loss affect how she interacts in city council meetings? Has her shift to email and Facebook as primary forms of communication influenced how she keeps up with friends? Has Mr. Miller’s talk at work changed over the course of 70 years as a businessman? How will he interact with his oncologist as he faces decisions regarding his cancer? What does Mrs. Green enjoy talking about? What seems to frustrate her? Would she be

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*The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Second Edition.

Edited by Deborah Tannen, Heidi E. Hamilton, and Deborah Schiffrin.

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better off in a specialized care unit where she can interact more frequently with other individuals who have Alzheimer's disease? Might participation in specially designed activities that deemphasize memory enhance her life?

Back in the early 1980s when discourse analysis was taking flight in a variety of domains, that scholar's bookshelves devoted to this juxtaposition of interests would have been nearly empty: *Language and Communication in the Elderly: Clinical, Therapeutic, and Experimental Aspects*, edited by Obler and Albert (1980), and *Aging, Communication Processes and Disorders*, edited by Beasley and Davis (1981), would have taken their place next to Irigaray's (1973) study of dementia in France (*Le langage des déments*), Gubrium's (1975) *Living and Dying at Murray Manor*, and doctoral dissertations by Lubinski, "Perceptions of oral-verbal communication by residents and staff of an institution for the chronically ill and aged" (1976), and Bayles, "Communication profiles in a geriatric population" (1979). File folders containing the published report of a case study on language function in dementia by Schwartz, Marin, and Saffran (1979), a discussion of senility by Smithers (1977), and an analysis of baby talk to the institutionalized elderly by Caporeal (1981) would have constituted the literature that was readily available at that time.

In the year 2014, however, that same researcher's bookshelves, file drawers, and cloud storage overflow with studies. The years since the 1980s have been filled with scholarly activities that have extended and deepened the understanding based on the small amount of early groundbreaking work. A quick glance displays a dizzying array of topics and approaches. Some scholars<sup>1</sup> describe the language and/or communicative abilities that accompany cognitive aging, characterizing both healthy individuals and those dealing with health problems that directly affect language use, such as Alzheimer's disease and aphasia. Others<sup>2</sup> assume that people's language choices within a wide range of discourse and interactional contexts help to construct their social identities (including an elderly identity or patient identity) and relate these choices to issues of mental and physical health. Still others<sup>3</sup> recognize the critical importance of communicative relationships across the life span and investigate talk among friends, family members, and in interactions with institutional representatives at home, in healthcare facilities, and online. And, finally, others<sup>4</sup> examine public discourses about old age and aging and the effects of these discourses on individuals of all ages. In this chapter, we discuss the multiple disciplinary perspectives and approaches that underlie this diversity (Section 2), tracing in some detail the different modes of inquiry (Section 3) and selected areas of inquiry (Section 4) that characterize the literature on discourse and aging today. Before moving on to those discussions, however, we turn first to consider the notion of old age (Section 1).

## 1 Who Is Old? Conceptualizations of Old Age

Researchers who work with elderly individuals come to the nearly immediate realization that age is much more complex than a simple biological category. Chronological age tells only a small part of anyone's story – and, in fact, can be quite misleading at times. Finding that simple chronological age did not correlate well with the facts of linguistic change in her research within the Labovian paradigm, Eckert (1984) turned to differences in speakers' aspirations, roles, and orientation to society to account

for their linguistic behavior; she later argued that researchers must direct their focus “away from chronological age and toward the life experiences that give age meaning” (Eckert 1997: 167). More recently, Coupland (2009a: 855) pointed out that chronology is a “socially created and endorsed meaning system” and that “biological ageing is only one of several metrics that we can impose on ourselves and others.”

People often feel older or younger than their chronological age (Boden and Bielby 1986; cf. discussion of “disjunctive aging” in Coupland, Coupland, and Giles 1989). Sometimes this difference between perception and calendar years can be traced to what Counts and Counts (1985) call “functional age” – changes in a person’s senses (e.g., sight or hearing), appearance, and mental and physical health, as well as activity level. Other times “social age” (Counts and Counts 1985) may be at play; for example, people who are experiencing the same “rite of passage” in society may feel more alike in terms of age than their individual chronological ages would predict. To illustrate, 45-year-old first-time parents may feel more like 25-year-old first-time parents than like their 45-year-old neighbors who just became grandparents. Likewise, a 60-year-old member of the graduating class of the local university may feel quite different from her 60-year-old friends who all graduated from college almost 40 years earlier.

Feeding into some of the disparities between perceived and chronological age is the extreme heterogeneity of the older segments of the population. Nelson and Dannefer (1992) observe that this increasing diversity over the life span does not appear to be specific to any particular domain. Elderly people can be expected, therefore, to differ greatly from each other in terms of physical health, attitudes toward self and others, communicative needs, memory, judgment, and reasoning (see also Jolanki 2009 for a useful discussion on agency and aging). Differences may also exist within the communicative domain: Is the individual’s lifetime partner (if any) still alive? Is his or her social network getting smaller and smaller as age-related peers die or move into assisted living residences? Is the individual making new friends from younger generations? Is the individual talking to people who hold ageist attitudes?

This extreme variation makes it difficult to talk about normative language use. More than two decades ago, Wiemann, Gravell, and Wiemann (1990) argued that, in order to be able to understand whether people are aging successfully, standards needed to be ascertained for different stages of aging. And yet in studies of language used by elderly people, such language is still most often compared to the communicative, social, and psychological standards of typical middle age. As Eckert (1997: 157–8) points out, “Taking middle-aged language as a universal norm and developmental target obscures the fact that ways of speaking at any life stage are part of the community structuring of language use, and that the linguistic resources employed at any stage in life have social meaning for and within that life stage.” In a similar vein, some researchers argue that elderly individuals’ adaptive behaviors to a variety of changes associated with aging should be understood as indicative of developmental gains rather than losses across the life span (Underwood 2010).

## 2 Embracing Multiple Disciplinary Perspectives

After reading the preceding discussion, one might feel a sense of anxiety and confusion when faced with the task of addressing the relationships between discourse and aging.

Chafe (1994), however, offers another possibility; in an insightful discussion of data and methodologies related to linguistics and the mind, he argues that no single approach can be inherently the correct one. In his opinion, all types of data “provide important insights, and all have their limitations” (12); each methodology makes a contribution, but “none has an exclusive claim on scientific validity” (18). Following Chafe, then, we argue that, not only should no single disciplinary approach be understood as the dominant paradigm in issues of discourse and aging, but the exclusion of any disciplinary approach a priori will likely result in a less-than-complete understanding of such issues. The field is far too complex to be understood through one analytical filter (see also Coupland 2009a and Hamilton 1999).

Simply agreeing that multidisciplinary (possibly leading to interdisciplinarity) should be embraced, however, does not get the job done. Any scholar who has worked seriously on issues that cross disciplines knows that such work can be a true challenge (see especially Sarangi and Candlin 2011: 34–44 for a discussion). Different dominant paradigms often point to different kinds of research questions that are thought to be both answerable and useful or important. These paradigms also influence which and how many participants and settings are included in research studies, what kinds of language data are collected and how, what types of theoretical frameworks and analytical units are thought to be illuminating, as well as what counts as research findings and how and where those findings are reported.

With an eye to that goal – and in the firm belief that we can only welcome multidisciplinary if we try to understand some of these differences – we turn now to a discussion of disciplinary influences in terms of the preferred mode of inquiry into issues of discourse and aging. Areas touched on include: theory-driven versus data-driven approaches, selection of informant(s), length and breadth of study, and contexts of language examined. Section 4 then characterizes disciplinary influences on preferred types of research questions as evidenced by the state of the selected literature in this area.

### **3 Modes of Inquiry**

#### **3.1 *Different starting points***

Possibly the most obvious paradigmatic difference relates to the choice of a theory-driven (top-down) or data-driven (bottom-up) approach to questions of discourse and aging. Researchers who align themselves with the behavioral and natural sciences tend to start with a question and motivation that derives from a theory they deem important and relevant. Once the motivated question has been posed, the researchers determine which and how many subjects are necessary to carry out the study as well as the context(s) of the subjects’ language use. In this approach, the analytical tools necessary to the examination of language use are usually determined ahead of the actual data collection.

In contrast to the theory-driven approach, researchers who align themselves with the broad interdisciplinary field concerned with the intersection of language, culture, and society (see Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 586 for a characterization of what they term “sociocultural linguistics”) tend to start with an interest (which could be understood to

be a motivation for the study – albeit a different kind than that emanating from theory) in particular subjects and/or contexts that leads to the collection of language used by these subjects within these contexts. The researchers typically have a general research question in mind, but this question is allowed to evolve as the investigation proceeds. Interesting patterns and unexpected language use by the subjects within these contexts lead the researchers to decide which analytical tools to employ; the analysis and the research question proceed hand in hand, each informing the other until the researchers are convinced that they have understood the discourse in an interesting and thorough way.

### 3.2 *Who should be studied?*

Despite the complexity relating to the notion of age and the heterogeneity of the elderly population discussed in Section 1 above, many researchers working on questions of discourse and aging still select subjects for their studies based on chronological age, often in conjunction with various measures of health and/or socioeconomic status. Time constraints frequently do not allow for the kinds of complex evaluations necessary to take into account individuals' *perceived* age and levels of activity and relative independence when selecting subjects. And, of course, in some studies, researchers are specifically interested in chronological age, not perceived age, as it relates to a variety of other factors, and, therefore, select subjects based solely on chronological age. These researchers sometimes set up categories to distinguish between the young-old and the old-old or even the oldest-old as a way of taking into account observations that 65-year-olds are often different in many significant ways from 85-year-olds or those over 100 years of age (see especially Baltes and Mayer 1999; Georgakopoulou and Charalambidou 2011).

### 3.3 *How many subjects?*

Researchers deal with the issue of heterogeneity in different ways. Often they argue that the best way of compensating for wide variation within the population to be studied is to include very large numbers of subjects. The large numbers are seen as means to greater generalization of the findings of the study; that is, in a large study, it is more likely that researchers will be working with a set of individuals who represent the larger population of elderly individuals in relevant ways. In a case study or one involving very few subjects, it is more likely that the individuals will not represent the larger population in these ways.

On the other hand, proponents of small-scale studies argue that the extreme variation that exists within the elderly population makes it likely that large-scale studies simply average out large differences on the dimensions in question, and that the averages found, therefore, are actually not representative of large numbers of the elderly population in any meaningful way. Small-scale studies are then understood as allowing more in-depth investigation into the interrelationships among a variety of discursive and social factors, leading to well-grounded research questions and methodologies that can be used in subsequent large-scale studies.

### 3.4 *Synchronic or diachronic?*

Some researchers separate their subjects into several age-based groups, carry out the tasks that will produce the discourse to be examined, and compare the “snapshots” of these groups. Although this cross-sectional study design is tempting in that discourse of different age groups can be elicited simultaneously, there are some potential problems with this approach. For example, differences found across groups may not reflect actual changes in individuals over the life span (therefore relating to aging), but instead may have to do with differential socialization of the groups regarding the importance of talk, gender roles and identities, etiquette, or with differing amounts of formal school education (which would not relate to aging *per se*). Even when similarities across groups are identified, the researcher is faced with another type of challenge, in that he or she needs to differentiate those discourse patterns that are similar for both groups *for the same reasons* from those patterns that are similar *for different reasons* (see Hamilton 1992: 246–7 for an illustration).

The most obvious way to deal with issues evoked by the cross-sectional research design is to invoke a longitudinal design, in which each subject is followed over time, thereby acting as his or her own control. In this way it is possible to identify changes that take place over time within individuals’ own discourse, rather than having to infer these changes in the cross-sectional design. Despite its advantages in this way, researchers involved in a longitudinal study must be alert to a possible skewing of data over time as some individuals stay with the study and others either opt out over time or die. Although the longitudinal approach can be employed in studies of individuals and single age groups, it is most effective in combination with the cross-sectional approach, where, for example, the discourse used by people in their thirties, forties, fifties, sixties, seventies, and eighties, and so on, is tracked, say, every three–five years (as is done, for example, in the Language in the Aging Brain Project [www.bu.edu/lab](http://www.bu.edu/lab)).

### 3.5 *Contexts of talk and text*

Discourse and aging scholars typically examine language used *by, with, or about* elderly individuals within one or more of the following contexts: (1) standardized tests, (2) interviews, (3) conversations, (4) real-life interactions listened in on or viewed online, and (5) public media, including print, television, and Web. Since differences inherent in these contexts can result in differences in the discourse produced and comprehended, some researchers have identified these contexts as being at least partially responsible for contradictory findings across studies.<sup>5</sup> It is with an eye to these differences that we now turn to a brief characterization of each of these five contexts.

#### 3.5.1 *Standardized tests*

The discourse in this context tends to be tightly constrained. The language tasks are very clearly identified so that any deviation from what is expected can be characterized as outside the range of normal. In one task that is typically used, the speaker is asked to describe what is going on in a black-and-white line drawing of a kitchen scene, in which

a child is standing on a stool and reaching for a cookie jar (the frequently called Cookie Theft picture of the *Boston Diagnostic Aphasia Examination*, Goodglass and Kaplan 1983). In other tasks, the speaker may be asked to retell a fairy tale or to read and recount the story in a specially selected children's book. One clear benefit of the standardized test situation is that the researcher can discover a good deal about a wide range of discourse abilities and compare the results with a large number of other individuals who have previously carried out the task within a specified amount of time. A disadvantage of this context is that its predetermined nature may limit the range of the test-taker's discourse abilities on display; a test-taker's performance on the test may, therefore, bear little resemblance to his or her discourse abilities as displayed in everyday situations (ecological validity). For example, if the data elicitation relies a great deal on working memory or attention to task, older individuals may perform worse than younger ones (where the memory or attention problems have not reached the point where they are recognizable in real-life situations). Furthermore, if the task is relatively abstract, older individuals might perform worse than younger individuals because they are "out of practice" performing these kinds of tasks, which are more typical of school than of everyday life (see Underwood 2010 for an in-depth discussion of these issues).

### 3.5.2 Interviews with the researcher

The discourse in this context tends to be somewhat topically constrained and the participant roles and communicative division of labor fairly clear cut. As has been demonstrated in studies of questions in institutional discourse (e.g., Freed and Ehrlich 2010), the interviewer is usually understood by the participants to be in charge of asking the questions, while the interviewee is expected to answer them. Although there may be no "right or wrong" answers to mark the interviewee as being within or outside the range of normal (as is the case with standardized tests), subjects still usually recognize that they are not to veer very far off the proposed topics of discussion. One benefit of this communicative context is that the researcher can discover in a fairly quick and straightforward way what the interviewee has to say about a given set of topics. The use of open-ended questions allows interviewees to frame their answers in whatever terms they feel are meaningful. This freedom not only gives the researcher greater insight into the interviewees' way of thinking but also provides rich discourse, including the possibility of extended personal narratives, that allows for micro-level analyses of myriad language choices by the interviewee. One disadvantage of the interview (as compared with standardized testing) is that the open-endedness of the questions opens up the possibility that certain linguistic or communicative behavior will not be displayed.<sup>6</sup> Depending on the degree to which the interviewee feels uncertain about the purposes of the interview or feels uncomfortable talking with a relative stranger, the answers *about* communicative practice given in the interview may bear little resemblance to what the interviewee *actually* does in practice.

### 3.5.3 Conversations with the researcher

The language in this context is usually more freewheeling than that in the interview and testing situations described above. In conversations, topics come and go relatively

freely, being initiated, elaborated upon, and closed by either party; individuals may feel freer to take (and be granted) the requisite longer turns at talk associated with the telling of rich autobiographical narratives. This relative symmetry may result in the elderly individual displaying a fuller range of linguistic and communicative abilities than in more asymmetrical contexts. Another benefit of undirected conversations is that the researcher may identify issues of importance to the elderly individual that might never have emerged in more topically constrained discourse. One disadvantage of the conversation as well as the interview context (in contrast to the testing situation) is the possibility that not all linguistic abilities judged to be relevant to the researcher may be displayed. Another disadvantage (as compared with the interview situation) is that it may be more difficult for the researcher to maintain a research "agenda" when the elderly interlocutor is able to introduce new topics at any time or choose not to elaborate upon topics that are introduced by the researcher.

In all three contexts just described – in tests, interviews, and conversations with the researchers – the testers/interviewers/conversational partners need to be alert to the possibility that they may unwittingly influence the language used by those whose discourse is of interest to them. Coupland *et al.* (1988) point out the subconscious overaccommodation by younger-generation interlocutors to the (sometimes falsely) perceived needs of their older-generation conversational partners; this overaccommodation may then result in lower performance levels on the part of the older individual. My four-and-a-half-year longitudinal case study of Elsie, an elderly woman with Alzheimer's disease (Hamilton 1994a), is replete with examples of such interactional influences – both positive and negative – on Elsie's talk.

#### 3.5.4 *Real-life situations listened in on or viewed by the researcher*

In these situations, the elderly individuals whose language is of interest are going about their business in the usual fashion and "just happen" to be observed, say, as they play bridge with their friends, visit the doctor, or participate in online chat rooms.<sup>7</sup> One distinct advantage of this context, in contrast to the situations characterized above, is that there is no direct influence by the researcher on the language used by the elderly individuals.<sup>8</sup> Another advantage in situations where the researcher is of a younger generation than his or her subjects (and, by definition, involved in *intergenerational* encounters when interacting with elderly individuals) is that it is possible to gain access to *intragenerational* interactions such as conversations held among residents in a nursing home or in online support groups. The researcher is also able to examine language used by elderly interlocutors with persons *they* have chosen to interact with in everyday life situations that are meaningful to *them*, in contrast to language used with researchers as part of tests, interviews, and conversations that take place outside their usual stream of life.

One possible disadvantage of listening in on speech events or viewing online communication has to do with the fact that, by definition, the researcher is not part of the ongoing interaction. Because the discourse is not constructed with the researcher in mind, it is likely that he or she will not be privy to aspects of the discussion, will *think* he or she understands what is going on but actually does not, or will have only a superficial understanding of the discourse. This challenge may be partially overcome through

the use of playback sessions (see Tannen 2005: 42–52 for discussion of playback more generally within discourse analysis), in which the participants come together with the researcher to illuminate problematic aspects of the interaction.

### 3.5.5 *Public media*

The discourse in the context of public media, including newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and the Internet (including blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube), is “found data” that has been selected by the researcher in accordance with his or her research questions and interests. Because the researcher has no influence on the language produced (in contrast to standardized tests, interviews, and conversations), investigations of such discourse carry with them both the advantages and disadvantages of studies of interactions listened in on or viewed. The key distinction between those interactions and the discourse of public media can be found in the relationship between the discourse and aging and/or the elderly; namely, the discourse of public media used in these examinations is primarily *about* aging and the elderly, rather than being *by* and *with* the elderly as in the contexts above.

Most researchers of public discourse take a critical discourse perspective, conducting research on written media texts using Systemic Functional Linguistics or intertextual analyses, occasionally in combination with interactional sociolinguistic or conversation-analytic investigations of spoken media interactions. The advantage of studying such discourse *about* elderly individuals, as individuals and as groups, and of aging more generally, lies in the enhanced understanding of the master narratives or cultural scripts of aging that circulate in specific sociocultural historical perspectives – in contrast, perhaps, to many individuals’ lived experiences of age, including the researcher’s own views about aging and the elderly. Because the “textual reflexes of such scripts” (Coupland 2009a: 855) may find their way into discourse used by individuals (elderly and non-elderly alike), the researcher’s fuller understanding of these scripts may provide him or her with greater insight into analyses of public–private discourse effects on intergenerational and/or professional–lay interactions, including the maintenance of ageist perspectives and stereotypes. Key disadvantages relative to the contexts described earlier include the researcher’s lack of thick ethnographic information regarding the process behind the public discourse under examination, as well as the lack of discursive interaction between writer/producer and the researcher that could help the researcher understand the writer/producer’s intentions.

## 4 Areas of Inquiry

As mentioned in Section 2, disciplinary differences extend beyond the kinds of considerations regarding design and execution of research that we have just been discussing; they go to the heart of what kinds of questions and research topics are thought to be answerable and useful or important. In this section we identify three areas of inquiry that have served to center clusters of research in the area of discourse and aging and that we predict will continue to be important magnets for research in the future: (1) language

and communicative abilities in old age, (2) identity in old age, and (3) social norms, values, and practices in old age. Of course it is impossible to draw clear lines around these areas; for example, a particular discourse practice (type 3) or marked change in discourse ability (type 1) can serve as resources for the construction of the speaker's identity (type 2). Decisions regarding where to place individual studies in this review were based on our understanding of each author's primary focus and goals.

#### *4.1 Language and communicative abilities in old age*

Some scholars interested in the relationship between discourse and aging are drawn to questions relating to the relative decline, maintenance, or (occasionally) improvement of language and communicative abilities that accompany aging. The majority of these scholars work in the disciplines of psycholinguistics, cognitive linguistics, neurolinguistics, and speech and language pathology; their findings are typically based on the discourse produced and comprehended within standardized test batteries by large numbers of systematically selected elderly subjects. Some of these researchers look specifically at subgroups of the overall elderly population who are known to have difficulties with communication, such as individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias<sup>9</sup> and different types of aphasia.<sup>10</sup> Others attempt to characterize the decline, maintenance, or improvement of such abilities within the healthy elderly population.<sup>11</sup>

The long list of references in the notes to the paragraph above should not mislead the reader into thinking that these translate clearly into one set of unambiguous findings regarding discourse abilities and aging. This picture is still far from clear. Murkiness in the form of contradictory findings across studies has several sources, including: insufficient differentiation among ages of subjects in some studies; the ceiling on age categories being set too low (e.g., where 60 is used as the oldest age) in some studies; widely different discourse elicitation tasks across studies (see discussion in Section 3.5); and a somewhat prescriptive predisposition within speech and language pathology that takes a negative view of what sociolinguists may see as a normal range of discourse variation (see Hamilton 1994b for discussion).

Despite the somewhat cloudy picture, many scholars point to the following changes in discourse that accompany healthy aging: (1) increasing difficulty with lexical retrieval, for example, naming objects on command or coming up with words and proper nouns in conversation,<sup>12</sup> (2) decreasing syntactic complexity in spoken and written discourse production,<sup>13</sup> (3) increasing "off-target" verbosity,<sup>14</sup> and (4) decreasing sensitivity to audience when gauging given and new information as well as when using highly context-dependent linguistic features such as pronouns and deictic terms.<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, some researchers point out enhanced abilities (e.g., within particular discourse types such as narrative<sup>16</sup>) and argue more generally that the "path from birth to old age be conceptualized as one marked by a multidirectional blend of adaptive gains and losses" where one can consider "how individuals respond adaptively to the physical, mental and emotional changes which accompany aging" (Underwood 2010: 146), especially in the areas of social intelligence and wisdom (Baltes 1987). Pathbreaking work on "personhood" in the 1990s by Kitwood (1997) has become increasingly influential in discussions of communication, often in connection with narrative analysis especially in relation to dementia (see, e.g., Hamilton and Baffy 2014; Ryan and Schindel

2011). In these discussions of interactional contexts, “personhood is recognized and validated through the relationship-centered aspects of conversation and communication through engagement, insightful listening, acknowledgment of emotions, sharing ideas, reflection, and demonstrating acceptance” (Ryan and Schindel 2011: 195).

Generally speaking, researchers whose studies are highlighted in this section are not satisfied with the mere identification of language changes that accompany aging, but frequently design their studies in an attempt to uncover the cause of such changes (e.g., deterioration of the underlying linguistic system, problems of working memory, general slowing down of mental and physical processes). Such laudable efforts are often thwarted, however, by the complexity of what needs to be understood and differences in research design (as addressed in Section 3) in the extant scholarly literature. We believe that this picture will become ever clearer as researchers shift their focus from groups of elderly individuals selected by chronological age, health status, and educational background to carefully defined subcategories of elderly individuals carrying out specific discourse tasks in specific contexts (as one way to deal with the heterogeneity discussed in Section 1). To this end, researchers trained in the areas of psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics are encouraged to (continue to) collaborate with linguistic discourse analysts in discussions of ecologically valid task design in an attempt to ensure that elderly individuals are motivated to participate, to consider possible influences of the researcher on subjects’ language use, and to carefully tie discourse variation to features of its context.

## 4.2 *Identity in old age*

Other scholars working in the area of discourse and aging are drawn to issues of identity.<sup>17</sup> These researchers tend to be trained in the fields of social psychology, sociolinguistics, anthropological linguistics, and anthropology. Generally, their primary interest is not in characterizing language abilities and disabilities of elderly individuals (or, if they do so, these are seen as interactional resources in identity construction); instead these scholars attempt to identify patterns and strategies in discourse by and with elderly interlocutors and relate these to the ongoing construction of a range of identities for the speakers as the discourse emerges. Most findings are based on the language used (especially narrative discourse) by small numbers of individuals in conversations, interviews, or naturally occurring spoken/online interactions listened in on/viewed, due to the intense micro-level analysis required in this work. Some scholars examine how age identity is “negotiated at the intersection of private and public domains” (Coupland 2009a: 860) by connecting patterns within private discursive interactions to findings of investigations of public discourse.

Though it is not always stated explicitly in the scholarly literature, virtually all of the researchers working in this area assume that their subjects display a range of identities (following Bucholtz and Hall 2005; Davies and Harré 1990) as they speak or write (e.g., mother/father, wife/husband, child, adult, professional, friend, or patient), some of which have nothing at all to do with their age. Of course the notion of turn-by-turn construction of identities in discourse – of self-positioning and positioning of others – is nothing new in the analysis of naturally occurring discourse. What *is* somewhat different about this issue with regard to aging is how this negotiation of identities – both

past and current – plays out within intergenerational interactions, especially in institutional settings such as home healthcare (Heinemann 2011; Olaison and Cedersund 2006), nursing homes (Backhaus 2011b; Lenchuk and Swain 2010) or doctors' offices (Coupland and Coupland 1998; Coupland, Robinson, and Coupland 1994), where any overt or subliminal ageism or stereotyping (Coupland and Coupland 1999; Scholl and Sabat 2008) may be exacerbated by physical and/or mental health difficulties of the elderly person (Hamilton 1996, 2008b; Sabat and Harré 1992). It is in this way, then, that interactions between elderly adults and their personal and professional caregivers may become sites where elderly individuals (despite displaying a full range of identities in their discourse) come to see themselves primarily as patients or frail old people (Norrick 2009).

Decades-long research on “elderspeak” in institutional care for older adults (see, e.g., Caporeal 1981; Kemper and Harden 1999, Ryan *et al.* 1986; and Williams 2011) argues that deindividuating language by younger nursing staff to elderly nursing home residents based on stereotypic notions of the communicative needs of these elderly residents (e.g., “Let’s get you into bed,” “Shall we get our pants on?”) may not only “induce momentary feelings of worthlessness in elderly people but may also lead to reduced life satisfaction and mental and physical decline in the long run” (Ryan *et al.* 1986: 14). Lubinski’s (1988, 2011) extensive study of the quality of the communication environment in nursing homes speaks of the gradual process of “institutionalization” of patients to an unreinforcing communicative environment. According to this view, communication attempts on the part of residents (especially those seen to be communicatively impaired or incompetent) with staff members or even with other more communicatively competent residents can be “extinguished through lack of response or curt, condescending replies” (Lubinski 1988: 295); through this process, these residents may gradually come to expect little communication.

Baltes and colleagues (Baltes and Wahl 1992; Baltes, Neumann, and Zank 1994) argue that behavior that is consistent with what they term the “dependency-support script,” such as dressing a nursing home resident or washing his or her face, is based both on negative stereotypes of aging and on a desire on the part of nursing home staff to enact an ideal “helper role” and that, of all behaviors by older adults in institutions, dependent behavior is the “most likely to result in social contact and attention” from their caregivers (Baltes, Neumann, and Zank 1994: 179). Recent encouraging applied work by Davis and Smith (2011), Lubinski (2011), Savundranayagam *et al.* (2007a), and Williams (2011) indicates that discourse-based communication training of nurses’ aides and other staff members can result in positive changes within such institutional environments.

It is not only the case, however, that elderly individuals who see themselves as relatively strong and independent are positioned as weak and dependent in their turn-by-turn interactions with others. It can work the other way as well, as illustrated by Taylor’s (1992, 1994) studies of elderly individuals who actively construct themselves as old and frail (e.g., “I feel like a worn-out agent or man. Finished. Right near the edge of life” in Taylor 1994: 193). In some of these cases, younger conversational partners do not allow the elderly individual’s frail identity to stand, but instead “redefine their disclosure as an issue of performance and competence (e.g., “N’yer doin’ a good job!”), shying away, perhaps, from what is threatening to those partners in an ageist culture: accepted mortality” (Taylor 1994: 193–4).

Whatever the outcome, again we note the great influence of conversational partners on the active, emergent, turn-by-turn construction of identities by/with/for elderly individuals in interactions, both in person and in those that are mediated by technology. These provocative findings have wide-reaching implications, not only for family members, friends, and professional caregivers of elderly people, but also for researchers engaged in data collection (see related points in Section 3.5.3).

### 4.3 *Social norms, values, and practices in old age*

Another group of scholars interested in the relationship between aging and discourse focuses primarily on characterizing discourse practices by elderly individuals that display or reflect the speakers' social norms and values. These researchers represent the fields of anthropology, sociology, sociolinguistics, and communication studies; they study discourse from interviews, conversations, spoken and online interactions that are listened in on or viewed, and public discourse.

Perhaps not surprisingly, when we step back from the individual studies, we notice that many of the identified practices can be understood as responses to change; for example, comparing "the way it is" with "the way it was" (Boden and Bielby 1986), disclosing painful information about the self even in conversations with relative strangers (Coupland, Coupland, and Giles 1991; Okazaki 1999) and in initial medical encounters (Greene *et al.* 1994), complaining (Cattell 1999), gossiping (Saunders 1999), disclosing chronological age (Coupland, Coupland, and Giles 1991), viewing friendship differently in older adulthood (Nussbaum 1994), and using service encounters to socialize (Wiemann, Gravell, and Wiemann 1990).

In this sense, we can see that elderly people have formed solid expectations about how life is – and their place in it – by having lived it for so many years. Now perched near the end of life, change bombards them from all sides – from within and from without. Decreased vision, hearing, mobility. Problems remembering. Loss of driver's license. Loss of friends and family. New residence in a retirement community or assisted living center. New technology: computers, the Internet, e-readers, smart phones, video games, DVR, video streaming, tablets, touchscreens. Increased violence and sexuality on television and in the movies. Different patterns of immigration and neighborhood demographics in their hometowns.

Many years ago, Boden and Bielby (1986) noticed that the elderly speakers in their study frequently made direct comparisons between "the way it was" and "the way it is" as topic organizers in get-acquainted conversations with age-peers (e.g., "I've seen quite a few changes in Santa Clara," "I have too. I don't like it as well as I did when I came here.").<sup>18</sup> Not knowing each other's personal life experiences, these speakers referred frequently to historical events, time periods, and social experiences they assumed they must have shared due to their chronological age. In their study of get-acquainted conversations (both age-peer and intergenerational), Coupland, Coupland, and Giles (1991: 112ff.) noticed that their elderly speakers were prone to disclosing painful information about their lives, including bereavement, immobility, loneliness, and health problems (e.g., "My eyes are not so good," "I've got two false hips," "I've got emphysema"). Although Coupland, Coupland, and Giles do not relate this painful self-disclosure to the "way it was" practice identified by Boden and Bielby, the same

kind of contrast seems to underlie both, but on a more personal level (“the way I was” vs. “the way I am”). More recent study on conversational “painful self-disclosure” by Matsumoto (2011a) exemplifies the way in which older Japanese women reframe tragic situations like a spouse’s death into “a minor and quotidian event” (2011a: 596) as a way of alleviating psychological pain. Personal changes as displayed in narratives told by residents in long-term care facilities also illuminate the complex identity navigation (Bamberg 2011) that is characteristic of many elderly individuals as they approach the end of life (see especially Lenchuk and Swain 2010; Yamasaki and Sharf 2011).

These change-related contrasts also lie at the heart of many of the complaints heard and discussed by Cattell (1999) in her ethnographic fieldwork among elderly people in rural western Kenya and in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. These complaints often centered on perceived differences between young and old generations regarding family obligations (e.g., “The young don’t want to walk with us” or “They don’t want to sit and eat with us”) and perceived ethnic changes in residential neighborhoods and shopping districts (e.g., “We don’t speak the same language. We can’t even talk to each other” and “I never see anyone I know on 5th Street any more”). Cattell (1999: 312) argues that researchers should not dismiss such complaints as “just what all old people do,” but should recognize the strategic use of this practice through which the complainers “assur[e] their physical security and reassur[e] themselves as persons in settings of rapid social and cultural change.”

Comparing the past to the present. Disclosing painful information. Complaining. These discursive practices can be seen as reasonable responses to change, but ones that may be subject to misinterpretation when (over)heard by those who do not share the same experiences of changing physical environments, changing bodies, and changing relationships. Eckert (1984: 229) reminds us of the danger inherent in intergenerational research (and, we would add, in intergenerational encounters of all kinds): “The elderly, being the farthest from the experience of the young and middle-aged researchers, comprise the age group that is most subject to stereotyping in linguistics as well as other research.”

## 5 Conclusions

The goal of understanding how discourse and aging are related to each other challenges us to understand how language is used by large numbers of elderly individuals in many and varied contexts, both experimental and natural. Much progress has been made since the early 1980s. Exciting contributions in neighboring fields, including anthropology, sociology, psychology, and philosophy, have provided rich contexts for fine-grained discourse analyses that relate linguistic details to aspects of the interactional context or provide insights into emergent discourse. As on a painter’s canvas that had been blank, bold strokes have been made in several areas and the background sketched out. Clusters of carefully detailed work can be found. Connections are starting to be made between these clusters. Obvious gaps call out for additional studies of discourse related to aging within other languages and cultures (see here important recent collections by Backhaus 2011a; de Bot and Makoni 2005; Duszak and Okulska 2011; and Matsumoto 2011b), with a focus on both public and private spheres,

to facilitate an understanding of the role of cultural values and health beliefs. The only way to get closer to completing the picture is through continued research from multiple perspectives. Ironically, perhaps, the biggest potential barrier to this goal is precisely this multidisciplinary.

How, then, to proceed? First, it can be assumed that disciplinary training will often lead researchers to study only certain kinds of problems and to propose the most effective way of approaching only these problems (and, of course, certain problems may indeed be more easily solved with a particular approach); we should take care, however, not to allow this situation to blind us to the possibility of the creative solutions that can be found if one is brave enough to cross disciplinary boundaries.<sup>19</sup> To this end, we need to stay informed about developments within discourse analysis as well as within fields related to aging that may affect discourse, such as memory, studies of social relationships, and ethnographies of nursing homes, hospitals, and hospices. Such awareness will open our eyes to areas of possible collaboration across disciplines and facilitate subsequent cross-disciplinary discussion. In this effort to understand aging and discourse, we should not forget that, in order to gain a true insider's perspective, we need to listen to voices of those who are old – either by incorporating them as co-researchers or at a minimum by finding out what they think in playback sessions or focus groups.

Second, in order to make headway in understanding how discourse and aging are interrelated against the unceasing motion of the seemingly uncountable moving parts that represent the heterogeneity of the elderly population (see Section 1), we need to continue to carry out studies of well-defined subgroups of the aging population who are engaged in specific activities in specific settings, treating aging “as something we achieve in the minutiae of our social lives, in social encounters of diverse sorts and even in individual acts of expression in speech and writing” (Coupland 2009a: 851). It is only through studying particularity (Becker 1984) that we will come to illuminate more general issues. Each of these two areas – aging and discourse – is so large and multifaceted as to preclude any real understanding of their interconnections if each is not broken down into manageable parts.

Finally, despite the possible consequences of the previous paragraph, we need to take care *not* to lose sight of the human beings who are at the center of our research. Since scholarly literature typically reports findings regarding fairly narrowly defined discourse produced by *different* elderly individuals in *different* contexts, it is easy to forget that each participant in each study is a more complete human being than can be made apparent in any given context of language use. The Ruth Watkins whose ability to name objects in conversation was judged to be quite impaired by a standardized test is the same Ruth Watkins who writes the most persuasive letters-to-the-editor of all the environmental activists in her community. The Gerald Miller who hardly spoke a word in his visit to the oncologist is the same Gerald Miller who tells story after marvelous story to his squealing great-grandchildren. The Viola Green who cannot remember whether her husband is alive or not is the same Viola Green who can flawlessly recite a poem she learned in the seventh grade – 59 years ago.

In closing, then, the future of research into the interrelationships between discourse and aging looks bright if scholars continue to reach out to collaborators, both to experts in other disciplines and to members of the elderly population. Mounting evidence from multiple well-defined studies of particular groups of aging individuals will help us reach our goal: understanding how the biological, social, and psychological changes

that people identify as aging influence the way these people use language and, conversely, how people's use of language can shape the biological, social, and psychological changes that people perceive and identify as aging.

## NOTES

- 1 For example, Guendouzi and Müller (2006), Hamilton (2008a), Kemper (2012), Kempler and Goral (2008), Obler and Pekkala (2008), and Savundranayagam and Ryan (2008).
- 2 For example, Coupland and Coupland (1995), Coupland and Nussbaum (1993), Hamilton (1996), Lenchuk and Swain (2010), Norrick (2009), and Sabat and Harré (1992).
- 3 For example, Hummert, Wiemann, and Nussbaum (1994), Lubinski (2011), Nussbaum and Coupland (2004), Nussbaum, Thompson, and Robinson (1989), Savundranayagam, Ryan, and Hummert (2007b), and Wright and Query (2004).
- 4 For example, Coupland (2009b), Lin, Hummert, and Harwood (2004), Ramanathan (2010), Rozanova (2010), Yoon and Powell (2012), and Zhang *et al.* (2006).
- 5 See, for example, Bower (1997: 266–9), Hamilton (1994a: 17–19), Light (1993: 907–8), and Melvold *et al.* (1994: 334).
- 6 It has often been noted, for example, that individuals with early stages of Alzheimer's disease can mask the degree of some communicative problems, such as naming difficulties, by cleverly giving accounts and using humor (see, e.g., Saunders, de Medeiros, and Bartell 2011).
- 7 Researchers interested in this approach can take advantage of the online corpora of discourse involving elderly individuals, including, for example, the *Carolinas Conversation Collection* (Pope and Davis 2011) or *TalkBank* (MacWhinney 2007).
- 8 In studies of spoken discourse where the researcher is in the immediate physical vicinity taping the interaction or taking notes, there may be a moderate indirect influence on the interaction due to the Observer's Paradox (see Labov 1972 for discussion of the fact that it is impossible to observe people who are *not* being observed), but this is not the case in investigations of online discourse or in examinations of discourse that was recorded for other purposes (e.g., town hall meetings or courtroom interactions).
- 9 For example, Davis (2005), Guendouzi and Müller (2006), Hamilton (1994a, 2008a), Kempler and Goral (2008), Ramanathan (1997), and Schrauf and Müller (2014).
- 10 For example, Armstrong *et al.* (2011), Brownell and Joannette (1993), Goodwin (2004), and Ulatowska and Chapman (1994).
- 11 For example, Burke and Shafto (2008), Kemper (2006), and Obler and Pekkala (2008).
- 12 For example, Albert *et al.* (2009), Obler *et al.* (2010), and Pekkala *et al.* (2013).
- 13 For example, Kemper, Thompson, and Marquis (2001), and Kemper *et al.* (2010).
- 14 For example, Arbuckle and Gold (1993), Gold, Arbuckle, and Andres (1994), and Pushkar *et al.* (2000).
- 15 For example, Horton and Spieler (2007).
- 16 For example, Kemper and Anagnopoulos (1989), Kemper *et al.* (1990), Ulatowska (1985), and Ulatowska *et al.* (1998).
- 17 For example, Coupland and Coupland (1995), Coupland and Nussbaum (1993), Hamilton (1996), Lenchuk and

- Swain (2010), Lin, Hummert, and Harwood (2004), Norrick (2009), and Sabat and Harré (1992).
- 18 Examples from Boden and Bielby (1986: 78). Transcription has been simplified.
- 19 For example, when I began my investigations of natural conversations with an elderly woman who had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in the early 1980s (as written up in Hamilton 1994a, 1996, 2008b), most scholars I talked with indicated to me that I should be conducting my research within the paradigms recognized by psycholinguistics or neurolinguistics. The existing theoretical frameworks and methodologies in those literatures did not, however, allow me to capture what I sensed was potentially most significant about my subject's communicative abilities and how they were interrelated with my own communicative behavior in our conversations. In the face of these comments and recommendations, I had to continually ask myself what an interactional sociolinguistic approach to this problem would look like and, indeed, whether it was possible. I found as time went on that such a crossing of the boundaries was not only possible but fruitful.

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# 34 Discursive Underpinnings of Family Coordination

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ELINOR OCHS AND  
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## 0 Discourse and Family Life

Given that the family is the primary locus of learning to speak, think, feel, and act in socially recognized and culturally meaningful ways, family discourse is limitless in its influence on the configuration of caregiving and childhood. Where to begin? In utero when the fetus becomes familiarized with the mother's voice and its phonological shape? In neonatal breastfeeding when the basis of interactional turn-taking is built? Should we include rhythmic vocalizations mirrored between parent and infant as proto-dialogue? And what about simplified baby talk registers that characterize discursive exchanges with young children in many societies? Caregivers the world over are prone to draw attention to, model, instruct, direct, correct, argue, narrate, plan, and otherwise use discourse to guide young children into practices and dispositions that are crucial to their membership in communities. In this manner, children of the world are saturated with family discourse over their first five years. Even older, school-aged children spend considerable time in discursive engagements with other family members, and are highly dependent on these moments for emotional and practical support.

Family sites where such discourse transpires span from domestic to public. Depending upon local social expectations, these sites host a wide range of activities, which in turn organize how family members communicate with one another. As noted by Ochs and Shohet (2006), the most central cross-culturally and most widely studied family activity is the family mealtime. Historically, sharing food is key to demarcating membership in a household. Food sharing provides an opportunity to sustain close social relationships, even when members do not eat all together at the same time. As noted by Blum-Kulka (1997), Bohanek *et al.* (2009), and Ochs, Smith, and Taylor (1989), in contemporary post-industrial societies mealtimes are moments in which information about family members' experiences are exchanged and arrangements for the future are

made. Children learn from such discourse about how to handle social situations and how to understand themselves and others. As noted in Elias's (2000, originally 1939) *The Civilizing Process* and later by Ochs, Pontecorvo, and Fasulo (1996) and Aronsson and Gottzén (2011), mealtime discourse also attends to the more immediate matter of the taste and value of food itself and preferred eating comportment.

Trimming the encyclopedic scope of family discourse to chapter measure, we focus on a single, critical role of language in family life, namely its deployment in the coordination of family members' participation in daily activities such as greeting one another after school and work, doing homework, performing household chores, eating a meal, and getting ready to leave the house for school, sports, or other events. Families are not only sociobiological units and social institutions; they are also living, dynamic entities that require considerable coordination to sustain themselves, and language plays a critical role in this endeavor. Unlike spoofed images of efficient households as benefiting from time-saving appliances (e.g., washing machines), contemporary family life is vastly unsystematized and subject to day-to-day unpredictabilities. In the automatized Chaplin-esque world of *Modern Times*, words seem unnecessary to accomplish a practical task; one need only perform assigned repetitive actions. In the imperfect, mercurial choreography of family activities, however, language and other semiotic tools become relevant.

This chapter focuses on "coordination troubles" in contemporary US households. It presents three sources of coordination troubles: (1) separation, (2) individualism, and (3) inconsistency. It analyzes how these troubles organize family interaction and the discursive strategies deployed, often unsuccessfully, to bring about a state of collaboration. These strategies belie any straightforward relation between language and getting things done as a joint endeavor; discourse surrounding coordination may facilitate successful coordination, but it may just as well amplify troubles.

On the upside, language may play a key facilitative role in recruiting and coordinating the attention, emotions, and actions of family members in an effort to accomplish an activity. This is especially the case when parties to the activity are *separated* in space. Rogoff (2003: 315) argues that "the separation of middle-class European American infants from other people may necessitate greater use of distal forms of communication involving sound." Caregivers in Mayan and other communities rely more on touch, facial expression, gesture, gaze, and other corporeal signals to communicate with infants and young children.

The importance of securing interactional alignment of gaze and bodies is not restricted to indigenous communities. Parents in post-industrial societies also often try to overcome the spatial separation with their children by approaching them and securing their gaze and corporeal alignment. Cekaite (2010) and M. H. Goodwin and Cekaite (2013) attest to the Swedish and American practice of "shepherding" children toward a task at hand. In addition, M. H. Goodwin (2006), Tulbert and Goodwin (2011), and M. H. Goodwin and C. Goodwin (2012) demonstrate the extraordinary efforts that American middle-class parents exert to secure eye contact with their child and direct his/her attentional focus to an activity deemed important to accomplish.

The activity requiring coordination need not be desired across the board by all the family members recruited as participants. Indeed, the *individualistic* proclivity in post-industrial societies such as the United States all but insures that each family member pursues a path of self-determination and self-fulfillment. Parent-child discourse in the

United States, for example, is riddled with the sticky problem of gaining compliance from a reluctant child to enact a parentally desired task or pay attention to a social interaction at hand.

The capacity of language to facilitate family coordination is challenged when a fractured alignment among family members arises. As Giddens (1991: 52) notes,

The orderliness of day-to-day life is a miraculous occurrence, but it is not one that stems from any sort of outside intervention; it is brought about as a continuous achievement on the part of everyday actors in an entirely routine way. That orderliness is solid and constant; yet the slightest glance of one person towards another, inflexion of the voice, changing facial expression or gestures of the body may threaten it.

Yet, even when family coordination is riddled with conflicting and *inconsistent* expectations about who is to do what, when, and how, language is still a superstar resource in the choreography of family activities. Indeed, Klein, Izquierdo, and Bradbury (2007) surmise that language is needed *more* when, for example, the delegation of household responsibilities is inconsistent and *not* clearly defined, as is often the case in middle-class US families. In this circumstance, family members rely upon discursive practices to alert, reason, counter, and otherwise lay the grounds for cooperation. In contrast, in communities and households where routine responsibilities have been consistently allocated, accepted, and understood, family members usually perform them without prompting or negotiation.

Many of the communicative tools of social coordination are obvious and well studied, for example, directives, instructions, suggestions, reminders, cajoling, criticisms, corrections, refusals, justifications, negotiations, accusations, threats, and sanctions. These efforts may be couched more or less directly and more or less forcefully. In her study of US middle-class households, for example, Tannen (2003) found that adult family members softened acts of social control with expressions of affective solidarity, for example, a wife sweet-talking her spouse into being less grouchy to their toddler by casting the chastisement in the toddler's voice (e.g., "I was just missing you Daddy, that was all").

This chapter turns to another dimension of communication surrounding the endeavor of coordinating family life, namely its reflexive capacity. Efforts toward coordination, including responses to coordination troubles, are subjectively experienced, and language plays an important part in bringing experience into conscious awareness. Language helps to render our actions open to reflection. Reflexive speech (e.g., "Why does this have to be a battle every night?") steps out of the situation at hand and calls attention to what one is doing. Our analysis of reflexive speech in the course of coordinating family life draws upon Duranti's (2010: 12) proposal that reflexive speech is a potent vehicle for socializing children not only "to attend to objects or to perform certain actions on them. They are also exposed to ways of reflecting on their own experience of such objects and more generally on their life experiences." Singular to our species, reflexive speech socializes children into the intersubjective project of defining, (re-)assessing, questioning, and revising the cooperative enterprise under construction.

As noted by Daly (1996) and Darrah and colleagues (2007), coordinating family activities in fast-paced and mercurial contemporary middle-class American households presents a formidable challenge. These households form the centerpiece of this chapter. The discussion that follows offers an analytic framework for understanding family coordination that integrates our own and other studies that are part of a large-scale, interdisciplinary research project undertaken by the UCLA Sloan Center on Everyday Lives of Families (CELf). CELf examined 32 middle-class dual-earner families, focusing on how they managed the exigencies of work, school, and family life. The families resided in the greater Los Angeles area. Each family included two or three children (one of whom was between the ages of seven and 11). Multiple methods were used to study family daily life. Families were video-recorded over four days across a week from early morning until family members went to work and school and from the moment of first contact with children in the afternoons until the children went to bed at night, yielding over 1500 hours of video data on family interactions. Researchers filmed family members inside the home engaged in relaxation, household chores, homework, and other activities and outside the home on errands, during extra-curricular activities, and other social events. When at home, each family member was also tracked at timed intervals, noting location, activity, objects in use, and presence of other family members. In addition, thousands of photographs of home spaces and possessions were taken to capture the material worlds of middle-class families, in-depth ethnographic interviews with parents and children were conducted, saliva was sampled across the week to measure the stress hormone Cortisol, psychological measures were administered, and social networks and daily routines were elicited through questionnaires, among other procedures (cf. Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik 2013 and Ochs *et al.* 2006 for a full description of the CELf study).

## 1 Family Coordination and Reflexive Speech

Reflexive speech involves a shift from what Husserl (1931) calls the “natural attitude” (i.e., taken-for-granted ordinary flow of events) to the “theoretical attitude” (self-conscious contemplation of events). In the context of family coordination, reflexive speech displays to those within earshot how a family member “theorizes” – cognitively, morally, or affectively – the interactional moment. When the theoretical attitude is applied to one’s own behavior, the self splits into a reflecting subject and a more distant subject that is under reflection. Reflexive speech also transforms the situation into a dynamic experience that the self is aware of living through. In addition, the theoretical attitude can focus upon the behavior of another person, as when a mother asks her daughter “Why does this have to be a battle every night?” which implicates not only the speaker (the mother) but also the addressee (the daughter), both lodged in a battle of wills over eating dinner. When the other person is co-present, reflexive speech may promote that person to revise their understanding of the activity at hand. In the following excerpt, for example, a mother addresses reflexive speech to her eight-year-old son Jason in an effort to make him aware that the activity in which he is presently engaged, that is, watching television, violates the no-watching-TV-before-7:30pm house rule. The first reflexive move is to call out his name and pose a question that draws Jason’s attention to what he is doing<sup>1</sup>:

Mother: JASON!  
Jason: YES MOM!  
Mother: What are you doing?  
Jason: Watching TV.

The mother's question "What are you doing?," while she is standing by Jason and is completely cognoscente of his actions, and Jason's response "Watching TV," knowing very well that his mother knows, draw both of them into an intersubjective reflective space. Suddenly, Jason is no longer immersed in his activity; he is forced to suspend this state and bracket what he is doing by defining it for his mother. Both Jason and his mother are co-engaged in the theoretical attitude.

The theoretical attitude is taken a step further when Jason's mother next indirectly reminds him of "the rules of the house." She speaks in a double voice: using a sarcastic tone to convey her derision, she ventriloquizes Jason's voice, as if Jason were speaking in the first person and apologizing for forgetting the rules. The strategy works; Jason fills in the details of the no-watching-TV-before-7:30pm rule.

Mother: Well, I'm sorry. I guess I forgot the rules of the house.  
Jason: Oh yeah, till (. . .) seven thirty.

Tannen's (2003: 55) analysis of ventriloquizing in families is apt here: a family member – here the mother – exerts control by shifting the author of the accusatory utterance to someone else – here the child. The ventriloquized utterance makes Jason the virtual confessor to forgetting the house rule. In so doing, the mother firmly exerts control but allows the child to assume moral agency by confirming his guilt and willingness to adhere to household expectations.

This illustration of the reflexive route to an intersubjective stance on family coordination is notable. Step by step a mother guides her son to modify his consciousness of his immediate experience of watching television, first by interrupting its phenomenal flow, then by contextualizing it historically in terms of house rules. Further, in sarcastically ventriloquizing the son's voice, the mother models for him both his consciousness – how he as the "I" ought to feel – and the moral effect of his transgression on her. In this instance, ventriloquation becomes a potent hegemonic strategy for instilling prevailing social order and its normative perspectives.

Not all reflexive speech has the effect of bringing about normative order and a state of desired family coordination. Instead, reflexive speech may backfire and plunge a would-be cooperative activity into disarray. Below we illustrate the wayward path of cooperation that can ensue when parents reflexively voice their despair over the possibility of convincing their children to cooperate. Eight-year-old Jonah and two-and-a-half-year-old Dylan are seated at the table eating yogurt, while their father and mother are nearby in the kitchen putting away food. At a certain point the father indicates that he expects them to clean up their spilled yogurt; Dylan refuses:

Father: Are you guys going to clean up that mess?  
Dylan: No.

In a reflexive turn (marked in boldface), the father laughs – perhaps anticipating what Dylan’s refusal entails for parental authority – walks over to the mother, puts his hand on her shoulder, and designates her as the parent responsible for ensuring compliance:

Father: Heh heh.  
**You- you monitor that.**

After launching an aborted repair initiation that is more a challenge than an inquiry, the mother immediately issues an imperative to Dylan:

Mother: **Monitor what-** Dylan, you need to clean up your mess.

The father then reflexively reiterates the mother’s task assignment, with the justification left trailing:

Father: **You, you enforce that one because-**

This time around the mother issues, along with a directive to both Dylan and Jonah, a reflexive statement that explains the desired act as Jonah’s “duty,” linking his age to this duty and rewards that flow from parent to child. This meta-statement about responsibilities, however, is produced in fits and starts, suggesting that the mother may be distracted with her kitchen tasks and struggling to formulate a justification:

Mother: Clean up mess.  
And Jonah is definitely going to help you clean the table because-  
You know why?  
Father: And the floor.  
Mother: **Because Jonah that’s your- duty.**  
**you’re eight years old,**  
**you’ve gotta-**  
**you gotta earn-**  
**you gotta earn your-**  
**you know, all the good things you get from us.**

In yet another reflexive move, the mother then undermines her own authority and rationalization by voicing an imagined ironic disparaging response that she attributes to Jonah:

Mother: *((deep, creaky voice))* **Yeah, right mom.**

Jonah meanwhile continues to eat his dessert without acknowledging being addressed. The mother then prefaces a new, matter-of-fact line of reasoning with “well.” This preface weakens both her prior justification and the one that immediately follows:

Mother: **Well, we need some help (.) cleaning.**

The children take no notice of this moral lesson and leave the table to play in another room. But, as M. H. Goodwin (2006) reveals in her analysis of interaction that transpires immediately following the above exchange, the parents do not surrender completely: Jonah is strenuously summoned and dragged back to clean the mess, and, after extended negotiations, he clears some dishes in exchange for his father cleaning the spilled yogurt.

We hear a lot about children ignoring or refusing to carry out parental directives. Yet, as in the above debacle of getting a child to help clear the table, parents as well as children can be culprits in sabotaging cooperation. Parents dissipate children's cooperation when they reflexively disparage their own authority. The breakdown is amplified when parents are distracted, when they do not follow up on the aftermath of their directives, when they do not consider children's current involvements, and when they try to coerce children.

Reflexivity and resistance over performing the simple chore of table-cleaning exemplifies Giddens's (1990) point that pervasive doubt about social order is emblematic of late modernity and the dissipation of a unified model of society and the certainty that accompanies social conventions and expectations. Of course, in every historical epoch there have been variable ways of acting as a family, some of which question the status quo. Today, however, many US parents feel that even basic anchoring principles that guided former generations are no longer held dear. As Hestbæk (1998) and Kremer-Sadlik (2009) have shown, parents often voice their uncertainty concerning how to enact their positions and what they should expect from children and partners in the practical management of daily life.

Uncertainty pervaded this highly reflexive family dinner encounter: Who has the responsibility to clean the mess on the table; whose responsibility is it to monitor and enforce this task; what is the rationale for these "duties"? And if these responsibilities are up for grabs, how will the table get cleaned? In every conversational turn, such matters rose to the surface and became objects of doubt. Doubts had to be resolved one way or the other to accomplish a task, yet a long string of reflexive utterances suspended the resolutions of doubt. The parental discourse flip-flopped between a quasi-directive (e.g., "Are you guys going to clean up that mess?") or a half-hearted rationale (e.g., "Because Jonah that's your- duty. . .") and a disparagement of these attempts at task assignment (e.g., "heh-heh," "Yeah, right mom"). These discursive acts implicated a lack of a routine for clearing the table, fuzziness of assigned parent and child roles, and reflexivity concerning this predicament. Both the mother and father demonstrate reflective self-awareness; they treat themselves as objects of scrutiny and, in so doing become self-critical. Like Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, the parents voice a sense of ironic detachment from the existential moment. Coordination around cleaning spilled yogurt consumed a lot of meta-talk, turns, and time.

## 2 Coordination and Family Coherence

Bratman's (1992) analysis of shared cooperative activity stipulates three key requirements of participants: (1) mutual responsiveness, (2) commitment to the joint activity, and (3) commitment to mutual support. These orientations, already manifest in the

first year of life (Tomasello *et al.* 2005), are fundamental to children's understanding of normative order (Rakoczy, Warneken, and Tomasello 2008), the coordination of family activities, and the family itself as a shared cooperative enterprise. Cooperation itself is central to a young child's social cognition. Indeed, as noted by Cole (2002), Moll and Tomasello (2007), and Rogoff (1990), joint attention is a developmental milestone in learning in general, including cultural knowledge needed to engage the social world.

Nonetheless, the state of joint attention and the establishment of shared cooperative activity do not come easily for even older children and their parents. Family interactions like the cleaning up task excerpted above indicate that mutual responsiveness, commitment, and support needed to establish joint attention and that shared cooperative activity cannot be automatically assured. Instead, as clarified by Cekaite (2010), M. H. Goodwin (2006), C. Goodwin (2006, 2007), and Kremer-Sadlik and Kim (2007), considerable interactional work is often required to bring children into corporeal and attentional alignments that afford participation in a joint activity.

Family coherence, that is, the sense that the family is an orderly and meaningful social unit (Antonovsky and Sourani 1988), does not entail stopping whatever one is doing to support one another. Rather, in keeping with Bratman's requirement of mutual responsiveness, the vitality of the family depends upon its members being aware and supportive of a web of activities that they and/or other family members are attempting to accomplish now or in some projected future time. CELF family members, for example, usually engaged in homework as a shared cooperative activity; but, in addition, homework involvement needed to coordinate with the accomplishment of other family routines after work and school and with unanticipated events that entailed special consideration.

Arriving home CELF mothers often had to manage a web of tasks – monitoring children, helping with homework, preparing dinner, tidying up, and even workplace duties – before their spouses returned home. Deep in this swirl of tasks, they usually did not have the “luxury” of directing attention exclusively to one child's activity underway. As such it was important for children to be attuned to the transcendent family coordination effort and adjust their own behaviors accordingly. CELF children often were oblivious to this effort, but in some households they displayed a grander attunement to the family as a larger enterprise. In these instances, children's awareness was displayed by exhibiting a measure of autonomy in completing a chore and/or by helping their parent directly with a pressing task.

Unlike the isolated shared cooperative activity designed for experimental settings, on-the-ground family coordination is far messier. In a Georgetown Sloan study, Kendall (2008) found that over the course of dinner-time parents took on managerial, caregiving, and other interactional roles along with concomitant tasks. In line with Bianchi and colleagues (2006), Hochschild and Machung (2003), Offer and Schneider (2010), and other studies of gender asymmetries in household division of labor, the mother in Kendall's study juggled far more roles than the father, often simultaneously.

In a study of a wide range of activities that transpired in CELF households from late afternoon until children were in bed, Good (2009) provides a micro-analysis of the moment-to-moment flow of multiple, rapidly shifting tasks that required CELF mothers' attention, commitment, and support. The following CELF family scene illustrates the many simultaneous tugs on a mother's attention and the effort involved in monitoring her son's homework completion. The scene involves Jason, his mother,

and his one-year-old baby sister Rory and transpires soon after the exchange reproduced above in which Jason recognizes that he has broken the house rule that forbade watching television before 7:30pm on weekday evenings. Once the television rules are clarified and Jason has turned off the television, Jason's mother directs him to bring his homework to the kitchen, where she is cooking dinner and Rory is in her highchair:

Mother: Why don't you bring me your homework stuff. I want to look at it.

Looking over his math problems seated at the kitchen table with Jason, his mother spots an error:

Mother: How did you get twenty-seven miles? Did you add eighteen and nine?

Jason: Uh hm.

Mother: Okay, that's not how it works.

She and Jason dive into the shared cooperative activity of solving a math problem: (1) Jason's mother asks him to get a piece of paper for them to work on the solution, (2) Jason brings the wrong kind of paper, (3) Jason's mother redirects him to the right kind of paper, (4) Jason eventually locates the right paper. Before they can continue problem-solving, however, Rory, who is sitting in her highchair next to them, starts babbling, which prompts her mother to stand up and engage Rory in a brief face-to-face affectionate exchange:

Rory: ((Prattles))

Mother: Hi baby:::

Rory: ((Prattles))

Mother: Ro::ry:: Ro::ry::

The mother swiftly sits down at the kitchen table again to engage Jason in collaboratively working through the math problem. In this endeavor she steps outside the calculation exercise to reflexively comment on her own "hard time" with such assignments when she was "in school":

Mother: Okay look. (.) Let's try to do this together.

(.)

Cause this is the stuff that I used to have a hard time with in school.

But two events derail this effort: (1) Rory begins to fuss and, (2) Jason's attention drifts. The mother reels Jason back to task:

Rory: [((Yelps loudly))

Jason: [((Looks at Rory))

Mother: [Pay attention please.

Trying to juggle the needs of Rory, who cries out, and Jason, the mother intermittently reads aloud the math problem and talks to Rory:

- Mother: Okay Carson (pause) to Hunter takes forty-five  
[minutes.  
Rory: [Ahhhhhh!  
(. .)  
Mother: Okay? Forty five minutes to drive from Carson to Hunter. TEN miles-  
Carson to Rye  
Rory: Ahhhh! [Ahhhhhh  
Mother: [is ten miles.  
Rory! Where is your snack?  
Rory: Uhh.  
Mother: Six miles from Rye to Hunter.

At this point, shared cooperative activity around homework takes a breather, and mother and Jason coordinate on another level to calm Rory. Getting up from the table, the mother addresses Rory and recruits Jason to locate her juice bottle.

- Mother: You want to get out?  
You want your juice?  
Jason you know what?  
Can you-  
Is her juice around babe?  
Can you look for it for me?

In the midst of Jason retrieving the bottle for Rory and the mother placing a snack in front of her, the mother manages also to check on food cooking on the kitchen stove. And the completion of these joint accomplishments provides an opening for homework to resume.

- Mother: So then how far is it from Carson to Hunter? Well, if  
Carson to Rye is ten miles, and Rye to Hunter is six miles,  
you would add these two together.  
Jason: [I know. It's sixteen. Sixteen miles to Hunter ((unclear)).  
Mother: [That's how-right. That's what I'm trying to tell you.

Good's model of multi-tasking in this brief interaction indicates that the shifts in attention are dizzying and the embeddedness of the coordination complex. Notable for the present discussion, unlike the non-collaborative children in the dinner cleanup scene depicted earlier, Jason was able to see the larger set of demands in the present situation and demonstrated responsiveness, commitment, and support in coordinating with his mother to help soothe his baby sister.

Certain activities – which are culturally construed – are deemed absolutely basic to family life. In US middle-class households, meals, laundry, housecleaning, hygiene, schoolwork, errands, and bill-paying are endeavors that generally cannot be skipped without compromising family well-being. While the timing of these activities may have some wiggle room, their occurrence is not optional from most parents' perspective. Thus, coordination relies upon not only the cognitive ability to read another family member's orientation to launch an activity but also social awareness of the significance of this activity within the scheme of the family. For example, a child's collaboration in

the activity of cleaning a table after dinner requires not only attunement to a parental directive to perform such activity but also background sociocultural knowledge that tables require cleaning after eating. The parent's desire to have the table cleaned is not arbitrary but rather normatively expected.

In and across family activities, coordination rested upon a disposition of care and the ability to see others and oneself sociologically, to borrow from Garfinkel (2006). Like Bratman, Garfinkel stipulated that social action requires an actor to consider "the behavior of others in orienting his own action" (2006: 194). Taking a more social science turn, however, Garfinkel (2006, originally 1948) insisted that this orientation draws upon sociocultural knowledge. Social identities and relationships, including families, are "occasioned by working acts performed with reference to another actor" (Garfinkel 2006: 145). In this perspective, family members interpret intentions, anticipate actions, and otherwise coordinate with one another by selectively attending to their identities and the world of associated, expectable activities that realize them.

### **3 Coordination Troubles**

If all we need to anticipate actions and coordinate with others is cognitive and social knowledge of situated activities and identities, then, theoretically, once we have acquired this knowledge, activities should run smoothly. But they do not. To be human is to act spontaneously; activities evolve in ways that are not foreseen by participants. As Schegloff has noted (1986, this volume), even seemingly mindless routines (such as beginning a phone conversation) are moment-by-moment interactional achievements. In addition, all sorts of unanticipated life circumstances crop up to throw monkey wrenches in one's expectations about routine activities.

Looking across the CELF corpus of more than 1500 hours of video-recorded family activities and existing studies thereof, we isolate three prevalent sources of trouble that complicated cooperation among family members: (1) separation troubles, (2) individualism troubles, and (3) inconsistency troubles.

#### **3.1 Separation troubles**

##### *3.1.1 Work and school separations*

One challenge to family coordination resides in the sociocultural reality that families in the United States spend long hours apart each day during the work and school week. The spread of cellphone use across generations has mitigated some of the effects of separation, but there remain large portions of family members' days that are neither co-experienced nor known. This existential condition renders re-uniting as a family at the end of the day often the first opportunity to learn about one's day and state of mind.

Achieving a state of connectedness rests upon a more basic awareness that a family member has arrived back at home and is co-present for social engagement. All over the world people ease themselves into a state of social engagement through the ritual

of greeting one another (Duranti 1997; Goffman 1963, 1967). Yet, our observations of CELF families indicate that parents, especially fathers, returning from work were often ignored by their children (Campos *et al.* 2009; Ochs *et al.* 2006). Fathers on average worked longer and arrived home two hours later than mothers. When fathers first walked through the door, the house was usually abuzz with all sorts of ongoing activities. They were ignored in 87 percent of their re-entries that we observed by at least one child and 45 percent of these occasions by their spouses who did not interrupt an activity in which they were engrossed. Returning mothers were acknowledged more often by children and spouses: they were ignored by at least one child in (only) 44 percent of their arrivals home and by their spouse on 33 percent of these occasions. Children were also more likely to give brief reports of their day to returning mothers than to their fathers. In addition, fathers sometimes upon returning home retreated to be by themselves, perhaps in an attempt to compensate for a long day at work (Repetti, Wang, and Saxbe 2009). In our scan sampling across weeknights, fathers were observed more often alone in a room than with other family members (39 percent vs. 25 percent of timed observations) (Graesch 2013). The lack of synchronization between fathers' and other family members' schedules rendered their transition into shared cooperative engagement with the family more difficult.

Returning fathers, however, often tried to press forward to reconnect with their family, especially their children. In the exchange below an arriving father tries to garner the attention of his 13-year-old son Abe and six-year-old son Ben, who are playing a video game on the television. He begins with a short greeting:

Father: Hi guys.

Receiving no response, he turns to the researcher, with whom he exchanges greetings and sympathetic inquiries about the day. The father then re-launches his greeting to the children. Still no response:

Father: Hi you guys.  
(. . .)

At this point, the father formulates a reflexive commentary on their lack of sociality, "So uh that's it," but in the middle of the comment he pauses and during that pause, Ben greets back:

Father: So uh=  
(long pause)  
Ben: So hi.  
Father: = that's it.

The father then expands his reflexive commentary, comparing himself unfavorably to the TV as a point of attraction for the boys; Ben reinforces this perspective:

Father: So you don't talk to me, just TV.  
Ben: No.

But all is not lost! Abe, still playing the game and watching the television screen, suddenly inquires about his father's colleague, Ed:

- Abe: So when Ed has no other ride, what does he do-  
 what does he do when you don't ((*unclear*)).  
 (. . .)
- Father: His wife picks him up and he couldn't get a hold of her.

Abe displays, in spite of a lack of greeting, that he is fully aware that his father has just arrived home after having given a colleague a ride home. And from here the father connects with his sons by jointly attending to and asking questions about the video game they are playing.

### 3.1.2 *Built environment separations*

An additional form of separation is tied to architectural features of most contemporary American houses. In these houses, living spaces are often separated by interior walls, creating compartmentalized spaces that afford privacy from others in one's surrounding. This built environment is striking from a cross-cultural perspective: dwellings in many, relatively "traditional" societies consist of open spaces where family members eat, sleep, work, and otherwise engage in socially coordinated activities (Ochs 1988; Ochs and Izquierdo 2009; Schieffelin 1990). Robert Frost wrote that fences make good neighbors; in this light, walls allow some psychic breathing room from one's omnipotent family. Yet, this architectural feature also is an impediment to (1) face-to-face interaction among family members, and (2) participation in communal activities involving the entire family. Graesch (2013) reports that kitchens served as the prime area for CELF family members to participate in activities (e.g., meals, homework, workplace tasks), but during the work and school week family members infrequently were all together in the same room (14.5 percent of timed observations). Somewhat more frequent were scenes of a mother (34.2 percent of observations) or a father in a room with one or more children (25.1 percent of observations). Couples were very rarely in the same room without their children (less than 10 percent of observations).

What are the implications of these observations for family interaction? Graesch (2013) observed that when family members were in the same space, those moments were not necessarily loci for shared activities, even communication. In line with this observation and relevant to family coordination, M. H. Goodwin (2006) found that directives by a parent to a child were often issued from a separate room from the location of the child. With the parent out of sight, the directive often went unheeded. Directives were more successful when the parent was in the same room as the child and engaged in face-to-face communication. Thus, for example, in the contentious after-dinner exchange between Jonah and his mother about cleaning the table (M. H. Goodwin 2006), the mother started out directing Jonah at a distance while standing by the dining table – to no avail. Only when the mother walked into the room where Jonah was playing was some minor progress toward compliance gained.

Alternatively, lack of collaboration can occur when family members start out in the same space but one wanders away into another area of the home, creating spatial

separation. In the following excerpt, eight-year-old Hailey is lying on her parents' bed watching a video, when her father walks in to remind her that she needs to read her book for homework. He stands in front of the television set to secure her attention, but Hailey complains and presses to first watch her program and then read. The father first steps back to examine the situation, proffering a reflexive summation of the arrangement between Hailey and him that he has to offer ("Here's the deal"):

- Father: Here's the deal. You want to watch some of this  
 ((*pointing to TV*))?  
 (..)  
 Then we need to read a little bit ((*pointing to book*))
- Hailey: But-but- watch this then read.
- Father: What do you mean, watch that and read?
- Hailey: Watch this and then read.  
 [Excuse me, I can't see.
- Father: [No, because you won't read.
- Hailey: Yes, I will:! [It's almost [ov- and-  
 ((*Father turns the video off*))
- Hailey: [UGH::
- Father: [It is? Is it almost over?  
 ((*turns the video on again*))

After 11 more turns of negotiation, her father turns off the video once again. Hailey gets off the bed and moves toward the video machine, but her father blocks the way; she whines, throws herself on the bed, buries her head in the pillow, and continues to argue with her father, who does not back down. After 15 turns, Hailey succumbs and begins negotiating the number of pages she will read:

- Hailey: But- how many pages?  
 Only (.) two pages.
- Father: No.
- Hailey: Yes::
- Father: I'll sit with you.
- Hailey: ((*whining*)) NO::, you'll probably make me read like forty:: pages:!

She manages to bargain down the number of pages from her father's suggestion of 20 to five pages. After 16 turns of this negotiation, the father leaves Hailey to read on the bed and exits the room. Disaster: four minutes later he returns to find Hailey watching the video. After she clumsily claims to have read 10 pages, cheekily moving the bookmark 10 pages forward in front of her father, he throws up his hands and reflexively says "You know (pause) I give up." Walking out of the room, he announces that he will turn off the video in five minutes. After considerably more back and forth, Hailey eventually stops watching the video but refuses to read more, arguing that she read enough.

In this exchange and others, the layout of the home (1) established a physical separation between Hailey and her father, (2) allowed the father to come and go; thus, not continuously monitor Hailey's actions, and (3) made it possible for Hailey to privately resist cooperating with her father. Although not a totalizing explanation, all of these affordances diminished parent-child collaboration around the reading task.

### 3.2 *Individualism troubles*

From its inception the United States has championed the credo of individual freedom in the spheres of religion, politics, economics, education, health, and the pursuit of well-being more broadly. Integral to this social ethos is the preference to be able to choose, exercise one's free will, and make one's own path through life. In the post-World War II era, Dr. Spock (1946), an American pediatrician and author of best-seller books about child-rearing, advocated a set of child-rearing tenets that encouraged parents to foster children's expression of their individual beliefs, desires, and tastes. These views were not universally accepted, but they have seeped into core parenting practices in many middle-class American homes ever since (Laureau 2003; Kuserow 2004).

This tendency is related to the license of family members to voice dissent, although families vary in who is entitled to do so, to what extent, and under which circumstances. This expression of individuality can wreak havoc in the achievement of family coordination. In CELF households children's resistance to parental desires was ubiquitous (C. Goodwin 2006; Klein and Goodwin 2013; Paugh and Izquierdo 2009). Children expressed their individual desires in opposition to their parents' wishes in circumstances such as not eating food served to them, not cleaning up, not doing homework, and not going to an extra-curricular activity. Across these moments, children's individual desires became the focus of interaction, around which coordination depends.

C. Goodwin (2006) analyzed one such upheaval in family coordination around an established extra-curricular activity: out of the blue, 12-year-old Ed announced "I wanna quit choir" to his father in the car on the way to choir rehearsal at their church with his twin sister. This sudden declaration caught the father off-guard. Several minutes of oppositional turns ensued, even when they reached the church grounds. The news unsettled the father's hope that Ed, like his sister, would sing in the choir concert the following day. In the back and forth, he tried to stall (e.g., "Honey we can talk about it"), then strike a compromise ("Today you gotta go to choir"). But Ed held his ground, even when asked to look to his conscience. Ultimately, his father respected his decision and its consequences for the future (C. Goodwin 2006: 445–6):

- Dad: You'll feel better leaving than staying? \*hhh  
 Ed: Yes.  
 Dad: Cause sometimes  
 Ed: I'm not going anymore  
 (. .)  
 Dad: Sometimes you feel bad after the [fact  
 Ed: [((unclear))  
 Dad: But you wanna go home?  
 Ed: Yes. I'm not going anymore.  
 Dad: Okay.

In this reckoning of desires, the father deployed reflexive speech to raise Ed's awareness of his immediate and future feelings (e.g., "You'll feel better leaving than staying?" "Sometimes you feel bad after the fact"). The contesting parties managed to sustain mutual respect and involvement through linguistic structures, such as endearments

(e.g., “Honey”) and format tying, that is, repetition (e.g., “I’m not going anymore,” “But you wanna go home?”), which enmeshed them “poetically” (C. Goodwin 2006: 451).

Expressions of individual desires usually take the form of volitional verbs, as in “I (don’t) want” and/or “You (don’t) want.” The full choir practice exchange is littered with “want”: “I wanna quit choir,” “Daddy, I don’t wanna sing today=okay?,” “I can talk when I wanna talk,” “But you wanna go home.” A child’s “want” is often cast in opposition to what a parent perceives to be necessary or required to accomplish an activity in focus. Alluding to the child’s obligation, parents use modals such as “got to” and “have to,” as when Ed’s father retorted, “You gotta go to rehearsal,” “Toda:y you gotta go to choir,” “Honey, you have to go” (C. Goodwin 2006).

Another common counterpoint to “want” is a reflexive statement of a family rule, norm, or policy. This reflexive counter (in boldface) was used to secure a child’s cooperation in the following family dinner conflict between six-year-old Becky and her father over eating potatoes:

- Father: Finish your potatoes at least.  
 Becky: I: [done:: I’m done, I don’t want to do it, I’m done.  
 Father: [Finish that one piece.

((*interveining talk*))

- Father: You know what, Becky?  
**We’ve been fooling around, but it’s really time for you  
 to finish that potato and then you’re done.**  
 Becky: I’m done.  
 Father: Come on, you just have maybe four bites of potato [left.  
 Becky: [I’m done:  
 done.

((*intervening talk*))

- Father: Becky, come here.

((*intervening talk*))

- Father: [Finish up.  
 Becky: [And no dessert. ((*Sticks tongue at Father*)).  
 Father: Well, it’s your choice (.) if you want no dessert.

These turn exchanges were part of a much longer transaction in which Becky formulated her desire not to eat the potato (“I don’t want to do it”) in the face of her father stipulating requirements of eating the savory part of the meal (“it’s really time for you to finish that potato and then you’re done”). The father did not support his daughter’s desires when it contradicted his requirement. That is, there were constraints on individualism. In line with these constraints, he reflexively cast Becky’s decision not to have dessert as her choice (“Well, it’s your choice (pause) if you want no dessert”). But implied in his wording was the assumption that Becky’s choice to not have dessert did not mean that she had the choice to not finish the potato on her plate. Eventually

Becky agreed to her father's requirements in order to merit dessert. Once again family coordination depended upon a discursive process, here one in which individual desires are aired, reconciled, and otherwise reckoned with to achieve mutual responsiveness, commitment, and support.

Before leaving the topic of individualism and family coordination, we point out that the much-championed ideology that children, at least by school age, should be relatively self-reliant was rarely apparent in children's behavior in CELF households (Ochs and Izquierdo 2009).<sup>2</sup> Children's self-reliance is critical to the coordination of family life as a whole. In many societies around the world adults rely upon children to perform certain basic tasks more or less on their own, especially bathing and dressing themselves. Such self-reliance frees adults to perform other important tasks. Instead, in many CELF households elementary-school-age children infrequently initiated on their own even basic tasks (e.g., getting dressed) and often received assistance from their parents in a wide range of activities from hygiene to homework: An eight-year-old boy asked his father to untie and tie his sneakers; a 12-year-old asked his father to get up from the dinner table and bring the silverware. Many of these middle-class parents struggled with the potentially unwanted consequences of investing in their child as the center of their attention and energy. They worried that promoting children's self-absorption inhibits their self-sufficiency and attunement to helping others in their surroundings.

### 3.3 *Inconsistency troubles*

Inconsistency is an eternal part of the human condition and the impetus behind the existential search for self-continuity in an unstable world. Incongruities occur between past and present, one situation and another, and the perspectives of self and other. A cognitive challenge is to assimilate dissonant, contradictory ways of thinking, feeling, and acting and thereby to grow and learn across the life span. A societal challenge is to create, in the face of these discrepancies, a semblance of social orderliness and certain shared cultural orientations among members of a social group.

In this light, social coordination in families (and elsewhere) requires (1) members' flexibility to respond to contingency, change, and difference, and (2) members' cultural-historical sense of what is normal and expected in social situations and practices. The rub is that it is difficult to strike a balance between these two demands.

For CELF parents it was vital to apprentice their children into stable practices. Parents used a wide range of strategies to encourage children to abide by situational expectations, including prompting, persuading, teasing, accompanying, monitoring, and inspecting their behavior as it progressed toward the desired end (see Kremer-Sadlik and Gutiérrez 2013; Tulbert and Goodwin 2011; Wingard 2007). As noted, they also explicitly stated a situational expectation and tried to secure children's affirmation of that expectation as a means of instilling recognition of their responsibilities. Recall what transpired in the exchange cited earlier between Jason and his mother when she discovered him watching TV before the permitted hour of 7:30pm. She used sarcasm to drive home his transgression and elicit his confirmation of "the rules of the house." Her ventriloquized utterance "Well, I'm sorry. I guess I forgot the rules of the house" carried a metamessage for Jason beyond its literal meaning as an apology. Like a

scene from Hamlet, Jason was audience to his mother’s shaming performance. In this performance, she attributed to him the act of forgetting, holding him aware of the rule and thereby accountable for his actions. Indeed, in admitting his knowledge of the 7:30pm constraint on watching TV, Jason sealed his fate as blameworthy offender.

Our point in returning to these socializing strategies – be they strict or gentle – is that they emphasize the import of consistency, that coordination of family activities is managed through children’s continuing attunement to such activities and disposition to contribute what is expected or desired.

Yet, the imperative to apprentice children into what is expected of them frequently gave way to inconsistent parental expectations concerning the responsibilities of children to help out in household and other activities. The parent–child dinner cleanup encounter presented earlier exemplifies such inconsistency, as outlined in Table 34.1. Similarly, in the exchange between Hailey and her father (see above), the father switched back and forth between being assertive and relinquishing his authority. His imperative that Hailey read her book for homework was weakened by discrepancies in his behavior: he offered to read with her but then left the room; he requested that she read 20 pages but then reduced it to 10 and did not object when Hailey decided to read only five pages.

CELF family coordination efforts were flooded with similar inconsistencies. Often parents requested that children execute a certain task (e.g., make bed, take shower, tidy room, set table) but ended up doing it themselves. Sometimes inconsistent socialization

**Table 34.1** Inconsistent enactments of parental authority

<i>Exerts authority</i>	<i>Mitigates authority</i>
Father directs sons to cleanup table	[Younger son refuses; older son ignores] Father laughs at refusal to comply Father relinquishes authority over cleanup to Mother
Mother directs younger son to cleanup.	[Younger son ignores]
Mother directs older son to cleanup	[Older son ignores]
Mother cites “duty” as rationale for older son to cleanup	Mother utters rationale for cleanup with hesitations and restarts, as if searching for words. [Older son ignores] Mother ventriloquates older son’s refusal
Mother cites another rationale for older son to cleanup	Mother mitigates rationale with “well” preface [Older son ignores] [Sons go play in other room] [Conflict continues]

strategies were a result of one parent undercutting the authority of the other parent by derailing the child from fulfilling a task requested. In one such exchange a mother insisted that her 13-year-old son make his bed, but his father countered by saying he had asked the son moments before to play cards with him. In this case, the mother retorted, "Cleaning up comes first," and the son quickly made his bed before joining his father in the living room.

Instances of parental inconsistency may be spawned by a number of circumstances. Inconsistent socialization of children into cooperating in family life may be the unwitting outcome of lives overcrowded with workplace and domestic demands and the sheer exhaustion that ensues. Or, as noted by Kendall (2007), Klein, Izquierdo, and Bradbury (2007, 2013), and Tannen (2006), inconsistency in recruiting participation in chores and other activities may be tied to lack of a default division of labor in which parents have pre-delegated tasks to family members, including children.

Alternatively, inconsistency troubles may be a corollary of separation and individualism troubles. Cross-cultural research by Ochs and Schieffelin (1984), Ochs and Izquierdo (2009), and Rogoff and colleagues (2003) indicates that in smaller scale indigenous and other social groups, children and adults generally remain in close proximity of one another for long stretches of time during the day. Children in these communities have greater opportunity to observe and acquire skills needed to cooperate in basic tasks. Moreover, caregivers have more opportunity to encourage children to attend to ongoing activities and monitor the consistent quality of children's efforts to contribute to these activities. In the US, the geographic separation that ensues from family members going to school and work and the architectural separation inside the home promotes individual, divergent pursuits (especially the time-consuming homework activity) and perspectives, which in turn diminishes opportunities for children to learn from and consistently work together with their parents in a wide range of shared cooperative activities.

Furthering the link between inconsistency, separation, and individualism, the respect for privacy and personal perspectives opens the way for each family member, including each child, to develop his or her own ideas about what should be done and how. Indeed, this inclination characterized the transaction forged between Ed and his father while on the way to choir practice (see above). In this case, Ed was given license to voice his strong view about quitting choir, which diminished the father's authority and expertise in deciding what Ed should do. At the same time, the father's shifting stances were managed in such a way as to yield the positive outcome of maintaining the emotional bond and mutual respect between father and son. That is, inconsistency can be positive when equated with open-mindedness and flexibility in the face of unexpected circumstances.

## 4 Conclusion

Family coordination in US middle-class households is a formidable interactional accomplishment, in that the horizon of expectations for particular activities is not uniformly taken-for-granted, including the participant roles of family members. Discourse

becomes fundamental to family coordination, as the coherence of the modern family is inherently prone to troubles arising from lengthy periods of separation of family members each day, celebrated ideology of individualism, and inconsistent apprenticeship into cooperation.

Separation, individualism, and inconsistency troubles together form a troika of late (or post-) modernity, characterized by a diversity of voices that protest dominant power structures and received ideas, the privileging of personal choice over duty, and a quotidian heightened awareness of self and situation. In this cultural-historical paradigm, social conventions – a psychic and social necessity – are vulnerable to a heterogeneity of constantly shifting perspectives that call into question the “naturalness” of the status quo. In the realm of family life, the “naturalness” of child-rearing practices, including parental authority, is recalibrated, as parents cast uncertainty about their decisions and actions and children assert their own voices of authority over their conduct.

The unpredictable aspect of daily practices presents a challenge to family well-being. According to ecocultural theory (Weisner 2002, 2008), engagement in everyday routine activities promotes family well-being for not only children but couples as well. Knowing what activity is expected to take place, when, how, who is expected to be involved, and in what manner are vital to maintaining family coherence. It also underpins the cultural-historical continuity of social practices. In addition, individual family members’ well-being is enhanced when they collaboratively construct the meaningfulness of joint activities through co-involvement. Across the CELF families, coordination troubles were always close at hand, ready to throw a monkey wrench in goal-attainment. This upset, as the excerpts in this chapter have illustrated, led at times to long drawn-out arguments and negotiations between parents and children in an attempt to rally collaboration. At the same time, the social interaction that surrounded these troubles had a silver lining: family members, including young children, were drawn into collaborative practices for coping with situational contingencies and reconciling their own and others’ desires to reach a compromise. In this perspective, coordination troubles in themselves may enable family well-being.

In the contemporary US, family life has become a vernacular object of panoptical examination in the public at large. Family-relevant metacommentary, however, is not restricted to media articles and blogs. Nor is reflexivity inside the home relegated to the rare moments in which a family member is able to introspect about the family at a distance from the throes of daily demands. Instead, the family coordination excerpts presented in this chapter demonstrate that reflexive inspection of the situation at hand is integral to family interactions underway. In the course of coordinating with one another, adults and children had one foot inside the family process and the other in a reflexive, evaluative position. Goffman (1967) identifies the proclivity for reflexivity as a form of alienation in which one disconnects from social engagement. But its ubiquity in the CELF family interactions indicated just the opposite: a yearning to bring one’s child or one’s life partner into a state of reciprocal responsiveness, commitment, and support while preserving mutual respect.

Recourse to reflexive comments in coordination troubles – “You monitor that,” “Jonah that’s your duty,” “We need some help cleaning,” “I guess I forgot the rules of the house,” “Let’s try to do this together,” “So you don’t talk to me, just TV,” “Sometimes you feel bad after the fact,” “It’s really time for you to finish that potato,” and “You’ll probably make me read like forty pages!” – were appeals for social alignment

or, at a minimum, for social recognition. In this social endeavor, reflexive moves, along with the coordination troubles that incited them, crystallized what family members desired or, cognizant of power asymmetries, what family members demanded from one another in the situation at hand. The ever-present possibility, at least in the households observed for this study, that a family member may rebuff such an appeal indicates that the family is an incompletely determined social institution and that family members do not merely perform their roles. Instead, family is subject to reconstitution and transformation – much of which transpires through discourse – as an ongoing coordination project.

NOTES

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|--|--|--|
| <p>1 The following transcription conventions are used in this chapter:</p> <p>(.) micro-pause</p> <p>(..) brief pause</p> <p>(...) long pause</p> <p>[ squared brackets aligned across adjacent lines denote the start of overlapping talk</p> <p>CAPS relatively high volume</p> <p><u>word</u> underlined word is emphatically stressed</p> <p>:: lengthened syllables of speech sounds</p> <p>- cut-off utterance</p> | <p>((grimaces)) non-vocal behavior or other communicatively relevant information</p> <p>() unclear utterance</p> <p>= no discernable pause between turns</p> | <p>2 This observation supports Kuserow’s (2004) conclusion that “hard individualism,” which promotes toughness, resilience, and independence, is more common in working-class caregiving, while “soft individualism,” which promotes sensitivity to a child’s inner self, is predominant in upper-middle-class caregiving.</p> |
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# IV Discourse in Real-World Contexts

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# 35 Institutional Discourse

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ANDREA MAYR

## 0 Introduction

Institutions (and how they work) have long been the object of many investigations in the fields of media, cultural, and organizational studies. More recently, there has been a “linguistic” turn in the study of institutions with many language-focused explorations of how power and discourse may function in specific institutional and organizational settings, such as schools, courtrooms, corporations, clinics, hospitals, and prisons. Many of these studies have been concerned with the ways in which language is used to create and shape institutions and how institutions in turn have the capacity to create, shape, and impose discourses on people. Institutions thus have considerable control over the organizing of our routine experiences of the world and the way we classify that world. They also have the power to foster particular kinds of identities to suit their own purposes.

One important question that has been addressed in studies about institutions is the way that the relationship between discourse and institutions should be conceptualized. Linguistic-oriented and discourse analytical approaches to institutional research generally regard linguistic exchange as an important aspect of interaction where discourse is seen as *constitutive* of institutions (Deetz 2003; Fairclough and Wodak 1997; Mumby and Mease 2011). From this perspective, language is the principal means by which institutions and organizations create their own social reality. Mumby and Clair elaborate this point thus:

Organizations exist only in so far as their members create them through discourse. This is not to claim that organizations are “nothing but discourse”, but rather that discourse is the principal means by which organizational members create a coherent social reality that frames their sense of who they are. (Mumby and Clair 1997: 181)

This view of discourse as constituting social reality does not necessarily mean that discourse is all there is, but assigns discourse an important role in shaping reality, creating patterns of understanding, which people then apply in social practices. Accordingly, institutions – their members and others with whom they interact (e.g., the public) – are being constructed and reconstructed in discourse practices.

Rather than regarding organizations and institutions simply “as social collectives where shared meaning is produced,” critical studies of institutions and their discourses see them as “sites of struggle where different groups compete to shape the social reality [. . .] in ways that serve their own interests” (Mumby and Clair 1997: 182). For example, a number of critical discourse studies have explored how management in the “new” capitalist workplace (such as the call center) attempt to articulate a social reality for employees which emphasizes supposedly egalitarian workplace practices (“teamwork”) in which employees take “ownership” of their work, while at the same time securing commitment from them in order to realize their institutional goals (see Cameron 2000a, 2000b). These attempts at institutional and discursive control are however often contested by workers as we shall see below (see also Taylor and Bain 2003).

The study of institutional discourse has been approached from many theoretical and analytical perspectives, including critical, postmodern, and feminist (see Mumby and Mease 2011). Here we focus on studies in the critical and postmodern tradition with particular reference to two prominent discourse analytical approaches, Conversation Analysis (CA) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (for a more extensive overview of approaches see Drew and Sorjonen 2011). While CA is a “micro-level” approach to institutional discourse, CDA has adopted a more “macro-level” orientation with theoretical antecedents both in neo-Marxism and Foucault. The contributions of both traditions will be discussed below. First we will explore the relationship between discourse, power, and institutions in more detail.

## **1 The Relationship between Institutions, Discourse, and Power**

Mumby and Clair (1997: 195) have identified various strands of research in the study of the relationship between discourse, institutions, and power. One strand has explored how members of oppressed groups can discursively penetrate the institutionalized form of their oppression (e.g., Hall 1985); another how subordinate individuals discursively frame their own subordination, thereby perpetuating it (e.g., Clair 1993). A third strand has been concerned with the analysis of how dominant groups discursively construct and reproduce their own positions of institutional dominance (e.g., van Dijk 1993). While some of these accounts emphasize agency over structure, others focus more on the mutually constitutive relationship between the two. Examples from each of these strands will be presented below.

As pointed out above, an important concern in studies of institutional discourse has been the conceptualization of the relationship between discourse and institutions. Alvesson and Karreman (2000) make an important distinction between “discourse” (with a small “d”) and “Discourse” (with a capital “D”). The former refers to

“micro-level” studies of institutional discourse (such as how members of institutions interact), whereas the latter concerns macro-level, often Foucauldian, studies of the social context in which institutional interactions occur. In the study of institutional discourse the question of how to relate these two levels is crucial, although most studies have not adopted an integrated approach that bridges the two. Whereas micro-studies may have failed to adequately conceptualize how institutional actors react to broader structural constraints, macro-studies have perhaps not focused enough on how the broader context shapes social actors’ micro-level interactions (but see Holmer Nadesan 1997; Kwon, Clarke, and Wodak 2009; Mayr 2004; Reisigl and Wodak 2001; Scollon, Scollon, and Jones 2012).

In discourse analytical studies of institutions, “discourse” is language in real contexts of use. “Discourse” is also simultaneously a piece of text (written or spoken), an instance of discourse practice and an instance of social practice (Fairclough and Wodak 1997) and can also be signified through visual semiotic choices. It is therefore regarded as “multimodal,” because visual as well as linguistic structures can express (ideological) meanings. In the study of institutional discourse multimodal aspects of meaning-making have been largely ignored, although critical discourse analytical work has addressed this omission (e.g., Grant and Iedema 2005; Hansen and Machin 2008; Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 2001; Mayr and Machin 2012; van Leeuwen 2008).

The concept of “institution” itself is hard to define. Institutions are commonly associated with physical buildings or settings, such as schools, hospitals, media organizations, prisons, or courts of law. Popular definitions of an “institution” see it as an established organization or foundation, especially one dedicated to education, public service, or culture, or the building or buildings housing such an organization. Clearly, there appears to be some overlap in the use of the terms “institution” and “organization.” They are also used more or less interchangeably in the sociological and linguistic literature on the topic (e.g., Drew and Sorjonen 1997; Jablin and Putnam 2001), although “organization” seems to be used more for commercial corporations, whereas “institution” is more associated with the public organs of the state, both of which we are concerned with in the present chapter.

A useful definition of institutions is provided by Agar (1985: 164) who defines them as “a socially legitimated expertise together with those persons authorized to implement it.” This suggests that they are not restricted to designated physical settings and that they can refer to any powerful group, such as the government or the media.

Therefore, the “institutionality” of discourse, written and spoken, is not necessarily determined by its occurrence in physical settings. Discourse can be said to be institutional “insofar as the participants engage in and accomplish institutionally relevant activities ... and in doing so, orient to the relevance of their institutional identities for the interaction” (Drew and Sorjonen 2011: 193). Sarangi and Roberts (1999: 15) make a further distinction between “professional” and “institutional” discourse. How professionals (such as doctors or teachers) interact with their “clients” during a medical exam or a lecture is an example of professional discourse, while those communicative practices sanctioned by the institution (such as record-keeping) would be an example of institutional discourse. Again, the distinction between these terms is not clear cut and they are often used interchangeably (Koester 2010: 5).

The research reported in this chapter focuses mainly on face-to face institutional interactions and written institutional-bureaucratic and media discourses, although it

is important to note that “new” modes of communication, such as email, text messages, social media, and the Internet have also come to play an important role in institutional interactions (see Arminen 2005; Hutchby 2001; Jones 2012; Leppänen and Peuronen 2012).

## 2 Critical and Postmodern Studies of Institutional Discourse and Power

The idea that institutions serve the interests of certain powerful groups who impose their power on people has informed many theoretical accounts. When talking about institutional power as dominance, reference needs to be made in the first instance to the works of Weber and Marx. Weber (1947), who focused on the corrective power of the state and its institutions, argued that a bureaucratic system of rules constitutive of *authority* shapes and constrains the behavior of actors in institutional contexts (Mumby 2001). He therefore made a distinction between “power” and “authority.” Whereas power is tied to the personality of individuals, authority for Weber is always associated with social roles. The exercise of authority in institutions is the rational extension of a social actor’s *legitimate* role and power. In other words, power needs to be legitimate in order to be accepted by subordinates or the public. Marx (1967, originally 1887) in turn focused on the exploitative nature of capitalism and what in his view were the coercive relations of dominance in the workplace. He also described how exploitation is made to appear legitimate through ideology. “Ideology” in the Marxian sense functions to construct meaning that is in the interest of a dominant social class or group that articulates and legitimates certain forms of social reality. Research in the critical tradition has therefore focused on the ways in which capitalist organizations are able to produce and reproduce relations of domination in the workplace and how discourse functions ideologically to structure these power relations (e.g., Clegg and Dunkerley 1980).

Other critical accounts have adopted a more complex view of institutions and institutional power, in which power is achieved not by mere oppression, but also by persuasion and the complicity on the part of their members and the public. Based mainly on Gramsci’s (1971) concept of “hegemony” (which is related to ideology), these neo-Marxist studies describe the mechanisms through which dominant groups in society and institutions succeed in *persuading* subordinate groups to accept the former’s own moral, political, and cultural values. However, this consent is only ever achieved partially and temporarily and has to be fought for. The more legitimate and commonsensical the discourses and practices of dominant groups appear, the greater is their capacity to rule by “consent.” In critical studies of institutions and their discourses the concept of hegemony has therefore been an important tool for explaining why people consent to conditions that are not necessarily in their interest (e.g., Clair 1993; Fairclough 2004; Mumby 1987). An early example of a study of hegemonic relations between management and shopfloor quoted by Mumby and Mease (2011) is Burawoy’s (1979) ethnographic study of power relations at a machine parts factory, where he showed that workers were driven to work harder not through coercive measures on the part of

management but through “making out,” a (discursively constructed) game in which workers competed against each other to gain productivity bonuses. The game obscured the workers’ interests and the fact that management was gaining productivity with only minor increases in wages. The act of playing the game generated consent for its rules while providing a diversion to the repetitive labor. Similarly, a study by Deetz and Mumby (1985) found that the use of certain militaristic metaphors within organizations established a cognitive framework in which hidden power interests could be legitimately executed, serving to (re)produce the existing systems of domination.

Another important contribution to studies on institutional power is Foucault’s conception of institutions as sites of disciplinary power and disciplinary “micropractices” (Mumby 2001: 607). In this view, power is not solely exercised from above in terms of repression and ideology through the state and other sovereign institutions. Instead, power is far more diffused and dispersed. It is a “productive network which runs through the whole social body” (Foucault 1980: 131) and which is characterized by a complex and continuously evolving web of social and discursive relations. To analyze institutional practices and discourses solely from the perspective of domination, oppression, and exclusion therefore ignores how these discourses and practices “enlist subjects to their ‘natural’ cause” (Iedema 1998: 497). People are formed as “subjects,” that is, free but disciplined individuals.

It is mainly postmodern studies of institutional discourse that have appropriated Foucault’s conception of power and disciplinary control for their analysis of institutions and the “new” workplace in particular. In the more recent cultural and economic changes of “late modernity” (Giddens 1991), the re-organization of workers into “teams” has changed the way power is exercised in institutions. Control has shifted from managers to workers themselves through this establishment of work teams that engage in “self-surveillance.” In this way, “power is produced from the bottom up through the everyday discursive practices that construct team members’ identities” (Mumby 2001: 607). Mumby and Mease (2011) quote two examples from workplace settings that illustrate this. Barker’s (1999) study of a hi tech company showed that the shift of power from an impersonal bureaucratic to a de-centralized form with supposedly greater levels of participation for employees in fact created a far more insidious form of surveillance that emerged from the employee teams. Holmer Nadesan’s (1997) analysis of the widespread use of personality tests to measure employees’ suitability for certain jobs found that these tests did not discover certain personality traits, but functioned as a form of “government” in Foucault’s sense, providing the company with “a technique for engineering the workplace and for disciplining unruly employees” (Holmer Nadesan 1997: 213). What these studies also demonstrate is that power does not just prohibit and negate but also *produces*: it produces identities, knowledge, and possibilities for behavior and it does so through discourse, creating patterns of control that did not exist before the discourse itself was created.

So while neo-Marxist studies have typically focused on institutional settings with clearly demarcated hierarchies and formal bureaucratic structures, accounts in the post-modern tradition have examined settings such as the “new” (post-Fordist) workplace to capture the “paradoxical, fluid and contradictory processes” inherent in modern institutions with their knowledge-intensive work processes and the insecurities presented by the market (Grant and Iedema 2005: 49). While work in both traditions has produced compelling insights into the workings of institutions, it has not been anchored in a close

linguistic analysis of their discourse practices. This is where both CA and CDA have made important contributions (see below).

The process of “disciplining” people in modern capitalist societies occurs mainly through the work of “discourse technologists” (Fairclough 1992), that is “experts” who are empowered by their formation of scientific and technical forms of discourse. Expertise has become an important feature of disciplining populations and is central to the dynamics of power in modern societies and their institutions (Scott 2001: 92). Of course, resistance to, just as much as compliance with, institutionally preferred discourses and disciplinary practices, is to be expected.

### 3 Power and Resistance in Spoken Institutional Discourse

While many critical and postmodern studies have demonstrated how discourses function ideologically to (re)produce hegemonic relations between management and a “disciplined” workforce, others have focused on the struggle and resistance to dominant relations and discourses and how the everyday mundane language of members can have implications for organizational power and resistance. Collinson’s (1988) analysis of workplace humor at a factory, for example, showed how workers used humor to resist managerial efforts to make them embrace a new corporate culture that emphasized harmonious management–labor relations. Similarly, Holmes’s (2000) ethnographic and linguistic study of humor in New Zealand government departments found that humor was used by subordinates to subtly challenge and subvert power structures as well as by those in power, who used it to de-emphasize the power differential and to achieve specific goals. Taylor and Bain’s (2003) ethnographic study of workers’ use of humor in two call centers in Scotland likewise demonstrated that humor contributed to the development of a counterculture which conflicted with corporate aims and priorities. Studies in this vein are important as they pay attention to apparently trivial institutional discourses and also go to show that people can and do subvert dominant discourses and practices by tailoring dominant understandings to their personal circumstances. Importantly, these studies depict people not as passive subjects of disciplinary power, but as active agents who constantly negotiate, contest, and resist imposed institutional and workplace identities (see Scott 1990).

The point of resistance was also explored by Giddens (1981) in his “theory of structuration.” Giddens argues that social actors are not completely overwhelmed by institutional power and dominance and that institutions have a potential for both domination and emancipation: “at the heart of both domination and power lies the *transformative capacity* of human action, the origin of all that is liberating and productive in social life, as well as all that is repressive and destructive” (Giddens 1981: 51; emphasis original). This “dialectic of control” refers to the ability of social actors, as agents, to engage in choice, no matter how restrictive their conditions may be. Agency and structure are interdependent. Institutions are therefore not only constraining, but also enabling. For example, Mumby’s (1987) study of organizational narratives found that although narratives can function as an ideological device to legitimate those in power, they at the same time can be used by the “powerless” to de-legitimate dominant meaning systems.

Resistance is of course more likely to occur in institutional locations where domination of one group over the other is partial and contested, such as in the workplace, than it is in more coercive institutions, for example, prisons. Giddens may therefore have marginalized considerations of objective power relations in coercive institutional settings. But even in prisons, which in many respects are built on repression and low accountability, resistance is possible, if not always in overt form, as Mayr's (2004) linguistic and ethnographic study of an educational course in a prison has demonstrated. In such circumstances, milder, "everyday forms of resistance" (Scott 1990: 45) are the strategies of the "disempowered."

Active and overt resistance to institutional discourse practices is also unlikely when people's economic survival is at stake; for example, when they are dependent on state support. Pelissier-Kingfisher's (1996) study of a group of American "welfare mothers" found that these women resisted stereotypes that branded them as lazy and promiscuous by making use of "reverse discourse" (Foucault 1980). Reverse discourse "draws on the very vocabulary or categories of dominant discourses in order to make a case for oppressed groups" (Pelissier-Kingfisher 1996: 541). An example of reverse discourse can be seen in the following excerpt, where three "welfare mothers" discuss a meeting they had with the aide to a local legislator:

- 1 S: I told him, I said EVERY chi::ld NEEDS a safe  
 2 environment, NOT the rich, NOT the middle class, but  
 3 ALSO WELfare mothers  
 4 R: yep  
 5 S: and we are having to leave  
 6 Our kids with ANYbody and everybody that'll take 'em  
 7 C: yep  
 8 S: THAT'S not ri:ght  
 9 C: no it's not right  
 10 S: that's  
 11 ()  
 12 [  
 13 R: 'cause they're our FU:Ture

(Pelissier-Kingfisher 1996: 541)

In this interaction, the three women not only insist that "welfare mothers" should have the same rights as more well-to-do mothers but they also use reverse discourse by arguing that *all* children deserve to be looked after properly and by expressing concern for the next generation ("they're *our* future"). They therefore appropriate notions from mainstream discourse that probably very few people would contest. The women also attempted to contest their "spoiled identities" (Goffman 1963) by refusing to see their poverty as a result of their personal deficits and replacing them with explanations based on class structure or the interests of the dominant classes.

Similarly, Houghton's (1995) study of young Latino single mothers on a compulsory therapeutic program which attempted to address their "irresponsible" behavior

and their refusal to endorse mainstream American values of work, material acquisition, and productivity showed that these young women knew very well that they would gain little from overt resistance. Instead they resorted to linguistic strategies that were difficult to confront by the therapists, such as mimicking the therapists' language or engaging in "girl talk" – talk about their relationships and sexuality – which were basically consistent with topics of their group therapy. However, the women used these as a form of resistance by talking at length about their relationships during the therapy sessions, with the therapists struggling to keep them "on topic." Imposed institutional identities therefore can and are constantly (discursively) negotiated, contested, and resisted, if only in the form of "hidden transcripts," that is, protest that occurs "backstage" (Goffman 1959), away from those with institutional authority, or is disguised so that members of the dominant group can only suspect their meaning (Scott 1990: 45).

## 4 Discourse Analytical Approaches to Institutional Research

### 4.1 *Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis*

Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis (CA) have both played an important role in the area of institutional research (e.g., Atkinson and Heritage 1984; Drew and Heritage 1992; Garfinkel 1967; Schegloff 1992). They are cognate approaches in that they both adopt a "bottom-up" approach to the study of social action. But while Ethnomethodology, which technically is sociological and not linguistic, can be understood as a form of enquiry that investigates how social phenomena are achieved in local environments of action, CA has a more specific focus on the production and organization of talk in spoken interaction.

One area in which Ethnomethodology has made a significant contribution is in the study of deviance. Crime and deviance have been shown to be a consequence of the practices by which police on the beat, and judges and lawyers in the courtroom interact with suspects (Atkinson and Drew 1979; Cicourel 1968). Cicourel's (1968) study of social control agencies and youth crime, for example, examined the way that talk socially constructs definitions of deviance and how the everyday existence of these agencies actually *produces* given rates of deviance.

Some of the more qualitatively based studies of prisons in the ethnomethodological tradition (e.g., Cardozo-Freeman and Delorme 1984; Cohen and Taylor 1972; Manocchio and Dunn 1970; Wieder 1974) have been an important corrective to the many pro-administrative studies of the institution that are normally more concerned with managing prisoners than understanding them. Cardozo-Freeman and Delorme's (1984) "folk-ethnography" in a Washington maximum-security prison was based on Whorf's hypothesis that language not only contains the worldview of a speech community, but also tends to structure its experience and behavior. The study was conducted mainly by the prisoners of the institution (one of whom was Delorme) with a view to bridging "the vast abyss of misunderstanding and lack of communication that exists

between those who are imprisoned and those who imprison" (Cardozo-Freeman and Delorme 1984: 19).

The most significant exploration of interactions in institutional settings has come from studies informed by the conversation-analytic perspective. Inspired by Garfinkel (1967), CA scholars focus on detailed aspects of people's interaction, such as turn-taking, which they consider to be representative of interactional principles (e.g., Schegloff 1992). CA goes back to Sacks's (1992a, 1992b) research on the levels of social order that were revealed in the everyday practice of talking. The aim of CA in institutional settings is to reveal how the mechanics of talk are "the structured, socially organized resources by which participants through talking in interaction co-ordinate activities" (Hutchby and Drew 1995: 183; see also Heritage and Clayman 2010). Talk is therefore considered the main instrument for institutional action in the sense that "institutional organization and goals in person-to-person interaction are mutually *constructed and sustained*" (Geluykens and Pelsmaekers 1999: 13; emphasis original).

The term "institutional talk" goes back to Drew and Heritage, who sum up its features as follows (after Drew and Heritage 1992: 22):

- 1 Institutional interaction involves an orientation by at least one of the participants to some core goal, task, or activity (or set of them) conventionally associated with the institution in question. In short, institutional talk is normally informed by *goal orientations* of a relatively restricted conventional form.
- 2 Institutional interaction may often involve *special and particular constraints* on what one or both of the participants will treat as allowable contributions to the business at hand.
- 3 Institutional talk may be associated with *inferential frameworks* and procedures that are particular to specific institutional contexts.

Many of Drew and Heritage's criteria are borne out by numerous studies on institutional interactions, such as in the courtroom (Atkinson and Drew 1979; Harris 1984), police interrogations (Stokoe and Edwards 2008), news interviews (Heritage and Clayman 2010), and doctor-patient interactions (Stivers 2007). To select an example from courtroom discourse, Harris's (1984) study on the linguistic structure of interactions in a British magistrate's court shows that the *goal orientation* in the courtroom was to elicit answers from the defendants through a series of questions about non-payment of fines, as in:

- M: How much do you earn a week?  
 D: I don't earn any determinate amount.

(Harris 1984: 18)

One particular *constraint* Harris observed was the turn-taking system that operated in the courtroom. Defendants were not allowed to ask questions. If they did, they were reprimanded by the magistrate for the inappropriateness of their conduct, as in:

- M: I'm putting it to you again – are you going to *make* an offer – uh – uh to discharge this debt?  
D: Would you in my position?  
M: I – I'm not here to answer questions – you answer *my* question.

(Harris 1984: 5)

The third characteristic of institutional talk, associated with certain inferential frameworks, suggests that people who are engaged in institutional interactions interpret utterances in a way they might not in other circumstances. In Harris's study, questions were not asked as straightforward requests for information; rather they functioned as accusations in the courtroom context:

- M: How much money have you got on you?  
D: I haven't got any on me your worships  
M: How'd you get here?  
D: I uh got a lift — part way here

(Harris 1984: 5)

Here the Magistrate's two questions carry with them the accusation that the defendant has been lying about not having any money and that he must have money because he paid to travel to court.

These three dimensions – goal orientation, interactional inferences, and restrictions on the kind of contributions that can be made – are the main features that underpin the analysis of institutional interaction in many conversation-analytical studies because they can reveal how participants construct their institutional identities and manage their institutional activities.

Both Ethnomethodology and CA have come under attack for not paying enough attention to the concepts of power, class, and ideology (e.g., Fairclough 1992). CA's focus on the analysis of interaction as a topic in its own right has led critics to argue that CA fails to establish explicit links between the micro-phenomena of interaction with macro-social theory, which would allow for a consideration of power, the role of ideologies, and the influence of history and cultural values on the ways people interact. However, it would be wrong to claim that CA has not dealt with power at all, as is evidenced by studies of the relationships among professionals and their "clients," for instance doctors and patients (e.g., Cicourel 1992; Silverman 1981), or lawyers, judges, and suspects (e.g., Atkinson and Drew 1979; Drew and Heritage 1992). After all, a common feature identified in institutional interaction is the *asymmetry* of knowledge and hence power between participants (Heritage 1997; ten Have 2001, 2007). Drew (1991: 22) suggests that "unequal distributions of knowledge are a ... source of asymmetry in almost all institutional settings," particularly in those in which members of the public or lay persons may "not have access to the professional's specialized technical knowledge about relevant organizational procedures."

More recent work in CA has specifically addressed concerns about power, as can be seen, for example, in the analysis of power relationships in police interrogations (Haworth 2006), news interviews (Greatbatch 1998; Thornborrow 2002), talk shows (Tolson 2001), and radio phone-ins (Hutchby 1996; Thornborrow 2003). Haworth's (2006) study of a police interview shows that a combination of CA and CDA can work: it demonstrated that the balance of power between the participants was affected by their institutional status (one a police officer, the other a doctor), by the discourse roles assigned to them, and by the institutional context. Haworth also showed that the power dynamics are constantly shifting and open to contestation (in line with CA), while her consideration of the wider institutional context (in line with CDA) revealed that the police officer was at times forced by his institutional role to concede discursive control to the suspect in order to achieve the wider goal of obtaining a confession from him.

Studies in the tradition of Ethnomethodology and CA, with their focus on reality as experienced by the subjects of the study, demonstrate the importance of entering the subjective world of people in order to comprehend how they view, define, and conceive the world. As Mumby and Mease (2011: 283) point out, in order for institutional research to be "meaning-centred," it has to examine institutions from their members' and subjects' point of view through qualitative methods such as ethnographies, as these can provide insight into "the assumptions that underlie the creation of organizational realities."

## 4.2 *Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)*

The other main discourse analytical approach to the study of institutional discourse, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), is concerned with exposing the often hidden ideologies that are reflected, reinforced, and constructed in everyday and institutional discourse. CDA places particular emphasis on the interdisciplinary study of discourse, mediating between the linguistic and the social and regarding the social as more than a mere contextual backdrop to language (e.g., Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999; Weiss and Wodak 2003). In this respect, CDA is different from the more descriptive approach taken by CA, which derives its theory from the interactional order. The term "critical" principally means revealing how power structures are constructed and negotiated in and through discourse. As such, CDA specifically analyzes institutional discourses which "testify to more or less overt relations of struggle and conflict" (Wodak 2001: 2).

Issues addressed in CDA are, among others, the discourse of media organizations (Fairclough 1995; Montgomery 2007), language and education (Mautner 2005; Rogers 2004); language and the law (Cotterill 2003; Coulthard 1996, 2000); communication barriers in institutions (Wodak 1996); "new" capitalism and neo-liberalism (Fairclough 2004), bureaucratic discourses in late modern society (Iedema 1998; Sarangi and Slembrouck 1996), racism in the press (Teo 2000; van Dijk 1993), anti-immigration discourses (van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999); linguistic and visual discourses of war (Machin 2007; Montgomery 2005), metaphor in corporate discourse (Koller 2004); visual racism and fascism (Richardson and Wodak 2009a, 2009b), and crime and deviance (Mayr 2004; Mayr and Machin 2012).

Critical discourse analysts see discourse as a social practice. This view of discourse as a social practice implies "a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive

event and the situation, institution and social structure that frame it: the discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them" (Fairclough 1992: 62). Some CDA researchers have appropriated Foucault's (1977) notion of discourses as "models of the world." These discourses project certain social values and ideas and in turn contribute to the (re)production of social life. According to van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999), these discourses represent a kind of knowledge about what goes on in a particular social practice. Drawing on Bernstein's (1990, 1996) concept of "recontextualization," they analyze the way that social practices can be ideologically transformed by looking at how discourses of one social practice are "recontextualized," that is, drawn upon and incorporated into another. It is in this relocation of discourses that ideology operates: "every time a discourse moves, there is a place for ideology to play" (Bernstein 1996: 24). New discourse practices and discourse mixes are therefore a sign of and an important factor in discursive and cultural change. For example, the incorporation of managerialist discourses into the university and other public institutions can be seen as a recontextualization of these discourses and models and in the wider sense of the new capitalist and neoliberal order. Central to work in CDA is therefore an account of the way producers of discourse recontextualize events in order to promote their own interests (e.g., Machin and Mayr 2007; Richardson and Wodak 2009a, 2009b; van Leeuwen 2008). For example, Machin and Mayr's (2013) analysis of newspaper reporting of an instance of corporate crime, the Paddington rail crash in London in 1999, showed that events that had specific causes and responsibilities were in the first place reported through a discourse of natural disaster. The news reporting on the crash therefore recontextualized the events through replacement of participants (emphasis on "heroes" as opposed to perpetrators), actions (focus on the saving of victims rather than on corporate greed), causes (use of terms such as "accident" as opposed to "corporate negligence"), and sequences of activity (reporting on the "accident" followed by reporting on shock and communal mourning).

The critical discourse analytical study of institutional discourses increasingly incorporates non-linguistic communicative features of texts in the analysis. Inspired by the linguistics of Halliday (1978), this form of CDA draws on many of the now widely known principles of multimodality pioneered by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2001) and Machin (2007). These principles are used not simply to understand the nature of non-linguistic communication, but to carry out a critical analysis of image and text in the broader tradition of CDA (e.g., Machin and Mayr 2012). The interest in multimodality results from the fact that institutional communication itself has become increasingly multimodal, with language now being only one among a whole range of communicative modes. Research in this tradition highlights the multi-semiotic and potentially ideological character of most discourses in contemporary capitalist society, thereby acknowledging that the visual has a particularly important role to play due to its less denotative and more symbolic nature compared to language. This can be observed in new capitalism's dependence on new communication technologies and the ever-increasing importance of "brands" and the "branding" of products. For example, as part of the increasing commercialization of the press, many newspapers have been "re-branded" and have begun to think much more systematically about visual communication in an attempt to attract readers/consumers (see Machin and Niblock 2008; Machin and Thornborrow 2003). As Machin and Niblock (2008: 257) state, news no longer has, first and foremost, the role of documenting "reality." Instead, what readers

find in terms of content and address often connotes values such as “creativity” and “forward thinking,” which is “not articulated as any concrete political strategy but is a concept tied to the mood of neo-capitalism.” In this neo-capitalist mood, “social awareness” does not mean awareness of poverty but of “market-defined trends and lifestyle issues.” The visual style of newspapers, according to Machin and Niblock, connotes “values that belong to the same discourses of ‘regeneration’ involving expensive property investment, chic restaurants, etc. It is essentially the same business language that is now also used in university mission statements and local councils that are ‘forward thinking’ and ‘creative’” (Machin and Niblock 2008: 257). Recent research has also focused on the semiotics of typography and new media (van Leeuwen 2005) and on “transmedia,” such as publishing, film, music, and games associated with a franchise (Lemke 2005), arguing that these semiotic resources play a key ideological role in late modern capitalism by helping to convey and embed certain social values globally. For instance, Hansen and Machin’s (2008) analysis of the promotion of visual discourses on climate change (through globally operating Getty images) in advertisements and editorials demonstrates that even climate change is now a marketing opportunity in new capitalism.

A further example of the ideological meaning potential of visual semiotics is the analysis of visual discourses of war (Abousnnouga and Machin 2009; Machin and van Leeuwen 2005). These war discourses are disseminated and legitimized visually through a whole range of genres of communication, such as toys, photography, computer war games, and war monuments. This work points to the important role played by visual communication in the process of recontextualization, in this case the recontextualization of the brutality of war.

Another main concern in CDA’s analysis of institutions has been the critical research on social and economic change, with a particular focus on the neoliberal political and institutional discourses of late modernity. Fairclough’s (2004) work on “Language in the New Capitalism” (LNC) in particular has referred to the importance of language in bringing about the restructuring of contemporary capitalism and has focused on the conscious intervention to control and shape language practices in accordance with economic, political, and institutional objectives. The term is applied to those forms of contemporary transformations of capitalism which are characterized by a “re-structuring” of the relations between the economic, political, and social (Jessop 2000). This “re-structuring” concerns dramatic shifts in relations between different domains of social life – most significantly, between the economic field and other domains such as politics, education, and culture, in the sense that there has been a “colonization” of these by the economic field. This has resulted in the reconstruction of a wide range of “non-business” institutions, such as schools, universities, and hospitals, along business lines. One example of this trend is the ongoing “marketization” of universities within a wider context of a global “enterprise culture” and the problematic adoption of neoliberal and hegemonic corporate discourses into Higher Education, where academics are being increasingly turned into “enterprising and self-promoting knowledge workers” (Webster 2003: 87). This is evident, for example, in many job descriptions for academics, which are now replete with neo-capitalist buzzwords such as “team objectives,” “business effectiveness,” “business enhancement,” “maintenance of customer-focus” (the customer being the student), and “achievement of organizational goals,” all terms which embody the logic of management discourse: that academics can be made more

efficient and more productive if they are taught to think like managers and instilled with values and practices chosen by management (see Mautner 2005; Mayr 2008, ch. 2; Trowler 2001).

These changes in language have been brought about by the “knowledge-driven” economy, an economy in which new knowledge is constantly produced, circulated, and consumed as discourses (economic, organizational, managerial, political, or educational) and disseminated in institutional settings through “discourse technologies” (Jessop, Fairclough, and Wodak 2008). Fairclough (1992: 215) describes these technologies as “transcontextual techniques ... that can be used to pursue a wide variety of strategies in many diverse contexts.” For example, knowledge about what language to use for conducting successful (job) interviews or negotiations is produced and taught by management consultants not only in commercial companies but also in schools, universities, and other state institutions (see Mayr 2008). Employees’ verbal behavior is now treated as a commodity and is part of what employers are selling to their customers, an element of their “branding” and corporate image. This also explains the increasing tendency for employers to regulate the speech patterns of their workers, particularly in the service industries (see Cameron 2000a, 2000b; 2006).

This “knowledge-driven” economy can also be said to have produced a “new work order” (Gee, Hull, and Lankshear 1996) with two categories of workers: a knowledge-producing elite and a less privileged group serving and servicing the needs of others (Sennet 2006). Although old style authoritarian hierarchy may be largely a thing of the past, in the new capitalist businesses the “top” is sometimes the boss/coach, sometimes the consumer and/or market, and sometimes both. In many present-day service contexts, such as call centers, customers have become “a second boss,” as employers often use customer evaluations to reward or punish service workers (Tracy 2000: 120).

Contemporary societies are not only knowledge- and discourse-based in their economies but also, and increasingly so, in their expectations about how people should lead their private lives and conduct their personal relationships. Expert knowledge and discourse that have the capacity to shape people’s lives are disseminated through texts of different sorts and are transmitted through the media and modern information technologies. The print media, and lifestyle magazines in particular, are top-heavy with expert advice on how people should conduct almost every aspect of their lives. For example, Machin and van Leeuwen (2003, 2004) found that the Dutch, Indian, Spanish, and Greek versions of global women’s fashion magazine *Cosmopolitan* present a very similar format of advice for women in the sphere of work, as it has taken shape in the neo-capitalist global order. These discourses are presented not as ideological constructs but as practical solutions to common problems, endorsed by transcontextual “global” expert advice.

To sum up, in spite of new capitalism’s promise of organizational democracy and empowerment the research reported in this chapter, both critical and postmodern, suggests a very different picture: new capitalist power structures and discourses can be said to embody “new, perhaps more hegemonic, techniques of control now masquerading in the name of democratic organizational reform” (Gee, Hull, and Lankshear 1996: 19). In other words, these more diffuse and de-centralized power structures help to create organizational forms that can be more oppressive than older “Fordist” types of organization.

## 5 Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Research

This chapter has illustrated some of the major theoretical and analytical developments in the area of macro- and micro-level institutional discourse studies without attempting to be exhaustive. For future research, the following suggestions can be made:

- Discourse analytical studies of institutions should make a concerted effort to combine the macro-context with micro-communication in order to see how the two impinge on each other and use ethnographic methods to help interpret micro-level phenomena (see Kwon, Clarke, and Wodak 2009).
- Critical discourse analytical research of institutions in particular should be combined with longitudinal ethnography that would yield “precisely the sort of knowledge that CDA often extrapolates from text,” such as “the beliefs, values and desires of its participants” (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999: 61–2).
- An integrated CA/CDA approach that combines CA’s analytical focus on spoken data with the critical social stance of CDA would therefore be in a stronger position to capture the complexities of institutional interactions and the overall sense-making of social actors.
- Given the increasing salience of visual communication in many institutional contexts, researchers should not limit their analytical focus to the language dimension of institutional discourse research but pay attention to other semiotic modes as well.
- Finally, more genuinely applied research should be conducted which would contribute to more effective communication in institutional settings and more equitable work practices. Research and application should be a joint undertaking (see Sarangi and Roberts 1999; Wodak 1996).

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# 36 Political Discourse

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JOHN WILSON

## 0 Introduction

The term political discourse can refer in a number of ways to a range of different types of talk or text. We may be referring to a type of discourse which is a political production – a speech, debate, political interview, policy document, and so on (van Dijk 1997; Fairclough and Fairclough 2012), or we could be referring to any talk or textual output that is either about a political subject or which is politically motivated. For example, in a recent text entitled *Political Discourse and Conflict Resolution* (Hayward and O'Donnell 2011), most of the chapters use the term “political discourse” to refer to the object of analysis – a piece of extended talk or text produced by or for political actors. On the other hand, Liebes and Ribak (1991) argue that family talk about political events could also be political discourse, since the topic of talk is about “political events or issues” (see also Blommaert 2005; Feldman and De Landtsheer 1998), and Joseph (2006) argues that all language is inherently political, therefore almost all language use could be seen as “political discourse.”

For thousands of years political discourse has also been equated with the term “rhetoric,” since one of the original uses of the term was to describe particular forms of persuasion within political assemblies (Cicero 1971). Rhetorical studies of political discourse abound within the literature (Arnt Aune and Medhurst 2008; Finlayson 2007; Lunsford, Wilson, and Eberly 2008; Parry-Giles and Hogan 2010), and one finds a focus on the political and an emphasis on “language.” The essential nature of the exercise, however, is the study of rhetorical/argumentation procedures, their identification, and their persuasive effects. Hence, the “political” becomes one genre for the display of rhetorical forms of persuasion or performance, rather than an analysis of the ways in which linguistic selection and production not only derives from language theory, but also constitutes a definition of what is “political” (see Connolly 1993).

In a more restricted sense, “political discourse” refers to the study of political language where the focus is on aspects of language structure as it constitutes and displays specific political functions. Thus, large swathes of work that reference the term “political discourse,” such as found in areas like “rhetorical political analysis” (Finlayson 2007), or other general fields such policy study, political science, or social theory (see, e.g., Foucault 1972; Giddens 1991; Habermas 2000), while relevant, may not be political discourse within this specific interpretation. Various approaches may deal with political language, and even privilege language in some senses, but they often do so without any core theory of language or, more importantly, without any core language analysis.

This does not, however, make political discourse analysis “political linguistics.” There have been a number of analysts who have suggested going down this route. Burkhart (1996: cited in Wodak 2011) has suggested that the study of political language may be seen as “sub discipline between linguistics and political science” (cited in Wodak 2011: 6), and that its focus should be on everything from lexical issues to semiotics. However, while linguistic analysis is central to political discourse, it must be seen as a tool in explaining the operation of such discourse and not an end in itself; political discourse should be seen as intersecting a range of communicative modalities and theories. Further, in a practical sense, “political discourse” is the term of choice in the study of political language. Even those such as Okulska and Cap (2010), who claim there has been a significant growth in the field of “political linguistics,” do not actually use this term for their work, preferring to refer to this as the “analysis of political discourse” (2010: 3).

In distinguishing the focus of political discourse as language centered we are not calling for the drawing of disciplinary boundaries. Indeed, for political discourse other fields are clearly relevant as they are linked to the general linguistic concerns of political discourse, and frequently inform the questions the political discourse analyst wishes to answer. In the case of “critical” political discourse analysis this is made explicitly clear. Chilton (2004) states (see below) that the critical approach “has tended to draw ... on social theory of a particular type and on linguistics of a particular type.” Hence, this chapter presents political discourse as language centered, and it does so in the knowledge that such linguistic-oriented analyses will both inform, and be informed by, other relevant fields and theories as they intersect with and help explain the social and political concerns of actors, institutions, and polities.

## **1 Representation: Reference and Metaphor**

One of the central concerns of political discourse is the question of how the world is presented to the public through particular forms of linguistic representation. For example, how is language used in attributing meaning to individuals and groups with reference to the performance of their social practices? How are actions and events perceived and described? Which modes of reference are used to signify places, objects and institutions within particular positive or negative frames? (see Blommaert and Verschueren 1998; van Dijk 2009a, 2009b; Fairclough 1989, 1995; Wodak and van Dijk 2000). The claim is that “reality” is not simply given to us through language; rather it is mediated through different forms of language representation (see Sapir 2010; Whorf 1956).

Viewing political discourse in this way, analysts often explain politics as a relationship between language and power, specifically that political control is a form of language control (see Wodak 2011). Chilton and Schäffner (2002: 5), for example, define politics “as a struggle for power, between those who seek to assert and maintain their power and those who seek to resist it.”

One of the first scholars to note the use of language in controlling the distribution of power in society was George Orwell. In *Politics and the English Language* Orwell argues that there is a link between language and the way we view the world, and that politicians manipulate this for their own ends, as he puts it: “using political speech and writing ... in defense of the indefensible” (1969: 225). Here he is referring to forms of “inverted logic” such as those found in his novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Orwell 1949), where slogans such as “WAR IS PEACE,” “FREEDOM IS SLAVERY,” and “IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH” create “doublethink,” and invert the positive into the negative and the negative into the positive.

It is argued that control and domination of representations allows politicians to generate worldviews consistent with their goals, and to downgrade, negate, or eliminate alternative representations. To take another Orwellian example, if a village full of innocent people is bombed, or thousands of people are relocated as a consequence of aggression and war, we can choose to manipulate the representation of such negative acts as types of positive or neutral events. We could call the first “pacification” for example, and the second could be referred to as a “rectification of frontiers.” Presented in this way issues such as pain, suffering, and homelessness are hidden within neutral, placid, or positive representations.

This is the core point that Orwell wishes to make, and it emerges again and again in the study of political discourse (see Bonnett 1993; Hart and Lukes 2007; Henry and Tator 2002; Philips 1998; Wodak and van Dijk 2000). It also raises the issue of whether there is an “objective” truth which politics or other forms of language subvert through representation, or whether all interpretation is relative to a context. These two views of representation may be seen as the “universal” and the “relativist” (Browning 2006; Montgomery 1992; Rorty 2008). The universalist view states that we understand our world in terms of conceptual primes, and language simply reflects these possibilities. Language is the vehicle for expressing our system of thought, with this system being independent of the language itself. The relativist argues language and thought are inextricably intertwined, in that available linguistic resources affect our understanding of the world. Our world is not given to us directly but is continually mediated by language.

Consider for example America’s war with Iraq. This was not just “war,” with all its negative connotations, this was a project called “Operation *Iraqi Freedom*.” Keeping the United States and its people safe from further attack was not simply security but “*Homeland Security*.” The legislation established for the protection of the “homeland” became known as the “*PATRIOT ACT*.” The full title is “Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism.” While the term “*PATRIOT*” looks like an acronym, critics suggest that it is in fact a “backronym,” intentionally designed to produce, or spell out, a selected word with an attendant concept. Specifically, it was designed so that criticism or lack of adherence to the Act would be seen as *unpatriotic*. A *PATRIOT Act* may therefore convert the war on terror into a more positive exercise with a worthy moral purpose. Hence, the consequent limits

on individual or group freedoms dictated by security measures, and the consequent extension of presidential powers (Herbert 2012), become something that is normalized as part of “patriotic” duty. Interestingly, George W. Bush accepts this assessment. He argues that the term PATRIOT was an outcome of Congressional action, and he agrees that one consequence of this action was to make “unpatriotic” any critique of the Act (see Bush 2010).

Or consider Weden’s (2005) study of alternative ideologies within the Arab–Israeli conflict. Weden looks at how language is used to justify resistance through various forms of violent action. The process by which individuals carry bombs and detonate these, killing both themselves and others around them, may be called “human bombing” or referred to as “suicide bombing” by the Western press (Weden 2005: 93). However, Weden argues the “military metaphor of human bombings” can be reconstituted by combining other metaphors from Islam so that “human bombings” are defined as “martyrdom attacks” (Ghazali 2003, cited in Weden 2005), where bombers “sacrifice their lives” as martyrs (Salih 2003). Hence, under one ideology such bombers are viewed positively as they make the ultimate sacrifice for their beliefs.

Representations can also be reinforced by the repeated use of descriptions, where such repetition helps embed specific interpretations. In the prelude to the Iraq war reference to “Saddam Hussein” would frequently occur in conjunction with the phrase “weapons of mass destruction (WMD),” and also either “al Qaeda” or “terrorism” or both (Kull, Ramsay, and Lewis 2004). This process confirmed in the public mind that Saddam Hussein not only had WMD but that he had links with terrorists, and al Qaeda in particular, and hence may have been in some way linked to 9/11. As the co-chairs of the 9/11 Commission put it:

The Bush administration had repeatedly tied the Iraq war to September 11 – insinuating in some people’s minds a link between Iraq and the attacks themselves ... [A]t different junctures a majority of Americans believed that Saddam Hussein was involved in 9/11. (cited in Russomanno 2011: 141)

Evidence of these links was debatable at the time, and was later confirmed as basically untrue. Nevertheless, repeated references linking Saddam Hussein with WMD and al Qaeda became so strong in the American public’s mind that even when evidence emerged that the links were unconfirmed a large proportion of the public still continued (and continue) to believe that there were such links; including, despite evidence to the contrary, that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. Reviewing selected public polls Entman (2012: 168) comments that:

In a Gallup Poll taken during January (2006), 53 percent of respondents said they thought the “Bush administration deliberately misled” Americans about Iraq’s WMD. Yet 57 percent in a March 2006 Gallup Poll said they were either certain that Iraq had WMD or thought it likely. And 50 percent in a July Harris Poll said they believed WMD had been found.

It seems that once particular representations are established they are hard to shift. Interestingly, they may also have other effects. Many Americans (and indeed many other nationalities around the world) are suspicious of Islam and things associated with the

Middle East. It was with some unease, then, that some sections of the United States public discovered that their new president of 2008, Barack Obama, the first ever black president, also had the middle name "Hussein." For some this suggested links or associations with the Muslim world. Obama has been a lifelong Christian and is not a Muslim. Yet Obama himself, speaking in 2010 to Israeli media, said "it may just be the fact that my middle name is Hussein, and that creates suspicion" (cited in *The National Journal*, September 27, 2012). Waismel-Manor and Stroud (2012) reported an experiment where Arab-Israelis and Jewish-Israelis both watched videos of President Obama talking to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu. In one video the caption read "Barack Obama" and on the other "Barack *Hussein* Obama." When the middle name was introduced Arab-Israelis thought Obama would be fairer to Arabs, while Jewish-Israelis thought he would be "less pro Israel."

How one refers to oneself or others is not, or not always, a neutral act, and can be affected by culture, context, and interactional practice (Schiffrin 2006). This can also be seen in politicians' manipulation of pronouns; making a distinction between "them" and "us" for example, or carefully distributing personal roles and responsibility through what is called the "inclusive" and "exclusive" use of "we" (see Borthen 2010; Bramley 2000; Mühlhäusler and Harré 1990; Petersoo 2007).

Recent research on how language guides our political representation includes work by George Lakoff (2004) on what he calls "framing," the way in which language sets up particular "frames" which guide beliefs and our interpretation of the world (see also Goffman 1974). The concept of "framing" builds on Lakoff's work on "metaphor" (see Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that metaphors have a conceptual function and that they provide mappings between forms of subjective experience and other more abstract complex domains. They note "the existence of experientially grounded mappings," for example, "More is Up," as in "Prices rose" and "Stocks plummeted." "In 'More is Up' a subjective judgment of quantity is conceptualized of the sensorimotor experience of verticality" (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 47). Such metaphors can serve as "frames" for guiding how we view and think about complex issues, tasks, or relationships.

In political discourse there is a significant literature on how conceptual metaphors are used for political purposes, ranging from explaining economic theory via "Economy is a person" (Sacco 2007), to explaining interparty and intercultural conflict in South Africa through "Racism is a disease" and "reconciliation is healing" (Malan 2008: see also El Refaie 2001; Musolff 2004).

Lakoff (2004) has now extended this argument further, suggesting cognitive metaphors not only describe how politicians attempt to delimit our thinking about politics, but also how "framing" itself can provide a way out of this controlling language. In Lakoff (2004) he gives us the command "Don't think of an elephant." As he then points out, by mentioning an elephant at all we will have difficulty in not summing up an image of an elephant, and alongside that image other images or thoughts which involve size, tusks, trunk, the jungle, and so on. The point is that once a frame is invoked it is very hard to block the ideas and images associated with the frame – even when it is negated. Lakoff (2004) gives an example from political discourse when Richard Nixon said: "I am not a crook." Despite Nixon's intentions, by using the term "crook" he has invoked a frame in order to deny it, and, therefore, loses control over the way that frame is interpreted.

Lakoff also suggests, however, that one can change certain “frames” by offering counter “frames,” that is, alternative ways of looking at the same object, event, or concept. Lakoff has argued that Conservatives in the United States have been particularly successful in using “framing” to get their message across. Progressives, on the other hand, do not seem to understand the way in which Conservatives have used language to set the “frame” for debates. Lakoff suggests, for example, that when Progressives argue against “tax relief” they do so within a Conservative frame, that “tax” is something bad, a burden that one needs relief from. Alternatively, Lakoff suggests that Progressives might like to provide a different image of “taxes” as “fees” for services, as in being a member of a Country Club, where everyone has to pay in order to access facilities. The same concept can be applied to society as in “we are all in this together,” so we should contribute to society since we all get something out of society.

There are a number of issues here, however: first, Lakoff’s position seems limited by its own relativism (see also Section 2; van Dijk, this volume). If we can invoke “frames” which are counter to a conservative or other view, this gives us choice, including the choice to ignore such frames or to retranslate new frames back into original frames in order to accommodate previous beliefs (see Pinker 2006). Second, in analyses of political speeches some analysts have found it difficult to code the appearance of “progressive” and “conservative” conceptual metaphors (Cienki 2005), since a simple bifurcation of political views does not always involve distinct metaphors, but rather includes the use of similar metaphors by each party to express different political values. And third, metaphors, particularly political metaphors, need not always be linguistic, but may be visual (cartoons, video, and so on: see El Refaie 2001; Lazuka 2012) or a mix of both linguistic and other modalities.

Further, politicians can also take the same frame, or metaphor, and, just like the analysts, use it for their own purposes. Consider the following alternative assessments of the metaphor “political policy is an iceberg.” In the first example UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher critically assesses the Labour opposition election manifesto of 1987 (see Atkinson 2011):

Thatcher: The Labour party iceberg manifesto, one tenth of its socialism visible nine-tenths beneath the surface (laughter).

Mrs. Thatcher is using the “iceberg” metaphor to criticize Labour for hiding its true socialist aspirations. In a later speech Labour leader Neil Kinnock, responded in this way:

Mr Kinnock: In a way she was right, it is a bit of an iceberg manifesto. it is re::ally cool and it is ah very tough and it is totally unsinkable! (laughter)

Taking the same metaphor Mr. Kinnock uses it to draw on positive aspects of the same frame, in doing so both supporting the Labour manifesto and making a meta-humorous comment on Thatcher’s humorous comment (see also Musolff 2004; Sclafani 2008).

The discussion so far presents a view of political representation that sounds particularly negative and controlling, and much work on political discourse views it as a “form of social practice with a malign social purpose” (see Torode 1991: 122, also van Dijk 2008, 2009a, 2009b; Fairclough 1989; Mehan 2012; Wodak and Auer-Boreo 2009).

But is there an alternative? Could there be a discourse that has no hidden agenda, produced in a cooperative spirit of mutual understanding (see Habermas 2000)? Or is it that what is true or false is determined by context, practicalities, and the language of both politicians and critics (see Wilson 1990). For example, Aristotle said: "We make war in order that we may live in peace." Is this a realistic or malign claim? And how does it sit with George W. Bush's claim that the Iraqi war was necessary in order to "free the Iraqi people"? Is this Orwell's "war is freedom" or simply a description of objectives based on evidence Bush believed true at the time he initiated the war with Iraq (see Bush 2010: 242)?

## 2 Politics and Grammar: Things Turn "Critical"

In the late 1970s theorists such as Fowler *et al.* (1979) and Kress and Hodge (1979) suggested that the surface realization of language represented the transformation of an underlying reality (Wilson 1990). The work was based, mainly, on Halliday's (1985) functional linguistic theory, which viewed language as a "social fact." In this view social and cognitive aspects become reflected within grammar. Politics and ideology were seen as displayed through grammatical structure, and analyzing language in this way was referred to as "Critical Linguistics." This approach has since been expanded, both in methodology and theory, and is now seen as part of the broader analytic program known as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (see van Dijk, this volume). Wodak and Meyer (2009: 2) see CDA as moving the "linguistic" to a "multi-disciplinary and multi-methodological level"; although grammar remains a central tool in explaining how ideology, power, and domination become constituted through linguistic structures.

Van Dijk (this volume) argues that CDA should not be seen as a method but as a form of critically driven theory and practice operationalized by politically concerned discourse analysts, whose aim is to use a variety of methods in the study of power abuse and inequality within society. Such an approach has been criticized for its own internal politicization, since it seems to begin with the assumption that certain data sets produce power abuse and then sets off to find and describe such abuse. Consequently, it is suggested that critical analysts are in danger of confirming what they already believed from the start (see Sharrock and Anderson 1981; Stubbs 1997; Widdowson 1998). Further, CDA has been criticized for its claim to use linguistic analysis to confirm forms of power abuse. Widdowson (1995, cited in Stubbs 1997: 4) argues that because of its critical orientation CDA is "essentially sociological or socio-political rather than linguistic." And it is also possible that the political critique of political discourse for political purposes becomes a form of political discourse itself.

Whatever the case, in the past 20 years the "critical" approach to language, and to political discourse in particular, has been one of the fastest-growing areas of applied linguistic research. Many of the scholars writing on CDA have also been leaders in the field of political discourse; for example, Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak, and Teun van Dijk.

The critical analyst sees political discourse as the use of words and phrases, syntactic processes, and discursive positioning, to either hide or distribute responsibility in certain ways, or designate specific individuals or groups as belonging to categories that

may serve particular political purposes. Consider, for example, the various ways in which one might represent an individual rape victim:

- A woman
- A young woman
- A young woman who is a mother of three
- A divorced exotic dancer and mother of three
- An unemployed party girl and single mother of three

Each choice may represent specific facts, and all of these may be true. The decision about which ones to use will vary with the speakers' aims. And these may range from trying to gain sympathy for the victim to trying to indicate some personal responsibility on the part of the victim (see Schiffrin 2006).

Such choices are "systematic" and may reflect choices available within the grammatical systems of languages (Halliday 1985). At the grammatical level of "transitivity" for instance, choices may be made between several different and related processes. These processes include such things as the "material" – what is/ or happened, or the "mental" – including the way things are understood, felt, or perceived. Transitivity allows us to view how language is being used to describe, "who does what to whom and why" (Machin and Mayr 2012: 104). Machin and Mayr (2012: 105, see also van Dijk 2008) use the following two sentences to show transitivity in action.

- Muslims win a transfer out of too "white" jail. (*Daily Mail*, March 21, 2008)
- Terrorism convicts granted move from "white" jail. (*Daily Telegraph*, March 21, 2008)

In the first sentence the Muslims are active in gaining a prison transfer, while in the second they are "passive recipients of a privilege." Machin and Mayr (2012: 105) go on to say that in both cases the prisoners are described negatively in that they are being treated in an advantaged way, and this is negative "because prisoners should not be given privileges." Of course there is more to it than this, the actors are not simply prisoners but "Muslims," or "terrorists," forms of reference that compound the negativity of the claims.

Or consider the following two examples from Crichton (2007: 7):

- The terror that targeted New York and Washington could next strike any center of civilization. (Bush 2002)
- Terror, unanswered, cannot only bring down buildings; it can threaten the stability of legitimate governments. (Bush 2003)

Crichton argues that "terror" is given a material role as "actor" within the grammar of these sentences. As such "terror" becomes an entity that causes something to happen to someone or something (Halliday 1985). In an analysis of 12 speeches by George W. Bush, Crichton notes the distribution of the word "terror" and argues that its use within the material process obscures and leaves left unsaid those actual human participants involved in terror, or those who have suffered the consequences of terror. This personification of "terror" as an actor allows Bush to turn an abstract concept into an

image of “someone” who does something, and who therefore can be fought against and defeated.

It is accepted that choices at various grammatical levels may be made for specific representational purposes, but it is also true that a specific production does not guarantee a specific comprehension. If I say, “soldiers shot at rioters,” as opposed to “rioters were shot at by soldiers,” I may wish to emphasize one group rather than the other. However, the way a soldier or rioter interprets these sentences may be unaffected by the structure, since both possess the same grammatical system and may convert passive sentences into active sentences, or active sentences into passive sentences. Equally, in an “agentless” sentence such as “taxes will be raised from next year,” one could say responsibility is being avoided since there is no subject who is seen as carrying out the actions. On the other hand, in real texts sentences do not occur in isolation, and the agent or subject could be interpreted via previous claims, or be inferred logically from the aims of the text (see Stubbs 1997).

To be fair to CDA, Fairclough (1992: 89) notes that “it is not possible to ‘read off’ ideologies from texts” as they involve “discourses as whole social events – they are processes between people – not just to texts which are moments of such events.” Fairclough also highlights in this the role of “intertextuality,” the interdependent relation of texts to one another, and reminds us, like Stubbs, that “texts” do not occur in isolation (Dunmire 2009; Hodges 2011; Sclafani 2008).

### 3 Discourse and Political Pragmatics

Language frequently becomes politicized because specific structures are used in particular contextualized discourses. Consider President Bill Clinton’s famous phrase “I did not have sexual relations with that woman (pause) Miss Lewinsky.” Much has been made of the ambiguity of the phrase “sexual relations.” Since Clinton was accused of having an affair with Monica Lewinsky, “sexual relations” could mean he did not have “sexual intercourse” with Miss Lewinsky, but may have had other forms of sexual contact. Equally interesting here is the phrase “that woman.” The phrase is being used appropriately, referring to/pointing to an individual marked as a member of a gender set. But Clinton adds, after a slight pause, “Miss Lewinsky.” In this context most people would have known the referent of “that woman,” and hence, not to make use of a definite description would invoke Gricean rules (Grice 1975), which say that if one says less than one could have the hearer should infer further information through specific inferences referred to as “implicatures” (see Grice 1975, also Levinson 1983; Sperber and Wilson 1986). In this case the inference was that Clinton did not even want to mention Miss Lewinsky’s name because of his animosity toward her.

Clinton was, in a sense, assessing potential interpretations as part of “online speech production,” taking account of these and adjusting the detail in his response as he realizes the outcome of not mentioning the woman’s name. Sometimes, however, political plans that lead to the use of certain words, phrases, and sentences at one contextual point in time may be given a second negative reading at a later point in time. George H. W. Bush famously said during his presidential campaign in 1988, “watch my lips no new taxes.” Later, because of external economic factors, Bush had to raise taxes. Many

of these tax rises were not new, nevertheless his previous claims were critically invoked against him, and specifically that he had been dishonest or even lied.

John Major, Conservative prime minister of the United Kingdom, found himself in a similar position. The Labour opposition claimed Major and his government intended to raise Value Added Tax (VAT). Major said: "I have no *plans* and see no *need* to raise VAT." But Major's government did raise VAT by 2.5 percent to 17.5 percent. As in the case of George H. W. Bush, Major was accused of doing exactly what he said he wouldn't do, that is raise VAT. Osborne (2005) says of Major that he "broke his pledge." But did he? Remember what he said was he "had no plans" or "he saw no need" to raise VAT. His original statement was, he could argue, a time and contextual-based claim, and that what he said at time X was true. However, because circumstances changed at time Y, plans were required to raise VAT. So was Major lying in his first statement, or simply a victim of changing circumstances? Strictly speaking it is quite possible for Major's statement at time X to be true, but the public do not necessarily read such claims as time based or contextually constrained, they read them as general statements, and as, Osborne suggests, they saw Major's statement as a "pledge."

As we have seen politicians are often thought of as covering up the truth, manipulating language, and of downright lying, although determining the truth conditions for lying is not always straightforward (see Meibauer 2011; Wilson 2004). It is not simply that something is false, since speakers can always be mistaken; and even when a person has an intention to mislead they can do this without making false assertions, since one can also create misleading inferences that may then be cancelled (Meibauer 2011; Wilson 2004). Worse still, some analysts argue that in politics there can be different types of "lies," for example, "justifiable lies" as opposed to "downright lies" (Pfiffner 2006).

Recently there has been a growth in the use of another specific type of speech act that is perhaps less expected of politicians, the act of "apologizing" (see Lakoff 2001: 23ff.). In 1998 Bill Clinton went on television and made a public statement regarding the evidence he had given about his relationship with Monica Lewinsky. In it he "regrets" misleading people, although he does not claim he was lying. Whether this was an apology has stirred some debate among analysts (Morgan 2001), but this is often because the elements which make up the "speech act" of apologizing, such as sincerity, regret, and admission of wrongdoing (Austin 1962; Searle 1969), may be expressed in many different ways. In the case of a growing number of public political apologies certain aspects of the classic speech act of apologizing may need reconsideration.

Cunningham (1999) notes that in public apologies "sincerity" has become a central issue. This is not surprising in that public figures may be called upon to apologize for historical events in which they were not involved and for which they are not individually responsible. Hence, genuine regret may be less prevalent in public apologies.

Harris, Grainger, and Mullany note that the concept of a "political" apology has received limited attention, and have tried to distinguish a number of factors that define political apologies (2006: 721–3), for example, they are highly mediated and in the public domain; they are both generated by and generate controversy; and they require a form of words for acceptance or blame and responsibility (illocutionary recognition).

Harris and co-workers also make the point that one of the most important factors in producing a political apology is the relative seriousness of the offense, and this can range from "social gaffes" to "leading a country to war." There is also the issue that

many recent political apologies have been for actions that may be historically distant, and politicians may be apologizing on behalf of a previous administration. Prime Minister Tony Blair apologized for the Irish famine, and Bill Clinton apologized for America's role in the slave trade (Harris, Grainger, and Mullany 2006: 725).

But such apologies may be problematic or contextually constrained. In 1997 Australian Prime Minister John Howard spoke to a convention that was exploring the process of reconciliation between "indigenous" and "white" Australians. Howard says an apology:

will not work if it is premised solely on a sense of national guilt and shame. Rather we should acknowledge past injustices and focus our energies on addressing the root causes of current and future disadvantage among our Indigenous people. (Augoustinos, Le Couteur, and Fogarty 2007: 98)

Hence, Howard equates a public apology with "guilt" and plays down the need for an apology for past deeds – which did not involve most modern Australians – in favor of concentrating on the needs of the present.

Similarly, in 2012 the British government was called upon to apologize for British forces' use of brutal torture during interrogations of "mau mau" prisoners in 1950s Kenya. The British government agreed British forces' actions were unacceptable, and they agreed to apologize. But is this apology also an acceptance of responsibility? A number of "mau mau" prisoners saw it this way and took legal action against the British government.

The issue of regret and responsibility is at the center here. However, a government can, with hindsight, accept that the actions of a previous administration or government were morally wrong. But this is different from accepting the present generation must now take on both the guilt and responsibility of the past and the actions of previous generations.

## 4 The Discursive Production Politicians and the Political Stance

While much research on political discourse focuses on political actors in a variety of contexts, this is often done, not surprisingly, with the politician as the producer of discourse, as opposed to the politician as a product of such discourse. Wodak (2011) set out to look at politics and politicians as they discursively construct what it is they do, why they do it, and how out of all this they produce their own individual and political group identities. The main focus of Wodak's research is the European Union and the European parliamentary context. She explores a variety of phenomena and uses a range of discourse tools to unpack European politicians' views on a variety of topics, including how the politicians expressed their Europeaness. Drawing on Goffman's concept of "footing" (1981; see also Tannen and Wallat 1993, and Davies and Harré 1990 on "positioning"), that is how people align themselves with, or adopt a "stance" toward, a concept or topic, along with a focus on narratives of personal experience (Duranti 2006; Labov and Waletzky 1967; Schiffrin 1996), Wodak explores how members of the

European Parliament's (MEPs) identities become linguistically constructed. The findings draw out how MEPs make use of the cultural and historical bonds of Europe to position the political and cultural concept of Europe and the context of being European. In contrast, Wodak also found that issues of localism, regionalism, specific personal interest politics, and individual agendas were also central in an MEP's identity construction. This is perhaps unsurprising, after all you need to convince your local electorate to vote for and send you to Europe. Hence, the broader concept of being European must always be tempered by regional and local politics as found in individual states and polities.

Wodak's work on political alignment reflects a growing interest in how language is used to encode or reflect specific "stances." According to Du Bois (2007) a "stance" is a social act, something we do through communication when we evaluate or align ourselves with objects or others, and such evaluations may reflect a host of issues from gender, through formality, to politeness (see Coupland 2007; Dailey, Hinck, and Hinck 2008). For example, in his deposition given to the Paula Jones inquiry President Bill Clinton believed that the lawyers were "out to get him," so he did not see it as his job to be helpful. Hence, in his testimony he adopts a specific form of epistemic stance by making use of "discursive hedges" and "evidential modals"; "I'm not sure"; "it's possible that"; "I believe so"; "as I remember/recall." His testimony was criticized as less than forthcoming, but this is exactly what he set out to do, this is exactly the "stance" he took toward the court and the process of deposition.

Similarly, more recent examples can also be found within the Bush administration's statements about WMD. Here "evidentiality" is also present, but in this case "hedging" is replaced with higher degrees of certainty through reference to external evidence and epistemic markers of "fact":

Simply stated there is no doubt that Saddam Hussien now has Weapons of mass destruction.

*We know for a fact* that there are weapons there. (Ari Fleischer, January 9, 2003)

*Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt* that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised. (George Bush, March 18, 2003)

(examples from *Counterpunch*, May 2003)

## 5 Sounds Political

In studies of political discourse there has been relatively little attention given to how politicians make use of phonetic, phonological, or suprasegmental features of language for political purposes. Sociolinguistic research indicates that the way we sound has an impact on how people perceive us, and this can range from our attractiveness and intelligence to our trustworthiness and employability (see Giles and Powesland 1975; Lippi-Green 1997).

We know that Margaret Thatcher modified her speech to make herself more attractive to voters, and that UK Prime Minister David Cameron's upper-class accent

“turns off” some voters (see Beattie 1982; Bull 2003). In the United States recent work has suggested that ex-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice adopts selected African American speech forms in specific speech contexts (Podesva *et al.* 2012), and Hall-Lew, Coppock, and Starr (2010) claim that American politicians’ production of “Iraq’s” second vowel marks “political conservatism” when produced as /æ/ but political liberalism when produced as /a:/.

In studies of prosody within political interviews, Strangert (2005) notes that politicians reflect a very fluid and positive style, with only short pauses in syntactically appropriate positions. It has also been claimed that the sounds of politicians’ own names, along with the rhythmic patterns they project, can also assist, or hinder, a politicians’ aim of attracting voters (Smith 1998). Duez (1997: see also Touati 1991) has attempted to correlate aspects of acoustic patterning with degrees of political power. Duez suggests that aspects of acoustic delivery within the speeches of ex-French President François Mitterrand were affected by whether Mitterrand was in the role of challenger or opponent, as opposed to holder of the position of president. While in the role of president, Mitterrand made use of a slower articulation rate, but when in the position of challenger, or opponent, the articulation rate was much more rapid. Hence, Duez suggests that temporal organization could reflect relative distance from “power.”

A number of studies have also attempted to integrate the prosodic level of language with discursive and pragmatic levels. Braga and Aldina Marques (2004), for example, argue that suprasegmental features may be harnessed and used in correlation with syntactic, lexical, and pragmatic features to achieve specific political effects. In a study of political debates in European Portuguese they focused on a set of prosodic features, including pitch, emphasis, and focus and noted that particular patterns were found to match argumentative goals such as assertiveness, irony, emotion, and hyperbole.

While the study of sounds and sound patterns involves a variety of technical forms of analysis, it is nonetheless an important component of the consideration of political discourse, and as we have seen above it is an area that deserves further consideration in terms of how it interfaces with other levels of discursive production.

## 6 Conclusions and Summary

One of the core goals of political discourse analysis is to seek out ways in which language choice is manipulated for specific political effect. In our discussion we have seen that almost all levels of language are involved, from sounds through lexis to pragmatics. Words, for example, can be used to gloss over negative perceptions, or to give a positive spin on events (Geis 1987; Johnson and Milani 2010; Silberstein 2004). In grammar, studies indicate how selected functional systems are manipulated to reflect specific different ideological frames (Dirven, Hawkins, and Sandikcioglu 2001; Fowler and Marshall 1985). There are studies of pronouns and their distribution relative to political and other forms of responsibility (Allen 2007; Wilson 1990) and studies of the political role of pragmatic features like implicatures, metaphors, and speech acts (Chilton 2004; Harris, Grainger, and Mullany 2006; Holly 1989). Even the way politicians articulate their own names can have an impact on voters (Smith 1998).

As mentioned, defining political discourse is not a straightforward matter. Some analysts define the political so broadly that almost any discourse may be considered political. At the same time, a formal constraint on any definition such that we only deal with politicians and core political events excludes the everyday discourse of politics that is part of people's lives. The balance is a difficult one, and perhaps all we can expect from analysts is that they make clear in which way they are viewing political discourse, because they too, like politicians, are limited and manipulated in and by their own discourse. In many cases social and political judgments are made before an analysis commences, while in other studies (see Chilton 2004; Geis 1987; Okulska and Cap 2010) the political is derived from language in terms of linguistic assessments and constraints. These different approaches are not mutually exclusive, and neither one has any analytical priority, but we should keep in mind that some analyses of political discourse may become as much political as linguistic.

Since the 1980s there has been a growing interest in political discourse, and recent texts such as Wodak (2011) and Wodak and Chilton (2005) are beginning to bring together various aspects of research on political discourse. Other studies have also begun to challenge the language centric nature of political discourse studies by calling for a multimodal perspective on political data (Kress 2010; Lazuka 2012; Serafini 2010), and there will be a growing need in the future to combine the level of language with a range of other modalities, and to broaden the range of subject matter as politics develops, shifts, and changes within emerging states. In this latter case there is the example of the growing influence of women politicians in Western society and their emergence as a potential force in Africa and the Middle East (Dahlerup 2007; Wilson and Boxer 2012). Equally, the role of social media as a reflection of and a production of political discourse is becoming more central (see Bimber and Davis 2003; Howard and Hussain 2011; Khondker 2011). However, while the inclusion of multimodal analyses of political discourse, along with a growing focus on other forms of social media, further enhances our understanding of the production and contextual realization of political discourse, language still remains central and at the heart of the study of political discourse.

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# 37 Discourse and Media

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COLLEEN COTTER

## 0 Introduction

Not so long ago, “media” meant “the media”: broadcast and print institutions and outlets reporting, interpreting, and conveying news about the world around us, whether local or global, serious or fun, event or entertainment. Behind the production and consumption of media was Marshall McLuhan’s 1960s observation that the “medium is the message” – in other words, words and image alone do not tell the story; how we receive our news, and via which channels, is a key part of it. That notion has informed a fair amount of research on discourse in and of the media.

The Internet and other digital technologies came along at the end of the twentieth century and changed the way the media – newspapers, television, and radio – dealt with deadlines (24/7 updates), transmission (synchronous and asynchronous modes, online and traditional), outside involvement (through citizen or participatory journalism at one end to comments, online feedback, and user-generated content on the other), and story presentation (search-engine optimization, links, video and visual elements) and reporting (digital records and archives, blogs). At the same time, economic downturns and corporate mergers, alongside changing consumption habits, meant staff reductions in newsrooms and closures, so fewer reporters, photographers, and editors were doing the same with less, or less with less.

More recently, mobile media and new digital technologies (tablets, smartphones, copy-editing software), coupled with “social media” and information-sharing platforms (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Reddit, Instagram, and the like), news aggregation software (delivering the news to your desktop or mobile device), and a different business model for freelance writers online (often unpaid) and foreign reporting (bureau closures) are spawning new adaptations by the media and by university journalism departments, eager to add “visualization and digital storytelling” to reporters’ and

students' skill sets. At the same time, these responses and changes, with their discursive and socially salient entailments, add to the researcher's task in accounting for it.

It almost does not bear mention that "media" in the twenty-first century encompasses more than just print and broadcast. Consumption possibilities, alongside choices, are endless. YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter are now prime players on the cultural stage – as well as sources of news for many. The medium, to adapt McLuhan's aphorism, is "social." And thus "media" goes beyond even our fairly recent understanding of it as a purveyor of news. Over the past decade in particular, there has been an evolution of its meaning and blurring of its actual boundaries, alongside a proliferation of scholarship about "the media" in many disciplines. Cultural studies, media studies, critical theory, semiotics, rhetoric, film studies, and journalism studies dissect and deconstruct the impacts, roles, and cultural reproductions of what is broadly termed "media." The discourse and language of the media is also addressed, more and more so by linguists, as this chapter will detail. (Other chapters in this volume address *social media*, *multi-modality*, and *mediated discourse* – all relevant to our comprehensive understanding of media.)

As the scope of the media is so far-reaching, and so globally situated and influential, it is not surprising that it is the subject of a great deal of intellectual scrutiny across academic areas, highlighting the traditional domains of news production and advertising as well as entertainment media and social media and the changes underway. Despite the economic- and digital-instigated changes to news practice, participant structure, and genre form, the news in its many past and present incarnations – whether a Page One story or a viral video or a talk-radio program or a feature on a local online "patch" or blog – often finds its way into discussions by policy makers and politicians, not to mention our own lives, meaning it effectively sets (or follows) the agenda for public discussion. Thus, this chapter looks primarily at news media<sup>1</sup> as it can show very usefully discourse dimensions of all sorts (narrative, genre, coherence, context, style, participant structure, process, variation, pragmatics, representation, etc.) as well as operate meaningfully through a variety of modalities, traditional and digital.

In this chapter, I discuss the major foundations of and developments in media discourse research, and suggest areas for further work, particularly research that seeks to explain discourse in terms of changing social patterns and technologies, whether through the practitioner or the consumer/user. Before addressing the key components of media discourse – as *text*, through *process*, and in relation to *audience* – and the methods and approaches used to examine them, I turn to the development of the subfield of media discourse analysis, providing perspective on early work and applications that remain foundational.

## 1 The Development of Media Discourse Analysis

The United Kingdom has long been the leader in most of the dominant contemporary approaches to media language research, first through content analysis and then through Critical Discourse Analysis, multimodality, social semiotics, and corpus linguistics (see chapters in this volume). Initially, the work of the Glasgow University Media Group, collected in the book *Bad News* (1976) and its successors, was influential

in setting the stage for research on media discourse, particularly in Britain, Europe, and Australia. The *Bad News* books are well known as canonical examples of the study of media language, despite flaws that subsequent researchers in the British media studies tradition acknowledged. The researchers in these early ideological analyses of the British press investigated the content of industrial reporting in the British broadcast media. Lexical choices, the positioning of information, and the use of quotations were evaluated through content analysis and offered as evidence of bias in the press.

This research laid a foundation for other major contributions by scholars that led to the development of what is collectively termed media studies – building in part on established cultural studies work – which borrows from semiotics and critical theory-oriented traditions. As an example, a relatively early survey of the range of approaches to investigating media texts by scholars working in this tradition, Graddol and Boyd-Barrett (1994), details how multifaceted and multidisciplinary the media studies approach can be. For example, functional linguist M. A. K. Halliday (1994) – whose systemic-functional analytic framework remains the basis of much current work – contributes research on oral and written texts; cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall discusses audience familiarity with the “negotiated code” of the dominant culture (Hall 1994: 210); and applied linguists (e.g., Meinhof) discuss the heteroglossia of verbal and visual messages on TV – factors that resonate in today’s research. Research in volumes edited by Aitchison and Lewis (2003), Bell and Garrett (1998), and Johnson and Ensslin (2007) continue this trend.

In large part, the British and continental scholars, as well as the influential outputs of researchers from Australia, New Zealand, and elsewhere in Europe and Asia, have formed the basis of media discourse or media linguistics work that has established the current iterations of the subfield (see also Bednarek and Caple 2012; Conboy 2006, 2007; Lorenzo-Dus 2009; Montgomery 2007; O’Keeffe 2006; Perrin 2013; and Silverstone 1994). Their work stands in contrast to that of their American media studies counterparts, mostly non-linguists whose contributions to media research have largely continued either along the lines of traditional, quantitative communications research or are political science-based; although scholars such as Zelizer (2004) and Jamieson (1990, etc.) and her co-authors have provided insightful analyses of political rhetoric, public discourse, and journalism.

Within linguistics itself, US-based scholars interested in exploring the language and discourse of the media for its own sake or for the study of its effects on society tend to operate from the traditions of linguistic or social anthropology, multimodality, pragmatics, and Interactional Sociolinguistics (e.g., Briggs and Hallin 2007; Hill 2007; R. Lakoff 2000; Peterson 2003; Scollon 1998; Spitulnik 2001) as well as computer-mediated communication (see Herring and Androutsopoulos, this volume). Despite the burgeoning effort, there is still relatively little discussion by linguistically oriented researchers of American news-gathering traditions (but see Cotter 1999, 2010; Peterson 2001).

Since its inception, a primary objective of most media discourse analysis (from the linguistic to the sociological) is often the accounting of the presence of bias or ideology<sup>2</sup> in language, or the problematizing of power relations in society. As such, social theory has often been more a basis for analysis than linguistic theory. This is especially the case in the early work of the Glasgow University Media Group (1976), Davis and Walton (1983), and Kress and Hodge (1979) and continues with more recent, non-linguistic media studies research.

The early literature as a body tended to focus variously on the ideological implications of language in the media, and thus critiques of the approaches were organized around the validity of findings of bias. Verschueren (1985), for instance, warned against linguistic research that was not sufficiently contextualized, ignorant of the “structural and functional properties of the news-gathering and reporting process in a free press tradition” (1985: vii), or that the ideology work drew obvious conclusions, “simply predictable on the basis of those structural and functional properties” (1985: vii; see also Cotter 1999). Bell (1991), for his part, critiques approaches to media language analysis that suffer from a “lack of sound basic linguistic analysis” (1991: 215). Approaches that are too simplistic erroneously presume “a clearly definable relation between any given linguistic choice and a specific ideology” and assign to “newswriters a far more deliberate ideological intervention in news than is supported by the research on news production” (Bell 1991: 214). Their critiques continue to provide guidelines no matter the decade or research question.

As the interdisciplinarity of media research has become more firmly established, the analytical and methodological issues under critical consideration tend to focus on what the different approaches – taken together – can usefully reveal in relation to the research questions posed. These approaches, discussed in greater detail in the next section, include: pragmatics, social semiotics, Critical Discourse Analysis, Conversation Analysis, sociolinguistic variation, narrative analysis, Interactional Sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology and ethnography, corpus-assisted discourse analysis, and multimodality. The development of useful corpora, newsroom ethnography and practice-based methods, and new attention to the historical dimension – approaches that have proliferated in the past decade – are changing that scenario with respect to new and renewed research queries.

## 2 Approaches to Media Discourse

The main approaches to the study of media discourse can be characterized broadly as (1) discourse analytic, (2) sociolinguistic, and (3) “non-linguistic.” Media discourse researchers tend to blend aspects of all three in a single work. The “discourse analytic” paradigm addresses discourse-level matters related to larger stretches of talk and text beyond the word or sentence level, including questions of participant, topic, function, and discourse structure, as well as a range of genre- or speech-event-specific discourse phenomena that includes interviews, quotation and reported speech, register issues, politeness, positioning and framing, stance, graphic display, visual communication, and so forth. (Work in some of these areas will be highlighted in Section 4.1.) The term “sociolinguistic” refers to work that involves variation and style in the media or a similar close analysis of language alongside socially motivated processes of standardization and prescription. Researchers often rely on sociolinguistic insights either to characterize some dimension of media language or to inform related discourse-level work, such as genre and register (considerations that will be discussed in greater detail in Section 4.2). The “non-linguistic” research involves work in political science, media studies, cultural studies, history, or communication studies paradigms. Although it is not the primary focus of this chapter, it is important to note that work in these domains

is referred to by media discourse researchers perhaps more than in any other topical area of discourse analysis (citing the likes of Allan 1999, 2013; Cottle 2000, 2003; Galtung and Ruge 1981; Harcup and O'Neill 2001; Jamieson 1990, 1996; Jamieson and Campbell 2005; Tuchman 1980, etc.). Similarly, more and more media studies scholars are utilizing concepts familiar to discourse analysts, such as narrative and framing (Craig 2008; Peelo 2006; C. Squires 2011).

Initially, these approaches, which tend to cluster as much as they operate independently, involved critical, pragmatic, narrative, intercultural, and cognitive discourse approaches. More systematically explored over the past 10 years, and increasingly important, are the practice-based or ethnographic, multimodal, and corpus-assisted methods. To further elaborate, the research clusters are as set out below.

## 2.1 *Critical/corpus/multimodal*

*Critical Discourse Analysis* is critical in the sense of revealing societal power operations and invoking a call to social responsibility. It is informed by social or cultural theory, the systemic-functional and semiotic approach to linguistics developed by Halliday (1978, 1985; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014), and the earlier critical linguistics work of Fowler *et al.* (1979), as well as notions of mediated action (Fairclough 1995; Scollon 1998; van Dijk 1988, 1991) and social practice (Caldas-Coulthard 1997; Fowler 1991). Recent work, for example by Wodak and Chilton (2005), Blommaert and Verschueren (1998), J. Richardson (2007), builds on this theoretical base, as does a great deal of (but not all) research involving *corpus linguistics* (Baker 2006; Baker *et al.* 2008; McEnery and Hardie 2012; Morley and Bayley 2009) and *multimodality* (Jewitt 2009; Kress and van Leeuwen 2006; Kress 2010; Jones and Hafner 2012). New work on *representation* (of social group) in the media (e.g., J. Richardson 2004; Jaworska and Krishnamurthy 2012; Vessey 2013a) is also informed by and expands the critical and semiotic traditions. The approach can be “critical” in the sense of looking at social impact or inequality (see Santa Ana 2002); or concern political economy in the sense of the social value of language (e.g., Jaffe 2007; Milani and Johnson 2010) without necessarily aligning with a major tradition such as Critical Discourse Analysis.

## 2.2 *Narrative/pragmatic/stylistic*

Since the early days of media discourse analysis, a fair amount of research by linguists has focused on discourse-level elements and explanations, often in relation to the narrative structure of news stories; the pragmatic functions of the discourse; discussions of presentation and perspective, style, and register; and issues of interaction and audience response to texts (see foundational work by Bell 1984, 1991; R. Lakoff 1990; Tannen 1989; Verschueren 1985; Weitzman 1984; Wortham and Locher 1996, etc.). The overall structure of news discourse has received a great deal of attention, highlighting linguistic elements that underscore both the similarity and heterogeneity of media forms (e.g., Biber 2003; Clayman 1988; Clayman and Heritage 2002; Clayman *et al.*, 2006; Hutchby 2006, 2011; Leitner 1997), as well as linking critical approaches to the analysis of genre

(Bhatia 2008) and ethnographic approaches to understanding discourse across participant contexts (Jacobs, Maat, and van Hout 2008).

### 2.3 *Ethnographic/anthropological/practice-focused*

Promoted by linguists whose analyses are informed either by fieldwork in newsrooms or by their own journalism experience or professional training (e.g., Barkho 2011; ben-Aaron 2005; Cotter 2010; Gravengaard 2013; Perrin 2013; Peterson 2001; van Hout 2010; van Hout and Jacobs 2008; Vandendaele and van Praet 2013), this method looks to aspects of the situated practices of news reporters and editors, or their community of practice entailments (as per Lave and Wenger 1991), and aims for a holistic reading of media discourse (see also Barkho 2013; Bell 1991; Knight and Nakano 1999; van Hout and Macgilchrist 2010).<sup>3</sup> New methodologies that involve *writing* (cf. on-site progression analysis developed by Perrin 2003; Perrin and Ehrensberger 2006) are particularly noteworthy and provide another insight into both professional practice and the way discourse is constructed. From a different perspective on writing, Matheson (2003) shows the professionally constructed ways that journalists think about their writing, a feature that Peterson (2001) aligns theoretically to interpretive practice, also a hallmark of anthropological and ethnographic paradigms.

### 2.4 *Comparative/cross-cultural*

Researchers in this area reveal important understandings of the role of culture and politics in the production of news discourse as well as delineate the variable aspects of news practice not apparent in solely Anglo-American media-focused treatments, including topic, quotation constraints, and honorifics (starting with Leitner 1980; Love and Morrison 1989; Scollon and Scollon 1997; Waugh 1995, etc. and more recently Le 2006; Moschonas and Spitzmüller 2010; Satoh 2001; Vessey 2013b). *Multilingualism* (Kelly-Holmes and Milani 2011; Jaffe 2007; Heller 2010a) and the burgeoning area of *translation* scholarship (Bielsa and Bassnett 2009) also inform a wide range of newer work, from advertising (Kelly-Holmes 2005) to specialist media genres (Puschmann 2010) to minority-language media (Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes 2011) to language policy (Horner 2011; Kelly-Holmes, Moriarty, and Pietikäinen 2009; Vessey 2013b) and professional identity (Mazzi 2012).

### 2.5 *Cognitive*

Cognitive methods, either relative to comprehension or to other aspects of mental structure, seek to reveal the relations between cognitive processes, social meaning, and discourse (e.g., Aubrun and Grady 2003; G. Lakoff 1996; Santa Ana 2002; van Dijk 1988, 1998; van Dijk and Kintsch 1983). Building on the traditions of conceptual metaphor theory alongside White and Herrera (2003), Koller (2004), for instance, uses *cognitive semantics* to investigate business journalism and corporate branding.

## 2.6 Medial/communication studies

Researchers in this heterogeneous area either employ traditional positivistic research protocols and content analyses or work from the insights of cultural studies, semiotics, social theory, and social history; aspects of language or discourse may not be addressed as such (Cappella and Jamieson 1997; Couldry 2004; Day and Golan 2005; Schudson 1981; Zelizer 2010, etc.). Often, however, the relation of practice to a discursive outcome is stressed, as in Boyce (2007), who shows how journalists construct expertise and questions how it can affect coverage of topics like public health. Researchers from a variety of linguistically informed traditions (e.g., Conboy 2006; Peterson 2003) have drawn extensively from this literature, providing as it does insights beyond the linguistic. The process of *mediatization*, or the media's agency and influence on popular and political thought and action, is also a key construct in situating current work, whether linguistic or non-linguistic in investigation (cf. Cottle 2006; Craig 2008).

## 3 Key Components of Media Discourse

The discourse of the (news) media encapsulates three key components: the news story, or spoken, written, or visual *text*; the *process* involved in producing the texts; and alignments to *audience(s)*. The first dimension, that of the *text* (see Section 3.1), has long been the primary focus of most media researchers, particularly as the text encodes values and ideologies that impact and reflect the larger world. The second dimension, that of *process* (including the norms and routines of the community of news practitioners), has evolved considerably over the past 10–15 years with newer research detailing how factors in the production process significantly influence – and define – news discourse. (Discussion of this component, affecting as it does all facets of discourse, is reserved for Section 5.) The third dimension, anchored by Bell's audience design framework (1991) and accommodation theory (Giles, Coupland, and Coupland 1991), involves consideration of *audience* and the various social and linguistic meanings that adhere as a result (see Section 3.2). Given new digital platforms and the changes wrought by the interactivity potential of social media, this area is ripe for further research, as numerous scholars across disciplines and theoretical frameworks have done (e.g., see Alia 2010; Androutopoulos 2013; Jones and Hafner 2012; Knaś 2009; Koteyko 2010; Law 2013; Mykietiak in press; L. Squires 2011; Thurlow and Mroczek 2011). Re-evaluating what constitutes the text (Lewis 2003), theorizing the visual (and video) dimension (Caple and Knox 2012; LeVine and Scollon 2004), highlighting changes in genre form (Jucker 2006), and understanding interaction and participation (Chovanec 2010; Law 2010) are also part of the ongoing opportunity that digital modalities bring to the *text–process–audience* investigation.

### 3.1 Text dynamics

The traditional focus on the text does not mean it has been examined as a static artifact. Most linguists consider the news text from one of two vantage points:

(1) that of discourse structure or linguistic function, or (2) according to its impact as ideology-bearing discourse or representation of the social world. Either view assumes an emergent, dynamic mechanism that results in the unique display of media discourse over time, culture, and context. In the first view, Bakhtin's notions of voicing (1986), Goffman's concept of framing (1974, 1981), Bell's work on narrative structure and style (1991, 1994, 1998), Du Bois's research on stance and alignment through dialogic communication (2007), and Tannen's (1998) positioning of the media as agonists and instigators of polarized public debate have led to valuable insights into discourse structure, function, and effect – and have characterized the very significant role the media play in the shaping of public, as well as media, discourse.

In the latter view, which comprises the larger store of research, the interdisciplinary framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) – including Fairclough's deployment of social theory and intertextuality in the illumination of discourse practice (1992, 1995), Fowler's critical scan of social practice and language in the news (1991), and van Dijk's work on the relation of societal structures and discourse structures, particularly as this relation implicates racism (1991) – has been seminal, and indeed, with Bell (1991, etc.) created the foundations of the field of media discourse studies (for an extended discussion of CDA, see Fairclough 2010; van Dijk 2001, this volume).

More recently, scholars investigating media discourse have elaborated on the role of ideology (e.g., Hill 2007; Milani and Johnson 2010) and evaluation (Haarman and Lombardo 2008; Hunston 2000) in the mediatized construction of social meaning. This has happened alongside concurrent developments in corpus linguistics (e.g., Baker *et al.* 2008; Partington 2010) and linguistic anthropology (e.g., Heller 2010a, 2010b; Peterson 2007; Santa Ana 2013) through which the social impacts of the media are queried. Publications resulting from ongoing international conferences and consortia on language in the media (e.g., Catenaccio *et al.* 2011; Johnson and Ensslin 2007; Johnson and Milani 2010; Thurlow and Mroczek 2011) have laid further groundwork with respect to an understanding of the representation and identity of both media users and producers.

### 3.2 Audience considerations

Attention to audience is the first step away from text-only-focused analyses of media, and many researchers actively support a theoretical position of media discourse that includes the audience (or the consumer or participant/recipient or discursive co-creator), a point that has been raised in terms of sociolinguistic news-audience “design” (Bell 1984, 1991), reception (K. Richardson 1998), position within the media process (Cotter 2010; Scollon 1998), and more recently within new media, minority-language, and historical contexts (Law 2013; Blommaert and Verschueren 1998). Goffman's analysis of radio talk (1981) was one of the first to articulate and apply the insight that the relationships among the different interlocutors determine the nature of the speech event and the talk that is appropriate to it. Bell's (1991) view that the audience has an explicit or implicit voice in the discourse outcome builds on Goffman's participant categories.

While different linguists or theorists offer different conceptualizations of the audience and its role in the construction of media realities, in the approaches addressed

here, the audience is conceived of as part of the discourse mechanism. This is in contrast with more conventional and increasingly challenged assumptions about mass communication which rely on the active sender–passive receiver “conduit” model which social media both upends and maintains, and which is now contested (Cotter 1999; Craig 2005). The position of the audience may be one of the more salient differentiating features of the various research paradigms. A great deal of the research (from within discourse analysis and sociolinguistics and outside of it) either casts the audience as individuals who do not have much choice in resisting media power, or the audience’s role is credited with more equality in the relationship: as being *both* active and acted upon. A good description comes from Meinhof (1994), whose early work on the visual and textual double messages in television news is consciously predicated on a focus away from “text-internal readings, where readers are theorized as decoders of fixed meanings to more dynamic models, where meanings are negotiated by actively participating readers” (Meinhof 1994: 212) – an assumed factor in linguistic anthropology, sociocultural, or linguistic ethnography approaches. This dynamic is even more apparent with online media, as scholars are establishing with work on news story “comments” (Barton and Lee 2013), blogs (Puschmann 2013), and changes in news style (Cotter 2014).

There are also different ways to explore the concept of audience agency in relation to the media message. Expanding on Goffman, communication scholars Cappella and Jamieson (1997) employ the concept of frame to account for the influence of media language on public opinion. Their work on political campaign coverage determined that audiences who read stories about strategy became more cynical about politicians and politics than those who read stories that focused on, and were thus framed in terms of, issues. Similarly, Jamieson and Cappella (2008) use frames to account for the rhetorical mechanics behind the development of conservative media and their reinforcement of an “insulated interpretive community” (2008: 178) that keeps their message on track. Cognitive linguists have also used the concept of frame (expanding on Fillmore 1982) with work on political discourse (see G. Lakoff 2004) and public-interest issues such as global warming (Topos 2010), alongside the notion of cognitive stance to account for media representations of teens and news coverage of child abuse (Aubrun and Grady 2001, 2003).

The audience is considered from other cognitive perspectives, as well. Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) led the early work on the cognitive factors in the processing of information that influence comprehension of texts by readers. They establish that hierarchical relations exist among discourse strategies; that information comes from many sources within text and context; and that “forward” and “backward” interpretation strategies operate on the local level to specify the meaning and constrain interpretation – insights that background many current assumptions about audience interplay with text. In comprehension research such as this, the audience and its range of innate psycholinguistic abilities are assumed and essentially backgrounded in the discussion of other issues. This stands in contrast to the work by investigators who incorporate the tenets of reception analysis in their investigation of media discourse (K. Richardson 1998). In Richardson’s work, the audience is foregrounded as a key element in the production of discourse meaning both through the researcher’s own emphasis on audience comprehension of texts, and by the audience’s response to texts in the data-eliciting process itself.

As media-savvy participants in the larger culture, we recognize audience roles and embedded points of view and are conscious when there are departures from a prescribed position. We may be less aware when the discourse pattern of the text is familiar. For instance, Fowler's (1994) discussion of "hysterical style" in the media – which identifies language in print and broadcast news stories that blames, provokes concern, confusion, and emotional reaction, and animates the threat (e.g., "killer bug") – shows how discourse features we may not consciously consider can influence our reading of the news. This includes quantification and numbers: "inevitably the figures [and other style factors] blur, becoming impressions rather than facts" (Fowler 1994: 98), whether intentional or not. The premise of *intentional* deception is behind Brooks and Jamieson's (2007) work on "spin," in a similar way showing how language is used to sell products and politics and how framing works to achieve that objective. From a different point of view, Jaffe (2009) and Jaworski (2007) examine how authenticity of voice – of the non-professional participants contributing to the media output – is linguistically circumscribed and socially meaningful.

In his much-cited "audience design" framework, Bell (1984, 1991) articulated a framework for considering the role of the audience on the sociolinguistic level, using phonological, lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic evidence. Major insights of the framework involve the role of style, which in different ways can either be responsive to the linguistic norms of an audience, or refer in some way to a "third party, reference group or model" outside of the speech community (Bell 1991: 127). Style strategies, thus, can be seen as playing an essential role in redefining and renegotiating the media's relationship to the audience.

Finally, Cotter (1993, 1999, 2010) characterizes the nature of the relationship between the news community and the "community of coverage" it serves. This work focuses on the interactive properties of the "pseudo-dyadic" relationship that exists between the two communities, as well as on the dynamic of "reciprocal transmission" – "the interplay of texts, creators, and audience" which allows the media to engage on the social or phatic level, at the same time providing content that "captures facts about our social worlds" (Cotter 1999: 168). Meanwhile, Law (2013) incorporates tenets of social psychology to investigate audience participation patterns in online media contexts, particularly in the service of minority-language engagement.

## 4 Insights for Discourse

Discourse-level analysis also works to pinpoint the key features and behaviors of the language of news. The media context produces unique manifestations of language and discourse, the study of which enriches both our understanding of the media as well as our understanding of discourse behaviors. Narrative structure (Section 4.1) and style and register (Section 4.2) are two productive areas of analysis and produce unique results when media data are considered – whether print, broadcast, online, social, historical, or contemporary – and will be discussed in greater detail, as well as the historical or diachronic approach (Section 4.3), which speaks to both structural and cultural change and continuity through news discourse. Other ways in which media data enrich and challenge our understanding of discourse itself is highlighted in Section 4.4.

## 4.1 *Narrative structure*

Journalists write stories, and consequently, research into story structure or narrative becomes relevant to account for their motivations. Frameworks that have been successfully applied to other domains of talk, such as Labov's (1972) narrative framework, have also been applied to news discourse. For example, Bell (1991) uses Labov's framework to examine the global narrative structure of news across local and national news boundaries and Cotter (2010) uses it in tandem with ethnographic and pragmatic insight into how journalists are taught their "craft," while van Dijk (1988) outlines a "theory of discourse schemata," which includes the traditional narrative schema as well as a more elaborated "news schema" – a "series of hierarchically ordered categories" that helps define the discourse (van Dijk 1988: 49).

Bell (1991, 1994, 1998) has long compared the structure of news stories to personal narratives, noting their similarities and divergences using the Labovian framework as a point of departure. A key result is the insight that the narrative "evaluation" component, which cues our reading of a news story's salience, is focused in the lead (that is, the very important first paragraph in a news story). The discursive elaboration and alteration of time elements in the news narrative is another feature distinctive to media discourse (Bell 1995). Linear chronology is not important in a news story to the extent one would think: "Perceived news value overturns temporal sequence and imposes an order completely at odds with the linear narrative point" (Bell 1991: 153). In their manipulation of temporal elements, reporters are not stenographers or transcribers; they are storytellers and interpreters (Cotter 2010), a role that is still central amid digital and online modes and technologies. This point about a reordered "news chronology" constrained by the norms of text and content that underlie news discourse also comes up in the work of media researchers (cf. Manoff and Schudson 1986).

The surface simplicity of the writing rules (which are standard across newswriting textbooks) and the complexity of their outputs (which varies across presentation domains) have begun to get more scrutiny with the writing process as well as the text. Bell (1991), for instance, notes the common practice in news-story construction of embedding one speech event into another. For example, a quotation from an interview is surrounded by information from a press release, but on the surface it is realized as a seamless, coherent "story." Likewise, Cotter (1999, 2010), in discussing the progress of a story through time, and Knight and Nakano (1999), in delineating the "press release reality" that informed reporting of the 1997 Hong Kong handover, elaborate on the role of multiple texts and multiple authors in the production of news. This multiparty/multi-element infrastructure has been remarked on by other researchers (such as Bell 1994; Cotter 1999; van Dijk 1988; Verschueren 1985); expanded by Jacobs's (1999) insights into press releases' structuring of news discourse; and made visible in real-time by story-writing research data analyzed by Perrin and Ehrensberger (2006) and van Hout (2010). Theoretical notions of intertextuality (Fairclough 1992), entextualization, heteroglossia, and hybridity (Bakhtin 1986) help bolster these analyses.

## 4.2 *Style and register*

Linguistic style becomes an operative concept in media discourse, both as a means to characterize the register and the unique features of news language, and also to

consider the dynamic role of many speech or practice communities in the production of discourse. The many social tasks a journalistic text intentionally or unconsciously accomplishes are reflected in the different dimensions of register that many researchers have noted as constitutive of media discourse. For example, Chimombo and Roseberry (1998) see news register as a result of the informing role of news producers and its attendant linguistic correlates. Scollon (1998) argues that the journalistic register is marked in part by the reporter's standardized practice of avoiding brandnames and copyrighted material, an activity that integrates a "hidden dialogicality" with intellectual property priorities. Weitzman (1984) notes early on how quotation marks convey a reporter's stance toward the material he or she has included in the news story and in the process help constitute the news register. Stance – which "unites" communicative act, actor responsibility, and sociocultural value – has been theorized by Du Bois (2007) and is highlighted as a key communicative factor in online media discourse by Barton and Lee (2013).

Style issues have also been addressed in the context of the media of bilingual societies, including Gonzalez's (1991) study of stylistic shifts in the English of the Philippine print media and Cotter's (1996) research on English discourse-marker insertion in Irish-language radio interviews. Gonzalez notes that a stylistic formality and consistency in Philippine English print media can be attributed to an underlying insecurity toward the colonizing language as well as to the site of English acquisition, that is, the school. Cotter discusses the presence of discourse markers as a strategy for discourse coherence in a domain in which fluency is expected but not necessarily available, and for the negotiation of identity in a bilingual frame. In both cases, the discourse requirements of a well-formed news story or interview condition the use of language.<sup>4</sup>

The constraints on style also derive from the larger culture in which the media discourse is being produced. Leitner (1980) was one of the first to conclude that language on the radio is marked in culturally constrained ways by stylistic variation and reflects social contradictions. (Naro and Scherre's [1996] work on Brazilian Portuguese similarly points to the impact of a media presence on linguistic variation.) Employing a comparative approach to investigate the characteristics of language on the radio, Leitner's work on understanding the differences in German and British radio emphasizes the importance of sociopolitical contexts in characterizing media language.

Bell's audience design framework bears mention again, as reference group affiliation would also explain the circumstances in which the media influences or reflects variation in the larger community. Bell (1991) cites several studies of status determinants in both print and broadcast discourse, for example, in French radio in Montreal and with Hebrew dialects on Israeli radio. Social class is also a factor in work as early as Roeh and Feldman (1984) and as recent as Bennett (2013). Roeh and Feldman looked at two Hebrew dailies and observed how numbers, particularly in headlines, index social class. They found that numbers were used for rhetorical value more often in the popular daily than in the elite daily (a point raised by Fowler 1994, as noted above). Meanwhile, Bennett's analysis of politician responses to social protests in Britain shows how class itself, and its attendant inequality, is embedded in public discourse, often disguised by attribution to other factors such as morality or values.

### 4.3 *Historical context, continuity, and change*

Journalists' own perceptions of their roles in the public sphere and their changing job duties also influence style and speak to the dynamic construction of media identities. Research that identifies change over time in the media and concurrent discursive indicators of this change reminds us that what we see at a particular point in time is conditioned by historical and cultural patterns – of stasis and memory – as well as contemporary dynamics and movements – of innovation and responsiveness. For example, Quirk (1982) noted how speaking style on the radio had changed, comparing British broadcast texts from the first half and the latter half of the twentieth century. Initially, news readers were just that: readers, agents for conveying information, reading from a prepared text. Rhetorical devices, such as ad libbing or joking to lessen the distance between broadcaster and listener, were not present as they are now. Quirk observed that the changing roles of the broadcaster – in particular in relation to audience and in relation to medium – influence style, a factor that is present in current research on broadcast media and interview genres (Greatbatch 1998; Hutchby 2011; Montgomery 2010).

The historical or diachronic dimension, which in itself is a productive, cross-disciplinary strand in news discourse analysis (cf. Cesiri 2012; Cotter 2003; Conboy 2010; Facchinetti *et al.* 2012; Hillberg 2012; Ungerer 2000), is also revealing in research on language ideology and prescriptive injunctions about usage. This is particularly evident in multilingual national contexts, as described, for example, in research by Vandebussche (2008) for Belgium and Flanders and Horner (2007) for Luxembourg, which also shows how self-described linguists quoted in newspapers have taken a prominent role in constructing public discourse. Their work and others (e.g., Androutopoulos 2010; Kelly-Holmes and Atkinson 2007) show how the valence of language and of usage choices can be viewed as political, no matter the century or media and cultural contexts.

Changes in technology itself influence media discourse at the same time as they offer the researcher an opportunity to consider the stability (or intractability) of cultural categories – and not just in the present digital era. For example, McKay's (1988) historical work on voice amplification and gender observes how discourse styles had to alter to fit changing production modes in the early days of technology-assisted communication in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, from the megaphone to radio. Her focus on the role of gender in questions of authoritative voice indicates that culturally projected views of women's "appropriate" place did not stop at the door of the recording studio. Her observations of 1920s America speak to the perseverance of cultural attitudes over technological boundaries, present in the current day. (See also Cotter 2011 and Moses 1994 for similar diachronic explorations of gender and media; and Bauman 2010 for discussion of the interactional challenge of new technology when the telephone was introduced.)

### 4.4 *Other insights*

Media data also enrich the examination of more traditional discourse parameters, underscoring issues of discourse multi-functionality, challenging received analytical

assumptions, and demonstrating what is unique about media language. Particular distributions of discourse features occur in other media discourse, demonstrating more fully the range of social and textual meanings implicit on the discourse level. Media data often offer the “third alternative” to standard dichotomies such as the continuum of spoken and written discourse, or public and private language (see Burger 2006), local and global spaces, as well as to discussions of what constitutes participant structures, performance, and the very definition of what constitutes “media”; interaction, interactivity, and community offer a challenge to some of our *a priori* assumptions about how discourse might operate in varied, active contexts, and in the process they contribute to our understanding of media. For example, Zelizer (1995) observes that journalistic quotes present an “interface” between written and oral modes of communication, as they blend aspects of talk and text, an outcome that is present whether or not the channel of delivery is broadcast or print.

The use of quotation or reported speech – by newsmakers, from a range of texts, by direct or indirect means – is another example of a journalistic practice that has been addressed by discourse analysts from many perspectives, in the process illuminating a range of discursive behaviors across contexts. Leitner (1997) examines the use of reported speech in TV news, looking at the distribution of more than a dozen grammatical and textual elements, noting how their presence was instantiated by journalistic assumptions about what is normative in news presentations. Scollon and Scollon (1997) compare quotation, among other features involving point of view and citation, in 14 Chinese and English versions of a single story. They find that a complement of discourse features (including author acknowledgment through bylines) works together to project a story with a traceable lineage to its official publishing source. Caldas-Coulthard (1997), on the other hand, shows how some features, particularly the representation of non-linguistic elements as in face-to-face interaction, are lost as a story undergoes its process of transformation.

## 5 Directions for Continued Research

At the beginning of this chapter, I referred to the discourse of news media as encapsulating three key components: the dimension of text or story, the dimension of the process involved in the production of texts, and the role of the audience. Work on the text dimension is now well established and organized around a range of research questions, methodologies, and topics that continue to bear fruit. The production dimension has gained traction over the past 15 years and is similarly placed. Research groups worldwide are ensuring this proceeds. Nonetheless, in the large body of research to date, even now, news texts are not automatically assumed to be an outcome of a discourse process that comprises key communicative routines and habits of practice that work to constitute the journalistic or social community. A journalist or blogger reports, writes, edits, and produces in the context of his or her discourse community, and this somewhat obvious factor is worthy of further scrutiny. Thus, the way is clear for even more work in a field of academic endeavor that, taken as a whole, incorporates and welcomes research orientations from a wide variety of disciplines.

Alongside that, it remains important to look at the role of audience in relation to the practitioner, the sites of news production, and dissemination within the larger context of local and global community as well as the text. As noted earlier, digital media have changed and are continuing to change the role of the audience: News organizations work actively to foster the “interactivity” with consumers that the online modality affords (on the “identity” side to maintain brand position and on the business side to create advertising revenue through clicks); content is user-generated; journalists are expected to Tweet and blog with their “community of coverage” (Cotter 2010); the proliferation of news aggregation sites resituate media positions in relation to users. Peterson’s research on new media in the Middle East underscores the point (see also Bassiouney 2012), noting that “the Egyptian case emphasizes how complex are human media practices, how broad, shifting and multilayered the networks they create, and how unpredictable and creative such practices can be” (Peterson 2015: 513).

A key aspect in the production of media discourse remains the role of the *audience in relation to* the media practitioner. Key questions one can ask are: What is the role or position of the audience in the practitioner’s point of view? And how does this influence creation and content of the news text? How does it affect discourse structure, or style choice, or syntax or phonology? Who is the practitioner writing for? A deeper knowledge of the practitioner’s focus on his or her readership or audience would allow a more nuanced discussion of media practice and its relation to audience or the communities that are covered. While classic mass communication models position the audience in a nearly invisible role, and some media discourse researchers have made the strong claim that journalists are only interested in reporting for their peers, the strong counter-claim is that these assumptions can be challenged, and then better characterized, by a consideration of the actual intentions (if not outcomes) of journalists in relation to their audience, particularly with the changes in media consumption introduced by digital and social media.

Researchers would also do well to consider the range and scope of journalistic practice and process through community-based research. I have noted elsewhere that research is rarely focused on the smaller, local publication or station, or the smaller national outlet, whether online or not, despite their pervasive function as main news sources for countless communities worldwide. With some exceptions, study of community journalism (as opposed to metro or international reporting) is fairly minimal in the linguistic literature – this despite the fact that community journalists, like their bigger counterparts, apply the profession’s standard, which then mediates with local norms, contributing to linguistic heterogeneity as much as (or more than) larger news outlets (see the comparative/cultural work cited earlier in this chapter). Digital publishing practice also means that blogs and non-institutional online publications and newsletters, as well as evolving “participatory journalism,” are becoming central to consumption, and thus to our research scrutiny, as new genres and forms of presentation, alongside changes in participation frameworks, emerge.

Community-based research has implications for other domains, including that of lesser used or endangered languages, or in other contexts, finding out who is rendered visible and what is prioritized in the social hierarchy, what practices in the community support or challenge the status quo or local hegemonies. Much of minority-language media is modeled on community journalism practices, primarily because the population that is served by such media is often small and community boundaries are well

defined. This persists alongside an online presence (as Law's research on Welsh suggests). In some cases, the community status of a radio station or television channel, for instance, allows for a wider participation of its community of listeners in creating what actually goes on the air than a commercial or state station would have or allow. The discourse community of journalists intermixes with the speech community – or the audience – it serves. This proximity affords another vantage point from which to scrutinize media discourse processes, practices, and impacts.

## 6 Summary

This chapter has outlined a range of work that considers media discourse from several vantage points, examining many aspects of discourse structure, representation, and involvement with audience and society. What has been emphasized has been the importance of media language research – to articulate a better understanding of the media, the unique handling of language, text, image, and interaction and the impact on thought and culture; and the challenges it can provide researchers using the tools of linguistics and discourse analysis.

As I have summarized it, the primary approaches to media language analysis are a multidisciplinary blend of discourse analytic and sociolinguistic approaches. Analyses of media texts and impacts have been productively informed by the insights of work in complementary fields: cultural studies, critical theory, and semiotics comprise one area of research; political science, sociology, history, and a broad range of scholarly activities that make up communication and media studies comprise the other. Discourse structure, representation, ideology, pragmatic and social-semiotic meaning, sociolinguistic variation, ethnographic understanding, mediatization processes, and involvement with audience and society are all queried and studied with a wide range of media data.

I have noted that the methods of investigating media discourse, while uniquely cross-disciplinary in many respects, can be organized into areas characterized differently by method of investigation and theoretical focus. Critical and semiotic frameworks with their primary focus on content, and pragmatic, narrative, and stylistic approaches with a concurrent focus on structure, have dominated the field. Over the past decade or so, corpus-assisted discourse analysis and newsroom ethnography, the latter often in support of what can collectively be called “media linguistics” (see Perrin 2013), have gained the most attention. Also over the past decade, the extent to which we understand what constitutes “the media” has been queried as it means more than the traditional journalistic print, broadcast, and online modalities, particularly with the proliferation of social media and mobile technology. To this extent, expansion of our critical and theoretical frameworks bears attention. On this front, Bell (2013) discusses the “redefinition” of journalism in terms of philosopher Paul Ricoeur's “interpretive arc,” which situates the reader at the heart of textual understanding and ownership and allows a new account of the twenty-first-century reconfiguration of news producer and audience roles and online elaborations of news texts.

In proposing extensions of current research, as well as building on current work on media discourse and the processes involved in the production of texts and stories, I

suggested that the audience component could be more fully and explicitly considered, particularly with the omnipresence of social media and technology. One way forward is community-based research – undertaken by any of the range of approaches listed here. Additionally, standard “audience” models are yielding to changes in practice as users generate content, news outlets encourage “interactivity,” and the professional role of the new-media-oriented journalist changes. At the same time, news narratives reflect both stable and emergent ideologies within local and global cultures, hearkening to the historical past, and on the textual level incorporating visual and interactional elements that enhance their transformations in the digital age. Indeed, it is this latter, multimodal domain, with altered economies and new participation engagements, that offers the prospect of innovative and exciting insights into media discourse and its linguistic and cultural dimensions.

## NOTES

- 1 Linguists have traditionally divided media content into two main parts, news and advertising (Bell 1991), or included a third category, entertainment (Fairclough 1995).
- 2 Ideology is defined and investigated differently by different researchers.
- 3 Altheide and Schneider (2013) adapt an ethnographic methodology to the traditional quantitative-oriented content analysis, showing another way that research can be practice-focused.
- 4 Online news and entertainment sites afford an accessible source of multilingual, comparative data. News organizations often offer different Web publications through their portal sites to appeal to different audiences. For instance, various US papers offer English-language, Spanish-language, and youth news sites – which cover similar topics framed according to the interests of their different constituencies.

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# 38 Discourse Analysis in the Legal Context

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ROGER W. SHUY

One of the defining characteristics of discourse analysis is that it is capable of being applied to a wide variety of settings and contexts. Because law depends so heavily on language, its continuous spoken or written text provides a broad opportunity for discourse analysts. Law is comprised of written discourse, where care is taken to record in print all oral interactions that occur in court and all electronically recorded spoken language used as evidence. Entire law cases are preserved in written form to serve as the basis for later legal reviews and decisions. Law libraries house immense collections of both written text such as statutes, motions, briefs, counter-claims, and judges' opinions, but they also contain spoken language that has been transcribed in written form of trials, hearings, and arguments made possible by the continuous development of electronic communication technology.

Because of the advent of electronic voice recordings and their written transcriptions of concurrent spoken language evidence used at trials, the opportunity for discourse analysis has blossomed. Law enforcement agencies sometimes record events such as undercover stings, police interviews, and legal hearings, while businesses frequently tape important meetings, conference calls, emails, and other types of communication that become evidence in civil cases. The field of law, therefore, is a fertile field for discourse analysts because it provides mountains of data for linguistic analysis in both civil and criminal cases.

## 1 A Brief Background of Linguistics and Law

Work in language and law is a somewhat recently recognized subfield of applied linguistics, which in the past quarter century has spawned its own academic organizations and journals. Documentation is sparse about the ways linguists have assisted in

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*The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Second Edition.

Edited by Deborah Tannen, Heidi E. Hamilton, and Deborah Schiffrin.

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law cases before the second half of the twentieth century, but recent publications indicate that a flurry of activity began to take place in the 1980s in Germany (Kniffa 2007), England (Coulthard 2004), and the US (Shuy 1993b). Literature in this field began to flower in the early 1990s with important general collections of articles on language and law (Gibbons 1994, 2003; Levi and Walker 1990; Rieber and Stewart 1990), with books and articles on the language of the courtroom (O'Barr 1982; Philips 1985, 1998; Solan 1993; Stygal 1994), with bilingualism in the courtroom (Berk-Seligson 1990, 2009), with aircraft communication breakdowns (Cushing 1994; Shuy 1993a), and with criminal case evidence (Shuy 1993b, 1998a, 2011), sexual crime (Ainsworth 1993; Matoesian 1993, 2001; Shuy 2012), and the language of bureaucracies and business (Shuy 1993b, 1998b). Discourse analysis was beginning to play an important role in these applications, but it was still not the centerpiece of the work.

In the twenty-first century the field has expanded widely to civil cases with works on trademark disputes (Butters 2007a, 2007b; 2008; Shuy 2002), product liability (Shuy 2008; Tiersma 2002), contract disputes (Shuy 2008; Solan 2001, 2004), courtroom language (Conley and O'Barr 1998; Cotterill 2003; Eades 2008, 2010; Heffer 2005; Stygal 1994), authorship analysis (Chaski 2001; Coulthard 2004; Kniffka 2007; McMenamin 1993, 2002), discrimination (Baugh 2007; Shuy 2008), and defamation (Shuy 2010). Linguistic work on criminal cases also increased with focuses on police interrogation (Berk-Seligson 2002, 2009; Heydon 2005; Rock 2007), sexual crimes (Cotterill 2007; Shuy 2012), and perjury (Shuy 2011). Meanwhile, linguists who are also lawyers were also actively analyzing legal language (Dumas 2000; Heffer 2005; Schane 2006; Solan 2010; Solan and Tiersma 2005; Tiersma 1993, 1999, 2010). Meanwhile two extensive handbooks on the relationship of language and law have been published (Coulthard and Johnson 2010; Tiersma and Solan 2012).

Back in the 1970s one impetus for the use of discourse analysis in criminal law cases occurred after law enforcement began to use tape recordings of undercover conversations as a way to capture language crimes as they actually were taking place. Thanks to vast improvements in electronics and the passage of new laws related to white-collar and organized crime, the government began to increase its use of both undercover and wire-taped evidence. It is perhaps serendipitous that during this same period, linguistics was expanding its own analytical tools to include the systematic analysis of language beyond the level of the sentence and its study of meaning beyond the level of words and sentences. During this period, such concepts as discourse analysis, pragmatics, framing, speech acts, intentionality, and inferencing, began to find their way into common linguistic practice. These developments made it possible to use discourse analysis to analyze the electronic recordings gathered by law enforcement agencies as evidence against suspects in criminal cases as well as in some civil cases that contain evidentiary written and recorded texts.

In spite of these advances, even up to the present time it is common for lawyers to be concerned primarily with the smaller chunks of language that often stand out as the focus of their criminal and civil cases. For example, criminal indictments are often based on smoking gun passages, while disputes in civil cases also are often based on small units of language, such as sentences, phrases, or words. While such small passages of language capture the lawyers' immediate attention, discourse analysis can demonstrate how the entire language context in which those alleged smoking guns appear may put the matter in a very different light.

Lawyers who focus primarily on the smoking gun passages don't always realize how important it is to contextualize the smaller language units of syntax, lexicon, and morphemes that are nested within the larger language units of the participants' speech events, schemas, agendas, speech acts, and conversational strategies. And when issues of language variation and nonverbal behavior are evident, these also come into play at their appropriate sequential levels. Therefore, discourse analysts who work with legal evidence argue that it is optimal to contextualize such smoking gun passages within the contexts of the larger language units before making any final judgments about them.

## 2 Identifying the Speech Event

The first large place to start is with the speech event itself because it strongly influences the understandings of text that is contained within it. The notion of speech events appears to have begun with Dell Hymes's (1972) proposals made in reaction to Noam Chomsky's (1965) bold proclamation that the proper role of linguistics was to find the internalized rules of language and not, as descriptive linguists had held, on linguistic performance. In contrast, Hymes argued that communicative competence is found in the way speakers and writers use language in real-life contexts.

Central to Hymes's communicative competence rules is the speech event (1972). Speech events are identifiable human activities in which speech plays a central role in defining what that speech event is. In fact, such events cannot take place effectively without the language that defines them (van Dijk 1985: 201). Hymes's insights about the context, culture, and history of speech events had had a profound effect on analysts of spoken and written discourse as well as on studies of the ethnography of communication.

Following Hymes's model, Gumperz pointed out that speech events are recurring occasions that have "tacitly understood rules of preference, unspoken conventions as to what counts as valid and what information may or may not be introduced" (1990: 9). This means that in order to appreciate the work done by the sounds, morphemes, words, and sentences of a text, we have to see how they fit into the larger patterned language structures. The first and largest of these larger patterned structures is the speech event in which the language takes place. The speech event not only influences the parameters of what can be said by the participants (what counts as valid, in Gumperz's definition) but also the orderly sequence in which things can be said during that speech event. In many such speech events there is also an element of asymmetrical power that predicts these parameters. Commonly, one participant enjoys a superordinate position (doctor, judge, therapist, boss, buyer, teacher) while the other participant holds a more subordinate role (patient, witness, client, worker, seller, student). Their individual contributions to such speech events are influenced by this asymmetrical power relationship.

In *The Language of Perjury Cases* (Shuy 2011) I described several perjury cases in which the defendants found themselves in a speech event that they had never experienced before – the courtroom trial speech event (Solan and Tiersma 2005) – where power obviously is held by the prosecutor. But even when defendants are familiar with this speech event, they can run into serious problems. One perceptive defendant, in spite

of his powerlessness in this speech event, knew and understood that the tacitly understood rules of preference of the courtroom trial speech event restricted his testimony to only that for which he had verifiable knowledge (“the whole truth and nothing but the truth”). Defendant Reilly, vice president of the company that chartered the oceangoing vessel, *Khian Sea*, was indicted for perjury when, during his appearance before a grand jury, he denied having any knowledge about how the captain of that ship had illegally discharged 15,000 tons of incinerator ash somewhere into the ocean, which was a violation of international law.

The *Khian Sea* had wandered around the world unsuccessfully for two years trying to find a port that would accept its cargo of incinerator ash that was destined to be used as infill for low-lying areas. After the first year, Reilly’s charter expired and the ship was sold to another company. He had no contact with the ship’s captain after the ship illegally sailed from many ports in Latin America and Africa with its cargo of ash still aboard. All Reilly knew was what he read in the newspapers. He had, however, a clear and accurate schema about the speech event of a court appearance. He knew that he could testify only about that which he could verify, not about that which he might have to guess or infer. In contrast, the prosecutor was willing to violate the requirements of the trial speech event because he was sure that Reilly actually knew what happened and was lying.

A battle between their different notions about the requirements of that speech event then took place in the courtroom. But when the prosecutor at this grand jury hearing asked Reilly to speculate, he politely refused to do so:

- Prosecutor: Do you have any knowledge as to what happened to the ash on board the vessel?
- Reilly: No, sir.
- Prosecutor: Do you have any knowledge as the means by which it might be ascertained what happened to the residue on board the vessel?
- Reilly: No, sir.
- Prosecutor: You don’t have to be exactly familiar to talk to us. I want to know who you sort of think ... I want to take you one step further removed. Who do you think? ... We’re going to take a little speculation about this particular question.
- Reilly: Counsel, I respectfully request that I not be forced to speculate in these very important matters.

One might think that it might be easy for witnesses trapped in such an altered speech event to stop and explain that they were confused about what that speech event really was. But most people are not linguistically gifted enough to do this very well. They can request clarification when they don’t understand individual statements or questions by the other person, but clarifying the larger contextual confusion is much more difficult. For one thing, most people, including lawyers and jurors, don’t even know about the language category of a speech event. Defendants like Reilly might be able to object, saying something like, “I’m not supposed to testify about something I don’t know.” But even saying that can be difficult, because it can be taken as a face-threatening statement that could suggest an impolite accusation about the prosecutor’s deliberate trickery. In

the context of the courtroom testimony speech event, the prosecutor has the power, whether right or wrong.

In this case as in many others, the first thing for the linguist to point out to the court, therefore, was the conflict between two different understandings about what this speech event was, what it required, and how their different understandings of it led to the jury's misperception that Reilly committed perjury.

### 3 Identifying Schemas

In the legal context, after discourse analysts identify the structure and dynamics of the speech event in which the text occurs, they also need to identify the schemas of the speakers. The first clue about such schemas flows naturally from the speech event that determines the parameters of what the participants can and cannot say. Even then, however, speakers don't testify in the absence of their previous knowledge. They bring to each new encounter the information, attitudes, beliefs, and values that they already have, much as Reilly did in his grand jury hearing. In contrast, when people hear something new, in many cases they can absorb it and relate it, accurately or not, to what they already know.

The process of bringing previous knowledge to new information, labeled "schema" by Frederic Bartlett (1932), has since been developed further by other cognitive psychologists. Schemas refer to a person's mental plans that function as guidelines for their actions, words, and thoughts. Schemas are essential to all types of experience, because humans exist in a constant state of change based on new information they encounter. Unfortunately, sometimes their previously held information also can distort the way they receive and then talk about the new information. Even when they come to realize a misperception in a given exchange, however, it's often too late to take back what they have already said based on their previously operating schema. In legal settings, language has an usual type of permanence, especially when it is recorded for later evaluation. Witnesses can't easily take back what they said when they were operating under a different schema. In criminal cases, for example, the schemas that speakers hold during a period when they thought they were in a legal business transaction speech event can be misunderstood as relevant to an agent's sudden and unexpected topic shift into a bribery speech event that the target had not expected or anticipated.

The criminal case of John DeLorean provides an example of this (Shuy 1993b). He was building an automobile factory in Ireland when he met an undercover FBI agent posing as a banker, who offered to help him get either a bank loan or to help find investors for his nearly bankrupt company. Linguistic analysis demonstrated that DeLorean's schema that they were discussing potential loans and investors was clearly evident during the 64 undercover tape recordings made by government agents over a period of six months. The government's effort had produced nothing inculpatory until the very last of these conversations, when the agent finally told DeLorean that his bank would not be able to give him a loan after all, but that he could procure the needed finances for DeLorean if he would invest his company's remaining five million dollars in a drug business that the agent had on the side. DeLorean responded neither "yes" nor "no" to the agent's new offer, causing the government to misunderstand this as his agreement

to the illegal drug scheme. But since DeLorean's schema was that even though a bank loan was no longer possible for him, the banker's offer to find investors was still on the table, causing him to ignore the talk about this drug scheme that didn't involve him.

Noteworthy but completely overlooked by the prosecution was that throughout these many conversations, DeLorean consistently had used the word "investment" to refer to those who might invest in his company. In the final conversation, after the agent ambiguously pointed out that investment would be a good thing, DeLorean agreed. The prosecution thought it now had a smoking gun admission that DeLorean was guilty. But the agent used the word, "investment," with no indication of who would be investing in what, undoubtedly intending it to mean that DeLorean would invest in his drug scheme. DeLorean's agreement to "investment," however, was consistent with his schema throughout their many conversations, when his use of "investment" consistently referred to getting businesses to invest in his company. Because linguistic testimony contextualized the "smoking gun" that the government had focused on, the jury understood the discourse evidence of DeLorean's consistent schema and therefore his meaning of "investment" throughout all of their previous 63 conversations, leading to his acquittal on all charges.

## 4 Identifying Agendas Revealed by Topics and Responses

Discovering a communicator's possible intention is also important in virtually all criminal and civil litigation. For example, lawyers constantly try to discover the intention of a statute, what a contract writer may have intended by the wording in that document, what makers of their last will and testaments intended to leave to their heirs, and what people intended by what they said in tape-recorded conversations. Even though we can see the words that are written and we can hear the words that are spoken, no science can reach into the minds of writers or speaker to know with certainty what they were actually thinking or intending. There is simply nothing like DNA evidence to inform us about intentions, but there are *clues* to intentions that are often present in the discourse evidence, particularly when it is spoken language evidence. These discourse clues are the subject of linguistic discovery and analysis in court cases, because they are the best clues about the speakers' possible intentions.

Language clues lead juries to the next possible steps of understanding a text in the same way that detectives use the clues of fingerprints and tire skid marks to aid their understanding of murders and traffic accidents. Linguists often can find the language clues, contextualize them and, based on the structural rules of language, point out what these clues *can* or *can't* indicate. However, they don't (and shouldn't) claim to know what the speaker *did* mean because this is always the sole task of the triers of the fact. Discovering the language clues about intentions is an important task that most people, including lawyers and triers of the fact, normally cannot accomplish. It is an area where discourse analysis can play a much-needed role in law cases.

Such clues to intentions are, of course, found in the language in evidence. It is not disputed that people generally communicate because they have something that they want to say. It follows that what they want to say constitutes their conversational

agendas as these are revealed in the topics they introduce and by their responses to topics introduced by others. It's true that people are able to say things that they don't want to say, and that they can utter pure falsehoods, but conversation is by necessity a cooperative endeavor. Non-cooperative language is not natural, for it violates the principles of cooperation that underlie everyday communication. Grice (1975) outlined four maxims: people are expected to say as much as necessary and no more, to say that which is true, to be relevant, and to be clear and unambiguous.

When speakers violate these principles, the conversation is turned on its head. In most cases such violations are noticeable. Speakers can ramble on and on with unnecessary language, make untruthful or unverified statements, be irrelevant, or be unclear. When this happens, they can be challenged about their accuracy or truth, told to stick to the topic, urged to become relevant, or asked to clarify themselves. It is when they are not challenged in these ways that discourse can go awry. People are often reluctant to challenge, since this violates common rules of politeness and sometimes such challenges can be very face threatening. Admitting that they don't understand can point to their own social incompetence about understanding what the other person is talking about. Often they think it's better just to go along and hope that eventually everything will become clear. In some criminal cases, discourse analysis can contextualize seemingly unchallenged statements that on the surface appear to be inculpatory.

Conversational agendas are the best clues to the intentions of speakers or writers. People conventionally think of agendas as written lists of topics that are distributed to participants who are about to attend a meeting. If the subsequent discussion rambles away from the list of agenda items, the chairperson can call this to the rambler's attention and move the meeting back to the announced agenda. Other people at the meeting may have different personal agendas, but this doesn't matter because the format is set and the rules are clearly laid out.

In contrast, conversational agendas are often not well planned in advance. We may have an idea about what we want our conversation to accomplish and we may do our best to keep it on track, but there are no strong guides to tell us how this must happen. So how can we tell what the speakers' conversational agendas really are? Ruling out mind reading, of course, there are three other ways. First, because language provides that very useful speech act of requesting clarification, we can ask bluntly what the other person's agenda is, while taking the chance of violating politeness rules. Second, we can choose to assume and infer that we actually understand the other speaker's agenda, blindly responding as though we actually did understand it. This can be dangerous, because our assumptions and inferences can be very wrong. Third, we can analyze whatever language clues we can extract from what they say. Accomplishing this can be very difficult, however, while the conversation is rapidly taking place. This task is usually too difficult for listeners who are already busily immersed in the conversation and have many other things on their minds, including their own different agendas. Although such analysis can't be done on the spot by participants, recorded conversations provide discourse analysts the opportunity to apply their linguistic tools to that language evidence. This third approach provides the most effective and reliable clues to a speaker's intentions. It begins by identifying the topics that speakers introduce and the responses they make to the topics of other speakers in the same conversation or in a series of relevantly connected conversations.

## 4.1 Identifying the topics

The onset of a new topic usually is marked by a combination of semantic, phonological, and various discourse conventions. Most conversations of any length contain several topics, so it is important to set them off from each other so we don't get confused about what the participants were talking about. Complicating this is the fact that there can be one or more turns of talk that are nested within a single topic. For example, a new topic can be introduced, then amplified, clarified, responded to, or disputed by the participants until one of them introduces the next topic. And that same topic may be recycled at some later point in the conversation, especially after the persons who introduced it do not feel that their agendas have been satisfactorily resolved. Recycling a topic is a strong clue to those persons' intentions.

Semantic signals of a new topic are found when a speaker changes the conversation's content to something meaningfully different from that which had been talked about previously. Often this change is clear but, as noted above, sometimes the new focus is simply an addition, modification, or amplification of the current ongoing topic, which means that the original topic is actually being continued. Of the markers of topic change, the semantic shift is usually the clearest signal.

Phonological signals of a new topic include a modification in the stress and loudness of the speaker who introduces it. Another signal is often found when there is a significant pause between turns of talk.

Discourse conventions are also sometimes helpful in marking either the continuation of an existing topic or the start of a new one. For example, when speakers say, "Not to change the subject, but ..." we can be relatively certain that they are indeed changing it. In contrast, when a speaker begins a turn of talk with discourse markers like "well," "so," "I mean," "look," or "and," it often signals a continuation of the preceding topic, while markers such as "y' know," "or," and "but" are trickier because they can sometimes also serve as markers of a topic change.

One of the early uses of discourse analysis in criminal cases involving tape-recorded evidence was in the case of *Texas v. Davis* in 1979 (Shuy 1982, 2005). T. Cullen Davis was a Fort Worth oil-millionaire who in 1979 was accused of soliciting the murder of his wife. The government used undercover tape recordings of conversations between Davis and one of his employees to try to show that Davis had indeed solicited his wife's murder. But these tapes had some very odd qualities. For one thing, topic analysis showed that Davis never brought up the subject of killing, casting at least some doubt on this as Davis's agenda in those conversations.

The social context of the event also shed some light on Davis's verbal behavior. Davis had just been acquitted in a 1978 trial in which he was accused of breaking into his former home where his separated wife then lived with her new boyfriend. The wife identified Davis as the assailant wearing a ski mask, who wounded her and killed her live-in boyfriend. After Davis was acquitted, he understandably brought divorce proceedings against his wife. During these proceedings, Davis heard, accurately or not, that his wife was having an intimate relationship with the judge in their divorce trial. To obtain evidence of this, Davis asked his one of his employees to spy on his wife and catch her with the judge. Instead, the employee went to the police and told them that Davis had asked him to find someone to kill both his wife and the judge. The police then

wired the employee with a tape recorder and sent him out to get the verbal evidence on Davis. Two brief meetings ensued, in which Davis and his employee sat in a car and talked.

The two men held very different perceptions of this speech event. Davis believed it was a speech event of a progress report in which the employee would update him on his progress of getting evidence about his wife and the judge. The employee's notion of the speech event was that he was reporting progress on his effort to find a hit man. These conflicting ideas about this speech event led to their very different schemas about their conversation and, of course, to their different agendas.

The smoking gun evidence that impressed the prosecution was a passage on one of the tapes in which the government's version of the transcript showed the employee reporting to Davis, "I got the judge dead for you." To this, Davis was alleged to have responded, "good," followed by the employee saying, "And I'll get the rest of them dead for you too." Davis's "good" did indeed appear on the tape, but not in response to the employee's statement, as the government's version had reported.

The FBI not only had the employee wear a body mike in the car, but they also videotaped the meeting from a van located across the parking lot. My correlation of the voice tracks of the audio and video-tapes indicated that Davis got out of the car while they were discussing a topic about the employee's boss, a man named Art. While still in the car, Davis had been pointing out that Art complained to him about his employee taking off work so frequently. As he got out of the car, Davis continued to talk about Art while the employee, anxious to get incriminating evidence on tape, at the same time talked about getting the judge and others dead.

At trial, I testified that two separate speech events and simultaneous conversations were taking place here. Using my own transcript of the conversation, which displayed the simultaneous words of the speakers in proper sequence, I asked the jury to read everything that Davis said, beginning with the preceding topic about Art and continuing on the same topic as he moved around the side of the car to the trunk, where he retrieved his sun glasses. They could see where Davis's continuous topic of Art, which contained what the prosecution considered the smoking gun word "good," actually appeared. Davis uttered "good" in an integral and grammatical part of his own discourse topic, which was not at all related to the employee's topic. This demonstrated that Davis's "good" was not in response to the employee's topic at all. Then I had the jury read the employee's continuous discourse at the same point, which began with their mutual topic of Art. Finally I showed the jury how at the moment Davis was out of clear hearing distance, the employee lowered his head to his chest where his mike was concealed and peppered the tape with words that Davis would not be likely to have been able to hear. It was only by sheer coincidence that Davis uttered "good" as he talked about Art at a point where the prosecutor, who did not pay attention to the video tape evidence of his change in physical location, must have heard this as a response to the employee's talk about getting the judge killed.

Even when the language evidence is tape recorded, attention at trial is given almost entirely to the written transcript. In this case, the prosecution used their transcript to its ultimate disadvantage, because when the jury compared the prosecution's with what could be heard on the tape, their conclusion was very different from the government's.

This case demonstrates how the speech event and agendas as revealed by topic and response analyses are salient units of analysis for any conversation, but are especially

vital in criminal cases involving tape-recorded evidence. Likewise, this case emphasizes how dialogic discourse requires a participatory addressee in order to have interactional meaning. Tape recordings have only minimal ways to demonstrate that interactants are at different distances from each other when they utter their words. Relative degrees of loudness can help, but the on-topic or off-topic relevance of their discourse also contributes to understanding of physical distancing. The Davis case opened the door for discourse analysis in many other criminal cases that followed.

#### **4.2 Identifying the responses to the topics of other participants**

Another clue to the agendas of speakers is found in the ways they respond to the topics introduced by others. They can reply in a number of ways, just as Davis did. They can respond positively, negatively, indifferently, offer a feedback marker such as “uh-huh,” change the subject completely, or say nothing at all. The *type* of response is very important for discovering clues to the intentions of participants.

In the Davis case, response analysis showed that when the topic of murder was ambiguously hinted at by the undercover employee, Davis offered no agreement and, in fact, no recognizable interest in the matter. His response strategies were to front his own agenda (his worries about Art), to say nothing at all, or to offer only feedback marker “uh-huh” responses to the employee’s ambiguous reports of his search. To Davis, the search was to find evidence about the liaison of his wife and the judge. To the employee, the search was for a hit man. One courtroom battle concerned the meaning of Davis’s “uh-huh” responses. The prosecution argued that they were smoking gun signals of Davis’s agreement with the employee’s vague statements. The defense contextualized these “uh-huh” responses into his continuous discourse, which indicated that Davis was only intermittently attentive, but not agreeing with what the employee was saying. His mind was on his own agenda, not the employee’s.

### **5 Identifying Speech Acts**

While the macro picture of the language evidence is being contextualized in the speech event, schemas, and agendas, the discourse analyst’s next step is to examine the even smaller language units where the smoking guns usually are thought to reside. To this point we have observed how Delorean, Reilly, and Davis thought they were in different speech events, held different schemas, and had very different agendas. These larger language units, including the speech acts used by the participants, contextualize everything else, including the alleged smoking gun passages.

Speech is not just a matter of making sounds, words, and grammatical connectors. It’s getting things done with language. Even though most people don’t realize it, they get things done in an orderly way by following structured rules they were never directly taught, and probably never even thought about. Most languages enable speakers to effectively and felicitously report things, ask questions, request, agree, deny, claim, confirm, conjecture, apologize, offer, promise, warn, bribe, advise, admit, threaten, warn, regret, praise, accuse, complain, give opinions, and congratulate, among other things.

Sometimes we don't even recognize it when our efforts to get these things done are not accomplished effectively, or are not even accomplished at all.

Discourse analysts familiar with speech acts, however, can distinguish one that is made felicitously from one that is not. For example, people may think they are apologizing when they say, "I'm sorry you feel that way," but merely saying "sorry" is a far cry from a felicitous apology and "feeling that way" is a far cry from identifying the alleged offense. Similarly, speakers may believe they are warning or advising someone when what they are saying is actually a speech act of threatening.

After the notion of speech acts was introduced by Austin (1962) and amplified by Searle (1965), linguists have been applying speech act theory to many areas of language use, including the field of law. For instance, the legal issue about whether or not a threat, offer, promise, or agreement was made is very important in many criminal cases. In civil cases, whether or not a felicitous offer was actually made and accepted can be central to cases such as contract disputes. Whether lawyers are advising their clients about their rights or encouraging them to make false insurance claims is important in cases involving suborning perjury. In alleged bribery cases, it is crucial to determine whether or not the bribes were felicitously offered or accepted or, in fact, whether the speech acts of offering, promising, and agreeing were ever even present. Speech acts, such as promising, offering, denying, agreeing, threatening, warning, and apologizing have been well documented as central to conversation used as evidence in criminal cases (Shuy 1993b). Speech acts also provide important clues to the intent and understanding of contracts, warning labels, and other written documents in civil cases (Dumas 1990; Shuy 1990, 2008; Tiersma 1987, 1990, 2002).

One example of how speech act analysis was used in civil litigation took place at a car dealership in Texas (Shuy 1994, 1998b). After shopping for a used car, a congenitally deaf man charged the dealership with the infliction of false imprisonment, fraud, emotional distress, and violating the state's deceptive trade practices act and the human resources code that protects the handicapped. Many handwritten exchanges between the customer and the salesperson constituted the evidence for these charges. During the four hours of this event, the customer made it clear that he would not buy a car on that day, but he promised to think about it and come back when he was ready. Ignoring this, the salesperson took the keys to the customer's potential trade-in vehicle and refused to return them. He also solicited, and got, a returnable check from the customer that he alleged he would use to convince his supervisor that the customer was sincerely interested, purportedly to produce a more favorable deal for the customer, which is not uncommon as a used car salesperson's ploy.

After being forced to wait for the supervisor's response alone in a small office for about an hour, the customer finally asked that his check and car keys be returned. By the second hour, he demanded this. By the fourth hour, he was so frustrated that he took matters into his own hands, scooped up all of their written exchanges, rifled the salesperson's desk until he found his check, and then headed for the door, only to be blocked by the salesperson, who smiled as he tauntingly dangled the car keys in his hand. The customer then snatched the keys out of the salesperson's hand and headed straight to an attorney's office.

At trial the defendant car dealership argued that this was a normal car purchasing speech event in which the salesperson did nothing illegal. In contrast, speech act analysis of all of the hundred or so written exchanges made it clear that the customer gave no

indication that he was willing to buy a car on that day. His speech acts included reporting facts about his financial status seven times, requesting information about a newer vehicle six times, promising to return at a later date three times, requesting his check back 12 times, and clearly writing “no” to the salesperson’s offer 11 times. Despite this speech act evidence, the dealership claimed that the customer was, indeed, interested in buying on that day and, even worse, that he had agreed to purchase the vehicle, which they explained as their reason for detaining him there for so long. This rather simple use of speech act analysis complemented other linguistic analyses in this case and contributed to an ultimate trial jury finding for the customer.

Speech act analysis has been especially helpful in cases involving alleged bribery. A classic example, again in Texas, involved the bribery charge that a state legislator, Billy Clayton, had agreed to accept money in exchange for switching the state employee insurance program to a new carrier. The question was whether the speech act of offering a bribe was what the prosecution said it was. First of all, the speech event suddenly switched from a legal business negotiation to the speech event of a campaign contribution of \$100,000 (perfectly legal at that time and in that place). To the campaign contribution offer, Clayton replied, “Let’s get *this* done first, then let’s think about *that*.” Ignoring this, the agent then upped the ante to a bribery speech event saying, “There’s \$600,000 every year ... for whatever you want to do with it to get the business.” To this, Clayton replied, “Our only position is that we don’t want to do anything that’s illegal or anything to get anybody in trouble and you all don’t either. This [grammatically referencing the insurance plan] is as legitimate as it can be because anytime somebody can show me how we can save the state some money I’m going to bat for it.” This was clearly a speech act of denial, which the prosecution equally clearly totally missed or ignored.

It was useful to demonstrate Clayton’s speech acts of agreement in this conversation. He was very willing to participate in the speech event of a business transaction about saving the state money by switching insurance coverage. He also used the speech act of agreeing during the speech event concerning a campaign contribution (which he accepted, adding clearly that he would report it to the election committee). The agent quickly urged Clayton not to report the campaign contribution, to which Clayton produced a speech act of denial and eventually reported it anyway. Nevertheless, Clayton was indicted for bribery. At trial, speech act analysis along with speech event analysis demonstrated that there were two separate offers here and that Clayton clearly denied any connection between the two, both by his own words and by his act of reporting it to the state campaign finance committee. With the help of this discourse analysis, Clayton was acquitted.

## 6 Identifying Conversational Strategies

If the government’s schema and agenda fail to elicit the targets’ self-reported guilt, the strategy becomes trying to get them to say something else that might be inculpatory. Closely related to speech acts are the conversational strategies that people use in conversation. In *Creating Language Crimes*, I used the definition of conversational strategies made by Hansell and Ajitotutu (1982): “ways of planning and negotiating

the discourse structure (conversational agenda) over long stretches of conversation." In my book I described and illustrated the use of 12 conversational strategies consciously or unconsciously used by law enforcement during several different criminal cases. These strategies were: using ambiguity, blocking the target's words, creating static or otherwise manipulating the tape, interrupting the target at critical points, speaking on behalf of the target, the hit-and-run strategy, contaminating the tape with illegality or profanity, camouflaging the illegality of the venture, isolating targets from information they need, inaccurately representing what the target said, lying to the target about crucial information, and scripting the target about what to say (Shuy 2005: 13–29).

A common conversational strategy is for the undercover agent to say something that sounds vaguely inculpatory, and then change the subject quickly before the targets can respond to it (the hit-and-run strategy). This contaminates the taped record because these inculpatory words are on the tape, even if it was the agent, not the target, who spoke them (the contamination strategy). For example, the agent in the DeLorean case peppered their conversation with talk about his own drug scheme and the agent in Clayton's case suggested bribery. Even though neither DeLorean nor Clayton bit on these strategies, the very fact that these topics remained on the tapes for the jurors to hear at trial produced a contaminating effect on the content of the recordings. Discourse analysts can point out these conversational strategies to lawyers and juries.

A variation of this occurs when what a speaker says is totally ignored by the person making the tape in the same way that an overly eager salesperson ignores the customer's "no" and goes right on as though nothing had been said before. Still another variant strategy is for the agent to reinterpret and restate what the target has said, thereby casting it in a very different light. That reinterpretation remains on the tape for the jury to hear, often contaminating what the speaker had actually said.

The agent in the DeLorean case used various conversational strategies during the 64 conversations he recorded. Here I focus on only the last conversation, the alleged smoking gun tape. One example is the agent's ambiguous and self-serving reinterpretation of DeLorean's question about whether the group would provide him with interim financing, as follows:

- Agent: We have had delays.  
 DeLorean: Prior to the interim financing?  
 Agent: My group has the ability to provide 30 million.

The agent's "delays" does not specify whether they are delays about finding financing for DeLorean's company or delays existing within the agent's own drug operation. Even though DeLorean clearly interpreted it as delays in the "interim financing" of his company from outside investors, the agent ignored this and went right on to recast DeLorean's interpretation as the "interim" that his group experienced in its Columbian dope program. Fortunately, this finally clarified things for DeLorean, who now was beginning to understand what the agent was saying and, having finally reached this understanding, responded with a whopper of a lie, pointing out that he was getting all the money he needed from the IRA (an indirect speech act of denying, which the agent ignored and, like a tricky used car salesperson, he went right on talking about his drug scheme).

The agent used another conversational strategy toward the end of this conversation. By this time another agent monitoring their conversation from an adjacent room mistakenly believed that they now had all they needed to indict DeLorean. He telephoned the agent and told him this. Probably upon the advice in this call, the agent then employed the blocking strategy by switching the subject to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, knowing full well that this would divert DeLorean's attention and cause him to talk at length about his anger over her unwillingness to provide the funding that the British government had previously promised. As a result, this topic switch blocked DeLorean from rejecting the agent's drug proposal in a more forceful, direct, and explicit way.

The most commonly used undercover conversational strategy, however, is for agents to present information ambiguously, encouraging the targets to misunderstand or wrongly interpret references such as "it," "they," "before," and others. The reverse of this occurs when the agents reinterpret the targets' own ambiguous references as signals of their illegal intention. Much of language, both spoken and written, contains vague or ambiguous passages. The reasons for such ambiguity vary greatly. Speakers may intend to be ambiguous, they may be unintentionally ambiguous because they are operating on totally different schemas and wavelengths, or they simply may be verbally sloppy.

Because the less explicit a speaker is, the more opportunity there is for respondents to implicate themselves, ambiguity can be a very effective tool for the government in their efforts to uncover a language crime, at least in the initial stages of an investigation. If ambiguity leads to self-incrimination, the government has done its work effectively. On the other hand, when suspects do not even seek clarification, we may suspect (1) that they understand the drift of the ambiguity and that they may be, indeed, guilty, (2) that their minds are on something else, (3) that they are so fearful of talking about the issue that they retreat to silence, perhaps even suspecting that they are being taped, or (4) that they are so innocent that they do not even catch the drift of the hinted ambiguity. The first three of these interpretations may suggest to the government that it's worth another try at tape recording conversations with the suspect. Responses relevant to the fourth interpretation suggest that any future taping may well continue to yield nothing inculpatory and the investigation might as well stop right there.

In criminal cases, both the government and the defense tend to hear what they want to hear, leading them to interpret ambiguous utterances in a way that best serves their own goals. Neither defense attorneys nor prosecutors are very dispassionate and objective. Their jobs are to advocate for either innocence or guilt; otherwise they would not be doing their lawyerly best. In contrast, the linguist is expected to be objective and scientific. Even then, however, both observational and experimental scientists can become irrationally loyal to a phenomenon called confirmation bias, leading to results that are consistent with the scientists' own theoretical stances. Such bias should always be avoided, of course.

The prosecution often puts the guilty spin on the evidence, interpreting the suspect's ambiguity as an intentional ploy to disguise obvious guilt. The defense often spins the same passage differently as an indication of innocence and that the suspect was thinking of something non-incriminating. The resolution of such lexical ambiguity is a task for an outsider to the trial, an objective and neutral discourse analyst who must ignore both types of spin.

Ambiguity in the use of language is often thought to be the sole province of semantics. Discourse ambiguity, however, is equally productive and useful for both written and spoken language. The sequencing of discourse can create an ambiguity that is not always immediately apparent in the individual words or sentences. Often in cases involving continuous discourse, the participants speak in vague generalities. This makes it difficult both for suspects to understand what agents are getting at and for law enforcement to pinpoint what the suspects were trying to say. When the nature and dimensions of such ambiguity are pointed out, however, convictions can be more difficult for the prosecution to make.

## 7 Contextualizing the Smaller Smoking Gun Language Units

To this point, my focus has been on the larger chunks of language evidence: the speech event, the schemas of the participants, their agendas (as revealed by topics and responses), schemas, speech acts, and conversational strategies. The speech event is the largest of all, for it frames the context in which all of the other language units exist. Agendas and schemas run throughout the conversation, while speech acts and conversational strategies occur sporadically. These are all larger chunks that inform the meaning and significance of the smaller language units such as sentences, words, morphemes, and sounds. These smaller units often are where the “smoking guns” appear. This is where undercover agents and the prosecutors tend to focus their search for guilt, while overlooking the importance of the larger language units.

An example of this is the smoking gun the prosecutors thought they found when John DeLorean agreed that “investment” would be a good thing. But they failed to take into account the lengthy discourse context (speech event, schema, and agenda) in which DeLorean consistently used that word to mean something very different from the government’s interpretation. This case also illustrated the agent’s use of conversational strategies such as reinterpreting what DeLorean actually said, the hit-and-run, blocking what DeLorean tried to say, and the use of ambiguous references.

The Cullen Davis case demonstrates how, despite Davis’s own clearly revealed understanding of the speech event, his own schema, and his own agenda, the prosecution still maintained that his word, “good,” was the smoking gun indicating that he wanted his wife murdered.

It was the discourse context revealed by the schemas, speech acts, topics, and responses of the deaf man in the car dealership that convinced the jury that he didn’t intend to purchase a car and was unreasonably detained against his will.

In the case of Texas legislator Billy Clayton, his use of the purportedly ambiguous referential “this” looked enough like a smoking gun to the prosecutor to justify indicting Clayton for accepting a bribe. But it was the discourse analysis of this shifting speech event, his agenda, and his speech acts that led to Clayton’s acquittal at trial.

The trial of shipping agent Reilly demonstrated how the prosecutor failed to understand how Reilly’s schemas and his understanding of the trial speech event were the causes of his allegedly smoking gun “no sir” response to the question by the

prosecutor, who misinterpreted as perjury Reilly's denial of any knowledge of how and where the Khian Sea's cargo was offloaded.

## 8 Directions and Future Connections

The legal arena is gradually beginning to take advantage of discourse analysis to help unravel the complexities of litigation. Whether the language evidence is written or spoken, whether the case is criminal or civil, and whether the analysis is done for the defense, the prosecution, or the plaintiff, discourse analysis has a bright future in legal disputes. Disputes in criminal cases that involve intentionality, ambiguity, perjury, defamation, bribery, solicitation, and many other charges are subject to discourse analysis. Similarly, disputes in civil cases usually take place over small language units that can be contextualized through analysis of the entire discourse. There is a vast arena for linguists to explore the uses of these, and other, aspects of discourse analysis. It is up to linguists to respond to this opportunity.

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# 39 Discourse and Health Communication

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RODNEY H. JONES

## 0 Introduction

Over the past several decades there has been considerable interest among discourse analysts in various aspects of health communication, including physician–patient interaction, the discourse of health promotion texts, the construction of health and risk in the media, and the discursive negotiation of health and risk in everyday life (for overviews see Brown, Crawford, and Carter 2006; Candlin and Candlin 2003; Gwyn 2002; Jones 2013; Sarangi and Roberts 1999). Discourse analytical approaches to health and risk communication have been heavily influenced by work in disciplines such as medical anthropology, with its concern with understanding how people’s explanatory models of illness and danger can vary across cultures; medical sociology, with its concern with the ways in which communication of health and risk are embedded in social structures; and cultural studies, with its preoccupation with the ideological and “disciplinary” nature of biomedical discourse (Foucault 1976). What distinguishes a discourse analytical perspective from other approaches to health and risk is its focus on “language in use,” that is, on the way people use discourse as a tool to take concrete social actions. This focus is especially suited to the domains of health and risk, whose most pressing problems hinge on this relationship between discourse and action: much of what clinicians do, for example, depends on successfully transforming interactions with patients into various kinds of texts (such as medical records and diagnoses), and then using these texts (along with their patients) to take further actions (such as treatments). Similarly, the central task of health promoters is to make sense of the actions that people take in relation to various health issues, and to determine what kinds of discursive interventions are most likely to result in changing or maintaining those actions (Jones 2013). Discourse analysis, with its rich repertoire of analytical tools, provides the resources to help scholars and healthcare practitioners understand not just how people make

meanings around health and risk, but also “how people ‘do’ health through daily embodied and discursive practice” (Paugh and Izquierdo 2009: 188).

Health educators and medical practitioners have traditionally viewed the relationship between discourse and action in a rather straightforward way, assuming that discourse leads (or should lead) rather directly and unproblematically to some kind of desired action, and that the “better” the discourse (in the form of information) the better the health outcomes. Unfortunately, time and time again in the area of health we are confronted with situations in which the relationship between what is said, written, or otherwise communicated and what people actually *do* is complicated, indirect, or utterly contrary to what is expected. The aim of discourse analytical approaches to health and risk communication is to help to unravel this complexity.

## 1 Challenges for the Discourse Analysis of Health Communication

Several aspects of health communication, especially as it is practiced in the contemporary world of high-tech biomedicine, present particular challenges for discourse analysts. First, because notions of health and risk are so pervasive, touching so many aspects of our lives, it is often difficult to sort out what counts as health communication in the first place. People talk about health in many varied, sometimes indirect ways, and talk about health is often used to accomplish actions that are not directly related to health. As Jones (2013: 3) puts it: “when one is talking about health one is usually talking about other things as well, things like fear, trust, commitment, love, money, morality, politics and death ... (and) communicating about health can be used to accomplish many different social actions from making an insurance claim, to making love, to making conversation around the dinner table.”

Second, health communication almost always involves the intersection of what Treichler (1988: 42) calls “multiple meanings, stories and discourses.” On the simplest level, a visit to the doctor inevitably involves the interaction between what Mishler (1984) calls “the voice of medicine” and the “voice of the lifeworld.” On a more complex level, whenever people talk about health they invariably draw on a wide range of different “voices,” the voices of doctors and other medical professionals, the voices of family members, the voices of traditional cultural models of health and risk, and the voices of various media texts from newspaper articles to Internet Web pages. The inherently “heteroglossic” (Bakhtin 1981) nature of health communication is especially evident today as medicine itself becomes more and more specialized, as more and more biomedical information becomes available to laypeople via electronic media, and as more and more aspects of everyday life become medicalized (Lupton 2003).

Third, texts and interactions related to health and risk are almost always part of complex negotiations of power and expertise between people who have access to different kinds of discursive resources (such as doctors and patients). Recently, the terms of these negotiations have been rapidly changing as medical systems treat patients more and more like “customers,” and medical interactions are increasingly seen as exercises in “shared decision-making” (Armstrong 1983; Lupton 2003).

Finally, discourse around health has become more complex as our experiences of our bodies are increasingly mediated through “technologies of entextualization” (Jones 2013) such as laboratory tests, high-tech scans, and electronic medical records. One consequence of this is that the body as an object of medical knowledge has itself become more *discursive*, a collection of texts that are increasingly separated from the actual physical body of the patient (Atkinson 1995; Berg and Bowker 1997; Iedema 2003).

Scholars approaching health and risk communication from a discourse analytical perspective have focused on a variety of different kinds of discourse. Some have focused on real-time, face-to-face encounters around health and risk, most commonly those occurring in professional settings like clinics and hospitals. Less common sites of investigation have been more “everyday” settings like supermarkets, bedrooms, dinner tables, and fitness centers in which interactions around health and risk often do not involve “healthcare professionals” but may have more profound consequences on people’s health behavior than more formal, clinical encounters. One particularly fruitful area of investigation for discourse analysts both inside and outside the clinic has been the study of people’s narratives of health and risk. Still other scholars have focused more on written texts such as newspaper articles and health promotion pamphlets, as well as professional genres like medical records and case reports, and their role in disseminating and regulating health-related practices and beliefs. More recently, discourse analysts are turning their attention to the ways health and risk communication is increasingly being mediated through technologies like medical tests and high-tech scans within clinical settings, and Internet discussion forums, patient social networks, and health-related mobile “apps” outside of clinical settings.

## 2 Clinical Encounters

By far the most extensive work done by discourse analysts interested in health and risk has been in the area of physician–patient communication, and the chief concern of such work has been to understand how features of discourse and interaction affect the “success” of such encounters, especially given that doctors and patients often bring to them different forms of expertise, different stocks of interactional knowledge (Peräkylä and Vehviläinen 2003), and different expectations about what constitutes a “successful” consultation (Mishler 1984).

The approach that has dominated studies of patient–physician interaction over the past three decades has been Conversation Analysis, with its focus on the procedural logic of clinical encounters and the moment-by-moment “accomplishment” of social identities like “doctor” and “patient” and social actions like “examination,” “diagnosis,” and “treatment” (Garfinkel 1967; Heritage and Maynard 2006). Central to most conversation-analytical studies of clinical encounters is a focus on the sequentiality of conversational actions, the notion that medical consultations typically follow a predictable sequence of “phases” – formulated by ten Have (1989) as (1) opening, (2) complaint, (3) examination or test, (4) diagnosis, (5) treatment or advice, and (6) closing (see also Byrne and Long 1976) – and that each of these phases has its own typical set of locally organized sequential moves (ten Have 1991). Different scholars have focused on describing the discursive characteristics of these different phases, Beckman and Frankel

(1984) and Marvel and her colleagues (1999), for example, concentrating on the “complaint” phase, Heritage and Stivers (1999) focusing on the “examination” phase, and Heath (1992) and Maynard (2004) focusing on “diagnoses.”

Another preoccupation of conversation analysts has been exploring how power relations in clinical encounters are brought about through strategies of questioning, turn-taking, interruption, and the like. In contrast to most medical sociologists, who view power in medical consultations as a consequence of social roles and institutional structures, and to cultural critics who see it as a result of the disciplinary character of biomedical discourse, conversation analysts argue that power and control in medical encounters are best viewed as “micro-political achievements, produced in and through actual turns at talk” (West 1984: 95–6, see also Heritage *et al.* 2007; Maynard 1991). In one of the earliest and most influential interactional studies of medical consultations, for example, Byrne and Long (1976) found that in three-quarters of the over 2000 medical interviews they recorded, doctors performed all of the initiating moves and patients all of the responding moves. Subsequent studies have confirmed that moves like questions, orders, and proposals are mostly taken by physicians and seem to be “dispreferred” when taken by patients (see, e.g., Frankel 1990; Todd 1984; West 1984). Doctors also maintain interactional control through the kinds of questions they ask (Frankel 1984, 1990; Mishler 1984) and how they respond to patients’ answers using “third turns” (ten Have 1991). Finally, studies have shown that doctors frequently interrupt patients, and that once interrupted, patients rarely regain the floor until doctors have issued a further initiating move (Beckman and Frankel 1984; Beckman, Frankel, and Darnley 1985; Frankel 1990; West 1984).

The asymmetry in power relations in medical consultations, however, is not just a matter of the discursive behavior of physicians. Both Heath (1992) and ten Have (1995), for example, have shown how patients also contribute to this asymmetry by resisting invitations by physicians to make initiating moves (see also Silverman 1987). Others have pointed out that patients have their own strategies for asserting interactional control in medical encounters by formulating questions indirectly (West 1984), and using other “subtle and covert devices” to regain control of topics and “hold off the doctor’s questioning interventions” (ten Have 1991: 142).

Conversation analysts have also been concerned with the ways healthcare professionals and their patients deal with “delicate” topics in consultations and make themselves “accountable” for particularly consequential utterances such as the delivery of diagnoses. Several scholars have focused on how doctors and patients work together to accomplish diagnoses and make themselves mutually accountable for them (see, e.g., Garfinkel 1967; Heritage 2005; Peräkylä 2002). Perhaps the most well-known study dealing with such issues is that of Maynard (1991), in which he describes the use of what he calls the “perspective display series,” a strategy in which the physician invites the patient to give an opinion or assessment before delivering his or her diagnosis as a way of laying the groundwork for acceptance of the diagnosis or compliance with a treatment by framing the diagnosis as a “joint activity.” Others have explored how participants in medical consultations make use of subtle conversational cues to manage face threatening topics like the delivery of bad news or talking about risk. In a classic study of the imputation of “at risk” identities in counseling sessions at an HIV testing center, for example, Silverman and Peräkylä (1990), demonstrate how seemingly insignificant features in conversation such as pauses, hesitations, and false starts can

be used to mitigate the possible face threats associated with talking about the risk of HIV infection.

Another important approach to the analysis of clinical encounters has been Interactional Sociolinguistics, a perspective that focuses on how people negotiate social actions by strategically contextualizing their utterances and positioning themselves in relation to their interlocutors, the topics under discussion, and the social groups they belong to. Whereas conversation analysts focus on the ways participants in such encounters accomplish activities like diagnosis and advice-giving through the sequential logic of conversation, interactional sociolinguists explore how they use linguistic and paralinguistic cues to dynamically negotiate “what they are doing” and “who they are being” (Jones 2013). The classic description of this phenomenon in medical consultations is Tannen and Wallat’s (1987) analysis of a pediatric consultation in which the doctor uses various contextualization cues such as subtle shifts in tone and register to dynamically “frame” the different activities of examining an eight-year-old cerebral palsied child, explaining what is going on to the child’s mother, and reporting on the procedure for medical residents who will later watch it on videotape. Similar studies include Beck and Ragan’s (1992) demonstration of how nurse practitioners shift between a medical examination frame and a relational “small talk” frame as a way of dispelling the embarrassment associated with pelvic examinations, Justine Coupland and her colleagues’ (1994) discussion of how doctors and elderly patients work together to mix and blend sociorelational and medical frames in ways that help to make their encounters seem less “clinical,” and Adolphs and her colleagues’ (2007) study of how nurses reframe inquiries about risk as administrative rather than medical questions. Central to most of this work is the acknowledgment that actions in health-related encounters are rarely accomplished in a neat, sequential manner, and that participants must often manage multiple, simultaneous activities, some of which might involve considerable ambiguity or be interpreted very differently by different parties in the interaction. A good example of this is Sarangi’s (2000) work on genetic counseling, which he characterizes as a “hybrid activity type” in which counselors and clients constantly combine, adapt, and transform discourse types in strategic ways.

Interactional sociolinguistic explorations of medical encounters have also provided fresh insights into the issue of power in physician–patient interaction based on analytical perspectives from frame analysis and politeness theory. Aronsson and Sätterlund-Larsson (1987), for example, have found that physician interruptions, seen in most conversation-analytical studies as evidence of asymmetry, often function as expressions of support and cooperation rather than assertions of power. Perhaps the most famous challenge to assumptions of asymmetry in medical encounters comes from Ainsworth-Vaughn (1998), who shows in her analysis of interactions in private medical clinics in the United States that patients often take an active role in co-constructing both their diagnoses and their treatment choices, take the initiative to frame interactions to accommodate their own storytelling, and sometimes openly challenge the assertions and decisions of their physicians.

A more recent interest of interactional sociolinguists has been with the way health-care workers and patients negotiate *expertise*, an issue that is becoming increasingly complex as patients gain more access to medical knowledge via channels like the Internet. As Candlin and Candlin (2002) have pointed out, displaying “expertise” is more than just being able to show one’s command of a particular body of knowledge, but

crucially involves being able to produce various kinds of accounts, to manage assessments of probability, to control conversational topics, to manage politeness strategies and the alignment of frames, and to make use of indirectness, mitigation, hedging, and other rhetorical devices. In most medical encounters, both doctors and patients occupy different “zones of expertise” (Sarangi and Clarke 2002), which they dynamically take up, defend, and surrender using various discursive strategies like hedging, indirectness, and reframing. In an important early paper on this topic, for example, Moore and her colleagues (2001) describe how HIV positive patients and their doctors trade positions as experts by framing and reframing definitions of “viral load.”

With increased migration and globalization, intercultural communication has become a major preoccupation in healthcare, and it is here where discourse analysts, especially interactional sociolinguists have made particularly important contributions. Medical anthropologists have traditionally traced the sources of intercultural misunderstandings in medical consultations to conflicting cultural models of health and illness. Studies by interactional sociolinguists like Cameron and Williams (1997), Erickson and Rittenberg (1987), and Roberts (2006, 2010), on the other hand, have shown that such misunderstandings are often more the result of the different expectations people bring to interactions regarding discourse (including such issues as turn-taking, topic management, and the appropriate ways information should be structured). Erickson and Rittenberg (1987), for example, have found that the difficulties Vietnamese and Polish physicians in the United States have in communicating with patients can be attributed to their different ways of managing topics in conversation, of drawing inferences, and of showing appropriate “listenership,” and Roberts and her colleagues have shown that speakers of different varieties of English order information differently when explaining their reasons for seeking medical attention in the context of consultations.

When discourse analysts speak of “cultures” however, they mean much more than “national cultures.” They also consider a range of different kinds of groupings associated with things like professions and institutions (Cook-Gumperz and Messerman 1999; Iedema and Scheeres 2003), gender (Fisher 1995), age (N. Coupland, Couplan, and Giles 1991), and social class (Todd 1984). For example, just as health communication is increasingly involving interaction between people from different countries, it is also increasingly involving interaction among professionals from different specialties who may speak different disciplinary “languages,” have different notions about the way information about health should be communicated and with whom it should be shared, and bring to interactions different ideas about the roles and responsibilities of different participants (Peräkylä, Ruusuvuori, and Vehviläinen 2005). Iedema and his colleagues (2006: 1126) argue that healthcare is increasingly characterized by what they call “interactive volatility,” a phenomenon in which people with different ways of discursively constructing knowledge and communicating about it must work together to negotiate meaning. Interest in such volatility has led many discourse analysts to take a more ethnographic approach to health communication, examining how discourse circulates through complex networks of knowledge and competence distributed across different departments and professions in institutions such as hospitals and clinics (Atkinson 1995; Iedema and Scheeres 2003; Maseide 2007).

This “ethnographic turn” in studies of clinical communication can be seen as part of a larger trend that began in the 1990s in response to the perceived narrowness of conversation analytical approaches to doctor–patient communication, a movement toward

more socially embedded, “ecologically valid” (Cicourel 1992) accounts involving such methods as in-depth interviewing and participant observation which capture what Sarangi and Roberts (1999: 2) call the “thickly textured” and “densely packed” nature of human activity (see, e.g., Ainsworth-Vaughn 1998; Candlin and Candlin 2003; Gwyn 2002). Scholars promoting such multidimensional approaches have argued that the key challenge in the study of the discourse of health and risk is understanding how larger social and institutional formations of power/knowledge are both reflected in and constituted through situated talk.

### **3 Beyond the Clinic**

While the vast majority of discourse analytical research in health and risk communication has taken place in clinical settings, there is a growing recognition that many of the most important conversations that people have around health do not occur in clinics or hospitals, but rather in places like bedrooms and around dinner tables with people like friends, family members, and sexual partners – what Brown and his colleagues (2006: 95) call “wildtrack” communication. Of course, it is often more difficult for discourse analysts to gather data about such communication, or sometimes even to know if and how particular interactions are related to health or risk.

Much of the work on health communication outside of professional settings has focused on how family members and caregivers communicate with people whose medical conditions have severely impaired their physical or mental functioning. A particularly notable example is Hamilton’s (2005) application of tools from Interactional Sociolinguistics to the analysis of conversations with an Alzheimer’s patient observed over a period of four years. What distinguishes Hamilton’s study from earlier work on the topic is that the data was gathered in the course of the patient’s everyday life rather than in clinical or experimental settings in which characteristics of institutional discourse such as power asymmetry can affect the way people talk. Other good examples include Goodwin’s (1995) application of conversational analytic principles to the study of conversations with an aphasic man, and Al Zidjaly’s (2009) use of mediated discourse analysis to explore the communication and coping strategies of a young paraplegic man.

Other explorations of family communication around health and risk have focused more on how caregivers communicate with each other. In a pioneering study of the dynamics of health-related communication within families, for example, Beach (2001, 2009) uses Conversation Analysis to examine a corpus of telephone calls involving members of a family in which the mother has been diagnosed with cancer, showing both how family members discursively navigate delicate moments like delivering “bad news,” and how, in the course of their conversations, the topic of “mom’s cancer” sometimes becomes a vehicle for talking about other things like family relationships. Yet another approach to the study of health communication within families can be seen in Paugh and Izquierdo’s (2009) examination of dinner-time conversations between parents and children in which parents try to socialize their children into healthy eating habits. What such studies highlight is how health-related events or concerns have a way of rupturing the “obdurate orderliness” of everyday life (Maynard 1996: 4),

complicating mundane interactions about things like work, school, shopping, traffic, and eating.

Other scholars have focused more on the role of discourse in constructing and disseminating health-related beliefs and behaviors across communities and social networks. Poltoraka and his colleagues (2005), for example, explore how parents manage issues of power and solidarity in informal conversations with their friends and neighbors about vaccinations, and Danforth and Navarro (2001) examine how people work to co-construct notions of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in their everyday talk. In a particularly inventive approach to understanding how stories about the spread of HIV are disseminated through a village in rural Malawi, Watkins, Swindler, and Biruk (2008) used a technique that they call "hearsay ethnography" in which informants kept diaries in which they recorded overheard conversations related to HIV/AIDS throughout their day. The problem with most studies of health communication which analyze focused (mostly dyadic) encounters, they argue, is that they are unable to capture the complex ways discourse about health travels throughout communities "like a game of pool, with multiple players and multiple balls going this way and that" (Watkins, Swindler, and Biruk 2008: 29), and how the information given to people by healthcare professionals can undergo profound and sometimes unpredictable transformations as it is filtered through social networks in which members are inevitably engaged in complex and dynamic negotiations of social identity.

Finally, online communities have become particularly rich sites to observe health and risk communication outside of clinical settings. In a pioneering study of online health communication in the late 1990s, for example, Hamilton (1998) showed how the stories which participants in a forum for people who had undergone bone-marrow transplants and their relatives told contributed to patients' individual and collective construction of identities as "survivors." Other studies of health communication in online communities include Richardson's (2003) analysis of newsgroup debates on the relationship between cellular phones and cancer, Jones's (2009) examination of how gay men use online discussions about the risk of sexually transmitted diseases to manage their social identities, and the work of Harvey (2013) and Locher (2006) on the discourse of health-related online advice websites.

Since it is often difficult to collect primary data concerning actual interactions around risk behavior, many discourse analytical studies of health and risk "in the wild" have relied on analyzing people's retrospective accounts of risky behavior. The purpose of such analyses is not so much to understand what "really happened" as it is to understand how people understand and reconstruct the "orderliness" of risk-taking in ways that make themselves "accountable" as competent members of the social groups to which they belong. Jones and Candlin (2003), for example, analyzed gay men's narratives of unsafe sex, paying attention to such features as the temporal framing of actions and the ways speakers assigned agency to themselves and others, and Eggert and Nicholas (1992) used in-depth interviews to understand the discursive rules governing the drug-taking behavior of suburban teenagers, showing how rituals of "getting high" are "rule-governed" speech events with their own internal logic. Studies like this dramatically demonstrate the utility of discourse analytical methods to go beyond simplistic "knowledge based" perspectives of risk (which often dismiss risk-taking as the result of ignorance or "irrationality") to reveal how risk-taking is often a "socially interactive enterprise" (Rhodes 1997: 211) governed by its own "situated rationality"

(Parsons and Atkinson 1992). The way people account for risk behavior can often reveal a great deal about their underlying assumptions about the speech events within which these risky actions occur and how they fit into community norms and practices. Such understanding is particularly important for health promoters who wish to design targeted interventions for particular groups.

## 4 Narrative

No overview of discourse analytical approaches to health and risk would be complete without a mention of the considerable work done in the area of narrative. Narratives of illness have long been of interest to sociologists and anthropologists (see, e.g., Frank 1995; Garro 1994; Hydén 1997; Kleinman 1988), and, since the 1980s there has also been a strong focus on the therapeutic and diagnostic value of patient narratives within the field of medicine itself (Charon 2001; Greenhalgh 1998), what Polkinghorne (1988) refers to as a “narrative turn” in medicine. Where discourse analysts have contributed most significantly to the analysis of illness narratives has been in bringing to bear insights regarding how people use various linguistic resources to structure and interpret their experiences and manage their social identities and relationships. They have, for example, examined how narrators use “reported speech” in narratives to position themselves in relation to more powerful figures such as doctors (see, e.g., Hamilton 1998), and how they use verb tenses, metaphors, negations, and evaluative language to structure their experiences with chronic illness (see, e.g., Cheshire and Ziebland 2005).

Research on illness narratives in medical sociology and anthropology has sometimes been criticized by discourse analysts for not paying sufficient attention to the ways narratives are affected by the social contexts in which they are told (see, e.g., Atkinson 2009), and the ways they are always, to some degree jointly constructed by narrators and their audiences. A key feature of a discourse analytical approach to narrative in medical contexts, therefore, has been a focus not just on the contents of people’s stories, but also on the ways they are socially occasioned and embedded in different social contexts. Analysts have observed, for example, how doctors and patients work together to construct narratives in medical encounters (Cicourel 1983; Eggly 2002), how patients’ narratives are sometimes interrupted or limited by doctors (Clark and Mishler 1992; Mishler 1984), and how doctors sometimes assist patients in elaborating and focusing their stories (Chatwin 2006). Several analysts have endeavored to provide systematic accounts of how this collaborative aspect of illness narratives affects their structure and content. Eggly (2002), for example, in her review of studies of physician–patient collaborative narratives in medical consultations notes three main ways in which doctors and patients co-construct narratives: by working together to reconstruct chronologies of events, by cooperating in producing elaborations of events, and by jointly constructing interpretations of events. Bülow (2004), in her examination of patient–patient collaborative narratives in the context of a patient support group, pays more attention to the participation structures involved in the co-construction of illness narratives, observing how narratives sometimes take the form of self-contained personal stories which individuals perform for an audience, other times take the form of orchestrated chained narratives, in which participants take turns telling narratives on a common theme, and

still other times take the form of co-narrated collectivized stories, in which participants work together to build a common narrative of their experience with an illness. This concern with the joint construction of narrative has also extended beyond the clinic to other professional contexts like health insurance reporting (Bastos and de Oliveira 2006) and to family communication, as in Sirota's (2010) account of how families with autistic children use conversational narrative to co-create with children aspirations and goals in the face of uncertain futures.

Digital technologies have introduced new forms of illness narratives to which discourse analysts have turned their attention, stories in which many of the features of illness narratives described above are magnified through the participatory and performative dimensions of social media. Chou and her colleagues (2011), for example, have analyzed the personal narratives that cancer survivors tell in YouTube videos, noting how such stories tend to share a common narrative syntax outlining the tellers' transformation from patient to survivor, thus helping to construct a sense of a collective struggle with others coping with cancer, and Page (2012) explores the relationship between gender and the ongoing narratives cancer patients tell on Weblogs, noting how womens' cancer blogs are characterized by more frequent use of evaluative anecdotes and also tend to attract more comments from other readers, and concluding that while men tend to use such blogs to gather and share information, women are more likely to use them to build networks of social support.

## **5 New Directions in the Study of Health and Risk Discourse**

Much of the more recent work on the discourse of health and risk has been focused on coming to terms with the effect of technology on the ways we talk about and experience the body and the way knowledge about health and risk is disseminated. Within clinical settings, more and more communication is mediated through technologies such as medical tests, high-tech scans, and electronic medical records. As Atkinson (1995: 61) notes, "the discursive space of the body is no longer coterminous with the bedside." Instead, the bedside has become a site where data are collected to generate "virtual bodies" that are dispersed throughout institutions and healthcare systems. This progressive "extextualization" of the body (Jones 2013) has been accelerated by the development of technologies which have enabled us, in the words of cardiologist and geneticist Eric Topol (2012: vi), to "digitize humans." Particular attention has been paid to the ways clinicians and patients work together to interpret texts like medical tests and medical images. J. Roberts (2012), for example, in her observation of interactions around fetal ultrasound, describes a process that she calls "collaborative coding" in which sonographers and pregnant women work together to construct stories about the images that appear on screens. There has also been considerable interest in the effect of electronic medical records on physician-patient interaction, primarily related to how they can complicate the participation frameworks of medical encounters (see, e.g., Swinglehurst, Roberts, and Greenhalgh 2011), but also related to ways doctors and patients sometimes use them strategically to perform interactional

work like topic management (Pearce *et al.* 2008) and signaling listenership (Frankel *et al.* 2005).

Outside of clinical settings, new technologies are quickly altering the discursive balance of power between healthcare workers and patients as ordinary people gain access to both increased information about health and risk (of varying degrees of reliability) and to new tools for self-monitoring and self-diagnosis. Rose and Novas (2005) have used the term “digital biocitizenship” to describe the growing trend for individuals to make use of digital technologies to constantly monitor their bodily functions and health behavior. These technologies often involve ways for users to automatically collect and analyze health data using sensors and mobile phone applications, and to communicate that data to other users or to healthcare workers. In fact, one of the most dramatic changes in physician–patient communication in the coming years will be that much of it will take place at a distance via such technologies. These devices also help to encourage the formation of networks of people who share information about their health for purposes of collective knowledge building. Unlike more traditional “online communities” like that analyzed by Hamilton (1998), “health social networks” such as Patients-LikeMe and CureTogether are looser structures in which people with a wide range of motivations and interests exchange information which is aggregated in various ways to help individuals make health decisions. Where discourse analysts have a stake in such changes is in understanding how personal health technologies discursively represent the body to their users and the consequence of these representations for health behavior, how laypeople in social networks work together to construct medical knowledge, and how issues of privacy and power are negotiated in such settings (Jones 2013, 2015).

Associated with the above developments is increased concern with how topics related to health and risk are portrayed in the media, especially on the Internet, and how knowledge about health and risk changes as it moves from professional genres to more popular genres. While most social-scientific accounts of media “popularization” of biomedical knowledge focus on how media accounts and laypeople “distort” facts or oversimplify scientific concepts, discourse analytical studies (see, e.g., Calsamiglia and van Dijk 2004) can help reveal how the popularization of biomedical discourse often involves complex linguistic strategies such as metaphorization, exemplification, and reformulation, and how people interact with such information in sometimes sophisticated ways (Nettleton, Burrows, and O’Malley 2005).

Finally, digital technologies are not just changing the ways people interact around health and risk; they are also creating new opportunities for discourse analysts to study these interactions. Among the most significant developments in discourse analytical studies of health and risk communication is the increased use of corpus-based approaches in which large collections of texts or transcripts are analyzed using computer programs (Adolphs *et al.* 2004; Harvey 2013). At the same time, advances in digital video have made the multimodal analyses of medical communication more common (see, e.g., Pasquandrea 2011; Swinglehurst, Roberts, and Greenhalgh 2011).

The story of discourse analysts’ involvement with health communication over the past three decades has been one of a gradual “opening of the circumference” (Scollon and Scollon 2004) of what we understand as “health communication” from a narrow focus on dyadic interactions between doctors and patients to the more “messy” encounters that take place across professions and institutions and beyond the clinic itself, in which discourse about health and risk circulates from person to person and from

group to group across multiple modes and media, being strategically appropriated and adapted by different people for different purposes. Future work in this area will continue to seek to understand how, along these complex discursive itineraries, health outcomes and risk behaviors are invariably tied to the different discursive resources people have available to them and to the strategies they use to apply these resources to “doing health.”

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# 40 Discourse in Educational Settings

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## 0 Introduction

In an early study of language use in schools, Shuy and Griffin (1981) noted that whatever else goes on there, what teachers and students do in schools on any day is talk. To a great extent, the fabric of schooling is woven of linguistic interaction. Since the late 1960s, discourse analysis has been used to examine the ways in which school discourse is unique and thus what children must be able to do linguistically in order to succeed there (Heath 2000). Attention has focused on the socialization functions that schools serve, especially but not exclusively those connected to teaching and learning.

Over the years, several approaches to discourse analysis have been applied in educational settings. This chapter begins with an overview of the three main ones: interactional approaches such as Interactional Sociolinguistics (Gumperz 1982; Schiffrin 1994) and microethnography (Erickson 2004); critical approaches (Gee 1996; Rymes 2009); and the Systemic Functional Linguistic approach (Halliday 1961; Schleppegrell 2004). We explain these approaches and some of their contributions to the field of education, give examples of each in action, and demonstrate how they are methodologically distinct. In the second section of the chapter, we discuss some of the topics that have been addressed. Finally, we consider how insights from discourse analysis in schools can help to make them better.

# 1 Approaches to Analyzing the Language of School

## 1.1 Interactional approaches

In the early 1970s, research on language in schools began to move from a focus on discrete chunks of language to a concern with “communication as a whole, both to understand what is being conveyed and to understand the specific place of language within the process” (Hymes 1972: xxviii). Highly inferential coding of classroom linguistic activity receded (though it persists still) as scholars with disciplinary roots in sociolinguistics, anthropology, social psychology, and sociology began to identify the structural cues by which interactants understand what is going on (e.g., Gumperz and Herasimchuk 1975; McDermott, Gospodinoff, and Aron 1978; Mehan 1979).

Early work on elicitation sequences, composed of teacher initiation, student response, and teacher evaluation (IRE), provided principled descriptions of classroom talk as social interaction (Mehan *et al.* 1976). Examining the third turn of this exchange sequence, others proposed the terms *feedback* and *follow up* in place of *evaluation* (thus IRE becomes IRF) because these more inclusive terms cover the range of speech acts that can occur there in addition to evaluation, such as requesting more information or asking for evidence and backing (Jarvis and Robinson 1997; Kibler 2011; Lee 2008; Nassaji and Wells 2000). Follow-up of this sort initiates a new IRF.<sup>1</sup>

(1) *The teacher is checking student understanding of her directions for a math worksheet to first-graders.*

- 1 Teacher: What will you color in this row?
- 2 Students: Blue
- 3 Teacher: How many blue squares?
- 4 Students: Three
- 5 Teacher: Same on twenty-five, and twenty-six the same thing.

(Adger 1984: 249)

Turn 1.1 is an initiation; 1.2, a response. No overt teacher evaluation occurs, but it is inferable: the teacher’s follow-up in 1.3 implicitly conveys positive evaluation and initiates a new sequence.

Illuminating the IRE and principled means of linking talk and task laid the groundwork for investigating other aspects of interaction. Shultz, Florio, and Erickson (1982) and Green and Wallat (1981), for instance, examined social interaction in classrooms and homes in terms of participation structures. These account for who is participating; what turn-taking patterns are in effect; who has rights to the conversational floor; proxemics; gaze; and aspects of talk, such as directness, register, and paralinguistic cues. O’Connor and Michaels (1996) used Goffman’s (1974, 1981) notion of participant framework in explicating the ways that expert teachers socialize children into academic discussion, particularly through revoicing children’s lesson contributions. This participant framework “encompasses (1) the ways that speech event participants are aligned with or against each other and (2) the ways they are positioned relative to topics and even specific utterances” (O’Connor and Michaels 1996: 69). Talk and the participant frameworks it entails compose speech activities (Gumperz 1982).





This bit of classroom life instantiates Erickson's observation that classroom conversation is often more than a dialogue, more than reciprocal or sequential interactive turns. In (2), lesson talk inheres in a discourse ecosystem in which students assemble their individual versions of the math lesson in concert with others, balancing academic and social-interactional concerns. The teacher participates in advancing the math lesson with Coong, Katie, and Blair, but as a responder more than an initiator or an evaluator, the roles that the IRE/IRF attributes to the teacher. Her goal seems to be to urge them to adopt her interpretation of the math task. She negotiates, directs, explains, and corrects. She also non-responds, protecting the interaction with Coong against interruptions from Blair in line 5, from Hai in line 8, and from Katie in line 14. In the discourse task that is most directly related to the math lesson, the one involving Blair, she initiates the talk, but as critique rather than as request for information. These interwoven tasks reflect the teacher's responsibility to see that her version of the math lesson gets done and that interactional order is preserved, but they also show students as agents in both of those school agendas.

Interactional approaches have been instrumental in understanding the constitutive role of talk in learning and social life at school, which is central to all discourse work on schooling.

## 1.2 Critical approaches

A second approach, Critical Discourse Analysis, in particular the New Literacy Studies (Gee 1996), gained popularity as researchers sought ways to link policy and institutional processes with daily educational practices. Many felt that linguistic research had not gone far enough to intervene and improve education for underserved students (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 2006). Critical approaches proceed from the view that discourse analysis "should seek to speak to – or intervene in – social issues in the world because language is a key way that humans 'make or break our world and institutions'" (Gee 2011: 9). Gee uses Foucault's (1973) notion of Discourse with a capital D to propose that language is an instrument of power within the school context (see introduction to this volume for a brief discussion on how critical theorists use the term *discourse*) and Discourse is an integration of ways of saying (informing), doing (action), and being (identity). On the other hand, discourse with a small d refers to language in use: stretches of talk or written text. Critical approaches use methods similar to those of interactional approaches, but they go farther by theorizing how instances of discourse can relate to larger institutional Discourses at play.

Particularly relevant to examining language in school is the notion of primary Discourses, those that are learned at home, and secondary Discourses, those learned outside the home, including at school. A child's primary Discourse is tied to a sense of self. If the child's socialization to language at home matches the ways that language is used in academic settings, his or her sociolinguistic identity will be more unisonant with academic language. The following example (Gee 2008b: 96) shows how primary and secondary Discourses may differ:

Hornworms sure vary a lot in how well they grow.  
Hornworm growth exhibits a significant amount of variation.

The sentences express similar meanings, but they differ in vocabulary, syntax, and style. They are not part of the same Discourse.

Rymes (2009) adopts a critical perspective to classroom discourse in encouraging teachers to use discourse analytic methods for examining classroom interactions and reflecting on interactional practices there. She contends that “discourse-level inequality in the classroom is in large part produced by long-standing inequalities present in society outside the classroom” (153), and she challenges teachers to effect instructional, educational, and social change, informed by deep understanding of classroom practices. Understanding how small d discourses connect to Discourses within the institution of education is useful for effecting change (Heritage 1997; Mayr 2008).

### 1.3 Systemic functional approach

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Eggs 1994; Halliday 1961; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004) is a general approach to linguistic analysis, but its focus on text has made it useful for analyzing discourse. Currently, SFL is widely used for investigating language use in academic settings (Janzen 2008). An underlying premise of SFL is that language has evolved into a system of socially meaningful signs. In practical terms, this means that language users choose from among a range of sign choices (linguistic and non-linguistic) to assemble meanings in different social contexts. Because of this, SFL has been useful for examining language use in different academic disciplines. Particularities of how language is used in science classrooms versus history classrooms have implications for students’ academic success. Early work in SFL laid the foundation for this type of analysis, describing linguistic features of mathematical (Halliday 1975) and scientific language (Halliday and Martin 1993). In *Writing Science*, Halliday and Martin (1993) argue that science cannot be done using ordinary language: scientific language has grown out of experimentation over time as scientists have harnessed the power of the grammatical system and developed a highly sophisticated way of representing ideas.

It is not that these grammatical resources were invented by scientific writers. What the scientists did was to take resources that already existed in English and bring them out of their hiding for their own rhetorical purposes: to create a discourse that moves forward by logical and coherent steps, each building on what has gone before. (1993: 64)

From this perspective, learning the language of science is intrinsic to learning the content of science, but this sophisticated, technical way of using language – academic language – can make science difficult for students.

SFL shares common theoretical ground with other approaches to analyzing text in that it is focused on examining language use in its social context. SFL considers text to be the smallest unit of functional meaning, and so text is the primary unit of analysis. Halliday (1985) writes, “for a linguist, to describe language without accounting for text is sterile; to describe text without relating it to language is vacuous” (10). Two of SFL’s primary analytical lenses for examining texts are the notions of genre and register. Genre relates to the cultural context in which a text is invoked and the way people use

language to achieve cultural goals (Martin 1984). Martin and Rose (2008) define genre as recurrent forms of text used for specific purposes, with specific discourse organization and language features. Schleppegrell (2004) lists some common genres in academic content areas such as procedures, recounts, reports, explanations, and arguments. All are culturally valued ways of using language to accomplish academic goals. In order to be academically successful, students must learn how to use language in ways that are culturally recognizable as academic.

In addition to genre, SFL invokes register as a primary analytic lens and defines it as a constellation of lexical and grammatical features that realize a particular context (Halliday and Hassan 1989). The notion of register helps to explain why and how language use varies with context: "Registers vary because what language users do through language varies from context to context" (Schleppegrell 2004: 18). Students who are able to intuit shifts between registers at school are likely to be more academically successful than those who do not notice them.

An early and influential SFL study is that by Jay Lemke (1990), who set out to show that the notion of talking science does not merely mean that students are talking *about* science, but rather that talking is a major part of scientific work. Activities such as observing, classifying, and comparing are constituted largely through talk. Since language itself is a conceptual system, "we may as well cut out the 'middleman' of mental concepts and simply analyze conceptual systems in terms of the thematic patterns of language use and other forms of meaningful human action" (Lemke 1990: 122).

## 2 Topics of Discourse Analysis in School Settings

The rise in discourse analytic study of educational settings is part of a broader embracing of qualitative study in a domain long dominated by quantitative research methods (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis 2005). Reasons for this shift are complex, but a prime influence came from the imperative – moral, legal, and economic – to educate a diverse population of students. A number of studies have focused on the processes of literacy development and second language learning in culturally diverse classrooms and found evidence of poorly matched linguistic, cultural, and social norms, which contribute to inequity. Such studies have been mentioned in Section 1 above for all three of the methodological approaches. Discourse analysis has also been brought to bear in discovering the nature of cognitive development in social space. Lemke's (1990) study, mentioned in Section 1, is one of them. Many studies have combined more than one of these foci. This section shifts the focus from methods of discourse analysis to topics that discourse analytic studies have tackled in educational settings.

### 2.1 *Classroom interaction as cultural practice*

Discourse analysis has been instrumental in locating the educational struggle of children from certain groups in classroom practices, particularly where the cultural background of the teacher and the pervasive culture of the school is different from that of the

students. Micro-analysis of classroom interaction shows mismatched frames (Tannen 1993) and participation style in classroom routines, with the result that over time students accumulate individual profiles of failure that mirror the statistics for their groups derived from standardized tests.

Ethnographic studies have illuminated the community basis of some interactive behavior that schools find anomalous. Philips's (1993) study conducted on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation explained some aspects of Native American students' classroom participation style. What teachers saw as failure – students' demurring from individual engagement with the teacher in whole-group lesson talk – reflected community values that favor collective talk. The discontinuity between the community and the school norms for interaction also led to schools' disciplining Native American students who had misinterpreted the school norms for physical activity. (For related study of contrasting norms between Native American communities and Anglo schools, see also Erickson and Mohatt 1982; Scollon and Scollon 1981).

The development of microethnographic methods contributed to understanding the role of nonverbal communication and timing, in particular the ways in which cultural differences between home and school may systematically mitigate the chances of success for some groups of students (e.g., Erickson and Shultz 1982; McDermott 1976; Mehan 1979). Florio and Shultz (1979) undertook a complex analysis of participation structures during mealtimes at home and lessons at school, events that exhibited some structural similarities. Comparison showed differences between the two settings in the alignment of a participation structure with the phase of an event. Thus in the preparation phase for dinner in the Italian American homes that they studied, conversation tended to have a single focus and one primary speaker at a time. But in the preparation phase of a lesson at school, several conversations could co-occur and children could chime in. Italian American children had trouble meeting the expectations for classroom participation structure in various lesson phases. Studies of such home-school mismatch illuminate the culturally based discourse practices that schools have taken for granted – patterns based on the middle-class European American traditions that have predominated in US institutions.

Guadalupe Valdes's (1996) ethnographic work with Mexican families in border towns in Texas showed that the Latinos' understandings of *education* was different from those of others. For example, the phrase "bien educado" (well educated) has a broad connotation, meaning someone well behaved or good-mannered and moral. For the families she worked with, becoming well educated was not necessarily primarily about achieving academic success. Thus, when parents heard that their children were behaving well in school, they often thought that their children were doing well overall, even though they may have been struggling academically.

A few studies shed light on classroom discourse patterns that are based in other traditions. Foster's (1995) description of interaction in a community college class taught by an African American professor showed strategic use of stylistic features associated with African American culture. The professor's lecture style included the call and response typical of gospel meetings – repetition, vowel elongation, alliteration, marked variation in pitch and tempo, and features of African American English – discourse strategies that invited her mostly African American students to chime in. Foster suggests that where cultural norms are shared, this interactive style may serve a special instructional function. Thus, students reported to Foster that the professor repeated information that they



33	Pierre:	K.
34	Teacher:	(loud) It's G::=
35	Robert:	G.
36	Teacher:	=n.a:=
37	Sam:	We all look / /
38	Teacher:	=w. It's G::=
39	Quentin:	I got it.
40	Teacher:	=n.a:w. Which is why this paper is called sixty demons.

Clearly, eliciting the correct answer is not the sole point of this lesson. In response to the teacher's question in the first turn, "What is a word that means to eat little by little," Eric indicates that he knows the answer with "Ooh" in turn 2, and Robert indicates the same with "I think I know" in turn 4. If getting the answer were the teacher's goal, she could have asked Eric to supply it. But she continues asking for that answer in lines 7 and 9. Through repetition (e.g., *letter* in lines 13, 16, and 20), vowel elongation (e.g., the first vowel in *silent*, line 16), and volume shifting (lines 11 and 34), the teacher establishes a cadence that engages many more students than those who supply the information needed to advance the lesson. She transforms a technical exercise into a drama by emphasizing the unknown, ignoring the wrong answers in turns 14 and 15, spotlighting the speaker of the delayed correct answer (Robert, line 29), and then supplying the coda in line 40.

Another study of classroom discourse in which the teacher and all of the students are African American showed shared dialect norms that do not match idealized norms for academic talk (Adger 1998). In an upper elementary classroom (not the one from which example [3] was taken), the teacher consistently used Standard English for instructional functions, but the students shifted along a dialect continuum as they changed registers within a literacy event. For a literary analysis task in which they spoke with authority about a text, students selected Standard English features, but elsewhere within the literacy event they used African American English. Students appeared to be using dialect resources in ways that mirror the linguistic norms of their community.

Carol Lee (2006) uses discourse analysis, among other methodologies, to examine the relationship between talk and student reasoning. In one study, she shows that African American students leveraged African American English discourse patterns to help them reason in content classes. Lee's study began by examining rhetorical features of African American students' talk in reasoning about popular texts that were similar to academic texts that they encountered and culturally relevant to them (e.g., rap and film). In turn, their everyday rhetorical patterns could be used in classroom contexts to reason about literature and improve their literacy skills. Thus, by leveraging culturally diverse students' ways of using language, she was able to support their learning of subject-matter material. Her work shows the value of treating students' everyday ways of using language as a resource rather than as a deficit.

## 2.2 Classroom discourse and literacy development

Sociocultural studies have been concerned especially with the ways in which students develop literacy. In the field of education, two orientations toward literacy have

commonly been juxtaposed – an autonomous orientation and an ideological orientation (Street 1995). To this, Wiley (2005) adds a third orientation that he places between these two called the social practices orientation. The autonomous orientation has been typified by research focusing on mental aspects of decoding and encoding text, or an individual's ability to read and write. The social practices orientation is considered an early version of the ideological orientation and is typified by research focusing on how reading and writing are used in social contexts (e.g., Heath 1983; Scribner and Cole 1981; Scollon and Scollon 1981). In the ideological orientation, research shows how reading and writing are used in social contexts and how power relations are associated with use (e.g., Gee 1996; Street 1995). In addition to these, new approaches to literacy that go beyond a focus on reading, writing, and language use can be added. The New London Group/Multiliteracies perspective (New London Group 1996) and Multimodal literacy perspective (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001; Kress *et al.* 2001) extend the notion of literacy to other semiotic systems, including language, as well as action, gesture, sound, space, and visuals. Their approach situates discourse within an understanding of the broader semiotic landscape.

Michaels' work on "sharing time," an elementary-school literacy event that brings children together at the start of the day for oral group activities, identified two patterns of thematic progression in children's narratives: a topic-centered pattern and a topic-associating pattern (Michaels 1981). In the topic-centered pattern used by European American children, a narrow topic is mentioned and fixed in time to start the story, with subsequent utterances adhering to it. In the topic-associating pattern more usual with African American children, a general topic is put forth and other topics are raised in relation to it. The styles differ both in what can constitute the topic and in how topics are developed. From the perspective of the European American teacher whose classroom Michaels studied, the topic-associating style was illogical and deficient.

Subsequent work on narrative style at a graduate school of education (Cazden 1988) further illuminated the role that teachers' culturally based expectations for literacy-related discourse routines can play in student achievement. To test whether teacher reactions to children's stories were ethnically based, researchers recorded topic-associating (episodic) and topic-centered stories, both told in Standard English. As anticipated, white graduate students (teachers or teacher interns) preferred the topic-centered stories. They attributed the episodic stories to low-achieving students with language problems or even family or emotional problems. Black graduate students, on the other hand, approved of both styles, commenting that the episodic stories showed interesting detail and description. They imagined that the story that had suggested serious language problems to the white graduate students had come from a highly verbal, bright child.

Anthropological study of storytelling in Hawaiian communities described a collaborative narrative style that European American teachers had noticed in schools because it conflicts with narrative practices expected there. The speech event referred to in the community as "talk story" is characterized by co-narration among multiple speakers (Watson-Gegeo and Boggs 1977). By contrast, the idealized classroom discourse pattern involves one student speaking at a time, at the teacher's bidding. Although this pattern is very often superseded, teachers expect students to comply when the one-at-a-time rule is invoked. In the Hawaiian schools, an experimental instructional program was created, based on the community co-narration event. It involved teachers participating

in co-narration with the students, rather than leading IRE-based discussion (Au and Jordan 1981). Section 3 below reports that this program has endured.

Taking a multimodal perspective, Kress *et al.* (2001) argue that science learning takes place in a multimodal environment and that reading and writing can only be understood in relationship to the larger semiotic system (such as actions, gestures, visuals, and three-dimensional models). In science classrooms, there may be times when reading and writing are secondary to other semiotic modalities. Thus, becoming literate (i.e., mastering the system of communicative signs) in a science context may require mastery of a range of semiotic forms beyond written language.

### 2.3 Discourse study of second language development

Discourse analysis has become an increasingly attractive analytic method for researchers in second language development because of what it can show about that process and what it can suggest about second language pedagogy. For example, in a study of the development of biliteracy, Moll and Dworin (1996) examine the written work in two languages of two young bilingual speakers (Spanish and English). They conclude that there are many paths to biliteracy, made up of students' own histories and the social contexts for their learning, and that the ways in which bilingualism is typically characterized in schools is simplistic. In these two students' classrooms, the freedom to use both English and Spanish meant that children developed literate skills in both languages – not just the means of writing two languages but the ability for “literate thinking” where writing in English involves reflecting on Spanish-language experience.

In another study of second language development, Kibler (2011) adopts an interactional approach to examine emergent bilingual students' interactions with teachers in informal writing conferences. She finds that the success of these conferences is typically more closely related to the interactional exchanges themselves, rather than to student understanding: students often agreed with teachers even when they did not understand, apparently to promote smooth interaction. Building on research into the IRE/IRF sequence, Kibler shows that teachers' third turn is consequential for the type of interaction that ensues. For teachers, knowing about patterns of classroom discourse can help them to break counter-productive habits and to explore new ways of interacting with students. For researchers, attention to teacher/student interaction contributes to understanding emergent bilinguals' long-term language and literacy development.

Bunch (2009) uses the notion of *speech event* to examine the interactional demands of social studies classrooms for second language learners. He investigates aspects of a speech event he calls “going up there,” a group-led student presentation about a social studies topic based on a *Complex Instruction* curriculum. Three aspects of this speech event were particularly challenging for ELs: addressing multiple audiences, meeting the contrasting interactive demands of the student-led and teacher-led phases of the event, and managing the presentation structure through small group interaction. He argues that the interactional aspects make classroom oral academic discourse exceedingly complex. Because of this, he proposes that current discussions of academic language need to focus on more than vocabulary and grammar to teach second language learners how to engage in classroom interaction. He suggests that teachers should

examine the speech events in their own classrooms to notice the language demands that they place on students and envision how they can support their students. They can also consider how they might expand the kinds of speech events that their students learn to engage in.

## 2.4 Classroom discourse as learning

Discourse analysis has played an important role in testing and extending the theories of Vygotsky (1978) and other contributors to the sociocognitive tradition (e.g., Rogoff 1991; Wertsch 1991). While Vygotsky's thinking has been interpreted in very different ways (Cazden 1996), some of his insights have been highly influential in research on teaching and learning: that individuals learn in their own zones of proximal development lying just beyond the domains of their current expertise, and that they learn through interacting in that zone with a more knowledgeable individual and internalizing the resulting socially assembled knowledge. Thus learning is inherently both social and personal (Bakhtin 1981). A central question for scholars working in this tradition concerns the ways in which discourse between learner and expert mediates cognitive development. But research addressing this question has often given short shrift to the social dimension, viewing the discourse as an accomplishment – the product of learning – and leaving under-examined the flow of interactional, interpretive acts through which it is accomplished (Erickson 1996). Hicks (1996) observes that while sociocognitive theories have contributed significantly to educational theory, methods for testing them are not well developed (but see Wells 1993). Hicks lays out a complex methodology that combines the study of interaction and the study of the group's texts, oral and written. This methodology is welded to sociocognitive theory: it examines the process of social meaning construction in light of the group's history, as well as the process of the individual's internalization or appropriation of social meaning.<sup>2</sup>

Working in the interactional sociolinguistic tradition, Wright (2008a, 2008b) examines how and what students learn through participating in inquiry-based science units, showing how students transform their activity into external, evaluable forms of knowledge through language. The research follows students' action and interaction with different scientific phenomena (e.g., bubbling/gas; rust/iron oxide) over the course of a curriculum unit in a middle school science classroom to examine how they transform first-hand activity into spoken and written linguistic representations in order to demonstrate what they have learned. For example, when talking about rust, what students first identify as *a little red*, they then learn to call *rust*; later they adopt the term *iron oxide* and  $Fe_2O_3$  when writing about their activities. This work shows how students are socialized to more scientific ways of representing their knowledge and, conversely, how social interaction helps them come to identify and appropriate valued forms of scientific language.

SFL researchers, who view learning content and learning the language of the content area as intertwined, hold a slightly different lens on discourse as learning. Schleppegrell's (2007) study of mathematical language shows how grammatical aspects affect student understanding. For example, because of the density of information in pre-numerative phrases (e.g., *the volume of, the length of*), classifying adjectives (e.g., *prime number, rectangular prism*), and qualifiers (*a number that can be divided by one and itself*;

*a prism with sides of 8, 10, 12 cm* [Veel 1999]), students may have difficulty identifying what a math problem is about before they even begin to attempt solutions. In addition to the complexity of mathematical language, there is a semiotic difference between the way mathematic concepts are encoded in language and the way they are encoded in symbolic notation. Mathematic concepts are typically things in language, but processes in symbolic notation. Schleppegrell observes that “translating among ... semiotic resources and maintaining the technical register in classroom discourse is a challenge for teachers and students” (2007: 146).

## 2.5 *School as a venue for talk*

Most studies of discourse at school concern the language of teaching and learning, examining classroom interaction as social practice or cognitive work – or both. But school is also a site in which children’s repertoires for strategic language use expand (Hoyle and Adger 1998). Because classrooms and other school settings present social tasks that differ from those of home and neighborhood, they inspire innovation in register repertoires, framing capacities, and assumptions about appropriateness (Merritt 1998). Instructional settings in which students work without direct teacher participation, such as cooperative learning groups, allow them to construct knowledge and social structures through talk (Rosebery, Warren, and Conant 1992; Schlegel 1998; Tuyay, Jennings, and Dixon 1995) – although this may happen in ways that do not match teachers’ intentions (Gumperz and Field 1995).

School is also a site of social interaction that is not academic. Eder’s (1993, 1998) work on lunchtime interaction in a middle school shows that collaborative retelling of familiar stories functions to forge individual and group identities that partition young people from adults, thereby building a peer culture. By animating (Goffman 1974) themselves, and their parents and teachers in collaborative retelling, the young people highlight contrasting perceptions of their identity and their view of the adults. Here school structures and participants – teachers and students – are recast as background for the socialization work that young people do together through discourse.

## 3 Application of Discourse Studies to Education

Most work on classroom discourse can be characterized as applied research: by illuminating educational processes, the research is relevant to critiquing classroom practice and to answering questions about how and where teaching and learning succeed or fail. Much of it has been conducted by scholars who are affiliated with schools of education and who address the most troubling questions about schools and schooling, especially in areas of differential educational success. But discourse analysis has become an increasingly popular methodology for teachers: observing language use in the classroom contributes to understanding how students engage in content areas such as science and math (Lemke 1990; Moschkovich 2007; O’Halloran 1999; Roth 2005). Heath observes that discourse analysis is a specialized way of viewing activity, and “those who carry out such work must have a grounding in linguistics and one or more

of the other disciplines most related to understanding the context of language use" (2000: 57). Such a theoretical foundation is imperative for examining language functions in educational settings.

One program linking research and educational practice that has grown out of the work on literacy instruction reported by Au and Jordan (1981), mentioned in Section 2.2, is exceptional in terms of longevity, coherence, and influence. In the late 1960s, teaching methods that approximated the community narrative style – talk story – were developed and tested by a team of teachers, psychologists, anthropologists, and linguists at the Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP), a research and development center in Honolulu. The approach had positive effects on students' reading achievement there and later on test scores in other Hawaiian schools (Vogt, Jordan, and Tharp 1987). Findings from that project subsequently informed the development of sociocognitive theory in which the discourse of learning was highlighted (e.g., Rogoff 1991; Tharp and Gallimore 1988). Some of the researchers who began the Kamehameha work, along with others, have continued researching and developing educational approaches that promote school success, especially for language-minority students and others placed at risk for school failure. Their work is based on five principles for educational practice derived from their research and review of the literature on the influence of culture and gender on schooling:

- 1 Facilitate learning through joint productive activity among teachers and students
- 2 Develop competence in the language and literacy of instruction through all instruction activities
- 3 Contextualize teaching and curriculum in the experiences and skills of home and community
- 4 Challenge students toward cognitive complexity
- 5 Engage students through dialogue, especially the instructional conversation. (Tharp 1997: 9–12)

These principles stress interaction that involves teachers as assistants to children rather than drivers of dialogue and deliverers of information (Tharp 1997). Instructional conversations involve a teacher and a group of students in constructing meaning by linking texts and student knowledge as they talk (Goldenberg and Patthey-Chavez 1995). The challenge for the teacher, accustomed to taking every other turn in IRE/IRF-dominated classrooms, is to avoid responding to each student's response so that students can talk in each other's zones of proximal development.

An additional principle points to the need for explicit instruction in academic language:

- 6 Teach students new ways with words – disciplinary ways.

Failing to do so privileges students whose language practices already incorporate aspects of academic language and disadvantages students who have not been socialized to the language of school (Gee 2008a). Second language researchers have noted that it is particularly important for English learners to master academic discourse in order to be successful in school (Anstrom, DiCerbo, and Butler 2010). Numerous

studies of academic English have been conducted, based on different theoretical underpinnings (e.g., Bailey and Butler 2002; Gee 2008a; Scarcella 2003; Schleppegrell 2004; Stevens, Butler, and Castellon-Wellington 2000). While some of these studies are framed as discourse analyses, others recognize discourse as an important component of overall second language development.

## 4 Conclusion

This chapter touches on some methodological advances and topical interests within the corpus of discourse analysis in education settings. This corpus is by now encyclopedic (Bloome and Greene 1992; Cazden 1988; Corson 1998; Gee 2011; Rymes 2009; Schleppegrell 2004), and that is both the good and the bad news. The good news is that many of the educational processes that are the very stuff of school are being scrutinized critically. We now have methods and researchers skilled in their use for asking and answering questions about what lies beneath the educational outcomes that fuel policy decisions. The bad news is that discourse analysis and other qualitative methods are often secondary to quantitative methodologies within the educational establishment (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis 2005). One way of bringing this scholarship into the mainstream of educational research is through research and development programs that make the applications of discourse analysis very concrete along the lines of the Kamehaha program mentioned above. There is a need for more interdisciplinary collaboration in research design, data collection, and analyses requiring close attention to talk. The challenge is to avoid an atheoretical, merely commonsense approach to the study of talk and text, and to knit together and build on the rather disparate work so far amassed.

## NOTES

1	Transcription conventions are as follows (based on Tannen 1984):	italics	graphemes
.	sentence-final falling intonation	/ /	slash marks indicate uncertain transcription or speaker overlap
?	sentence-final rising intonation	=	speaker's talk continues or second speaker's talk is latched onto first speaker's
,	continuing intonation		without a noticeable pause
..	noticeable pause, less than 0.5 second	:	lengthened sound (extra colons represent extra lengthening)
...	half-second pause; each extra dot represents additional half-second pause	( )	information in parentheses applies to the talk that follows; continues until punctuation
underline	emphatic stress		
CAPITALS	extra emphatic stress		

- [XXX] overlapping brackets  
 [XXX] indicate two speakers  
 are talking at the same  
 time
- 2 Although this is not the point that  
 Hicks wants to make, the methodology  
 for which she argues is able to make  
 evident the dimensions of a discursive  
 event that Fairclough identifies:  
 "language use, analyzed as text,  
 discourse practice and social practice"  
 (Fairclough 1993: 138).

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# 41 Discourse in the Workplace

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JANET HOLMES

## 0 Introduction

The analysis of workplace discourse has burgeoned over the last two decades, developing in terms of methodologies, the types of discourse which have attracted attention, and the analytical approaches adopted. Within sociolinguistics, qualitative micro-level analysis, rather than quantitative macro-level analysis, has tended to predominate, as the research reviewed in this chapter illustrates. The earliest workplace discourse studies focused on talk in institutional settings, with interviews as a preferred genre, and the analysis of the audio-recorded data was dominated by Conversation Analysis (CA) practitioners such as those in the seminal collection edited by Drew and Heritage (1992). More recent research has extended data collection techniques to include ethnographic observation as well as video recording and written materials; and researchers' interests now encompass a wide range of types of workplace discourse, as well as locations which extend from factories and building sites to offices and boardrooms. More recent workplace discourse research also includes studies of monolingual, multilingual, and multicultural employment sites.

This chapter outlines developments in the area of workplace discourse from three different perspectives: I first discuss ways in which *methods* of data collection and analysis have expanded over the last two decades; second, a range of different *types* of workplace discourse which have been the focus of analysis are reviewed; third, I identify insights gained from the particular *perspectives* which different researchers have taken in their examination of workplace discourse. A theme that runs through the review is the pervasive evidence of cultural hegemony and the salience of power relations in workplace discourse research.

## 0.1 Methodological developments in workplace discourse

*Methods of collecting workplace discourse data* have developed in a range of ways since the 1990s. Survey techniques, using questionnaires, have long been employed to gather participants' reports of their language use and attitudes, especially in relation to written workplace discourse such as email usage, but this approach has recently served to supplement rather than substitute for more direct methods of researching spoken interaction in the workplace, as noted by Bargiela-Chiappini, Nickerson, and Planken (2007: 181). Written workplace discourse has been the main focus of analysis in some research projects, such as Gunnarsson (2010), but, like survey data, written materials have also often been treated as supplementary material to assist with characterizing the workplace culture or with interpreting spoken interaction.

The range of methods currently in use to study spoken interaction in the workplace include interviews (e.g., Mullany 2007), non-participant observation (e.g., Baxter 2010), participant observation with varying degrees of ethnographic detail supplementing the observations (e.g., Schnurr 2009), focus groups (e.g., Kingsley 2009), audio-recording with (e.g., Baxter 2010) and without the researcher present (e.g., Saito 2011; Tannen 1994), shadowing (e.g., Angouri and Bargiela-Chiappini 2011), and video recording (e.g., Campbell and Roberts 2007). Audio-recording is perhaps still the most widespread technique for capturing workplace talk, but increasingly researchers are supplementing this with video recordings which provide opportunities to analyze nonverbal behavior; as a result, different and more sophisticated methods of analysis, such as multimodal analysis, are also developing (e.g., Ford and Stickle 2012).

Many studies, like those of the Language in the Workplace Project (LWP) which I direct, make use of more than one method of data collection, often building case studies of particular worksites or participants by combining ethnographic observations, recordings of talk at work, and interviews, supplemented by questionnaire data and relevant written materials from the worksite.

Turning to *methods of analysis*, the range of analytical frameworks used to analyze workplace discourse has also diversified over the past three decades. Initially CA approaches dominated research on institutional discourse in particular, and CA continues to make a strong contribution (see, e.g., Svennevig 2012, a complete issue of *Discourse Studies* devoted to CA research on aspects of meeting talk). Interactional Sociolinguistics, another very influential analytical approach developed by Gumperz (1982), initially focused on gate-keeping interviews, taking account of a wider range of contextual factors in the analysis of cross-cultural discourse. This thread continues in the work of Roberts (e.g., Roberts and Campbell 2006) in Britain, and Kerekes (2006) in Canada. Interactional Sociolinguistics is now used by many researchers for qualitative analysis of workplace discourse (e.g., Tannen 1994), including our LWP research (e.g., Holmes, Marra, and Vine 2011; Holmes and Stubbe 2003), and much of the research reviewed below illustrates this approach.

Corpus analysis is increasingly being used by those researching workplace discourse to identify frequent keywords, collocations, and chunks as illustrated by Handford (2010) and Koester (2010), and, combined with qualitative analysis, to identify frequencies of different realizations of pragmatic functions, such as expressing opinions (Cheng and Warren 2006). Corpora have also been used to identify (sexist) metaphors in business magazines by Koller (2004), and in workplace talk by Baxter (2010), and

to investigate key expressions in corporate mission statements (Koller 2011). Koester (2010: 68) suggests that corpus analysis “confirms the institutional character of workplace discourse,” with further evidence for the salience of the dimension of power in many workplace interactions.

Critical Discourse Analysis is another framework which has been used in the analysis of workplace discourse, especially by European researchers. With what Kress (1990: 84–5) describes as its “overtly political agenda,” focusing on the ways in which power and dominance are produced and reproduced in social practice, this theoretical approach is well positioned to explore how power is constructed and negotiated in workplace interaction. In the survey of workplace discourse research below, these different approaches are all represented, with a focus on the range of evidence concerning power relations that has been identified by workplace discourse research.

## 1 Types of Discourse

The heading “types of discourse” here includes examples of what others might label discourse genres and fields. While interviews have long been a popular focus for workplace discourse analysis, meetings, both small and large, have attracted increasing attention in recent years. Other types of spoken discourse which have been analyzed by different researchers include small talk, humor, and narrative.<sup>1</sup> Researchers analyzing written discourse have examined email interaction (e.g., de Oliveira 2011), workplace notes and memos, minutes of meetings and formal letters (e.g., Bargiela-Chiappini, Nickerson, and Planken 2007; Gunnarsson 2010), mission statements and website materials (e.g., Gunnarsson 2010; Koller 2011). And, as noted above, Koller has also analyzed the significance in business media texts of (especially) war metaphors, such as “[she] bolstered the morale of the troops” and “[her task] will be like turning a battleship around” (2004: 16).

In what follows, I focus on research on spoken workplace discourse, first discussing interviews and meetings as paradigmatic genres or types of workplace interaction, and then describing some of the research on small talk and humor as specific types of workplace discourse.

### 1.1 Interviews

The earliest researchers on workplace talk were concerned with analyzing institutional interviews or transactions. One of the themes to emerge from this early research was evidence of the range of discursive strategies used by professionals to maintain control of the discourse. Through their questions, professionals such as doctors (Tannen and Wallat 1987) and health visitors (Heritage and Sefi 1992) direct the topic of the interaction, and constrain both the content and form of their clients’ responses. Detailed attention to the significance of the sequencing of turns, and the implications of the precise placement of pauses, overlaps, and prosodic cues in the negotiation of roles and statuses as well as agreement and disagreement, for example, is another strength of the CA approach to analyzing interview data.

Job interviews have also been the focus of discourse analysis. Kerekes (2006) observed and video-recorded 48 Canadian job interviews, identifying discursive evidence of how trust and distrust were co-constructed between the participants, and demonstrating the significance of these concepts in accounting for candidates' success or failure. Similarly, Campbell and Roberts (2007) analyzed video recordings of 60 job interviews in seven organizations in London and Birmingham (UK). They demonstrate that unsuccessful candidates did not adequately synthesize personal and institutional discourses in their talk to construct a convincing professional identity, and, adding an intercultural dimension, they identify twice as many misalignments, and more than three times as many reformulations of questions in interviews with candidates who were born outside Britain. Also examining interactional style in job interviews, Bogaers (1998) demonstrates the interaction of status and gendered discourse norms. She reports that in formal interviews, both male interviewers and male interviewees were more likely to adopt a dominant interactional style with more initiations and more interruptions than females in the same status positions. In all this research, the dimension of power is thus very salient, as researchers examine the range of ways in which control of the interaction is exercised by different participants.

## 1.2 Meetings

Meetings, large and small, have attracted much attention in workplace discourse analysis; justifiably so, since business communication researchers Romano and Nunamaker (2001: 5) found that senior managers may spend as much as 80 percent of their time in meetings. Discourse analysts have examined many different aspects of interaction in meetings, including meeting management (e.g., Angouri and Marra 2011; Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris 1996), decision-making (e.g., Boden 1994; Schnurr and Zayts 2011), and problem-solving, with attention paid to the detail of the discursive means through which problems are identified and owned (Angouri and Bargiela-Chiappini 2011), as well as resolved (Stubbe 2010). Workplace meetings are an obvious site for enacting institutional power as Sarangi and Roberts (1999) point out, as well as for maintaining and developing collegial relationships and doing "rapport management" (Spencer-Oatey 2008). Meetings are also a promising site for examining manifestations of gendered behavior as demonstrated by Tannen (1994), a theme discussed in more detail below.

In addition to features of meeting organization, such as agenda management and topic control, discourse analysts have identified a range of very specific strategies through which power is manifested in meetings, including disruptive interruption (e.g., Craig and Pitts 1990), the amount of talk contributed by different participants (e.g., Holmes 1992; Bilbow 2002), and, as in interviews, the use of questions to control the interaction and enact power, or as a "nonprimary" speaker to claim power (Ford 2010). A brief illustration from our own research (Holmes and Chiles 2010) demonstrates how, through his questions, Seamus, a managing director takes over the floor from his general manager, Jaeson, who is chairing the meeting.

### Example (1)

*Context:* Management meeting in New Zealand company. The topic is the purchase of new photocopiers.

- 1 Seamus: we were talking about buying a photocopier  
 2 Tom: we are buying it ( ) oh we have bought one  
 3 Seamus: **you have bought one?**  
 4 Tom: yep  
 5 Seamus: okay **it's about fourteen wasn't it?**  
 6 Evan: are we leasing it or are we buying it?  
 7 Tom: I don't know you and Deb sorted that out  
 8 Seamus: **has that deal been done?**  
 9 Tom: pretty much //( )\  
 10 Seamus: /okay so\\ **is it a programmable photocopier?**  
 11 **does it have?**  
 12 Tom: yeah  
 13 Seamus: okay **so it's got a movable back gauge and all of that?**  
 14 Tom: yeah  
 15 Seamus: okay **how physically big is it?**  
 16 Tom: oh it wouldn't be more than a metre square  
 17 Seamus: **and how much did it cost?**  
 18 Tom: probably about I thought I thought it was about twelve

In this brief example, Seamus asks eight of the nine questions, and they progress structurally from requests for confirmation of information that he wants verified to requests for new information; the questions also become increasingly demanding of the addressee. It is quite evident that even in this exchange about a routine matter, Seamus, the boss, controls the topic and the development of the discourse, despite the fact that he is not the meeting chair.

The strategy of disagreeing, or expressing an alternative perspective or opinion, has also been a focus of discourse analysis, with a number of discourse analysts demonstrating the importance of detailed analysis of the social and discourse context in categorizing expressions of “deviating opinions” as face threatening or not (e.g., Holmes and Marra 2004; Angouri and Bargiela-Chiappini 2011). Using multimodal analysis of video-recorded strategy meetings, Asmuß and Oshima similarly provide evidence of how making proposals for future action reveals “the use of various embodied practices by participants for the local negotiation of entitlement and institutional roles” (2012: 67). As noted in the methodology section, the extension of analytical tools through multimodal analysis indicates a direction which is increasingly being adopted in the analysis of workplace interaction (e.g., Djordjilovic 2012; Ford and Stickle 2012).

One-to-one meetings at work have provided further useful insights into the ways in which people achieve transactional goals and negotiate their way through disagreements and conflicts at work as illustrated by Kendall (2004) and Stubbe (2010). Challenging the hegemony of gender stereotypes, Saito (2011) provides a Japanese perspective on managing confrontational situations in meetings, illustrating the skill with which male leaders manage to persuade subordinates to cooperate.

The types of talk reviewed so far indicate that discourse analysts have paid a good deal of attention to talk that is aimed most obviously at getting things done – transactional talk, where power and control are perhaps most evident. Meeting management, problem-solving, and decision-making are illustrations of this tendency. Attention has

also been paid however, to more relationally oriented types of workplace discourse, including small talk and humor.

### 1.3 *Small talk and humor*

Workplace small talk and humor share many characteristics. Both are typically regarded by employers as peripheral and sometimes disruptive activities which interfere with the core business of the workplace. From a sociolinguistic perspective, on the other hand, they can be considered as types of talk which contribute to the construction and maintenance of rapport and collegiality at work, and to good customer–client relations. Discourse analysis of both types of talk have identified features of their distribution and their functions in workplace interaction, as well as considering how they contribute to the construction of different aspects of social identity in the workplace (e.g., gender, ethnicity, professionalism, leadership identity).

Both small talk and humor tend to occur at the margins of core workplace interaction: at the beginning and end of the day, at work breaks, at the beginning and ends of meetings as well as at the boundaries of topics or agenda items (Holmes 2000). Similarly, they share the function of contributing to social cohesion and rapport building at work; they oil the social wheels of workplace talk. In addition, they may serve more subtle functions. Maynard and Hudak (2008), for example, demonstrate how small talk can serve as a discourse management tool at unpleasant moments in interaction: small talk “may be used to ignore, mask, or efface certain kinds of agonistic relations in which doctor and patient are otherwise engaged.” Surgeons use small talk to distract their patients from unpleasant procedures, and patients use small talk to avoid attending to unwelcome recommendations (e.g., to diet or exercise). And humor may serve as a sweetener for a challenge to authority, a socially acceptable way of contesting a decision or subverting power as demonstrated by Ackroyd and Thompson (1999) in the United States and Holmes and Marra (2002a) in New Zealand.

Small talk, like gossip, but unlike humor, is widely culturally coded as feminine, and stereotypically associated with female activities and domains (Holmes 2006; Mullany 2007). Coupland (2000), for example, a collection devoted to small talk, but without gender as an explicit focus, is dominated by data from stereotypically feminine contexts (e.g., hairdressing, supermarket, travel agency, call center, women’s healthcare). The reasons for the association of small talk with femininity are obvious on the basis of such research. However, the reality is that both women and men engage in small talk, and Holmes’s (2006) analysis shows that preferred topics tend to reflect workplace culture or community of practice norms rather than gender per se. Humor, on the other hand, is often regarded as a male preserve, as Decker and Rotondo (2001) demonstrate.

Some research on humor in the workplace has examined how it is used by leaders in different workplace contexts. Holmes (2007), Schnurr (2009), and Rogerson-Revell (2011), for example, examine the particular ways in which participants in different workplace contexts make use of humor as a discursive resource for constructing themselves and others as workplace leaders, demonstrating how humor provides a flexible indirect strategy for enacting leadership in potentially challenging situations. A recurrent pattern is the use of humor to defuse tension or to attenuate the effect of an unpalatable decision or directive.

Research on small talk and humor in non-Western cultures identifies both similarities and differences in their functions at work. The general function of establishing solidarity and building rapport is widely shared. Spencer-Oatey and Xing (2003), for instance, indicate that social talk comprises an obligatory and relatively sustained component of Chinese business meetings, a crucial strategy for relationship building, and also a potential source of intercultural misunderstanding. Examining small talk in Japanese and American meetings. Yamada (1997) provides further support for this analysis: the first third of the Japanese meetings she analyzed was typically unrelated to the business at hand. She describes small talk as “a strategic prelude and buffer to the more task-related talk that follows” (1997: 127), and argues that it serves to establish the cohesiveness of the group and to confirm goodwill among members.

On the other hand, there are clearly cultural differences in terms of tolerance of silence around small talk contributions and the extent of such contributions. In Western contexts, small talk is widely regarded as a way of avoiding uncomfortable silences in interaction, while research on workplace meetings indicates that this is not the case in China and Japan. Yamada (1997) noted many more (103 vs. 20) occurrences of long silences in the Japanese meeting compared to the American meeting she analyzed, and also found that an average pause in the Japanese meeting was almost twice as long as those in the American meeting. Murata (2011) reports similar patterns for small talk and silences in her data from Japanese business meetings.

Cultural differences in the way humor is used and perceived in workplaces have also been documented (e.g., Mak, Liu, and Deneen 2012; Schnurr and Chan 2011). Murata (2011) notes that the person with most status typically initiated the humor in the Japanese meetings she analyzed, while in the New Zealand meetings analyzed by Holmes *et al.* (2003) the proportion of humor initiated by the chair ranged from 9 percent to 73 percent, and humor was also initiated by other participants.

Most studies comment on the solidarity functions of humor in the workplace, but there are also studies which examine “the dark side of humour” (Holmes 2000), identifying ways in which humor contests or subverts authority and challenges norms (Holmes and Schnurr 2005), or ridicules and teases colleagues in socially acceptable ways (Schnurr and Chan 2011). Plester and Sayers (2007), for instance, analyze the use of aggressive humor in IT companies, identifying a style of humor which they characterize as banter or “taking the piss.” This style involved jocular abuse, aggressive barbs, and potentially hurtful teasing – all features generally associated with powerful, “masculinist” discourse.

The role of humor in integrating a new person into a workplace team or community of practice has also been examined (Mak, Liu, and Deneen 2012), as well as the role of contrasting styles of humor in workplaces. Holmes and Marra (2002b) analyzed the amount, type, and style of humor in four different New Zealand workplaces. Meetings in government departments tended to use less humor, and less contestive humor, than meetings in commercial organizations. Differential degrees of respect for existing organizational structures and role relations, as well as pressures to perform and demonstrate innovation, may be relevant considerations in accounting for such differences. I turn now to consider some insights provided by research on the construction of specific aspects of social identity in workplace discourse.

## 2 Sociolinguistic Perspectives in Workplace Discourse Analysis

This section reviews workplace discourse analysis which has focused on the social variables of gender and ethnicity, together with a brief consideration of intercultural workplace interaction. While these factors have been mentioned at different points in the discussion above, the focus in this section is on how workplace discourse analysis can illuminate the construction of gender identity and ethnic identity at work, and the implications for power relationships and cultural hegemony in these processes as well as in intercultural interaction.

### 2.1 *Gender and workplace discourse*<sup>2</sup>

Of all the standard social variables used in sociolinguistic analysis, gender has undoubtedly generated most research in the area of workplace discourse. My analysis of gendered talk at work (Holmes 2006), supported by the research of Tannen (1994), Mullany (2007), Schnurr (2009), and Baxter (2010) demonstrated that effective communicators, both female and male, typically draw from a wide and varied discursive repertoire, ranging from normatively “feminine” to normatively “masculine” ways of talking. They skilfully select their discursive strategies in response to the particular interactional context, and their effectiveness derives from this discursive flexibility and contextual sensitivity.

Both Interactional Sociolinguistics and social constructionist approaches emphasize the dynamic aspects of interaction, and the continually developing nature of social identities, social categories, and group boundaries, a process in which talk plays an integral part, as Tannen (1994) demonstrated. Individuals are constantly engaged in constructing aspects of their interpersonal and intergroup identity, including their professional identity and their gender identity. The discourse strategies we adopt, the words we select, and the grammatical structures and pronunciations we favor all contribute to the construction of particular aspects of our social identity. Any particular utterance may thus be analyzed as contributing simultaneously to the construction of more than one aspect of an individual’s identity, whether social (enacting gender identity), institutional (their professional identity as a manager), or personal (their wish to be considered friendly, well-informed, and so on).

This focus on gendered styles of interaction rather than on gender per se indicates how this field has moved on from the earlier research mentioned above which tended to focus on differences between women’s and men’s ways of talking, or which looked for evidence that men dominated mixed-sex interaction (e.g., amount of talk, interruptions).<sup>3</sup> More recent research typically adopts a postmodern (e.g., Baxter 2010; Mills 2003) or social constructionist perspective (e.g., Holmes 2006; Mullany 2007),<sup>4</sup> and researchers have analyzed talk characterizing different *occupations*, different *types* of workplace interaction, different workplace *roles and identities*, and different workplace *contexts*.

In terms of different *occupations*, with few exceptions (e.g., Holmes and Stubbe 2003 and Stubbe 2010 analyze factory data, and Baxter and Wallace 2009 analyze

building-site talk), most research on gendered styles has examined white-collar, professional interaction. *Types* of workplace discourse range from job interviews (e.g., Bogaers 1998), through commercial transactions (e.g., Cameron 2000), and on-the-job encounters with clients, patients, and the general public (e.g., McElhinny 1998; Ostermann 2003), to workplace meetings of all sizes and kinds. Analyses tend to focus on different kinds of gendered behavior (e.g., flirtation, flattery, ribald banter, swearing), or ways in which gender identity is constructed in different types of interaction (Tannen 1994). Swearing, like verbal sexual harassment, for instance, is characterized as normatively masculine verbal behavior with negative consequences for women in some workplaces. Examining gendered discourses in Kenyan workplaces, Yieke (2004) focuses on the fine line between positively oriented teasing and sexual harassment. Workplace humor can provide effective cover for harassment which places women in a double bind, unable to respond without loss of respect, yet risking condemnation or punishment if they do.

In terms of different workplace *roles and identities*, leadership has attracted a great deal of attention in work on discourse and gender. Early leadership researchers, such as Hearn and Parkin, had noted that “what counts as leadership, the means of gaining legitimacy, and so on, are male dominated in most organizations” (1989: 27), with the consequence that women leaders are perceived as deviant exceptions to the male norm. Discourse analysis of workplace interaction has tended to confirm this perception in the leadership literature. Until recently, the prevailing stereotypes of a leader, chief executive officer, and even senior manager have been decidedly masculine, and the female voice in public contexts, including the workplace, has often been silenced or at least muted. There is evidence, however, as Holmes (2006) demonstrates, that the shape of the gendered concept of leadership is gradually being modified to accommodate attributes regarded as normatively feminine, such as being facilitative, supportive, and people-oriented, as well as those regarded as stereotypically masculine, such as being direct, challenging, and task-oriented. Wodak (2003) identifies three self-presentation strategies – “expert,” “assertive activist,” and “positively different” – used by women members of the European Union parliament to promote themselves, and to guarantee that they are taken seriously, while in a manufacturing company, Mullany (2008) describes how women draw on stereotypically masculine behaviors (e.g., impoliteness) as a resource in meetings for being assertive and gaining power over men who are their equals in the managerial hierarchy. Our New Zealand research (Holmes 2006) supports the view that effective managers, female and male, make use of a range of gendered resources to achieve their transactional and relational goals. In sum, using a detailed ethnographic sociolinguistic approach within an interactional sociolinguistic framework provides a more nuanced picture of workplace interaction, qualifying the rather unmitigatedly masculine representation of the decisive authoritarian leader which dominated earlier leadership research.

Turning to the concept of the “gendered” workplace *context*, we have found that people are very willing to identify some workplaces as particularly “feminine” and others as more “masculine.” These perceptions are based not only on non-linguistic characteristics such as the gender composition of the workforce and the nature of the organization’s work, as illustrated in McElhinny (1998), but also on distinctive communicative patterns which tend to characterize different workplaces. Baxter and Wallace demonstrate how, through their on-the-job talk which involves swearing and violence, British builders construct building sites as masculine workplaces: “these

Polish blokes they got guns an knives an they jus (.) they don't think nothing of slittin'someone's throat" (2009: 427). In a study of white-collar workplace talk, Baxter (2010) notes the negative impact of sexist language, as well as the preponderance of war and sport metaphors (e.g., *target, battle, fight, attack, hostility*), arguing that such language marginalizes femininity and "positions women as an 'out-group' in business" (2010: 159). Similarly, Nielsen (2008: 173) describes Danish bakeries as "masculine workplaces," characterized by "masculine discourse" (2008: 185), perceived by the women as "really rough and unpleasant. The tone is aggressive and can be nasty" (2008: 185). Hegemony in these contexts is enacted through aggressive masculinist talk.

By contrast, more feminine workplaces and communities of practice have been described as characterized by more collaborative and supportive humor, a greater amount of personal small talk, and, in general, greater attention to participants' face needs in interaction. One very explicit face-oriented strategy is expressing approval. The following excerpt is a paradigmatic illustration of a stereotypically feminine way of giving approval, delivered by the CEO of a New Zealand organization during a strategic planning meeting of the senior management team (Holmes 2006).

Example (2)

*Context:* Penelope, the Chair and CEO, comments on the performance of Hettie, a project manager.

- 1 Pen: actually I mean I I've said this before  
 2 but I'd like to just put it on record again h- +  
 3 May: mm  
 4 Pen: how extraordinarily impressed and proud we are  
 5 of the work you've done on this project /and\  
 6 May: /mm\  
 7 Pen: how I can't actually imagine anybody else [inhales]  
 8 certainly in my acquaintance /[laughs] who would've\  
 9 Inga: /[laughs\  
 10 Pen: actually being able to walk in and do this  
 11 and I'm I have said many blessings /on the fact that we hired\  
 12 May: /mm mm mm\  
 13 Pen: Hettie /when we did\  
 14 Hettie: /thank you\  
 15 Pen: because I think we wouldn't be where we are  
 16 in the [name] /act\ project  
 17 May: /mm\  
 18 Pen: if we hadn't /[inhales] and\  
 19 Hettie: /thank you\

This is an excerpt from an extended, sustained, and explicitly *on-record* (line 2) expression of approval and appreciation of Hettie's work for the organization. Using phrases such as *how extraordinarily impressed and proud we are* (line 4), and suggesting that no one else could have done what Hettie has achieved, Penelope is fulsome in acknowledging her contribution to the organization's work. This is one end of the spectrum of gendered ways of giving approval, a sustained compliment accomplished in a normatively feminine style.

Call centers can also be considered relatively feminine workplaces. Cameron (2000) describes how British operators are required to use speech patterns which match Lakoff's (1973) description of "women's language", though Hultgren and Cameron (2010) analyze call center transactions from the perspective of power rather than gender. Mullany (2007: 170) notes that women managers in some organizations report feeling under pressure to adopt a "feminine" style of interaction, while in others they find themselves under pressure to adopt masculine styles of interaction in order to make progress (e.g., the policewomen researched by McElhinny [1998] who use assertive language and avoid smiling). Yet by doing so they run the risk of negative evaluation – labeled by Lakoff (1973) and Tannen (1994) as a "double bind." Similarly men who use features of normatively feminine speech in more masculine workplaces expose themselves to the risk of ridicule. There is abundant evidence documenting how gendered expectations can become embedded within the institutional structure of a workplace, indicating again how dominant ideologies influence workplace interactional styles.

## 2.2 *Ethnicity and workplace discourse*

Perhaps because, as yet, "there is no comprehensive and unified theory of ethnicity in the social sciences" (De Fina 2007: 373), the construction of ethnic identity in the workplace has not attracted as much attention as gender identity. Nevertheless, there is interesting research in this area which can be broadly divided into studies of the *impact* of ethnicity on workplace culture, and research on the construction of aspects of social *identity* which include an ethnic component. Inevitably the two areas overlap, but it is useful to discuss them separately.

Research providing evidence of the ways in which workplace culture is *impacted* by an ethnic dimension has generally involved a comparison of interactional norms in different cultures. Transactional aspects of workplace interaction which have attracted attention from researchers examining non-Western norms include meeting openings, and closings, and decision-making, as demonstrated by Spencer-Oatey and Xing's (2003) analyses of meetings between British and Chinese business people and Chan's (2008) analysis of Hong Kong business meetings. While Westerners prefer to get quickly down to business, Asians expect extended formal welcome speeches with explicit expressions of respect and recognition of status. Schnurr and Chan (2011) describe different responses to teasing by superiors in meetings in Hong Kong and New Zealand, again appealing both to norms recognized in the wider sociocultural context as well as to the specific norms and practices that characterize interlocutors' communities of practice to account for the differences observed. Similarly, researching two Japanese companies, Murata (2011) examines how the distribution and expression of small talk and humor contribute to the construction of distinctively Japanese ways of conducting meetings compared to their distribution and expression in meetings in a comparable New Zealand business. Japanese participants seem to have a greater tolerance of silence in meetings, for example, and it is unusual for anyone but the boss to instigate humor. Again, however, there are also differences between companies which reflect the local ("emic") norms of the participants' communities of practice, supporting a more nuanced approach to explanation of differences identified in analyses of cross-cultural communication.

Holmes (2007) illustrates how humor provides an appropriate, adaptable, and indirect strategy for constructing leadership in New Zealand in ways that avoid conflict with traditional Māori cultural values, while Holmes, Marra, and Vine (2011) provide a detailed account of the distinctive characteristics of two Māori workplaces, which they describe as “ethnicized” workplaces. In ethnicized workplaces “ethnicity acts both as a taken-for-granted backdrop, crucial for interpreting everyday workplace communication, as well as a dynamic and constantly negotiated dimension of everyday interaction ... ethnic values underpin the norms which influence the way people interact, and the ways in which they construct different aspects of their identity, including their ethnicity” (Holmes, Marra, and Vine 2011: 3). Participants enact ethnicity in a range of ways in their everyday workplace discourse, including aspects of meeting management, preferred ways of handling praise and criticism, particular styles of humor, and distinctive ways of telling stories.

Turning to research on the construction of ethnic *identity* in workplace discourse, it is important to bear in mind that (as with gender identity) linguistic features and ways of speaking do not directly encode social meanings such as ethnicity, but do so indirectly through their associations with particular roles, activities, traits, and stances (Eckert 2008; Ochs 1993). In other words, ethnicity is a dynamic and active process instantiated in the way people behave, and indexed by features of their talk. Being European, Jamaican, Japanese, or Māori is a process which involves others and which requires constant appropriate performances in specific contexts. As De Fina notes, ethnic boundaries are always in flux, “creatively invoked and negotiated by individuals and groups in response to their evolving social roles and circumstances” (2007: 373).

The dynamic and negotiated nature of ethnicity is very apparent in the migrant job interviews analyzed by Campbell and Roberts (2007). They demonstrate that job applicants from ethnic backgrounds which differ from their interviewers often fail to effectively synthesize personal and institutional discourses to produce the “acceptable” identity required for being judged employable. Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz make a similar point, demonstrating that Pakistani interviewees in Britain did not succeed in projecting “an institutional self,” and identifying the lack of “cultural sharedness” (e.g., through reference to familiar events, places, or other culturally symbolic material) between interviewee and gate-keeping interviewer as a major intercultural communication problem (2002: 35).

In New Zealand workplaces, the enactment of ethnic identity work through code-switching behavior has been described among Samoan factory workers (Holmes and Stubbe 2004; Stubbe 2010), as well as between Māori professionals in a Māori workplace (Marra and Kumar 2007). In the factory context, Samoan employees index their ethnicity while constructing solidarity with their colleagues through switches between English and their ethnic language. The skilful use of the two languages provides an effective means of negotiating the complexities of minority group ethnicity in a European workplace. Switches to Samoan, for instance, by the team supervisor in a New Zealand factory, function to mitigate criticism and reinforce team spirit, while English conveys social distance and authority (Holmes and Stubbe 2004). By contrast, in a New Zealand white-collar Māori workplace, characterized by Māori values and Māori objectives, switching was a strategy for demonstrating allegiance with the organization and the organization’s goals (Marra and Kumar 2007). With a range of

proficiencies in the Māori language, even in ethnicized Māori workplaces, switching is a valuable strategy for indicating an orientation to Māori values and ways of doing things. Less proficient speakers often use short formulaic Māori phrases sprinkled through their mainly English discourse.

Finally in this section, it is important to note that, as in gender and workplace discourse research, the concept of leadership has attracted attention. The ways in which leadership and ethnic identity are enacted in workplace discourse has been explored by researchers in a number of different countries. In the USA, Karsten's (2006) edited collection includes accounts of the distinctive construction of leadership by American Indian women, as well as the (often perceived as very direct) management strategies and styles of black American women entrepreneurs and managers. In New Zealand, some of the discursive features of the leadership styles of Māori women and Māori men have been identified in the analyses undertaken by the Language in the Workplace Project team (Holmes 2007; Holmes, Marra, and Vine 2011). Māori leaders ensure that Māori protocol has a respected place in formal meetings, for example; the priority given to the group over the individual, alongside attention to the individual's dignity is evident in subtle discursive ways in the discourse of the Māori leaders we worked with. A culture of care is evident in many interactions between managers and their team members; and features of the Māori language (prosodic, lexical, and pragmatic) permeate many of the interactions in these workplaces to a greater or lesser extent, as illustrated in Holmes, Stubbe, and Marra (2003). Māori leaders tend to avoid self-promotion, constructing an unpretentious leadership style. In one Māori workplace, for example, the Managing Director typically reports her activities at staff meetings in the form of amusing, self-deprecating stories, illustrating the importance of humility rather than self-aggrandizement in Māori culture (Holmes and Marra 2011).

### Example (3)

*Context:* Monthly meeting of all staff in the organization. Yvonne, the Managing Director, is chairing and providing her report.

- 1 Yvonne: yesterday I talked I had to give a presentation
- 2 at the [name] conference I was invited by the Minister
- 3 I felt the presentation wasn't that good
- 4 because my briefing was about a two second phone
- 5 [laughs]: call: laughter] and so I had no idea who was
- 6 going to be at the conference and ( ) what's it about
- 7 I had no programme beforehand so I was a bit um /(())\
- 8 Sheree: //is this the one\ you had yesterday
- 9 Yvonne: yeah
- 10 Sheree: I loved it
- 11 Yvonne: //oh did you\
- 12 All: /[general laughter]\
- 13 Sheree: I actually came home raving
- 14 Yvonne: oh that's only because I had a photo of you
- 15 All: [loud burst of laughter]
- 16 Yvonne: so mm //but it's just ... anyway so that's me +++ next

Yvonne here reports on the fact that, at short notice, she made a brief contribution to a conference in the area of the company's interests. She comments that she felt the presentation *wasn't that good* (line 3), explaining that she had very little time to prepare *my briefing was about a two second phone call* (line 4), and that she was not provided with a program in advance (line 7). Yvonne thus constructs herself as acting in an appropriate way as the company Managing Director, by responding positively to an opportunity to promote the company's interests, but, consistent with Māori values, she also modestly denigrates her performance, commenting that she felt she had not done as well as she would have wished.

Sheree had also attended the presentation and she suddenly realizes this is what Yvonne is referring to: *is this the one you had yesterday* (line 8), and when Yvonne provides confirmation she is fulsome in praise of Yvonne's contribution *I loved it ... I actually came home raving* (lines 10, 13). Yvonne's first reaction is surprise *oh did you* (line 11), a reaction which our analysis of the intonation and tone of voice suggests is a very genuine one. When this elicits an upgraded compliment, Yvonne skilfully refutes it by suggesting Sheree's positive response can be explained because a photograph of Sheree was a component of the presentation (line 14). This occasions general laughter and the humor effectively deflects attention from Yvonne. By adopting a humble stance, and deflecting a compliment which draws attention to her oratorical skills, Yvonne behaves in a way that is totally consistent with the Māori value of *whakaiti*, or humility, while simultaneously indexing femininity. At the same time, she conveys the message that she is doing her job as leader of the organization, by responding to opportunities and performing as well as possible in difficult circumstances. This short exchange thus neatly illustrates how Yvonne constructs herself both as a conscientious leader, and as an appropriately modest Māori woman.

Discourse analysis focused on ethnicity in the workplace has clearly illustrated that majority group discourse norms tend to go unquestioned, while minority group norms tend to be ignored in most contexts, or to be perceived as marked if they are invoked in the presence of majority group participants. Predictably, then, interactional norms in the majority of workplaces are typically those of the majority group, and this hegemony sometimes results in misunderstanding between majority group employers and minority group employees.

### 2.3 *Cross-cultural and intercultural interaction and workplace discourse*

It will be apparent from the discussion in a number of sections above, but especially in the section on ethnicity, that a good deal of research in workplace discourse has considered the related areas of cross-cultural and intercultural interaction. Most of this has focused on interaction in professional contexts, though there is some research on intercultural discourse in factories (e.g., Stubbe 2010; Sunaoshi 2005). The relevance of contrasting cultural backgrounds in accounting for differential success in interviews of various kinds was discussed above. And the role of humor as a way of expressing and relieving interethnic group tension has been examined in a number of studies (e.g., de Bres *et al.* 2010; Schnurr and Chan 2011).

Such research often includes information on culturally different ways of doing things at work which can result in misunderstandings in intercultural contexts. Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996), for example, focus on different interruptive strategies in meetings between Italian and British professionals, Yamada (1997) compares Japanese vs. American meeting organization, and Spencer-Oatey and Xing (2003) identify a range of communication problems in meetings between representatives of British and Chinese organizations. The work of Bilbow (1997) is also relevant here: he examined different ways of enacting the role of the chair in intercultural meetings involving Western and Chinese professionals in Hong Kong, as well as the impressions that each group had of the other. Though he suggests that those involved in his research demonstrated a degree of linguistic tolerance that often circumvented miscommunication or offense, he also concludes that people's perceptions were considerably influenced by their cultural backgrounds. A later study (Bilbow 2002) identified significant differences between Western and Chinese participants in terms of the circumstances under which commissive speech acts are uttered, and how they are realized lexico-grammatically, with potentially detrimental consequences for intercultural relations.

The LWP research in New Zealand has examined intercultural communication between Māori and Pākehā (New Zealanders of European origin) in a range of work contexts (Holmes, Marra, and Vine 2011). Māori are expected to be bicultural, and in most workplaces hegemonic Pākehā norms dominate. However, in the Māori workplaces studied, patterns of interaction are often very different. For example, formal meetings typically begin with some ritual element involving an explicit greeting and formal welcome, often using the Māori language to a greater or lesser extent. By contrast in Pākehā meetings informality is valued as a sign of friendliness and solidarity, and the chair often "dispenses with the formalities." As a result, Māori people often feel uncomfortable at Pākehā-run meetings, and Māori visitors may perceive their Pākehā hosts as rude and impolite precisely because they have not been formally greeted and made explicitly welcome. Pākehā in Māori meetings, on the other hand, often express irritation at rituals and speeches which appear to entail unnecessary formality and which are perceived as a waste of valuable meeting time.

Overall it is again clear that Western norms tend to prevail in most New Zealand workplace contexts. One of the Māori CEOs commented that as a Māori organization, they were required to be "whiter than white," meeting deadlines and delivering exactly what was promised on time and within budget, indicating her omnipresent awareness of the hegemony of the majority group, and the taken-for-granted assumptions underlying much workplace interaction. Similar insights are provided in the analyses of gate-keeping encounters, discussed above, where one party has considerable power over another, as in job or promotion interviews (Campbell and Roberts 2007; Kerekes 2006), and police interrogations (Stokoe and Edwards 2010).<sup>5</sup>

### 3 Conclusion

Research on workplace discourse includes both quantitative and qualitative approaches, both "extensive" survey research and "intensive" in-depth ethnographic research as well as detailed case studies. This chapter has illustrated the extent to which

issues of power and control pervade all such research, from methodology through to findings, interpretation, and implications. Whose definition of a situation prevails? Whose ways of doing things are regarded as normal and unmarked? Whose interpretation is regarded as incontestable and obvious? Hegemony rears its head unavoidably at every stage of workplace discourse research.

Another perhaps less obvious way in which this is apparent is the fact that the predominant focus of workplace research to date has been white-collar, professional workplaces. While, as indicated in the review above, there is some interesting research on interaction in blue-collar workplaces such as factories and building sites, this seems an area which is bound to grow, as more sophisticated techniques develop for capturing workplace discourse in noisy and less accessible work environments.

Research on discourse patterns and norms of interaction in multilingual workplaces is another potential growth area. Current research in this area has examined the relevance of ideology and of efficiency in multilingual workplace interaction. Wodak, Krzyżanowski, and Forchtner (2012), for example, examine multilingual practices in European Union institutions, using a multi-method approach (ethnographic fieldwork, recorded meetings, interviews) to link macro-level language ideologies with micro-level linguistic practices. They identify a wide range of relevant contextual factors in accounting for language choice, emphasizing the salience of ideological positioning as well as genre and the particular community of practice (2012: 180). Efficiency is another important consideration in this study, as in a study of the plurilingual practices of employees in a multinational pharmaceutical company based in Switzerland (Lüdi, Höchle, and Yanaprasart 2010). Kingsley's (2009) description of the complex patterns of interaction in multilingual banking institutions, and the different motivations for language choice in different contexts, raises the related issue of the relationship between workplace language policies and actual usage, also an area ripe for further attention.

Another area attracting increasing attention in workplace discourse analysis is the *process* of becoming a skilled or professional worker, with research which tracks the discursive trajectory from apprentice to professional (e.g., Fillietaz and Losa 2012), and from peripheral or marginal (and sometimes migrant) status to integrated professional (e.g., Angouri, Marra, and Holmes 2012). There is abundant scope for further research exploring the complexities of the process of these transitions, along with the challenge of acquiring an understanding of the predominantly implicit social values and taken-for-granted practices entailed in that integration process. As this chapter indicates, learning how to manage workplace discourse in different contexts and from different identity positionings is a challenging undertaking; it involves developing an understanding of how complex social and cultural identities are discursively enacted and negotiated in varied sociocultural settings. Discourse analysis provides a valuable means of embarking on this journey.

## NOTES

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- 1 There is not sufficient space to discuss workplace narratives here. See Holmes (2005) and De Fina, Schiffrin, and Bamberg (2006) for discussion of relevant material.

- 2 This section draws on material which is more fully developed in Holmes (2013).
- 3 See Kendall and Tannen (1997) for a comprehensive overview of earlier research in this area.
- 4 But note that Baxter (2010) uses both difference and dominance approaches in her recent analysis of the position of women in different types of corporations.
- 5 There is a good deal of literature on the implications and applications of workplace research which I have not had space to consider in this chapter. Interested readers could consult material in the area of applied linguistics: for example, Roberts (2001), Candlin and Sarangi (2011); *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Professional Practice*.

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# 42 Discourse and Religion

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MICHAEL LEMPERT

## 0 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In Francis Mercury van Helmont's *Alphabet of Nature*,<sup>2</sup> published in 1667 but penned earlier from a prison cell in Rome – the Inquisition had locked him up for spreading heretical views, including a “Judaizing” fusion of Christianity and Kabbalah (Coudert 1999; Helmont, Coudert, and Corse 2007) – the frontispiece depicts him with caliper in one hand and quill in the other, facing a mirror. His audacity in this book was to argue that he had reconstructed the original form of Hebrew – the Adamic language with which God breathed life into the world and which humans spoke until Babel. This original Hebrew was a “natural” language. Free of human convention and its imperfections, this language represented the world with fidelity; it mirrored nature, so much so that the Hebrew script resembled the motions of the human tongue, illustrating how to articulate each letter. Hence the calipers and mirror. In recovering the true Hebrew alphabet and its sounds, van Helmont felt that a definitive reading of the Old Testament was in reach that would settle the religious conflicts raging in Europe.

Van Helmont's claims were hardly new – Hebrew had often been seen as Adamic relative to Greek and Latin (Szpiech 2012; see also Aaron 1999), for instance, and the fascination with natural signs was familiar in Greek antiquity, to say nothing of his own milieu (cf. Eco 1995) – but *Alphabet of Nature* was odd for its timing. It was already something of an anachronism when it was published (Coudert 1978). Van Helmont had his devotees, but this was the seventeenth century, a century renowned for critical reflection on language and for views diametrically opposed to his. Empiricist and Royal Society member John Locke (1959) argued famously that language was an autonomous system of arbitrary and conventional signs, not something organically or divinely hooked into the world (Bauman and Briggs 2003; Losonsky 2006). While competing views of

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*The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Second Edition.

Edited by Deborah Tannen, Heidi E. Hamilton, and Deborah Schiffrin.

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language jostled for supremacy in early modern Europe, Adamism and naturalism were believed by many to be on their way out.

Works like van Helmont's offer an instructive entry point into the topic of "discourse and religion," precisely for their anachronism. This anachronism was as much ideological as historical, in the sense that the book's perceived backwardness was part of a then nascent "moral narrative of modernity" (Keane 2007), a story the West told to itself about what it meant to be modern. Foucault (1973) spoke of this transition as a real sea change in conceptions of the sign, an epochal shift from a view of signs as tied to the world through mysterious likenesses and affinities to a view in which signs stood apart from the world they passively "represent." Arguments for the arbitrariness and conventionality of the linguistic sign were of course very old – the legacy of Aristotle's *De Interpretatione* is testimony to that – but critical players in nineteenth and early twentieth-century linguistics, especially Ferdinand de Saussure (1983) and his successors, did much to canonize these tenets, making them axiomatic. Hockett (1966) enshrined arbitrariness as a design feature of human language *tout court*.<sup>3</sup>

Early modern works like *Alphabet of Nature* remind us just how deeply theological preoccupations mattered in the debates over the linguistically natural and conventional, the motivated and the arbitrary. In a sense, linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics, and related fields have distinguished themselves from mainstream linguistics partly by giving refuge to all the communicative modalities exiled from the Enlightenment legacy and its early modern roots. They have welcomed back "natural" – that is, motivated, non-arbitrary – signs (Friedrich 1979) through exploring such topics as deixis in language and "indexicality" generally (where signs relate to their objects through contiguity, as in a pointing gesture; for introductions, see Hanks 2001; Levinson 2004; Silverstein 1976), "performativity" (where language use is causally effective in social life [Austin 1962; Searle 1969]; for an overview, see Hall 2000), and "iconicity" (perceived likenesses such as sound symbolism and poetic structure [Jakobson 1960]; for introductions to poetics in discourse, see Banti and Giannattasio 2004; Fleming and Lempert 2014). Viewed in this light, some of our deepest convictions about how language works have come into being within a moral narrative of modernity in which attitudes toward "magic" and "religion" mattered crucially. We can see these convictions partially reflected in the institutional make-up of linguistics itself as a field. Though the topic of language and religion has rarely been used this way, it has the potential to shed light on the history of linguistics's own ideological exclusions and our preoccupations as discourse analysts.

Religious discourse has already been instructive for us in a narrower sense. Much work on the topic of discourse and religion has focused on the linguistic and discursive characteristics of such practices as rituals, prayers, liturgies, trance, divination, spells, mantra, speaking in tongues, and other clearly delineated verbal genres. These practices typically involve deliberate and sometimes spectacular departures from "ordinary" communication, and these departures have been used to address issues of general linguistic concern.

Austin (1962), the chief architect of what became speech act theory, noted the "ritual"-like quality of performatives such as *I bet you sixpence*, and students of religious ritual then followed his lead, exploring the "performativity" of ritual (e.g., Finnegan 1969; Fitzgerald 1975; Rappaport 1974, 1979; Ravenhill 1976; Tambiah 1973) (on this issue generally, see Robbins 2001b). Linguistic anthropologists and semiotically oriented

anthropologists have learned much about the performativity of “poetics” in discourse by looking at ritual. Full-blown public ritual (situated on a continuum with ritualized discursive interaction in all areas of social life) works by way of dense, cross-modal poetic structure that figurates what the ritual purports to effectuate, tracing out a picture of its own “force” (Fleming and Lempert 2014; Silverstein 2004; Stasch 2011; Tambiah 1981; for details, see below). Trance, divination, and ritual speech have been used to trouble assumptions about the pervasive importance of intentionality in communication, since speaker intention in such cases can appear suppressed or wholly absent (Becker 1979; Du Bois 1993). In trance, does the deictic expression *I* really point to the proximal speaker (Becker 1979)? In cases of “mechanical divination,” where “the meanings arrived at are determined by something other than a volitional, human act” (Du Bois 1993: 54), does one really fish for the speaker’s intention to figure out what he or she is doing in the same manner as ordinary conversation?

This approach to discourse and religion exploits the extremes of religious practice to unsettle linguistic commonplaces and sharpen understandings of general linguistic and semiotic processes. Narrowing discourse and religion to the study of the characteristics and peculiarities of discursive practices carries risks, however. We too often take for granted what makes these practices religious, which means that we prematurely delimit our object of study and neglect to explain how these practices come to be seen as ‘religious’ and for whom they are so seen. It is now well appreciated that we cannot presume the givenness of religion as a category (Asad 1983, 1993; Masuzawa 2005; Tambiah 1995) and simply place discursive practices in it, as if their religious provenance were self-evident and left unchallenged by social actors. As I suggest toward the essay’s close, we should follow other social sciences in considering the relational and often fraught emergence of “religion” as a sociohistorical category – what it has been defined against and in relation to, such as “magic” and especially “the secular” – which requires attention to the institutional practices by which religion gets carved out as a distinct sphere of activity.

This review addresses two major issues. The first is a fundamental problem for religious practitioners themselves, that of how to communicate with agents, such as gods, spirits, and ancestors, who are immaterial. All sorts of discursive resources, from registers to reported speech, are mobilized in an effort to materialize these agents. The second issue is equally fundamental but often neglected by analysts: it concerns the manner in which discourse gets separated out as ‘religious’ in relation to the secular.

A word about this chapter’s limits. A curiosity of this topic is that the literature is both small – few researchers on discourse would describe what they do as that of “language and religion” or “discourse and religion” – and large. Large, because a massive literature does exist, but this literature is not preoccupied with language use and is scattered across disciplines, not to mention the globe, and has a formidable time depth. After all, all the major religious traditions familiar to us have had deep and abiding concerns with language, as evidenced by such monumental works as Pāṇini’s Sanskrit grammar and Book II of Augustine’s *de doctrina christiana*. I cannot touch on this well-known literature here (for a compilation of useful synopses, see Sawyer, Simpson, and Asher 2001), and must navigate past topics covered in depth elsewhere, such as the problem of theological predication (whether statements made about God have truth values [e.g., Alston 2005]), theories of scripture, hermeneutics, and translation; the extension

of theories of human conversation to relations with the divine (Buber 1958). In keeping with the priorities of fields like sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology, I privilege empirical research on language use – concrete, situated instances of discourse.<sup>4</sup>

## 1 Materializing the Immaterial

Research in discourse and religion often addresses a cardinal problem: How does one communicate with incorporeal agents – spirits, gods, ancestors – who cannot speak back and make themselves present to allow for “mutual monitoring” (Goffman 1966), intention-reading, and the rest, without which interaction would seem impossible? How are linguistic and discursive resources – including relatively marked uses of language – mobilized to address this “problem of presence” (Engelke 2007), that of communicating with immaterial interlocutors? As Keane (1997a, 2004) has argued, this problem of presence is fundamental, at least for understandings of religion that turn on the existence of an “invisible order” of experience (James 1971: 276). This problem has tended to inspire “highly marked and self-conscious uses of linguistic resources” (Keane 1997a: 48) – dramatic departures from the way people ordinarily speak.

Consider the problem of responsiveness. Addressivity, as Bakhtin (1986: 95) sweepingly put it, means an utterance’s “quality of being directed to someone,” and as Conversation Analysis (CA) has appreciated, this is fundamental to human interaction. The CA notion of “recipient design” refers to the “multitude of respects in which the talk by a party in a conversation is constructed or designed in ways which display an orientation and sensitivity to the particular other(s) who are the coparticipants” (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974: 727), but what can one do when the co-participants aren’t sensorially *there*? One may hail and entreat a deity or ancestral spirit with the aid of a proper name, reverential epithet and address term, vocative case marker and the like – but how can one demonstrate, to others and even to oneself, that one is “communicating” and that one has received a response? One basic solution is to resolve the participant role of “speaker” into multiple roles, so that one can play many parts, as it were. For this feat represented speech is indispensable. In reporting someone else’s speech, one distinguishes (minimally) the “animator” role (the one who physically produces the message) from “author” (the one responsible for composing the message) (Goffman 1981). Innumerable other roles can be distinguished, too, including what Goffman (1974, 1981) called “principal” (the one committed to the truth of the message), and the “target” (the addressee for whom the message is ultimately meant; on participant roles, see Irvine 1997).

Represented speech constructions allow one to project a “voice” other than the current speaking subject. Adapted from the writings of Bakhtin and his circle (Bakhtin 1981; Vološinov 1986), “the concept of voice, meaning the linguistic construction of social personae, addresses the question ‘Who is speaking?’ in any stretch of discourse” (Keane 2001: 268). When so-called “direct” or “quasi”-direct reports are made – that is, where one engineers the impression of fidelity to both “form” and “content” of the quoted speech – one can do much to create a sense that a voice very different from one’s own is present. This voice may be that of a non-human subject (e.g., talking as one’s pet dog [Tannen 2004]), including incorporeal agents such as spirits. The contrastive

juxtaposition of discourse styles across the reported-reporting clause boundary – where the reporting animator talks one way, the reported author another – invites hearers to think that two different voices are in play (Agha 2005), and this contrast can be sharpened and exaggerated through a whole array of linguistic resources, including prosody (voice quality, pitch, speech rate) and lexis (choice of vocabulary and register used). If one is communicating with, say, a spirit or ancestor or deity, it is quite common to use marked qualities of speech for the reported voice to make it distinct from one's own. In Schieffelin's (1985) essay on Kaluli séance in Papua New Guinea, skilled mediums use marked prosody, especially pitch register, to speak in a range of distinct spirit voices: "In general, spirit voices sound rather pinched and smaller than the medium's normal voice, and speak in a somewhat higher [pitch] register" (Schieffelin 1985: 715). In some cases the contrast is made with human speech *tout court*. "Glossolalia," speaking in tongues, is perhaps the most familiar and spectacular case of this, where the very unintelligibility of the code contributes to the sense that a divine agent is present. Malinowski (1965) long ago realized the power of this "coefficient of weirdness," as he termed it, which could be created, for instance, through the use of semantically unintelligible words. Trobriand magic was "cast in another mould because it is derived from other sources and produces different effects from ordinary speech ..." (Malinowski 1965: 218). Put another way, the unintelligibility of magic's register is iconic of its ontic separateness from the everyday and its pragmatic distinctiveness vis-a-vis "ordinary" human speech. (For a special issue on ritual unintelligibility, see Wirtz 2007c.)

In an essay on the healing rituals of the Warao of eastern Venezuela and western Guyana, Briggs (1995) notes how vocables – invariant, semantically "meaningless" particles found frequently in Native American song (Hinton 1980) – are used to index the presence of spirits. The vocables *waiya*, *ee:aa*, *ho*, and *hoi* cannot be glossed with metasemantic queries about what the forms mean, but in ritual contexts they function to index spirits. What is more, the phonetic and prosodic qualities of the vocables are not arbitrary but instead bear a motivated relationship to what they do.

*Ho* and *hoi* are produced with pharyngeal constriction, and *ee:aa* combines this feature with creaky voice. Since this raspy voice quality is believed to reflect the difficulty that the spirits encounter in passing through the [curer's] larynx and pharynx, it indicates a change in the agent who is seen as producing the sound; while the song is initially sung by the curer, it is the helping spirits who themselves produce the vocables. (Briggs 1995: 198–9)

Strictly speaking, these Warao vocables are not addressed "to" spirits – to summon or propitiate them, for example – but are akin to "audible traces" of their presence and participation (Briggs 1995: 199). Vocables serve as an "auditory trail" that "draws attention to the status of the curer's body as a small-scale icon of the spiritual cosmos, as well as of the curing process itself" (Briggs 1995: 209). (Compare with Lévi-Strauss's [1963] famous essay on the Kuna rite for facilitating childbirth, on which Briggs and others have drawn inspiration.)

In some cases, qualities of the incorporeal agent being indexed are iconically reflected in qualities of speech. Drawing on ethnographies from the 1930s, Irvine (1982), for example, summarizes a ritual of the Flathead Indians of Montana in which shamans

who have Bluejay as their guardian spirit would become possessed by this agent in a ceremony that occurred in midwinter.

As the Bluejay dance progresses, the shamans' transformation is reflected in changes in their behavior, which becomes increasingly different from the speech and movements of ordinary social life. By the end of the second night of the ceremony the shamans begin to be possessed by Bluejay. In the words of Turney-High's description (1937: 39) they "talk backwards, in gibberish" and then start making bluejay sounds: "Chirping and cawing, they ascend the lodge poles and run about the rafters with remarkable agility, perching and twittering in bird fashion." At this point they have actually become Bluejay. On the third night the shamans, restored to their human condition, hold a curing session. (Irvine 1982: 243)

This multi-day rite's phases chart a progressive transformation of human into bluejay and back again. Fits of unintelligible speech give way to fluent bluejay-like sounds and behavior, demonstrating successful possession.

In cases of represented speech constructions in which one relays messages from an incorporeal agent (rather than fully speaking *as* that agent, as in trance and possession), one is, in effect, skillfully decomposing the default speaker role into multiple participant roles and hence allocating or redistributing "responsibility" (Hill and Irvine 1993) for what one says. One claims to own parts of one's speech but not others. Such allocations are not always displacements of responsibility "away" from speakers *per se* but sometimes "expansions" of agency beyond the individual to include incorporeal agents (Keane 1997a: 57–8). Nor does this reallocation necessarily do just one thing. In each case it may help to make incorporeal beings into interlocutors, but the same acts can do things for speakers, too, such as help index their own status and shore up their authority (Parmentier 1993: 263). (The same is true of the aforementioned acts of materialization. The Warao vocables, for example, are realized phonetically in different ways by different curers, and vary in the order and frequency with which they are uttered. This variation among curers is no accident, for "[t]he individuality of the vocables emitted by a particular *wisidatu* [curer] points to the basis of his power in intimate relations with particular spirits rather than simply general knowledge regarding spirits" [Briggs 1995: 209].)

Represented speech practices cannot be studied in isolation, because they often echo widespread "textual ideologies," group-relative beliefs about text and textuality. Tibetan monks of the Geluk sect in India (Lempert 2012), for instance, talk about their authoritative philosophical texts with enormous respect, as if all the propositions inscribed therein were consistent. They also painstakingly memorize and are tested on the content of their core textbooks at all stages of the monastic curriculum. In terms of bodily habits, they treat these works, as material "text-artifacts" (Silverstein and Urban 1996), with enormous care, by not bending the pages, by safeguarding them from dust, by not writing in their pages except lightly and in pencil, by avoiding setting them on the floor or stepping on or over them. In myriad ways they pay deference to these works, and these behaviors have their correlates, expectedly, in reporting practices on the debating courtyard, where monks argue twice daily about their texts' meaning.<sup>5</sup> When monks quote books formally in debate, they use a reporting style that meticulously marks the quote's boundaries and establishes its provenance. The quotes appear

as if surgically extracted, with author name, deferential epithet, and book title clearly expressed, and with the left and right boundaries of the quoted segment unambiguously marked (through the ablative *las* on the left, to show where it's "from"; the quotative *zhes* on the right to mark the quote's end, and the honorific verb of speaking *gsungs*) (Lempert 2007, 2012). Surely this citational care has something to do with the care directed toward books expressed in other forms of textual practice (cf. Cabezón 1994). This care in citing texts seems to work in concert with other forms of textual "care," contributing to something we can caption as a textual ideology.

The formal architecture of represented speech constructions can reveal much, not just about textual ideology but also about a speaker's "stance" (Englebretson 2007; Jaffe 2009) or "footing" (Goffman 1981) toward the quoted material and the voice that issued it. "Dialogical" relations can be read off the interplay between reported and reporting clauses, so that the relationship between the two clauses serves as a sign of the speaker's orientation or stance toward the reported voice (Bakhtin 1981; Mannheim and van Vleet 1998; Vološinov 1971, 1986). Vološinov (1986: 116) famously wrote of this quality as the "active relation of one message to another," a kind of dialogicality that he thought reflected and refracted large-scale ideological formations. So-called "authoritative discourse," for instance – which tended to be cast in what he termed a "linear style" – exhibited a correlation: "The stronger the feeling of hierarchical eminence in another's utterance, the more sharply defined will its boundaries be, and the less accessible will it be to penetration by retorting and commenting tendencies from outside" (Bakhtin 1981: 342 et passim; Lempert 2007; Parmentier 1993: 263; Vološinov 1986: 123).

The aforementioned formal citational style in Tibetan Buddhist debates may be reminiscent of authoritative discourse, but monks also have in their repertoire a reporting style in which the boundary between voices is deliberately blurred. Here no matrix reporting clause is provided and no actant structure (information about who-said-what-to-whom) expressed. Monks merely attach a quotative clitic *-s* to their speech, marking it as "said before," even when the speech is understood to be their "own."<sup>6</sup>

(1) Represented speech segment with denoted actant structure

dr̥shii̯-gi̯ ca tsābo du̯-s ser-gi du̯ 'Tashi says "the tea is hot."  
 PN-ERG tea hot AUX-QT say-NZR AUX

(2) Represented speech segment without denoted actant structure

∅ ca tsābo du̯-s ∅ '[Tashi says] "the tea is hot."  
 tea hot AUX-QT

(3) Tropic merger of voices in debate register

dāā m̄-trub-s '[I/Tradition says] "the reason is  
 reason NEG established-QT not established."

In (1), the actant structure is spelled out with the help of a proper name (Tashi) and ergative case marking. A quotative clitic *-s* marks the right-most (end) boundary of the represented speech segment. Categorically the clitic marks the segment as reported, though no distinction analogous to so-called "direct," "indirect," or "quasi-in/direct" reports is directly inferable from *-s* alone. Speakers need not supply the outer matrix

verb and topic omission is commonplace, as illustrated in (2). In the twice-daily public debates on Buddhist philosophy that are so important to the Geluk monastic curriculum, monks routinely drop the reporting frame. In cases where monks use the quotative clitic without matrix verb and without any candidate for the participant role of author, the default construal of the author variable may be glossed as ‘tradition,’ that is, a virtual (i.e., not empirically manifest), authoritative locus of knowledge indexed as anterior to, or transcendent of, the utterance in which it is invoked. Monks invoke a voice of tradition frequently when they debate. (Compare with Kroskrity 1993, who details how Arizona Tewa storytellers exploit the evidential particle *ba* to “speak the past.”) Monks sometimes “distress” their discourse, making it seem old and consonant with tradition by using this reporting style, even when the speech being quoted is clearly their own (Lempert 2007). In (3), the represented speech segment would be understood in context to be the animator’s, but he frames it as if it came from an impersonal voice of tradition; there is thus a tropic ‘merger’ of the two voices – which makes sense, given that the defendant in debate is supposed to defend doctrinal tradition using his logical acuity.<sup>7</sup> In this manner reported speech styles can be scrutinized for the way they model dialogic stances among voices that, among other things, help make incorporeal agents – here a diffuse, authoritative doctrinal “tradition” – immanent in the here-and-now speech event.

As such discursive practices become conventionalized, they sometimes crystallize into registers. Speech registers have traditionally been studied as functionally differentiated repertoires of linguistic forms, different ways of saying “the same thing” in a language (Silverstein 2003), as in the case of many slangs, argots, and cants, and phonolexical registers such as the prestige accent of “Received Pronunciation” in England (for an in-depth treatment of registers, see Agha 2007). A sensitivity to register variation offers an orientation toward religious language finer than that of “language” *qua* denotational code. It scarcely deserves mention that languages in the latter sense have been enormously significant for religious traditions, given the extensive reflection, including theological reflection, on such languages as Classical Arabic, Sanskrit, Biblical Hebrew, and Church Latin. Ferguson (1982: 95) noted, for instance, the plain but telling fact that the “distribution of major types of writing systems correlates more closely with the distribution of world’s major religions than with genetic or typological classifications of language.” Ferguson also appreciated the importance of register variation, a topic still relatively understudied in work on religious discourse. Ferguson (1959) had earlier introduced the notion of “diglossia” to describe a functional compartmentalization of language varieties in society, which involve a so-called “high” (H) and “low” (L) variety, the former being acquired only through formal schooling, largely restricted to formal, non-colloquial communication, and treated as the exclusive medium for canonical religious literature. As sociolinguist and anthropologist Haeri (2003) demonstrates for the case of Classical Arabic and Egyptian Arabic, standard diglossic accounts tell us little about the pragmatic uses of register variation in social life or the values ascribed to these varieties from the perspective of different categories of social actor. Even the “high” variety in Egypt isn’t singular and monolithic, for example. Egypt’s 1980 constitution made Classical Arabic its official language, but which Classical Arabic is this, the divine language of the Qu’ran, or that of a “modernized” language unanchored from any one religion? While most of Haeri’s Egyptian interlocutors spoke as if there were but one Classical Arabic, derived from the Qur’an, they also couldn’t help but notice

significant differences between the Classical Arabic of Islam and the Classical Arabic used for non-religious purposes – in print journalism, television reporting, bureaucratic communication, and elsewhere. In the Classical Arabic of the Qur'an, case endings, for example, are always marked orthographically with diacritics. This Classical Arabic also always appears in calligraphic styles and is never typeset. The very status and value of these two “high” registers is precarious, subject to negotiation and contestation. In fact, Haeri found that it was caught up in debates about what relation Islam should have to the nation-state.

Registers are rarely distributed evenly across a population, as the very phenomenon of diglossia makes plain. As historical formations with complex social distributions, registers typically involve asymmetries in terms of who can recognize them and who has mastery of them. Registers become registers – become singled out from the rest of the language and imbued with social and cultural value – through recurrent “reflexive” practices, that is, “activities in which communicative signs are used to typify other perceivable signs” (Agha 2007: 16). Register formation is thus a historical process – “enregisterment” (Agha 2007). Which means that we cannot rest content with synoptic sketches of repertoires and static accounts of the “contexts” in which a religious register occurs and the “uses” to which it is put.

Register variation can be tracked within speech communities but also within the orbit of a single speech event, where register shifts can help materialize voices and the time-spaces or “chronotopes” (Bakhtin 1981) in which these voices live.<sup>8</sup> Wirtz (2007a, 2007b), for instance, traces register shifts in her studies of Cuban Santería ritual speech. Santero mediums bring the past into the present, the divine into the quotidian, partly by tacking between two marked registers, Lucumí – “the tongue of the *orichas*” that incorporates archaic Yoruba elements – and Bozal, a stigmatized sociolect of Cuban Spanish associated with African slaves and hence “ancestral-historical” space-time. Santeros use both registers contrastively against the background of Cuban Spanish, the unmarked variety associated with the mundane here and now.

Registers used religiously may be named and characterized as if they were exclusively linguistic, but this does not mean that they are. The early English Quakers’ “Plain Speech,” for instance, did involve the conspicuous avoidance of such resources as honorific titles and, famously, the second-person pronoun *you* for singular reference (this being a way to express deference on analogy with T/V distinctions). But Plain Speech also included a spate of nonverbal communicative behaviors, such as not doffing one’s hat to show respect and the avoidance of flashy clothing – to mention just a few facets of their behavior (Bauman 1983). The register name singles out speech, but speech is far more entangled in other communicative practices and materials than the label lets on. Nor are registers limited to language when it comes to their metadiscursive typification – what people say about the register and how they react to it. As a glance at any etiquette manual immediately reveals, talk about registers tends to tie these speech varieties to stereotypic types of people and the activities in which these people engage, creating “slippage” across the two. Talking in the same breath about speech and the kinds of people who use that speech is partly what makes it possible to make inferential leaps from speech to people, to “read” identity from register use (Agha 1998, 2007). All this suggests that the study of religious registers requires more than a repertoire-based perspective. It also requires a consideration of the social and historical life of the register, and the range of pragmatic effects regularly achieved in discursive interaction.

## 2 Directions for Future Research: Articulations of Religion and the Secular

“Any discipline that seeks to understand ‘religion’ must also try to understand its other,” writes Talal Asad (2003: 22). The other to which he refers is “the secular” – another reason why religion should not be approached as an autonomous, self-evident domain. A basic point that Asad, Charles Taylor, and a number of others have made is that the secular (it is customary to distinguish among such terms as “secular,” “secularity,” and “secularism,” but for simplicity I will not do so here) should not be defined negatively, as the mere decline or absence of religion or separation of church and state. The secular is ideologically substantive, requiring study in its own right. It has served as a penumbral background against which religious discourse has often been highlighted as “religious,” yet little discourse-centered research has been done on articulations of religion of the secular.

Empirical studies of discourse could lend much to the contemporary interest in religion and the secular. Drawing inspiration from Foucault’s *What is Critique?* Asad (2010), for instance, has identified what he calls the “the critical attitude” as a kind of socially transmitted disposition and way of knowing the world that supposedly characterizes secularity. (His contribution belongs to a series of online exchanges on The Immanent Frame under the rubric, “Is Critique Secular?” [<http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/is-critique-secular>].) Let us simply grant that this attitude has some kind of social existence. Surely it must have palpable communicative qualities to make itself recognizable and shareable, which would presumably include habits of bodily comportment and speech. Might this attitude depend on certain speech registers, or might it at least routinely exploit, say, epistemic modalization in language and stancetaking in discourse? Might such an attitude involve styles of communicating affect, too? Sociologically speaking, in which institutional contexts (e.g., within higher education [Roberts and Turner 2000] or the mass-mediated public sphere [e.g., Meyer and Moors 2006]) and through what interaction rituals is this attitude inculcated? How, in a word, does this attitude come to be known and shared?

Or think of the centrality of “choice” to the immanent frame. The very sense of having a choice is no mean semiotic feat. As in the proverbial shell game, there is often a whole dramaturgy and artifice to choice. The capacity to choose must be impressed upon people – they must be convinced that they have it – which means that we must ask what semiotic labor goes into staging choice, into convincing subjects of their capacity to exercise it, and what of all the showmanship of uptake and ratification, so that one knows that one has, indeed, chosen?

Another topic in work on religion and the secular is that of “re-enchantment.” We are accustomed to hearing rejoinders to Max Weber’s old narrative of modernity, which augured the decline of religion – “disenchantment” for the West. Instead we learn daily of religion’s various returns or re-enchantments. In the heart of modern capitalism and neoliberal regimes curious magico-religious atavisms of all sorts crop up (e.g., Comaroff and Comaroff 1999; Davis 1980; Taylor 2007). These re-enchantments often involve intricate entanglements of religion and the secular, yet rarely do we learn how these entanglements are discursively produced or even noticed by social actors.

A single example must suffice. Moreton's (2007, 2009) historical study of Wal-Mart details a creative fusion of Christian and neoliberal ideals. Spearheaded by Wal-Mart, a Christianized ideal of "servant leadership" arose in the US Sunbelt partly as a response to a post-Fordist service economy whose feminized workforce and demand for emasculating "people"-centered communication – emasculating, because this communication requires interpersonal warmth, sociability, and, above all, subordination – posed a threat to men. The solution Wal-Mart came to was a religiously informed doctrine that "sanctified" labor, making it safe for men to act in ways that would otherwise seem servile, and making it attractive for women to accept labor that, in strict economic terms, could hardly be said to be worth their while. To her credit, Moreton turns to institutional sites where this managerial ethic was inculcated, which includes vocational business training in Christian colleges and communication seminars offered by Wal-Mart, but we learn little about the means and materials by which gendered and religiously inflected notions of "family" and neoliberal principles were stitched together. Nor do we find out how people even noticed these ties between religion and the secular. (When Moreton does occasionally turn to discourse, she tends to make much of easily reportable words and expressions, such as the fact that many former employees used the lexical metaphor of "family" to talk about their experience working for Wal-Mart; she treats such tropes as if they reflected ideology directly [Lempert 2010].) Again, we are never quite sure how her subjects detect and react to these likenesses. A sensitivity to discourse, including what has been termed "interdiscursivity" – a cover term for the diverse ways in which discourse helps link and liken distinct spatiotemporal events (e.g., Agha and Wortham 2005; Bauman 2004; Hanks 2000) – would be useful for understanding how people communicate likenesses across a religious–secular divide. As students of interaction know well, we also cannot simply mine discourse for the "what is said" of communication and act as if no human interaction had occurred (as often happens when people prospect for information using interview data; see Briggs 1986; or, more recently, De Fina and Perrino 2011).

More subtle treatments of religious–secular articulations can be found in ethnographies that narrate local transformations in religious belief and practice as populations aspire or feel obliged or are forced to engage facets of "modernity." A substantial literature, to which I can only gesture here, discusses how ideologies of language and signs change as groups negotiate the promises and hazards of religious conversion, or adopt secularist ideals for social and political ends (for cases, see, for example, Haeri 2003; Hanks 2010; Keane 1997b, 2007; Kuipers 1998; Lempert 2012; Robbins 2001a; Wilce 2009). When these changes are chronicled well by analysts, they are not depicted as epic clashes of monolithic codes or ideologies or cultures. Instead, we learn about the actions and interests behind such change, so that the whole process begins to resemble an "interaction." If we speak broadly of this on analogy with face-to-face interaction, we can call this a concern with the "pragmatics of modernity" (Lempert 2012).

For example, monk disciplinarians at Tibetan monasteries of the dominant Geluk sect in India resort to public reprimand and corporal punishment but have started to worry about what communicative methods are best to socialize monks into their vocation (Lempert 2012). Reprimand has tended to be highly indirect and allusive, with no finger pointing or use of proper names. There is also an annual, formal type of reprimand (*tshogs gtam chen mo*) that is a fixed recitation delivered by the disciplinarian before the whole college. The recitation is drawn from a text written in a rather archaic

register and is intoned with such marked prosody and voice quality that nobody can really follow what is being said – a high “coefficient of weirdness,” Malinowski would say. This troubles Tibetan reformers such as the Dalai Lama, who have been encouraging disciplinarians to be more “direct” and “clear” when they communicate – to use language as an instrument for precise reference and predication. When Tibetans aspire toward directness and clarity in speech, or aspire, say, to avoid “empty” ritual in favor of well-reasoned doctrinal “belief” – belief being a hallmark of Protestantized views of religion – why and for whom do they so strive? The point is not just that they may have adopted these globalizing ideals about communication from sources that can be traced historically to the West’s Enlightenment and the Protestant Reformation – minus whatever deformations Tibetans may have introduced as a result of their own “local”-cultural beliefs. While it is important to trace these histories, identifying them alone will not tell us anything about the how and why of appropriation. Tibetans have felt pressure, for instance, to demonstrate that they, too, respect human rights, for how else can they ask nations like the United States to ensure that China respects theirs? In a sense, there is “recipient design” to these Tibetan monastic reforms, insofar as Tibetans take up these facets of modernity in a manner designed to be overseen and overheard by others, others that include foreign supporters – proxies for “the West” – to whom the Tibetan government in exile has turned in its nationalist struggle with China.

Such local projects of modernity suggest how the seventeenth-century controversies about language, controversies like those in which the *Alphabet of Nature* found itself ensnared, have not gone away. The story of a modern sea change in conceptions of the sign – and it is a story, because there never really was a singular, epochal break, as Foucault and others suggested – is a live script, still being reenacted today in ways that affect discursive practice. All this reminds us, once again, that we cannot limit the study of discourse and religion to the linguistic and discursive characteristics of verbal genres that range from mantras to sermons to spells – not because such characteristics do not exist or merit attention, but because their status as “religious” is often precarious and contested, and because the religious is often entangled in the secular in ways that demand empirical attention. In long form, our area of study may therefore be captioned, “discourse of religion and the secular.”

## NOTES

- 1 Many thanks to Webb Keane, Deborah Tannen, and Charles Zuckerman for offering helpful comments on drafts of this chapter, and to Niloofar Haeri, Jim Wilce, and Kristina Wirtz for fielding questions about sources.
- 2 This is an abridged English translation of the title, *Kurtzer Entwurff des eigentlichen Naturalphabets der heiligen Sprache* (Helmont, Coudert, and Corse 2007).
- 3 There is no place here to discuss the distinct but related issues of “arbitrariness” and “conventionality” except in the most cursory of ways (see, e.g., Friedrich 1979; Parmentier 1994; Taylor 1990).
- 4 Readers should pair this chapter with Keane’s (1997a, 2004) far-reaching and thoughtful surveys of the literature on “language and religion.” Other useful surveys include encyclopedia entries

- under the rubric “language and religion” in (Brown and Anderson 2006) and Sawyer’s *Concise Encyclopedia of Language and Religion* (2001). In sociolinguistics, an early and important edited volume on language and religion was edited by Samarin (1976).
- 5 For a lively first-hand account of the Geluk sect’s debate-centered curriculum, see Dreyfus 2003. On the materiality of religious writing generally, see, for example, Tracy (1998) and Keane (2013).
  - 6 The abbreviations used are as follows: AUX = auxiliary verb; DAT = dative; ERG = ergative; NOM = nomic evidential; LOC = locative; NEG = negation marker; NZR = nominalizer; PN = proper name; QT = quotative clitic.
  - 7 In (3), unlike (1)–(2), the default construal of the representing speech frame is the nominalized verb “say” (*zer*) with the nomic auxiliary *yog red*, expressing something “generally known to be true.”
  - 8 For linguistic-anthropological adaptations of Bakhtin’s (1981) notion of chronotope, see, for example, (Silverstein 2005) and a special issue, *Temporalities in Text* (Lempert and Perrino 2007).

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*The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Second Edition.

Edited by Deborah Tannen, Heidi E. Hamilton, and Deborah Schiffrin.

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