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Ingwer Paul, Berlin (Deutschland)

84. Ethno-sciences and their significance for conversation linguistics

1. Introduction

Contemporary approaches to the analysis of conversation are marked by three primary assumptions: (i) conversation always emerges from, and (re-)constructs, a social context of some kind; (ii) the context of talk is co-constructed through social actions which are designed by the participants to maintain, alter or subvert the context-in-play; and (iii) these two characteristics are possible because conversation is built using an extraordinarily complex set of rules and resources which are deployed to structure conversational contributions in specific and highly organized ways. These assumptions are common to a relatively broad range of approaches to the analysis of conversation, including the ethnography of speaking (Gumperz/Hymes 1972), interactional socio-

linguistics (Gumperz 1982; Auer/di Luzio 1992), significant segments of linguistic anthropology (Duranti 1997; Moerman 1988) and conversation analysis (Sacks/Schegloff/ Jefferson 1974; Atkinson/Heritage 1984; Ochs/ Schegloff/Thompson 1996). These three assumptions strongly reflect the impact of the ethno-sciences in this field, which it is the task of this contribution to describe.

2. Background

Imagine the following social interaction. A woman who is concerned about a seriously damaged car outside her apartment building calls the police. In a short telephone conversation, she narrates how her attention was drawn to the street below, and how she watched from the window while the car was abandoned by a man who ran away from the scene. The police operator asks her a number of questions about the car, and then tells her that the police are being dispatched to the scene.

Consider some questions which are absolutely central to an analysis of this encounter. What are the considerations that decide the caller to tell her story as a narrative, when she could have simply allowed herself to be questioned by the police operator? What concerns led her to structure her story with the particular details she used? In what ways and by what means does the police operator understand, process and respond to the caller's story? How does the operator reason about the caller's story, and how is that reasoning expressed in her subsequent questioning? How much of that reasoning does the caller grasp and, more generally, how does the caller make decisions about how to answer the operator's questions? How does each party grasp the motivations of the other at different moments in the interaction? How do the parties know 'where they are' in the interaction at any point in time? How do the parties 'make sense' of one another and their situation and, moreover, 'make sense' together?

Before the 1960s these kinds of 'emic' questions were not much asked and were essentially unanswerable. Researchers essentially analyzed the data of interaction using coding systems whose terms were not designed to catch the understandings or analyses of the participants. Rather the codes re-

flected the assumptions and interests that informed particular sociological or psychological theories of conduct. For example, the dominant sociological coding system of the 1950s was termed "interaction process analysis" (IPA), and was devised by Robert Bales (1950). This system, constrained by the IBM punch card method of data entry current at the time, assigned utterances to one of twelve categories. These categories – e.g., 'shows solidarity', 'gives suggestion', 'asks for opinion', 'shows tension' – were the products of a very specific theory that Bales and his theoretical mentor, Talcott Parsons, wished to test. The Parsons/Bales hypothesis was that social groups tend to develop a division of labor among their members between "instrumental functions" concerned with task achievement, and "expressive functions" concerned with the management of emotion and motivation. The IPA coding categories reflected this hypothesis: they embodied task oriented and emotion oriented actions in equal measure.

Thus it is important to recognize that, despite its name, this and related coding schemes did not embody a theory of interaction as such. Instead, IPA embodied a theory of the functioning of social groups, which it was aimed at testing. The underlying theoretical commitments of IPA created difficulties for subsequent researchers who wanted to use it for purposes other than those for which it was intended. For example, the IPA's categorical distinction between emotion-oriented and instrumental actions forced medical researchers adopting the scheme (e.g., Korsch/ Gozzi/Francis 1968) to decide whether an utterance was primarily one or the other. The predicament of a researcher, faced with the utterance *Doctor, am I going to die?*, who was thus forced to decide whether this utterance is better described as "shows tension" or "asks for opinion" is not hard to imagine (Wasserman/Inui 1983).

In sum, this approach treated social interaction as merely a substrate of resources through which sociological and psychological causal variables and processes played themselves out in human affairs. In this, and more sophisticated sociolinguistic approaches, discourse and conversation were treated as virtual *loci* marking, as Goffman acerbically remarked "the geometric intersection of actors making talk and actors bearing ... attributes" (Goffman 1964, 164). The orientations of the

participants *to* the talk and their orientations to context and action *within* the talk were not treated as issues to be addressed.

The main elements of the intellectual context lying behind this outlook are not difficult to discern. Until 1960 sociologists, while retaining a pro forma interest in human cognition and reasoning, in effect treated it as the province of psychology. Psychologists however, under the sway of behaviorist orthodoxy, had treated these domains as beyond the scope of scientific investigation, and had succeeded in impressing this point of view even upon those linguists (e. g., Bloomfield 1946) who had taken an interest in cognition and meaning.

One discipline stood aside from the then prevailing indifference to the meaningful character of interactional conduct. Anthropologists had never abandoned this focus, and indeed sustained an active commitment to analysis in *emic* terms (Pike 1966) throughout the period in which this approach was embargoed in other disciplines. Anthropological research, in the form of distinguished contributions by Malinowski (1923) and Firth (1957) had focused on the dialogic character of cognition and reasoning in pathbreaking approaches to the contextual analysis of discourse. Their initiatives remained stillborn, however, in an intellectual climate that was generally unready for a full scale attack on the analysis of social interaction.

Within sociology, the tradition of symbolic interactionism which developed from George Herbert Mead's philosophy of language and action (Mead 1934; Joas 1985), although favorable to emic analyses of social action based in the actor's point of view, essentially occupied an 'oppositional' position (Blumer 1969), while other approaches to the problem deriving from European phenomenology, especially that of Alfred Schütz (1962−66), had scarcely surfaced. In psychology, the perspectives deriving from Bakhtin (Volosinov 1973) and Vygotsky (1962) and that would later surface influentially as activity theory (Wertsch 1981), were as yet invisible to all but a few cognoscenti. It would not be until the 1950s, when digital computing began to offer a new way of conceptualizing and representing cognition and Noam Chomsky (1959) finally destroyed the behaviorist perspective, that the position began to change in both disciplines.

3. Ethno-sciences

3.1. The Palo Alto Group and 'context analysis'

The gradual creation of a conceptual space for the systematic study of conversational interaction can perhaps be dated from a collaboration in 1955 at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Palo Alto California between anthropologists (Bateson, Birdwhistell, Kroeber), linguists (Hockett, McQuown) and psychiatrists (Fromm-Reichmann, Brosin). Inspired by Fromm-Reichmann's interest in establishing the cues on which she based intuitive psychiatric judgments, this group analyzed a film provided by Bateson (1958), and drew on insights from their several disciplines, together with information theory and cybernetics, to formulate a novel and coherent analytic perspective. The Palo Alto participants began the development of a number of themes which have remained central in all ethno-scientifically influenced perspectives on conversational interaction. The most important, making up the foundations of what Scheflen (1963) called 'context analysis,' involve the conception (i) that actions in interaction conduct are primarily meaningful, not in virtue of their intrinsic character, but in relation to one another, and (ii) that the constructed coherence of meaningful conduct is possible in virtue of underlying structural principles that are shared and oriented to by members of a community (see Leeds-Hurwitz 1987; Kendon 1990b; Goodwin/Duranti 1992 for review). These themes have been progressively unpacked and specified in different disciplinary contexts during the past thirty years.

Although the direct results of the Palo Alto analyses were never published (McQuown 1971), the group was influential through the writings of its several participants in establishing these fundamental analytical principles of 'context analysis'. The work of the Palo Alto group also did much to establish the value of recorded data in the form of film or tape recordings for the analysis of social interaction, and was one point of origin for an increased emphasis on the use of data from naturally occurring, rather than contrived settings (Scheflen 1966; Kendon 1979; 1982). These principles found related expression in the work of John Gumperz and his colleagues on contextualization (Gumperz 1982; Erickson/Shultz 1982; Auer/di

Luzio 1992) and, in more abstract form, in the theoretical writings of Hymes (1962; 1972; 1974).

3.2. Erving Goffman

The perspective that crystallized in Palo Alto was drawn closer to the social scientific mainstream by Erving Goffman (Kendon 1988). Influenced by the institutionalist research of Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown (see Collins 1980 for review), Goffman developed 'context analytical' principles into a more far reaching set of claims in writings extending over many years (Goffman 1955; 1983). Central to Goffman's conception is the notion that social interaction embodies a distinct moral and institutional order that can be treated like other social institutions, such as the family, education, religion etc. This 'interaction order' (Goffman 1983) comprises a complex set of interactional rights and obligations which are linked both to face and personal identity, and also to large-scale macro social institutions. Further, the institutional order of interaction has a particular social significance. It underlies the operations of all the other institutions in society, and it mediates the business that they transact. The work of political, economic, educational and legal and other social institutions is all unavoidably transacted by means of the practices that make up the institution of social interaction. Goffman argued that the institution of interaction has what he called a "syntax". In the Introduction to Interaction Ritual he observes:

"I assume that the proper study of interaction is not the individual and his psychology, but rather the syntactical relations among the acts of different persons mutually present to one another" (Goffman 1967, 2).

Goffman emphasizes this structural focus, traceable to the context analysis pioneered by the Palo Alto group, as a framework within which participants and analysts can reach an understanding of the personal motivations of individuals. Moreover this structural analysis operates within contexts constructed through action. As Goffman puts it in a famous aphorism: "Not men and their moments, rather moments and their men". It was this framework which Goffman made central to his construction of a new institutional domain for sociology — the interaction order as an institution, *sui generis*, as Durkheim used to say.

Thus, in contrast to Bales, Goffman viewed the normative organization of practices and processes that makes up the interaction order as a domain to be studied in its own right. He repeatedly rejected the view that interaction is a colorless, odorless, frictionless substrate through which, for example, personality variables, dominance hierarchies, or institutional or macro-sociological processes operate. What is excluded from these analyses is the interactional order as an autonomous site of authentic sociological processes that inform social action and interaction.

In retrospect it is clear that, while his work has had a direct influence on politeness theory (Brown/Levinson 1987), Goffman's inspired recognition of discourse as an autonomous domain for social scientific analysis was insufficiently developed to become the basis for a self-sufficient school of conversation linguistics. In part, these difficulties had to do with Goffman's attitude to data. As Schegloff (1988) has noted, Goffman did not so much demonstrate his theoretical observations as illustrate them. His interest in the empirical realm was exhausted by its role in illustrating brilliantly conceived theoretical observations. Unlike the Palo Alto group, he was less inclined to use recorded data to interrogate those observations. A second order of difficulty was conceptual. Goffman's interest in the 'syntax' of interaction was one that connected social identity with the institutions of society. He was interested in how "face" and identity are associated with action, and how the inferences they trigger motivate interactional conduct that confirms or conflicts with the institutional, social and moral order of society. The result was a view of interaction that modeled it in terms of 'ritual'. Goffman was less interested in, and did not pursue, the connections between the syntax of interaction and the organization and management of action in interaction, or in terms of the construction of intersubjective understanding and shared knowledge in the social world. Indeed, these were topics that he dismissed as mere 'system' issues (Goffman 1976). Largely for these reasons, Goffman's approach failed to stabilize as a systemic approach to interaction. There is no 'Goffman School' of interaction analysis, and Goffman's seminal insights might have been stillborn but for their intersection with a quite separate resurrection of interest in cognition and meaning in the social sciences during the 1960s.

3.3. Trends in sociology

This resurrection was most pronounced in sociology. While the methodological writings of Max Weber (1968, 3–55) had originally stressed the meaningful character of human action and the importance of retaining a connection with the actors' perspective, this notion had become subordinated by mid-century in the influential Parsonian synthesis to a more causal analytic view of human conduct. Parsons (1951) asserted that social action is causally determined by social norms which are internalized by actors during socialization. These norms are engaged by social contexts and drive action, regardless of the extent to which the actors are aware of the fact. The actors can coordinate their actions (including their communicative actions) only because they recognize their circumstances in the same way, and share norms for conduct under those circumstances. Underlying their shared recognition of their circumstances is an internalized system of cultural representations and symbols which provide for agreement about the nature and meanings of objects, words and actions.

Under the influence of Wittgenstein (1953) and ordinary language philosophy, there developed a strong critique of this approach to rule-following as a deterministic cause of human action. This critique emphasized the subjective perspective of the actor, and the role of rules, not as a resource for causing action, but for the actors' understanding of what is happening around them. Correspondingly, human action became increasingly conceptualized as rule-guided (Winch 1958), and this rule-guidedness was understood as a resource for projecting and grasping its meaning. There also developed an associated interest in the conditions and contingencies under which rule-following becomes defeasible (Louch 1966; Hart 1961; Harre/ Secord 1972) and actions departing from the rule can be accounted for. The importance of this literature was at least in part that it stressed the analytical relationship between rules and action, and that the analysis and understanding of action, whether by social participants or students of language, involves the social constitution of the action in context so as to see whether and how the action is rule oriented.

This analytic outlook had affinities with a second stream of ideas emerging from European phenomenology which, especially in its existential (Merleau-Ponty 1962) and socio-

logically oriented forms (Schütz 1962), also stressed the relevance of knowledge, reasoning, context and meaning in human interaction (see Apel 1967). The work of Alfred Schütz in particular brought new dimensions to the growing analytic focus on language and social interaction: the role of social knowledge and the nature of intersubjective understanding. Granted that action is goal-oriented and is done under the guidance of rules and conventions, what kind of knowledge is required for coordinated action to be possible, how is this knowledge updated, by what means are dynamically changing knowledge and understandings of actions and events shared in a sustained fashion over time?

Schütz observed that each actor approaches the social world with a "stock of knowledge at hand" made up of common-sense constructs and categories that are primarily social in origin. The actor's grasp of the real world is achieved through the use of these constructs which, Schütz stressed, are employed presuppositionally, dynamically and in a taken-for-granted fashion. Schütz also observed that these constructs are held in typified form, that they are approximate and revisable, that actions are guided by a patchwork of 'recipe knowledge' and that intersubjective understanding between actors who employ these constructs is a constructive achievement that is sustained on a moment to moment basis. Finally, Schütz insisted that mutual understanding between social participants is an active, dynamic process that rests on presuppositions but which is continually worked at (see Heritage 1984).

3.4. Ethnomethodology

This basic theoretical research by Schütz was further developed in a series of quasi-experimental procedures by the sociologist Harold Garfinkel (Garfinkel 1967; see Heritage 1984; 1987 for review). Most of these procedures involved what became known as 'breaching experiments' which were inspired by the earlier 'incongruity experiments' pioneered by Asch and Bruner. The breaching experiments employed a variety of techniques to engineer drastic departures from ordinary expectations and understandings about social behavior. By 'making trouble' in ordinary social situations, Garfinkel was able to demonstrate the centrality of taken-for-granted background understandings and contextual knowledge in persons' shared recognition of

social events and in their management of co-ordinated social action. He concluded that understanding actions and events involves a circular process of reasoning in which part and whole, foreground and background, are dynamically adjusted to one another. Following Mannheim (1952), he termed this process 'the documentary method of interpretation'. In this process, basic presuppositions and inferential procedures are employed to assemble linkages between an action or an event and aspects of its real worldly and normative context. The character of the action is thus grasped as a 'gestalt contexture' (Gurwitsch 1966) that is inferentially and procedurally created through the interlacing of action and context. Here temporal aspects of actions and events assume a central significance (Garfinkel 1967, 38–42), not least because background and context have to be construed as dynamic in character. Within this analysis, presuppositions, tacit background knowledge and contextual detail are the inescapable resources through which a grasp of events is achieved.

Garfinkel also showed (1967, 1–7, 18–24) that the recognition and description of actions and events is an inherently approximate affair. The particulars of objects and events do not have a 'one-to-one' fit with their less specific representations in descriptions or codings. The fitting process thus inevitably involves a range of approximating activities which Garfinkel terms '*ad hoc* practices' (Garfinkel 1967, 21–24). This finding is, of course, the inverse of his well known observation that descriptions, actions etc. have *indexical* properties: their sense is elaborated and particularized by their contextual location. An important consequence of these observations is that shared understandings cannot be engendered by a 'common culture' through a simple matching of shared words or concepts but rather can only be achieved constructively in a dynamic social process (Garfinkel 1967, 24–31). In this way, Garfinkel comprehensively undermined conceptions of language and symbolization premised on the assumed primacy of representational functions. Instead he stressed the multiplex relevancies and the inherent reflexivity and contextuality of all sign functions. Above all, he insisted that because the production of signs is unavoidably embedded in courses of real worldly action, social actors will necessarily interpret them as elements of the actions that they partially constitute. Corre-

spondingly, the interpretive analysis of sign functions is properly and unavoidably 'emic' in character. Similar conclusions apply to the social functioning of rules and norms.

Garfinkel's researches indicate that every aspect of shared understandings of the social world depends on a multiplicity of tacit methods of reasoning. These methods are procedural in character, they are socially shared and they are ceaselessly used during every waking moment to recognize ordinary social objects and events. A shared social world, with its immense variegation of social objects and events is jointly constructed and recognized through, and thus ultimately rests on, a shared base of procedures of practical reasoning that operationalize and particularize a body of inexact knowledge.

In addition to functioning as a base for understanding actions, these procedures also function as a resource for the production of actions. Actors tacitly draw on them so as to produce actions that will be *accountable* – that is, recognizable-describable – in context. Thus, shared methods of reasoning are publicly available on the surface of social life because the results of their application are inscribed in social action and interaction. As Garfinkel (1967, 1) put it: "The activities whereby members produce and manage the settings of organized everyday affairs are identical with members' procedures for making these settings account-able."

While the results of Garfinkel's experiments showed that the application of joint methods of reasoning is central to the production and understanding of social action, they also showed that the application of these methods is strongly "trusted" (Garfinkel 1963; 1967, 76–103). This "trust" has a normative background and is insisted upon through a powerful moral rhetoric. Those whose actions could not be interpreted by means of this reasoning were met with anger and demands that they explain themselves. Garfinkel's experiments thus showed the underlying *morality* of practical reasoning and that the procedural basis of action and understanding is a part – perhaps the deepest part – of the moral order. Such a finding is consistent with the view that this procedural base is foundational to organized social life and that departures from it represent a primordial threat to the possibility of sociality itself.

4. Conversation analysis

Conversation analysis (CA), perhaps the most widely practiced single approach to conversation linguistics in the anglophone world today, emerged from a confluence of the perspectives of Goffman and Garfinkel. The two men most centrally involved in its foundation, Harvey Sacks and Emanuel Schegloff, were both students of Erving Goffman at the University of California at Berkeley during the 1960s, and also had frequent and extensive contact with Harold Garfinkel at UCLA during the same period (Schegloff 1992a). From Goffman, Sacks and Schegloff took the fundamental notion that conversation is a social institution which can be studied as an object in its own right, and that the institution consists of rules conferring rights and obligations concerning talk in interaction, for whose (potentially defeasible) implementation participants are morally accountable. From Garfinkel, they took the insight that these rules are resources for the production and recognition of actions and, hence, for the construction of continuously updated understandings of the context in which the participants are embedded. Sacks and Schegloff's approach was encapsulated in one of the earliest published papers in conversation analysis:

"We have proceeded under the assumption ... that in so far as the materials we worked with exhibited orderliness, they did so not only for us, indeed not in the first place for us, but for the co-participants who had produced them. If the materials (records of natural conversation) were orderly, they were so because they had been methodically produced by members of the society for one another" (Schegloff/Sacks 1973, 290).

The approach which is expressed here is resolutely 'emic'. The approach to the institution of interaction will be built from an analysis of the participants understandings and orientations. It will be a 'bottom up' rather than 'top down' analysis. By the same token, it will be resolutely empirical, and its empiricism embodies an important assumption which we can trace all the way back to the Palo Alto group: conversational interaction is orderly, it is a locus of social order. This conception was quite novel to both linguists and sociologists who, from Chomsky (1965) to Parsons (1937; 1951), had preferred to deal with idealized conceptions of language (e.g., the sentence — see Goodwin 1981) and action

(e.g., the 'unit act' — see Heritage 1984) on the grounds that interaction is too messy and unpredictable to be analyzed in its 'raw' state.

From these early papers and Sacks' lectures (Sacks 1992), CA emerged as a study of the institution of conversation by examining the procedural basis of its production. This basis was conceived as a site of massive order and regularity (Sacks 1984; 1992) whose normative organization and empirical regularities could be addressed using the sorts of basic observational techniques that a naturalist might use in studying animals or plants (Sacks 1984). As it has emerged, the field has consolidated around a number of basic theoretical and methodological assumptions.

4.1. The structural analysis of action in ordinary conversation

Fundamental to the inception of CA is the notion that social interaction is informed by institutionalized structural organizations of practices to which participants are normatively oriented. This assumption, perhaps more than any other, reflects the sociological origins of the field. Associated with this assumption is the notion that these organizations of practices — as the conditions on which the achievement of mutually intelligible and concerted interaction depends — are fundamentally independent of the motivational, psychological or sociological characteristics of the participants. Rather than being dependant on these characteristics, conversational practices are the medium through which these sociological and psychological characteristics manifest themselves.

It is this structural assumption which informs, in fact mandates, the basic CA imperative to isolate organizations of practices in talk without reference to the sociological or psychological characteristics of the participants. For example, a structured set of turn-taking procedures is presupposed in the recognition of an 'interruption'. Moreover, both the turn-taking procedures and the associated recognizability of interruptive departures from them are anterior to, and independent of, empirical distributions of interruptions as between males and females or between powerful and powerless individuals. It is thus only after the structural features of, for example, turn-taking and interruption have been determined that it is meaningful to search for the ways in which sociological factors such as gender, class, ethnicity, etc. or

psychological dispositions such as extroversion, may be manifested — whether causally or expressively — in interactional conduct.

From its inception, CA has placed a primary focus on the sequential organization of interaction. Underlying this notion are a number of fundamental ideas. First, in doing some current action, speakers normally project (empirically) and require (normatively) the relevance of a 'next' or range of possible 'next' actions to be done by a subsequent speaker (Schegloff 1972). Second, in constructing a turn at talk, speakers normally address themselves to preceding talk and, most commonly, the immediately preceding talk (Sacks 1987; 1992; Schegloff/Sacks 1973). Speakers design their talk in ways that exploit this basic positioning (Schegloff 1984), thereby exposing the fundamental role of this sequential contextuality in their utterances. Third, by the production of next actions, speakers show an understanding of a prior action and do so at a multiplicity of levels — for example, by an 'acceptance', an actor can show an understanding that the prior turn was possibly complete, that it was addressed to them, that it was an action of a particular type (e. g., an invitation) and so on. These understandings are (tacitly) confirmed or can become the objects of repair at any third turn in an on-going sequence (Schegloff 1992b).

CA starts from the presumption that all three of these features — the grasp of a 'next' action that a current projects, the production of that next action, and its interpretation by the previous speaker — are the products of a common set of socially shared and structured procedures. CA analyses are thus simultaneously analyses of action, context management and intersubjectivity because all three of these features are simultaneously, if tacitly, the objects of the actors' actions. Finally, the procedures that inform these activities are normative in that actors can be held morally accountable both for departures from their use and for the inferences which their use, or departures from their use, may engender. This analytic perspective represents a crystallization into a clear set of empirical working practices of the accumulated assumptions embodied in the various ethno-scientific approaches described in this article.

4.2. The primacy of ordinary conversation

A basic CA assumption is that 'ordinary conversation' between peers represents a funda-

mental domain for analysis and that the analysis of ordinary conversation represents a basic resource for the extension of CA into other 'non-conversational' domains. This conception was first expressed in work on turn-taking (Sacks/Schegloff/Jefferson 1974), by which point, it had become apparent that ordinary conversation differs in systematic ways from, for example, interacton in the law courts or news interviews. The conceptualization of these differences has developed substantially in recent years (Drew/Heritage 1992).

There is every reason to view ordinary conversation as the fundamental domain of interaction and indeed as a primordial form of human sociality (Schegloff 1992b). It is the predominant form of human interaction in the social world and the primary medium of communication to which the child is exposed and through which socialization proceeds. It thus antedates the development of other, more specialized, forms of 'institutional' interaction both phylogenetically in the life of society and ontogenetically in the life of the individual. Moreover the practices of ordinary conversation appear to have a 'bedrock' or default status. They are not conventional and historically mutable nor generally subject to discursive justification (by reference, for example, to equity or efficiency) in ways that practices of communication in legal, medical, pedagogical and other institutions manifestly are. Research is increasingly showing that communicative conduct in more specialized social institutions embodies task- or role-oriented specializations and particularizations that generally involve a narrowing of the range of conduct that is generically found in ordinary conversation (see below 4.3.). The latter thus embodies a diversity and range of combinations of interactional practices that is unmatched elsewhere in the social world. Communicative conduct in institutional environments, by contrast, embodies socially imposed and often irksome departures from that range (Atkinson 1982).

4.3. The use of naturally occurring recorded data in CA

CA is insistent on the use of recordings of naturally occurring data as the empirical basis for analysis. In his lectures (Sacks 1984; 1992), stressed the value of recordings as a resource that could be analyzed and re-analyzed. And he insisted that naturally occur-

ring data represent an infinitely richer resource for analysis than the products of imagination or invention — especially when the latter labor against the constraint, not faced by empirically occurring data, that others may deny their validity as possible events in the real world.

These comments made their appearance in an intellectual context in which invented data were the stock in trade of Chomskian linguistics and of philosophical perspectives such as speech act theory (Searle 1969; 1979) which adopted a similar stance towards linguistic data. CA continues to stress that the use of recorded data is central to recovering the detail of interactional organization and that all forms of non-recorded data — from memorized observations to all forms of on-the-spot coding — will inevitably compromise the linguistic and contextual detail that is essential for successful analysis. The empirical advances that CA has made have rest squarely on the use of recorded data together with the availability of data transcripts that permit others to check the validity of the claims being made.

4.4. Summary

There is a real sense in which the basic principles developed at Palo Alto have received their most extensive elaboration, refracted through the many disciplinary contributions reviewed here and more that cannot be summarized in so short a compass, in contemporary conversation analysis. This research embodies the core notions that (i) communicative meaning is inherently contextual in character, (ii) social context is unavoidably dynamic and is managed through the participants' actions, (iii) the specific contextual significance of actions is 'structurally' achieved by means of rules and practices of conduct which are systematically related and organized as systems, (iv) the contextual significance of action also involves a web of inferences which are inescapable, very often involve personal, moral and social accountability, and thus connect interaction with culture, social structure and personality, and (v) all this is managed through the integrated significance of talk, paralanguage, and body movement. Above all, CA stresses the foundations of human language practices in the real-time organization of social action itself. This conception is one with very far-reaching implications. Extended to the analysis of turns at talk and their component units, it

implies a reconsideration of the assumption that the representational function of language is the sole or even the primary function underlying the grammatical organization of language (Schegloff 1996).

5. Conclusion: The scope and extension of conversation analysis

It is not possible to summarize the vast mass of findings that have emerged from the application of the perspective sketched above. Large bodies of literature cluster around basic themes of conversational organization, including turn-taking, sequence organization, repair, turn organization, action formation, story telling, word selection, and overall structural organization. Approaches to these topics now integrate with hitherto distinct analytic frameworks including functional approaches to grammar (Ochs/Schegloff/ Thompson 1996), intonation (Couper-Kuhlen/Selting 1996), and numerous aspects of gesture, gaze, body movement and proxemics (Goodwin 1981). The approach also reaches out from the stream of speech to incorporate "structures providing for the organization of the endogenous activity systems within which strips of talk are embedded" (Goodwin 1996, 370) including material artifacts of various kinds. The perspective is also extending in subject matter beyond ordinary conversational interaction to incorporate a large variety of institutional settings, practical applications in the study of speech disorder, language socialization, second language acquisition, human-computer interaction and many other domains. The progressive integration with a range of perspectives in psychology including 'constructivist' approaches (Potter 1996; Edwards 1997) means that ethno-scientific approaches to discourse are reaching into the very citadel of cartesianism which blocked its progress during the first half of this century.

Although conclusions are always provisional and perhaps invite their own overthrow, it is clear that the pseudo-scientific objectivism and determinism which inhibited the development of a true conversation linguistics during the first half of this century is no longer a feature of modern social science. It is also clear that the ethno-sciences have made a substantial contribution, both to a shift in the basic assumptions that now char-

acterize contemporary social science, and to the present prominence and researchability of an enduring conversation linguistics.

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John Heritage, Los Angeles (USA)

85. Das Konzept der Konversationsanalyse

1. Begriff und Gegenstand

Konversationsanalyse (= KA) ist die Bezeichnung für einen seiner Herkunft nach soziologischen Forschungsansatz, der sich der Untersuchung von sozialer Interaktion als einem fortwährenden Prozess der Hervorbringung und Absicherung sinnhafter sozialer Ordnung widmet und der dabei einer strikt empirischen Orientierung folgt. Für das Selbstverständnis der KA sind ein Akteursmodell und eine Wirklichkeitsvorstellung charakteristisch, die auf ihren konstruktivistisch-ethnomethodologischen Theoriehintergrund verweisen. Es ist eine Grundannahme der KA, dass sich soziale Wirklichkeit kontinuierlich in kommunikativen Akten aufbaut und dass in allen Formen von sprachlicher und nicht-sprachlicher Kommunikation die Handelnden damit beschäftigt sind, die Situation und den Kontext ihres Handelns zu analysieren, die Äusserungen ihrer Handlungspartner zu interpretieren, die situative Angemessenheit, Verständlichkeit und Wirksamkeit ihrer eigenen Äusserungen herzustellen und das eigene Tun mit dem Tun der Anderen zu koordinieren. Ziel der KA ist es, die konstitutiven Prinzipien und Mechanismen zu bestimmen, die im situativen Vollzug und Nacheinander des Handelns die sinnhafte Strukturierung und Ordnung eines ablaufenden Geschehens und der Aktivitäten, die dieses Geschehen ausmachen, erzeugen. Für das methodische Vorgehen der KA ist charakteristisch, dass sie bei der möglichst verlustarmen Dokumentation realer und ungestellter sozialer Vorgänge ansetzt und daraus einzelne Strukturprinzipien von sozialer Interaktion sowie Praktiken ihrer Handhabung durch die Interaktionsteilnehmer fraktioniert.

Die KA ist aufgrund ihres Namens zwei Missverständnissen ausgesetzt. Zwar schreibt die KA dem informell-alltäglichen Gespräch eine zentrale Bedeutung als Grundform der sprachlichen Interaktion zu (Heritage 1984, 238 ff), doch hat sie sich von Beginn an nicht nur mit Unterhaltungen, sondern auch mit anderen — etwa institutionenspezifischen — Gesprächsarten befasst. Und ihre Perspektive ist keineswegs auf sprachliche Interaktion beschränkt, vielmehr hat sie sich sehr früh auch mimisch-gestischen, kinesischen und proxemischen Aspekten der Interaktion gewidmet.

2. Geschichte und Aktualität

Die KA entwickelte sich als eigene soziologische Forschungsrichtung in den 60er und 70er Jahren. Theoriegeschichtlich ist sie in der von Harold Garfinkel (1967) begründeten Ethnomethodologie verwurzelt, von der sie bis heute in ihrem theoretischen und methodologischen Selbstverständnis wesentlich geprägt ist (Heritage 1984). Bei der Formulierung des konversationsanalytischen Forschungsprogramms spielte Harvey Sacks eine zentrale Rolle. Sacks arbeitete seit Beginn der 60er Jahre an der Universität Berkeley, wo vor allem Erving Goffman, dessen erstes Buch „The presentation of self in everyday life" im Jahr 1959 (dt. 1969) erschien und die Erforschung der face-to-face-Kommunikation zu einem eigenständigen Thema machte, einen starken Einfluss auf ihn ausübte (Bergmann 1991a).

Die ersten Entwicklungsschritte der KA lassen sich gut verfolgen, weil Sacks 1964 da-