Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics
Series Editors: Christopher N. Candlin and Jonathan Crichton

Exploring Discourse in Context and in Action

Christopher N. Candlin
Jonathan Crichton
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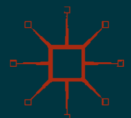

Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics

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This flagship series was created and overseen by Professor Christopher N. Candlin, and continues his work by providing the essential cross-over between research in applied linguistics and its practical applications in the professions. Books in the series address the growing need for professionals concerned with language and communication issues to keep up to date with applied linguistic research relevant to their practice. Central to this agenda, the series offers students and practising professionals rapid and authoritative access to current scholarship and research on key topics in language education and professional communication more broadly, emphasising the integration and interdependence of research and practice in a useable way. The series provides books with a common structure, each book offering a clear, up-to-date and authoritative overview of key concepts, research issues and developments in the particular topic, identifying: research evidence for the main ideas and concepts; competing issues and unsolved questions; the range of practical applications available for professional and organisational practice that draw on such concepts and ideas; a synopsis of important issues open for action; and practice-based research by practitioners/students. These state-of-the-art overviews are supported by selected cases studies of the practical applications of research and 'how to' research guides and resources, all designed to extend and localise knowledge of the topic and its relevance for the reader. Throughout the books, readers are encouraged to take up issues of enquiry and research that relate to their own contexts of practice, guided by reflective and exploratory questions and examples that invite practical connections to their work. Written by leading scholars and practitioners, the books will be essential reading for MA or PhD students in Applied Linguistics, TESOL, Communication Studies and related fields and for professionals concerned with language and communication who are keen to extend their research experience.

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Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics
ISBN 978-0-230-25270-7 ISBN 978-1-137-31506-9 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-31506-9

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017934355

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For Chris

General Editors' Preface

Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics provides the essential crossover between research in applied linguistics and its practical applications in the professions. Written by leading scholars and practitioners, the series provides rapid and authoritative access to current scholarship and research on key topics in language education and professional communication more broadly. Books in the series are designed for students and researchers in Applied Linguistics, TESOL, Language Education, Communication Studies and related fields and for professionals concerned with language and communication.

Every book in this innovative series is designed to be user-friendly, with clear illustrations and accessible style. The quotations and definitions of key concepts that punctuate the main text are intended to ensure that many, often competing, voices are heard. Each book presents a concise historical and conceptual overview of its chosen field, identifying many lines of enquiry and findings, but also gaps and disagreements. Throughout the books, readers are encouraged to take up issues of enquiry and research that relate to their own contexts of practice, guided by reflective and exploratory questions and examples that invite practical connections to their work.

The focus throughout is on exploring the relationship between research and practice. How far can research provide answers to the questions and issues that arise in practice? How should we warrant the relevance of

research to practice? Can research questions that arise and are examined in very specific circumstances be informed by, and inform, the global body of research and practice? What different kinds of information can be obtained from different research methodologies? How should we make a selection between the options available, and how far are different methods compatible with each other? How can the results of research be turned into practical action?

The books in this series identify key researchable areas in the field and provide workable examples of research projects, backed up by details of appropriate research tools and resources. Case studies and exemplars of research and practice are drawn on throughout the books. References to key institutions, individual research lists, journals and professional organisations provide starting points for gathering information and embarking on research. The books also include annotated lists of key works in the field for further study.

The overall objective of the series is to illustrate the message that in Applied Linguistics there can be no good professional practice that isn't based on good research, and there can be no good research that isn't informed by practice.

Christopher N. Candlin,
Jonathan Crichton

Acknowledgements

The primary acknowledgement for this book lies with Chris Candlin. It grew out of his work and thought. He led, inspired and guided its development from 2008 to early 2015, when, with his health declining, he could no longer actively contribute to its completion. In bringing the book to publication, we have sought to reflect his vision for the book, for the promise of discourse and the potential of its analysis. Any errors or omissions remain ours alone.

We would also like to acknowledge Chris' and our families for their support during the preparation of the book.

Further acknowledgements are due to City University of Hong Kong and Polity Press, UK, for permissions to reprint copyright material as follows.

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We also would like to thank colleagues and students at our respective universities for their feedback on ideas, concepts and activities that

inhabit this book and whose contribution made it an even more rewarding experience to write.

Finally, while Chris is lead author, the order of our author names is alphabetical.

Jonathan Crichton
Stephen H. Moore

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1

Introduction

Two questions confront us at the outset of this book. What is discourse, and why does it matter? The questions go to the heart of what has become a central focus of research, practice and more general interest across the humanities, social sciences and beyond, into the further reaches of public, private and professional life. These questions are both the starting point of the book and an invitation to you, the reader, to join us and the broader community of researchers and practitioners in a conversation to work out answers to these questions. We say 'conversation' because you, the reader, are and should be involved at every point. Your involvement is, we argue, essential if you are to answer the what and the why of discourse. The book, in other words, invites you to explore what discourse could mean in and for your context and your action.

We suggest as a way of opening the conversation this quote from Candlin:

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C.N. Candlin et al., *Exploring Discourse in Context and in Action*,
Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-31506-9_1

Quote 1.1 Candlin on discourse

Discourse is a means of talking and writing about and acting upon worlds, a means which both constructs and is constructed by a set of social practices within these worlds, and in so doing both reproduces and constructs afresh particular social-discursive practices, constrained or encouraged by more macro movements in the overarching social formation.

(Candlin 1997: pviii)

Taking this point of departure, the book is guided by an agenda that is prompted by critical, reflective and reflexive questions, involving you, the reader, and the field of discourse studies as a whole, that explore the what and the why of discourse.

In order to provide a structure to Part I of the book we have suggested a number of different layers: the first (and the overarching layer) is that of the **AGENDA** for exploring discourse, organised around three perspectives: *Setting the Agenda*, *The Agenda in Context* and *Going beyond the Discourse Agenda.* Every *Agenda* has a number of **THEMES**: *Setting the* Agenda (Themes 1 and 2); *The Agenda in* Context (Themes 3, 4, 5 and 6); and *Going beyond the Discourse Agenda* (Theme 7), and these constitute the chapters (and heart) of the book. Apart from the first Theme, which sets the scene for the whole book, the others are posed in the form of key **QUESTIONS**. These questions are not arbitrary. They derive from writings of particular key scholars concerned with the Theme in question and serve to characterise the focus of the Theme. We list them below:

- Who's involved in discourse? [Ch. 3]
- What is it that's going on here? [Ch. 4]
- How do you know that? [Ch. 5]
- Why that now? [Ch. 6]
- What actions are being taken here, by whom and why? [Ch. 7]
- How do discourse and social change drive each other? [Ch. 8]

Each of these thematic questions gives rise to some key **CONSTRUCTS** which define the **FOCUS** of the particular Theme, so, for example,

Theme 2, 'Who's involved in discourse?' gives rise to the focus on the constructs of:

- Participants
- Roles and behaviours
- Processes of **indexing** (i.e. placing or locating), **inscribing** (i.e. associating with a particular Discourse) and **accounting** (i.e. providing an account of what we have done/said, etc.)

Because discourse is not only (or even perhaps primarily) a theoretical field of study with its roots in sociological, linguistic, social psychological, anthropological and philosophical research, it is characterised by its own set of practical analytical tools—its **toolbox**, if you like. So, in this book, each Theme has associated with it particular **METHODOLOGIES** or modes of analysis. This is *not* to say that the particular methodology we have associated with a particular Theme is the *only* methodology, the only set of tools that either is, or might be, appropriate for the study of the Theme, its questions and its foci. In fact, we are strongly of the view that what is required for an **'ecologically valid'** discourse analysis (see Theme 4) is the management of a range of methodologies, in short, **a multiple methodology** associated with different approaches to discourse analysis-based research. Indeed Part II of this book is devoted to a full description of a **multiperspectival approach** to discourse analysis and provides a point of departure for discourse analytic research projects that readers might wish to undertake.

In terms of a multiple discourse analytical methodology, we introduce in Part I:

- **Theme 1: Critical content analysis**
- **Theme 2: Participant interaction analysis**
- **Theme 3: Ethnographic and sociocultural analysis**
- **Theme 4: Interactional sociolinguistic analysis**
- **Theme 5: Ethnomethodology and conversation analysis**
- **Theme 6: Mediated discourse analysis**
- **Theme 7: Critical discourse analysis**

Associated with these particular approaches to the analysis of discourse and their different methodologies will be some discussion of modes of analysing the realisations of discourse structure in spoken, written and multimodal text. So, in addition to the tools associated with the methodologies listed above we will introduce and refer to analytical approaches to the analysis of genre, lexico-grammatical analysis (especially in Systemic Functional Grammar methodology), and the analysis of multimodal (visual) texts.

Each chapter in Part I of the book reflects aspects of the particular Theme to which it is linked. Usually these aspects take the form of specific questions or highlighted constructs or issues which suggest particular content, but which also are intended to identify particular research issues and themes across a range of sites and contexts. Also, to add a human face to discourse analysis, we have highlighted in Theme 1 three key scholars (i.e. Bourdieu, Foucault and Habermas) and their research contribution and interests in respect of the foci of the Theme and its associated questions. For other Themes we provide pen portraits of key scholars.

1.1 Asking Critical Questions of Discourse: How Is Discourse Defined and Located?

We should begin by working out how the term **discourse** might be defined. Linguists Ron and Suzanne Scollon offer some helpful clarification. They suggest that the term can be used in three different ways. (Note that we have added some highlighting in boldface and explanatory comments in brackets):

Concept 1.1 Scollon and Scollon's three definitions of 'discourse'

1. In the most technically narrow definition of the word, the study of discourse has been the study of **grammatical and other relationships between sentences**. These relationships are often discussed as a problem of **cohesion** [Note: that is the way sentences are connected together in larger units, like paragraphs etc.]…. The purpose of such

studies of discourse is to come to understand the inferential processes by which people communicate their meanings and by which hearers interpret what is said. (Scollon and Scollon 2001: 107)

2. A more general use of the word 'discourse' has been made to study the broader functional uses of **language in social contexts**…. In such studies, the purpose is to come to understand how the language we use is based on the social environments in which we use that language. (Scollon and Scollon 2001: 107)

3. …the broadest concept of discourse… is the study of whole **systems of communication**. For example we might study the language of dealers in foreign exchange, of public school teachers,… [or of lawyers, of healthcare workers, or business managers]. Such broad systems of discourse form a kind of self-contained system of communication with a shared language or jargon, with particular ways in which people learn what they need to know to become members, with a particular ideological position, and with quite specific forms of interpersonal relationships among members of the groups. (Scollon and Scollon 2001: 107)

A variant of the Scollons' third interpretation above is the following definition, drawn from Gee, Hull and Lankshear (1996: 10):

> A Discourse is composed of ways of talking, listening, reading, writing, acting, interacting, believing, valuing, and using tools and objects, in particular settings and at specific times, so as to display and recognize a particular social identity.

Note how they refer here to ***Discourse*** with a capital **'D'**. Their idea is to distinguish the particular Discourses which are associated with members' practices in the sites of engagement of a community of practice and the more general term ***discourse***, as that category to which all Discourses in some sense 'belong'. So we can talk of the **Discourse** of lawyers, business

Reflection task 1.1

Think about some of the terms used in the quotation from Gee et al. (1996) and make notes on what they mean to you.

- What is meant by ***social identity***?
- What is meant by ***valuing***?
- Why the focus on ***settings*** and ***times***?
- Why the need to distinguish between ***display*** and ***recognise***?
- Why bring in the ***tools*** and ***objects***?

managers and so on, both of which share features of **discourse** more generally.

Another way of describing Discourse is also provided by Gee et al. (1996: 10), who cite Hacking (1986, 1994) as follows:

> Discourses create, produce, and reproduce opportunities for people to be and to recognize *certain kinds of people*.

What strikes one about these two definitions from Gee et al. (1996) is the way in which **discourse** in general and **Discourses** in particular are associated with persons (as identities and as members), with purposes and tasks, and, above all, how discourse is not just a matter of language (or text) but rather what it is that makes the connection between text and what they go on to call 'larger realms of experience'. Pursuing these associations, it becomes apparent that, above all, discourse (as Discourse(s)) is identified with particular **social practices** that these persons engage in, not only on their own account, but as a realisation of the identification with, and membership of, particular **institutional, organisational or professional groups**. In short, there is already established in such definitions a close linkage between **Discourse(s)** and the activities and practices of work and other activities, indeed, of living in general. This connection will be emphasised throughout Part I, but especially in Themes 5 and 6.

1.2 Asking Critical Questions of Discourse: What Are the Experiences and Dispositions of Discourse Participants? What Are Their Purposes and Actions?

In this section we will be primarily focusing on the interconnection between **Discourses, participants** and **practices**. In particular, we will be exploring how members are recruited into particular Discourses (such as that of working as a professional in a particular organisation or institution) as part of being recruited into the institutions which, in part at least, give rise to and maintain the Discourses in question. Teaching, doctoring, nursing, managing, lawyering, television reporting, taking part in workplace teams in problem-solving, are all **social practices** linked closely to particular **social institutions** and which are **Discoursed** in particular and specific ways. The allowable practices of these institutions (what you can *do* as opposed to what you can't *do*) are regularly tied in to what you can *say/write* and what you cannot. So, in this way discursive practices and social/institutional practices interact and are interconnected. We will expand on these issues in Chaps. 2 and 3.

Concept 1.2 Connection between social formation, practices and discourse

Social/institutional practices (i.e. what you are expected to do and how you are expected to behave as a member of this or that institution or workplace) act like a kind of fulcrum between the broader formation of the society at the 'highest' level (what social theorists call the **macro**) and the realisation of these social practices in terms of Discourses (how you are expected to talk/write, make inferences from what others say and write) at the 'lowest' level (what they call the **micro**).

The very simplified Fig. 1.1 displays this model:

Marxist critical linguist Norman Fairclough makes the following comment on the above relationship and extends it.

Fairclough represents his three-dimensional model by a simple nesting arrangement in which text is situated within discursive practices which in

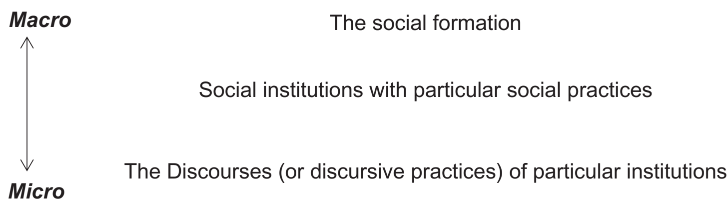

Fig. 1.1 Social formation, social practices and discourse

Quote 1.2 Fairclough on the relationship between discourse and practice

[T]his concept of discourse and discourse analysis is three dimensional. Any discursive event (activity type) is seen as being simultaneously a piece of text, and instance of discursive practice and an instance of social practice. The 'text' dimension attends to the linguistic analysis of texts. The 'discursive practice' dimension specifies the processes of text production and interpretation, for example, which types of discourses are drawn upon and how they are combined. The 'social practice' dimension attends to issues of concern to social analysis such as the institutional and social circumstances of the discursive event (activity type) and how that changes the shape of the discursive practice.

(Fairclough 1992: 4)

turn are situated within social practice (see Fairclough 1992: 73). Thus, the three dimensions are not discrete, but embedded within each other. Within any social institution, social and discursive practices are to different degrees encouraged or constrained. As Fairclough (2013: 41) comments, 'the institution provides them (the members) with a *frame* for action, without which they could not act, but it thereby constrains them to act within that frame.'

(Note will discuss this concept of 'frame' in more detail in Theme 3. Here it relates to what we often call 'frame of reference', how we see or understand things, based on our previous experience and our knowledge.)

When we explore the relationship between **frames**, **purposes** and **actions** we rapidly find out that life (and work) is not quite as simple as we have been making out so far.

First of all, practices are not as clear-cut as we might like in that we are not always sure what kind of event (or activity) we are in (offices or clinics sometimes seem as if they are rather like courtrooms with people interrogating each other, sometimes rather like counselling sessions in psychotherapy with our colleagues suggesting gently what might be the matter with us).

Secondly, we may have rather more freedom to choose what we want to do or to say and write than we expect or realise. People don't always speak or write in the manner we imagine they would. Teachers don't always have to speak like archetypal teachers or doctors like doctors. They may choose to speak or write in different ways (i.e. to employ different and distinctive Discourses) for a number of strategic reasons; perhaps because they want to establish a new and different relationship with us, take on a distinct and different role, if you like.

Thirdly, people within a particular social or workplace institution will have very different ideas, and often competing ones, of exactly what the appropriate or preferred Discourse is for a given moment within a particular practice. All these different Discourses that can be drawn upon, Fairclough (1992), following Foucault, refers to as the **archive**—by which he means 'the totality of discursive practices…that falls within the domain of a research project' (Fairclough 1992: 227), or, we might say, within the domain of an organisation or community.

In short, discursive life is a lot more heterogeneous than we might think. People often use forms of discourse from a variety of **activity types** at the same time, realising different Discourses. Such **interdiscursivity** or what is often a strategic mingling of Discourses is very common and becoming increasingly so. We will be exploring this more in Theme 7. Within any event or interaction people may vary between styles of speaking or writing, sometimes speaking/writing directly or indirectly, sometimes (un)consciously adopting modes of speaking and writing representative of other Discourses, as if they were changing the **rules of the game**. Now, we *could* see this heterogeneity as purely accidental, as entirely a matter of personal and idiosyncratic creative style. However, if we want to hold onto the connections between the micro and the macro, and the connections between discursive practices and social/institutional

practices, some more purposeful, strategic and explanatory reasons need to be proposed.

What we can say is that it is often the case within a social or workplace institution that there are varying and often competing views on the nature, purposes, allowable and disallowed practices of that given institution, and their Discourses, and how these are realised in actual texts. (Note that we will be exploring this further in Theme 2.) For example, not all teachers believe the same things about the practices of teaching, nor do nurses, nor do workplace managers, nor do team-leaders, nor do doctors or lawyers. They often have quite distinct and even opposing views. It may be the case, for example, when a lawyer interviews a client, that he or she may decide to adopt for the moment a non-lawyer-like discourse, for a particular strategic purpose. It may be that when a new institutional practice arises, say for example, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) practitioners may move between a more counselling and negotiative form of discourse, redolent of the Discourse of Counselling and a more lawyer-like mode of discourse, more related to the adjudicatory Discourse of the court. These views may be given out as (or imagined to be) personal, but a more explanatory view would see them as deriving from quite distinct conceptions of the profession or the job, the work, and its purposes, quite different views of the nature and goals of the social or workplace institution of which they are all, severally and in different ways, **members,** and quite different views of what constitute **permissible or impermissible actions**.

Further, if these institutions are as discursively complex, heterogeneous and interdiscursive as we are saying they are, then the recruitment of members into these institutions will be similarly complex and, more than likely, problematic. New, hybridised, distinctive and competing Discourses will have to be discerned and negotiated alongside the apprenticeship into particular (and correspondingly complex, hybridised and quite possibly competing) social practices. (Note that we will be discussing this further in Theme 2.) Understanding this discursive and social complexity will make it relevant to ask yourself some further questions.

Reflection task 1.2

In relation to your own workplace/institution, consider the following questions:

- What power relations in your workplace/institution shape these different Discourses? For example: The authority of the organisation as expressed through its regulations on workers' conduct.
- What pressures are there on members to produce and interpret different Discourses in particular ways? For example: Pressure from peers, pressure from clients or patients.
- What struggles are there in the workplace/institution which are mirrored in (and reproduced and maintained) and through these Discourses? For example: Struggles over alternative understanding of the profession or the job or the particular task; for example between more traditional versus progressive practices.
- To what extent do you think that increasing complexities in the practices of the workplace/institution become realised in a parallel complexity and heterogeneity of members' Discourses?

1.3 Modelling the Description, Interpretation, and Explanation of Discourse, Participants, Actions and Texts

We introduce here (in Fig. 1.2) a model (Crichton 2004) which looks at the relationship between features of the complex web of discourse and Discourses that we are engaged in **describing** (i.e. setting down what people say or write or display), **interpreting** (i.e. working out the meaning of what people say or write or display, or what they themselves mean) and **explaining** (i.e. offering some explanation why people write or say or display what they do, or don't write or say or display what they don't, in relation to the institutions/organisations/professions they are members of and whose history, principles, ideologies their actions reflect). In the model we see a distinction being drawn between language as **text** (and note by 'text' here we mean all kinds of semiotic coding, not just written

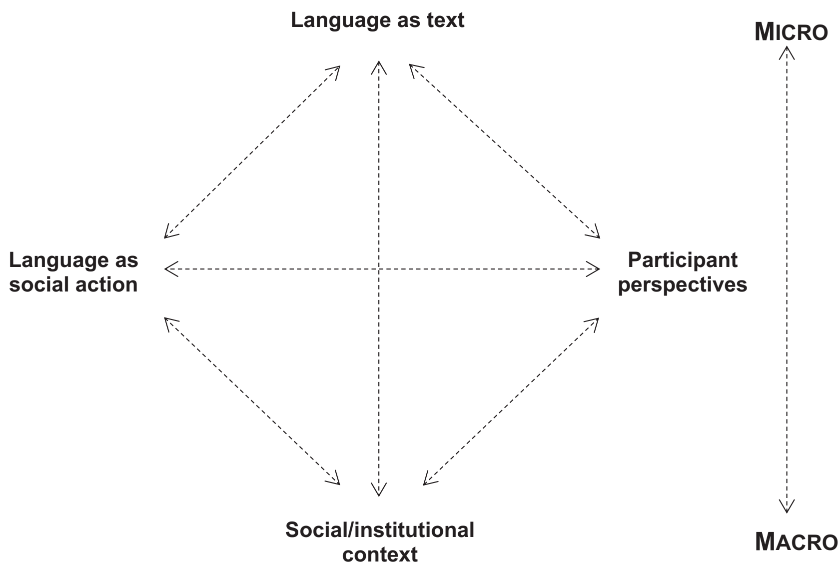

Fig. 1.2 Perspectives of discourse (Crichton 2004: 25)

texts, and this constitutes the micro scale—in effect, the smallest scale of focus), language as **social action** (see the earlier discussion in this Introduction), the **socio/institutional context** (the macro scale—in effect, the largest scale of focus), and the introduction of the **participant perspectives**, that is the views, narrative accounts and responses of those participants engaged in the interaction. The model is intended not so much to answer questions as to provoke them. Above all, how are we to understand these different perspectives and the relations among them? For the moment, bear the model in mind as a way of mapping the ground covered in Part I, of locating the questions, themes, concepts and issues discussed, and of considering what questions remain for you unanswered. We aim to take these up in Part II when we will return to a more complex version of this model.

This concludes our Introduction and orientation to Part I of this book, and we now turn to our first Theme, 'Discourses on discourse', which we present and discuss in Chap. 2. In the accompanying portraits of key scholars associated with this first Theme (i.e. Bourdieu, Foucault and

Habermas) we show how some of their key constructs have informed the discussions in this Theme, and indicate their central relevance to the study of Discourse.

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Part I

Concepts and Issues

Setting the Agenda

2. Discourses on Discourse
3. Who's Involved in Discourse?

The Agenda in Context and in Action

4. What Is It That's Going on Here?
5. How Do You Know That?
6. Why That Now?
7. What Actions Are Being Taken Here, by Whom and Why?

Going Beyond the Discourse Agenda

8. How Do Discourse and Social Change Drive Each Other?

2

Discourses on Discourse

In this chapter we discuss principles and practices concerning discourse, and the model of describing, interpreting and explaining discourse. We draw especially on the work of Bourdieu, Foucault and Habermas to inform our understanding.

Summary of Concepts

Metaphors of discourse: the concepts of 'field, market, game', and 'habitus' and 'capital' (Bourdieu); 'statements', 'utterances', 'discursive formations' and 'orders of discourse' (Foucault); 'public' versus 'private' discourses and the notion of '(dis)ordered communication' (Habermas); tools and means in discourse analysis; *communities of practice* and exploring *critical moments* in *crucial sites*

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C.N. Candlin et al., *Exploring Discourse in Context and in Action*,
Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-31506-9_2

2.1 Discourse Practices and Social Practices

Quote 2.1 Sarangi and Coulthard on discourse as social practice

When it comes to linking micro discourse analysis with socio-political structures, we need to see discourse not as a unit beyond the sentence, but as a social practice.

(Sarangi and Coulthard 2000: pxxii)

This connection between social practices and discourse practices is at the heart of this book and has already been heralded in the discussions in the Introduction. Indeed, we make the point there that social practices are to a degree enacted by particular discourses. In this chapter we propose to explore further what is implied by this social practice/discursive practice interconnection, and to draw on the literature and Key Scholar Portraits to help us in this process.

A good way to start is to focus on the location of the practices, what we can refer to as the *sites* in which these practices take place. Not surprisingly, then, sites are where most discourse analysis begins. Indeed, a good motto here might be: 'Focus on the site!' (In Part II of this book, the site is precisely the point of departure we take for any prospective research in the field of discourse studies.)

Concept 2.1 Sites of engagement

Sites (or, as we will term them, *sites of engagement*, following Scollon (1998)) are where we should address our attention for the exploration and explanation of the significance of communication as a means by which participants engage in a range of social practices, all of which are discoursed in particular ways. Here are some of the social practices in which people engage and which they perform by means of discourse:

- **Claim** various roles and identity(ies)
- **Signal** membership of particular groups
- **Manage** relationships with other participants in interactions
- **Accomplish** work and social tasks and purposes

- **Define** what is meant by what they are doing, perhaps 'leisure', perhaps 'work', perhaps 'being friendly' and so on
- **Determine** their purposes, roles and authorities, and those of others with whom they are interacting (in whatever modes)

Crucially, in performing these practices through discourse participants reveal and maintain their beliefs, values and ideologies in relation to all these practices. Therefore, to understand these social practices, the discourses associated with them and the values/beliefs/ideologies which underpin them, we need to make use of a number of key interrelated concepts:

- Communities of practice
- (Crucial) sites and (critical) moments
- Participants and actors
- Activity types and events
- Actions, discourse types and strategies

In this chapter we will focus on the first two sets of these concepts, leaving the remaining three for Chap. 3 and the discussions of Theme 2.

As a reminder of the Introduction, here is a relevant quotation from Norman Fairclough:

Quote 2.2 Fairclough on texts, social structures and settings

[The] analysis of texts should not be artificially isolated from analysis of institutional and discoursal practices within which texts are embedded… There is also a need to bring together critical discourse analysis of discursive events with ethnographic analysis of social structures and settings, in the search for what some have called a critical ethnography.

(Fairclough 1995: 9–10)

2.2 Metaphors and Concepts for Discourse Analysis

Before we engage with the concepts of communities of practice, crucial sites and critical moments, there are a number of metaphors and concepts that we need to explore.

2.2.1 Bourdieu's Concepts

The first set of concepts we wish to highlight in this chapter are drawn from the work of Pierre Bourdieu (see the *Key Scholar Portrait* below) and include his key terms of *habitus*, *capital*, *market*, *field* and *game*.

Concept 2.2 What does Bourdieu mean by *habitus*?

Quote 2.3 Bourdieu defines *habitus*

[H]abitus is a system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively "regulated" and "regular" without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor.

(Bourdieu 1972/1977: 72)

Randal Johnson in his edited book of Bourdieu's writings *The Field of Cultural Production* (Polity Press) offers the following gloss on Bourdieu's definition:

Quote 2.4 Johnson on Bourdieu's definition of *habitus*

[T]he habitus is sometimes described as "the feel for the game", a "practical sense" (*sens practique*) that inclines agents to act and react in specific situations in a manner that is not always calculated and that is not simply a question of conscious obedience to rules. Rather, it is a set of dispositions that generates practices and perceptions. The habitus is the result of a long process of inculcation, beginning in early childhood, which becomes a "second sense" or a second nature. According to Bourdieu's definition, the dispositions represented by the habitus are "durable" in that they last through an agent's lifetime. They are "transposable" in that they may generate practices in multiple and diverse fields of activity, and they are "structured structures"; in that they inevitably incorporate the objective social conditions of their inculcation.

(Johnson 1993: 5)

Applying the concept of *habitus* is a way of enabling us to 'go beyond the information given' in reading any text, in interpreting any spoken utterances, explaining any messages in whatever modality. In whatever site we are, and in whatever interaction, for Bourdieu our interpretation of the 'goings on' in that site, among those participants, in relation to this or that text, is always filtered through our *habitus*—our (ever-extending) store of experiences, interpretations, conventions.

Reflection task 2.1

Imagine a context where you are interacting with someone you know well (or someone you don't know well) in a site which is familiar (or unfamiliar): what aspects of your *habitus* do you find yourself calling on to make sense of what is going on?

Concept 2.3 What does Bourdieu mean by *field*, *market* and *game*?

As we have insisted so far, participants (or agents) do not act in a vacuum, but in *concrete social situations* which are marked by *durable social conventions* and *located in specific sites*. Bourdieu's term for these 'social situations' is what he called a 'champ' (field). As we say in our Key Portrait (following Thompson (1991)), what we do, our practices, arises from an interaction between our *habitus* and the social context of our interaction, namely, what Bourdieu refers to as 'field'.

It is worth noting here that Bourdieu uses the three terms *field*, *market, game* often interchangeably, although we can see that the terms do have different connotations: for example 'field' implies *a social space* in which actions, practices and discourses take place in the context of interacting with the different *habitus* of the participants (agents); the property of a field is what he terms its 'market' (as in his paper 'The Linguistic Market'), suggesting that what is being enacted in this 'field' is the exchange of what Goffman (see Theme 3) calls 'goods' (which can be messages, meanings beliefs, attitudes, assumptions, speech acts) and which 'goods' have distinct *values* according to the *capital* of the agents in the interaction in the social context (or *field*); finally, the term 'game' implies not only that there is some conventionality—some 'rules' of the game, but also that in the game the players (actors, agents) may take *risks* or may *hedge* against risk in seeking to win or (not) lose.

Quote 2.5 Johnson on field, market and game

[A] field or market may be seen as a structured space of positions in which the positions and their interrelations are determined by the distribution of different types of "capital"…. all individuals, whatever their chance of success will share in certain fundamental presuppositions. All participants must believe in the game that they are playing, and the value of what is at stake in the struggles they are waging.

(Johnson 1993: 14)

In other words, participants (agents) struggle over *capital* (see below) in the context of particular *fields* and in interaction with the background of their *habitus*. Participants will have different aims, objectives, resources, strategies, discourses and discursive competences. What holds these participants together are shared presuppositions.

Reflection task 2.2

Imagine a field with which you are familiar, and think about a particular interaction in this field and particular participants (agents) involved in the interaction. For example, you might imagine the position of the interpreter (as an agent) in the field of the courtroom, and where the interpreter has to translate for the judge or magistrate who does not speak the language of the witness (or the accused) what the witness or the accused is trying to articulate in respect of his/her actions.

What is the nature of this field?
What is its nature as a marketplace?
What is its nature as a game?
What are the values that are being struggled over?
What roles would the distinctive habitus of the interpreter, the judge/magistrate, the witness/accused play in the conduct of the engagement of the agents in the interactions in this field?

Concept 2.4 What does Bourdieu mean by *capital*?

As we indicate in our Key Scholar Portrait below, for Bourdieu, every participant in a field of interaction (or a market/game) has interests and these interests are bound up with the participants' awareness of the distribution of what he refers to as 'capital'. Bourdieu writes the following:

Quote 2.6 Bourdieu on capital

[T]he position of a given agent within the social space can thus be defined by the position he occupies in different fields, that is, in the distribution of the powers that are active within each of them. These are, principally, economic capital (in its different kinds), cultural capital and social capital, as well as symbolic capital, commonly called prestige, reputation, renown etc., which is the form in which the different forms of capital are perceived and recognised as legitimate.

(Bourdieu 1985: 724)

So we may differentiate the various forms of *capital* as follows:

Economic capital:	extent of economic and material wealth, assets
Cultural capital:	extent of cultural awareness, competencies, strategies, skills
Symbolic capital:	extent of accumulated prestige, honours and so on founded on personal knowledge/experience/expertise and their recognition by others

Why are such types of capital of interest to discourse analysis? Principally, because the expressions of such types of capital are often manifested through discursive practices and in particular because recourse to them enables us to gauge the relative significances of utterances (in whatever modality) as perceived and acted upon by the participants (agents) in the interaction in question. Entering any *field* (*marketplace, game*), one needs to have a minimum level of skill, in particular, according to Bourdieu, the linguistic (we would say *discursive*) skill to be a recognised player and to make an investment of one's capital through one's discourse.

So, the value we attribute to what others say (write/portray) (i.e. whether we believe it, it appears acceptable or not, it is or is not authoritative) depends on our (and their) assessment of the capital invested in that saying or writing in that interaction in that field or site. Thus one of the key challenges for discourse analysis is to elucidate which interests are at stake, drawing on the evidence of the discourse analysis, and to seek to determine what capital is in play.

Key Scholar Portrait: Pierre Bourdieu

The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) represents for discourse analysts the key figure connecting the worlds of language and social life. His extensive writings emerge from the central premise that language and social life are not only linked, but so intricately interconnected that to understand one requires an explanation, not only a description or an interpretation, of the other. If society is, as some suggest, a site of struggle and the exercise of and response to power, then it is through language that such struggles are made manifest, analysable, and to a degree, explicable. As John Thompson writes:

> *He [Bourdieu] portrays everyday linguistic exchanges as situated encounters between agents endowed with socially structured resources and competencies in such a way that every linguistic interaction, however personal and insignificant it may seem, bears traces of the social structure that it both expresses and helps to reproduce.* (Thompson 1991: 2)

As a consequence of this general position, it is clear that language (or discourse) for Bourdieu is not some separate and a priori system which can be analysed and in some sense 'applied' to social contexts and situations; language, like the social order it reflects and which it 'helps to reproduce', is a product of history and of that social order over time. Discourses of the present all have their own histories; they are the outcomes of struggles over forms and meanings. Digging into the discursive past is thus one way in which, like archaeology, we can reveal histories of social change, of social struggle, of social (and institutional) development. This is in part Bourdieu's project.

Discourse for Bourdieu is essentially connected to the concept of *performance*, and all performance is itself implicative of some institutionalised, conventionalised, endowed set of meanings, access to whose interpretation is itself a privileged matter. (It is worth noting here that as we shall see with other key figures in discourse analysis, this theatrical and dramaturgical metaphor is a pervasive one.) Privilege here implies authorisation and ratification of some persons rather than others, both in modes of uttering and modes of interpreting. To talk of *convention*, for Bourdieu, is essentially to talk of the social order. Words and utterances (discourses) are conventional in that they adhere to a particular imposition and acceptance (or not) of certain social phenomena.

Of greatest interest to discourse analysts, and one which reflects all of the preceding paragraph, is Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*. Thompson (1991: 12) refers to habitus as a 'set of dispositions' that guide us to behave, and use discourse in particular ways. Through the exercise of our habitus we are disposed to act, but also to perceive others' actions in cer-

tain ways. Habitus develops through processes of *inculcation*—that is our experiences from childhood onwards, very often mediated through discourse, lead us to behave in certain ways, to possess particular attitudes to others, to their behaviours and to their discourses. Habitus is both durable (i.e. it is hard to renege) and also, Bourdieu argues, *transposable* and *generative* (i.e. an experience in one domain or occasion leads to perceptions which we apply to other, distinctive, domain and circumstances). Our dispositions, our habitus, then, provide evidence of our socialisation and offer insights into the explainability of what we say and do. What we do, our practices, arise from an *interaction* between our habitus and the social context of our interaction, what Bourdieu refers to as the *field.* As Thompson (1991) writes:

> *A field or market may be seen as a structured space of positions in which the positions and their interrelations are determined by the distribution of different kinds of resources or "capital" … there are different forms of 'capital': not only "economic capital" in the strict sense (i.e. material wealth…) but also "cultural capital" (i.e. knowledge, skills … qualifications), "symbolic capital" (i.e. accumulated prestige or honour) and so on.* (Thompson 1991: 14)

Fields are the sites of contests over capital, and, centrally important for discourse analysis, such capital and such struggles are regularly realised through discourse. How we address the other, how we interact, what knowledge we display, what questions we ask, what claims we make, what evidences we proffer, all are discoursed and through such discourse the nature of the marketplace, the field, and the relevant aspects of capital are discernible. Indeed, the field or marketplace is the site where such capital-infused discourse is appraised and given value, where such discourses are the tools of struggle between different interpretations, or meaning, of authority, of role. Each use of discourse is valued by particular marketplaces or fields—some highly rated, some less so, some as appropriate, others as inappropriate. Our linguistic capital is the communicative resource we have available to gauge the demands of the marketplace and its system of value. If we have a large resource, we can 'dominate' the market, or change its rates of exchange (in essence its accepted meanings); if our resource is less, we are correspondingly impoverished, not only in modes and extent of expressibility but also in interpretability.

Everyone in this field or market is seen by Bourdieu to have interests. These interests (maybe even investments) are *inscribed* in our discourses, and it is one of the tasks of discourse analysts to elucidate which inter-

(continued)

Key Scholar Portrait: Pierre Bourdieu (continued)

ests are at stake, drawing on the evidence of the discourse of the participants (understood in the manner Bourdieu defines language and discourse in paragraph one above). What people do (say, mean, act)—their social practices—are thus linked to what interests people have—and such social practices are almost always discoursed in some modality or another, or a mix of them. Also, to recall, what we practise is a concomitant of our habitus, our *predisposition* to act in such and such a way. Our freedom of discursive manoeuvre (in performance and interpretation) is to that degree circumscribed—not determined entirely, of course, but constrained. This is true not only in speech, but even more obviously, perhaps, in *how* we write and interpret what is written. Both are constrained by our habitus but also by the social conditions of the institutions (the marketplaces and fields) in which we choose to communicate.

It is for the above reasons, then, that Bourdieu occupies such a central position in any analysis of discourse in context and in action.

2.2.2 Foucault's Concepts

The second set of concepts we wish to highlight in this chapter, are drawn from the work of Michel Foucault (see the Key Scholar Portrait below), and include his key terms of *statements, utterances and discursive formations, and orders of discourse*. How are these three concepts interrelated in Foucault's conceptions, and what is their significance for discourse analysis?

Concept 2.5 Foucault's 'statement'

Foucault's concept of the *statement* lies at the basis of his approach to discourse. In part the concept differentiates itself from 'sentence', in that it is not at all a unit of grammar but rather a unit of discourse as part of situated interaction—he refers to it as an *énoncé* (enunciation) which suggests a view of statement as a dynamic 'event' that is related to a particular system (in his terms). In his book *The Archaeology of Knowledge* he makes the following comment (in the English translation):

Quote 2.7 Foucault on statements and the archive

Instead of seeing … lines of words that translate invisible characters' thoughts that were formed on some other time and place, we have the density of discursive practices, systems that establish statements as events (with their own conditions and domain of appearance) and things (with their own possibility and field of use). They are all these systems of statements (whether events or things) that I propose to call archive.

(Foucault 1969/1972: 128)

The idea of a text as an event is something that we will return to in Chap. 3 (Theme 2), but for now what we can do is to make the connection between Foucault's *statement* and the social context of its uttering, in terms of its placement within a field, its association with participants and interactions, and, above all for Foucault, with the history of such statements in the archive to which discourse analysis provides, in part, an archaeological inquiry.

As in archaeology, *statements* as findings do not occur as isolated found objects but can serve as clues to a relationship between utterances (texts) and social institutions and social processes, with participants and interactions, which in turn are or have been subject to systems of norms and behaviours. Statements *position* participants both as speakers and hearers in particular ways and they do so by means of the various discursive practices associated with the field (in Bourdieu's terms). Thus teaching positions teachers as teachers and students as students; in multilingual courtrooms, judges position interpreters as having particular roles (and not others).

Quote 2.8 Foucault's 'archaeology of knowledge'

If, in clinical discourse the doctor is in turn the sovereign direct questioner, the observing eye, the touching finger, the organ that deciphers signs, the point at which previously formulated descriptions are integrated, the laboratory technician, it is because a whole group of relations is involved (Foucault 1969/1972: 53) … between a number of distinct elements, some of which concerned the status of doctors, others the institutional and technical site [hospital, laboratory, private practice, etc.] from which they spoke, others their position as subjects perceiving, observing, describing, teaching etc.

(Foucault 1969/1972: 59)

Again as in archaeology, it is the case for Foucault that the positioning statements are not isolated but revelatory of the practice of discourse where they interconnect with other statements. It is this interconnected system that Foucault refers to as a *discursive formation*. At the same time we should be wary of regarding the discursive formation as merely a corpus of related utterances (texts or statements) associated with a particular Discourse. For Foucault, the discursive formation implies on the one hand both performance and interpretation, and on the other the relationship between discursive practices and the social practices, what participants say/write and what they do.

What does Foucault mean by 'orders of discourse'? The following quotation from Fairclough (1995) is helpful here:

Quote 2.9 Fairclough on Foucault's 'orders of discourse'

I have adopted the concept of order of discourse [what we have called Discourse in this book] from Foucault (1981) [*l'ordre du discours*] to refer to the ordered set of discursive practices associated with a particular social domain or institution … and boundaries and relationships between them. Discursive practices may be relatively strongly or relatively weakly demarcated—they may be in various sorts of relationship… They may be in the complementary sort of relationship … and may be in relationships of opposition … Boundaries between and within orders of discourse are constantly shifting and change in orders of discourse is itself part of sociocultural change.

(Fairclough 1995: 12–13)

The *order of discourse* is then (citing Fairclough 1992: 43) 'the totality of discursive practices within an institution or society, and the relationships between them'.

It is also, the social practices of such an institution, the interactions between its participants (agents), the 'goods' that are valued and exchanged, including the interpretations that are struggled over (following Bourdieu) within that institution. In a real sense, and one we adopt in this book, is that Discourse Analysis is the descriptive, interpretive and explanatory study of orders of discourse.

Reflection task 2.3

Think about a particular workplace, or a particular leisure or social encounter with which you are familiar.

What kinds of social practices can you identify among the participants?

How might these be related to particular discursive practices (in Fairclough's sense above)?

What *orders of discourse* (sets of discursive practices) can you identify? How strongly or weakly marked out are they? What sorts of relationship appear to exist between them?

Key Scholar Portrait: Michel Foucault

The French sociologist, philosopher and critical theorist Michel Foucault (1926–1984) continues to exercise a pervasive influence on those concerned with discourse analysis. This is not on account of any specific and detailed engagement with the analysis of discourse per se, since dealing with data in our sense was not Foucault's project, although as we shall see here (and in the themes, topics and questions of this book), his constructs have proved extraordinarily productive in assisting us in the interpretation, and in particular the social and historical explanation, of such discourse data. Rather, his influence for us derives principally from his reliance on language and metalanguage, and in particular metaphor, in his deconstruction of social theory and principle, and as a basis for understanding the human sciences, including, of course, applied linguistics and discourse analysis. Language as an object of study or as a mediating means for the study of institutions is a central theme in Foucault's work. Language in his formulation is to be explored historically as well as synchronically, and as a means of providing evidence for shifts in human relationships within institutions. In his early book *The Order of Things* he writes:

> *What is language? What is a sign? What is unspoken in the world, in our gestures, in the whole enigmatic heraldry of our behaviour, our dreams, our sicknesses—does all that speak, and if so, in what language and in obedience to what grammar? Is everything significant, and, if not, what is, and for whom, and in accordance with what rules? What relation is there between language and being, and is it really to being that language is always addressed—at least, language that speaks truly?* (Foucault 1970: 306, cited in Sarangi 2001: 44)

We can discern here a number of constructs of central importance to discourse analysis and to the themes of our book: the idea of multimodality, the importance of convention, the key focus on hermeneutics and interpretation, the

(continued)

Key Scholar Portrait: Michel Foucault (continued)

implication of the link between language and action, and the importance of exploring 'significance'. In the same book he writes, as if to emphasise the link between talk and action: '… the verb is the indispensable condition for all discourse' (1970: 94). As Sarangi comments (2001: 45), 'Discourse, not expression, becomes the essence of language'. What human beings can do, or do by saying, is subject to the conventions of discourse, and these conventions are institutionally and historically grounded.

It is this that lies at the heart of Foucault's characterisation of the 'statement' (*énoncé*) as the key construct in what we would call discourse analysis. *Statement* here refers to what may be said or not said, what may be meant or not meant, and how in certain circumstances what people say may be regarded as true or false. Statements are thus intimately linked with role, and with identity.

It would be wrong, however, to regard the relevance of Foucault for discourse analysis only because of his commitment to the pragmatics of the social. *Statements* do not exist in isolation. Indeed, their force comes most from their accumulation in what Foucault calls 'discursive formations'.

As he writes in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*:

> *Of course discourses are composed of signs, but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this* more *that renders them irreducible to the language (langue) and to speech. It is this 'more' that we must reveal and describe.* (Foucault 1972: 49, cited in Sarangi 2001: 49)

It is this 'more' that is of greatest concern for discourse analysts. What does it imply? Firstly, as we say above, *statements* are clustered and interlinked in *discursive formations*. These *discursive formations* are themselves part of a larger and more comprehensive construct—perhaps the best known (and most used) of Foucault's formulations among discourse analysts—which he refers to as *l'ordre du discours* ('the order of discourse'). Such a construct not only encompasses *statements* and clusters of *statements* but the entire system of ideological positions, beliefs, values, as well as behaviours and actions, all of which are conventionalised by an accretion over time into permissible and impermissible behaviours (here meaning both physical actions and interpretations).

It is this grander construct on which Fairclough (as we see in Theme 7 and in the outline in Chap. 1 of this book) draws in his own presentation of the relationship between discursive practices and social practices. Thus when we talk of *clinical discourse* (or capital D Discourse) in Gee et al. (1996)'s terms (see Introduction), or *courtroom discourse*, we are drawing on Foucault's construct of the 'order of discourse'.

Note also—and the title of his book *The Archaeology of Knowledge* makes this explicit—how Foucault always includes an historical dimension

to his social analysis. Instances of *statements* always have a history of conventional meanings and interpretations at that and other times with which contemporary users and interpreters then and now have to take account. The 'order of discourse' is in no way static (as Foucault demonstrates in his study of the changing discourses of medicine in his classic book *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963)) or a socially neutral or necessarily benign construct—indeed the construct is fundamentally bound up with Foucault's abiding engagement with power and control within institutions. For him, such exercise of power and social control is in large measure realised through discourse and the use and meanings of language. Here we can see how from the perspective of a capital D interpretation of Discourse, power and authority are exercised through sanctioned categorisations and classifications, all of which are conveyed through the means of language: determining who people are, what they may or may not do, how they should or should not use discourse.

2.2.3 Habermas's Concepts

The third set of concepts we wish to highlight in this chapter are drawn from the work of Jurgen Habermas (see the Key Scholar Portrait below) and include his key terms of 'public' versus 'private' discourses and the notion of '(dis)ordered' (or 'distorted') communication. What is the significance for the discourse analyst of Habermas's distinction between public and private discourses?

Concept 2.6 Habermas's 'public' versus 'private' discourses

Habermas's distinction derives from his historical and social analysis concerning the relationships between the 'private sphere' of the *person* and the 'public sphere' of institutions within which the *citizen* interacts. He argues that as society diversifies, the distinction, even among institutions, between those that are truly public and those that are private or semi-private (e.g. voluntary, locally organised groupings of persons) begins to 'break down'.

For example, a classic site where this distinction of Habermas can be seen to be relevant to the discourse analysis of professional encounters is that of the doctor–patient interaction. Mishler (1984), drawing on a data set of regular doctor–patient consultations, proposed that such interactions were characterised by distinctive *voices* of the doctor and patient.

Specifically, within the standard structure of such interactions, where doctors *elicit*, patients *respond* and doctors *assess the response,* he argued that such interactions revealed a contrast between what he called the 'voice of medicine' and the 'voice of the lifeworld'. As Atkinson (1995) points out, Mishler was *not* arguing that the voice of medicine was the property exclusively of the doctor, and that of the lifeworld that of the patient. Different speakers may share the same voice, or they may alternate voices. As Atkinson states:

Quote 2.10 Atkinson on 'voice' in professional discourse

Different voices distinguish contrasting orientations to the world and to the moral order. Voices articulate differing presuppositions concerning language and reality. They have different implications for avowals or attributions of agency and responsibility. Each voice realizes a particular relationship between the speaker and the world. Mishler's contrast between the voice of medicine and the voice of the lifeworld refers not just to the subject-matter of discourse but also its discursive organization.

(Atkinson 1995: 129)

This is not the place to reiterate Atkinson's commentary on Mishler, very interesting and revealing though it is. What is important from his account of his data is that these two worlds are not only distinctive in their discursive realisations, but the employment of each is interactionally complex. What the patient narrates (*lifeworld*) may in fact be significant as a voice of the *medical world* (as for example in the carrying out of a pharmaceutical regimen). Similarly, doctors may seek to adopt the discourse of the lifeworld for strategic purposes in a consultation.

Of course, such a bald distinction between one voice and another is belied by the richness of the data. As Habermas indicates, these voices are *interdiscursively* intermingled, and within each there may be a range of distinctive 'sub worlds'—for example among doctors, the *voice of science* or the *voice of therapy* or the *voice of experience.* As Atkinson (1995: 147) points out 'medical discourse does not articulate a single lifeworld'.

How can Habermas's concept of 'distorted communication' be relevant in analysing professional discourse?

Concept 2.7 Habermas's 'distorted communication'

Again, applying the concept to a specific site makes the concept clearer. There are two ways in which we can interpret the concept 'distorted'—on the one hand we can relate it to Habermas's adaptation of Weber's distinctions among different types of action (as indicated in Sarangi 2001):

- ***instrumental rational*** action (where cost-benefit analysis drives the action)
- ***value-rational action*** (where the goal is all-important)
- ***traditional (or norm bound) action*** (where social norms govern action**)**
- ***affective action*** (where feelings prompt action)

We associate with each of these types of action particular types of 'communicative action'.

So, we might expect that there would be *distinctive discursive realisations* of each of the above:

- **'instrumental action'** might be associated with a discourse which was depersonalised, experimental;
- **'value-rational action'** on the other hand might be associated with a discourse which was focused on the direct, purposeful achievement of particular communicative goals;
- **'traditional action'** might be associated with a discourse which followed the conventional discursive norms of a particular interaction in a particular site;
- **'affective action'** might be characterised by the discourse of emotion, of feelings, of mutuality.

On such an analysis one could match types of action with types of discourse and where, as it were, the 'wrong' or the 'inappropriate' discourse was related to the 'wrong' action, there would be 'distortion'.

An alternative interpretation (and one exemplified in the psychotherapy interactions in Sarangi (2001)) is where, for particular site- and interaction-specific reasons, what appears perhaps to be 'conversational'

talk has to be understood as 'therapeutic talk (i.e. 'distorted' in Habermas's sense in that it really is not conversational in nature at all in its purposes or indeed its forms).

This indeterminacy between discourses is very prevalent, as Fairclough and others have pointed out, and we shall discuss it later in the book under the topic of *interdiscursivity.* As a further example, S. Candlin (2008)'s exploration of therapeutic communication is in part built around the distinction the author makes between communication which is *therapeutic* in nature and effect, and 'ordinary conversation', with no such professional purpose, thus providing a practical application of Habermas's concepts.

Key Scholar Portrait: Jurgen Habermas

Jurgen Habermas (born in 1929) continues to influence work in discourse analysis and its applications from his lifelong engagement in issues of language, philosophy, critical social theory and political economy, especially, perhaps, because of his relevance to themes of critical discourse analysis (see Theme 7 in this book), and to the much less known influence he exercised in the 1970s and early 1980s on the development of 'communicatively oriented' curricula on the teaching of the mother tongue in German (and by extension, foreign languages) (*CNC personal experience*). Indeed it continues to be of interest, even now, how Habermas's engagement with a critical perspective on communicative action in the classroom (published in a professional educational journal *Die deutsche Schule*), encouraged an innovative curriculum where the enhancing of learners' communicative ability was the major means whereby teachers (and learners) could engineer greater equality in meaning-making in the classroom through a process of validating multiple interpretations of discourse. Through developing and drawing on our communicative ability we can enhance understanding (*Verstaendigung*) and work towards consensus (*Einverstaendnis*).

More directly in terms of discourse, Habermas's work matches that of American philosopher Paul Grice in terms of focusing on interpreting the presuppositions that lie behind utterances, assuming that co-participants start from the premise that what each other says is true, meant sincerely and is normatively appropriate. Where such a premise is found in the context of interaction to be false or its conditions infringed, interactional communicative 'work' has to be undertaken to determine what the presuppositions would have to be for the utterance to conform to the premise. Hence Habermas's interest in what he refers to as 'distorted communication'. We can see here not only links to pragmatics but also the interactional sociolinguistic analysis of Gumperz (see Theme 4) in organisational and institutional contexts and the focus on ethnomethodology and conver-

sation analysis in general (see Theme 5). The following quotation, cited from an interview with Habermas, is relevant:

> *(Habermas is not) 'saying that people ought to act communicatively, but that they must … when parents educate their children, when living generations appropriate the knowledge handed down by their predecessors, when individuals cooperate—i.e. get on with one another without a costly use of force—they must act communicatively. There are elemental social functions which can only be satisfied by means of communication.'* (Outhwaite 1996: 14)

We can trace here certain (though unstated) connections with Bourdieu's focus on interaction and the inseparability of discourse and the social order but also the much more acknowledged connections between Foucault's and Habermas's views on the linkages between power, authority and discourse, where discourse is, as Outhwaite (1996: 20) states, 'rigged in advance by inequalities of power and knowledge'. Indeed, one can see here a more general and consistent reflection of the educational example with which this Portrait began.

As Sarangi (2001: 37) summarises: 'Habermas is primarily concerned with the theorisation of the language-action relationship, and the extent to which communication (as symbolic interaction) is central to the evolution of society'. However, from the perspective of a discourse theory we would have to say that Habermas's reliance on speech acts (Austin, Searle) is more related to pragmatic theory and the study of performative utterances as bringing about action (see Austin's concern for the conditions under which a 'promise' can be held to be a 'promise') than it is to discourse as a theory concerned with interaction. Nonetheless Habermas's concern for the relationship between communicative ability (i.e. the deployment of strategy) is a dynamic one and one might say that there is no 'in principle' reason why one cannot make a connection between Habermas's theory and a theory of interaction. Moreover, Habermas's interpretation of 'communicative competence' and the 'ideal speech situation' is a much-used heuristic by discourse analysts in determining 'what is going on' in distinctive, non-ideal and 'distorted' communicative events.

Broadening our discussion of the relevance of Habermas to studies in discourse analysis, if we examine research studies into doctor–patient communication, for example, we find a consistent reliance on the key distinction Habermas makes between the *private* and the *public* spheres. His argument is that we need to always make a distinction between the lifeworld of the private person and the public, in some sense, professional or official world of either that person or of others with whom that private person engages. Here Mishler's formulation of the struggles in medical consultations between the private discourse world of the patient and the public, professional dis-

(continued)

Key Scholar Portrait: Jurgen Habermas (continued)

course world of the medical practitioner is very relevant. Mishler shows how the essentially narrational and relational discourse of the patient, telling stories of experience, may often be at odds with the 'objective' professionally focused discourse of the doctor, and how such mismatches (or 'distortions' in Habermas's sense) can impact on action.

We may sense here the struggles between contesting 'orders of discourse' as set out in Foucault or Fairclough but here within the theory of communicative action advanced by Habermas where one's communicative ability is the means by which such distortions and such contestations can be brought to understanding, and possibly to consensus, given the potential for mutuality inherent in Habermas's position.

2.2.4 Some Further Concepts

The final set of concepts we wish to highlight in this chapter are 'communities of practice', 'crucial sites (of engagement)' and 'critical moments'.

Concept 2.8 Communities of practice

Lave and Wenger, in their study of access to membership of organisations and participation in them, offer the following definition:

Quote 2.11 Lave and Wenger define 'community of practice'

[A] community of practice is a set of relations among persons, activity and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice.

(Lave and Wenger 1991: 98)

Scollon expands on this:

Quote 2.12 Scollon on community of practice

[A] community of practice is a group of people whom over a period of time share some set of social practices geared towards some common purpose … everyone is always multiply membered in various communities of practice.

(Scollon 1998: 13)

The term 'community of practice' thus implies a configuration of beliefs, practices and 'orders of discourse' to which members display allegiance in varying degrees of peripherality or centrality. Membership of such communities of practice is a powerful designator of members' identities. Any organisation may be said to accommodate a number of such communities of practice. We shall revisit the concept of community of practice in Chap. 3.

Concept 2.9 Crucial sites (of engagement) and critical moments

Characteristic of these communities of practice (their social practices, discourses and texts) are a number of what Scollon has called sites of engagement:

Quote 2.13 Scollon on sites of engagement

[T]he site of engagement is not just the neutral context, setting or scene within which mediated action takes place. The site of engagement is the window opened through the intersection of social practices in which participants may appropriate text for mediated action.

(Scollon 1998: 11)

Sites can be interpreted physically as places or locations but they can also be interpreted *dramaturgically* as *stages* for particular practices. Such staged sites typically invoke particular discourses, whose scripts (*texts*) are realised by identified and purposeful 'actors'. Sites are thus not just seen as places but rather as windows into what people think, why they behave as they behave and as moments in action. Through their discourses and their texts, sites can be seen as records of activity. Some of these sites are what Candlin (1987, 2000a) calls *crucial sites*:

Quote 2.14 Candlin on crucial sites

In any such community of practice, there will be identified, variously by particular people and at particular times and places, certain encounters which are recognisably problematic and may be highly charged, where persons' positions, identities, abilities and face are placed on the line.

(Candlin 1987, plenary talk)

Within these crucial sites participants can identify certain *critical moments* (Candlin 1987, 2000b), that is, those moments within the processes and practices of a crucial site of engagement in which the participants identify and orient to the occurrence (or the potential occurrence) of contradictions arising among conflicting orders of discourse (see here Habermas on *(dis)ordered communication*). Such critical moments may be variously mediated and they may involve a range of modes and types of textualisation. They are moments to be engaged with and, where possible resolved in some way, and moments which pose often a considerable challenge to the communicative resources of the participants. Some examples of such critical moments might be having to:

- Discipline an employee
- Carry out a staff appraisal
- Break bad news to a patient
- Make a possibly life-threatening decision
- Admit to failure in some task
- Discuss intimate matters with a friend
- Offer condolences on a death of someone you know

Reflection task 2.4

Think about a particular 'crucial site' in your own experience—say, in your workplace or where you engage in leisure or more social activities, and note down your responses to the following questions:

Why is this site crucial?
(Then consider one or more critical moments in such a crucial site):

How is such a critical moment to be characterised?
What is the problem/challenge? Why is the moment critical?
Why does it arise?
Who is responsible (for it and for its resolution?)
How can it be resolved?
What communicative resources does resolving it require?

2.3 A Case Study

Thurlow, C. & Jaworski, A. (2006). The alchemy of the upwardly mobile: symbolic capital and the stylization of elites in frequent-flyer programmes. *Discourse & Society, 17*(1): 99–135.

In this study Thurlow and Jaworski investigate the discursive construction of elites as displayed in website documentation of frequent flyer programmes across a wide range of international airlines. The study examines the interplay between discourse and constructs of loyalty and elitism.

Rationale

Airline travel, once the preserve of the wealthy and famous, has become a commonplace event for millions of ordinary people around the world. As the reduced cost of air travel has attracted a multitude of travellers on modest incomes, airlines have had to compete fiercely to create and retain a market share of this global industry. One device they use to achieve these goals is known as the 'frequent flyer' programme. Such programmes claim to reward customer loyalty by offering extra services which are meant to enhance the travelling experience. These services include priority check-in; upgrades; and 'free' air travel upon redemption of a certain number of accumulated frequent flyer points. Thurlow and Jaworski unpack the language and discursive strategies used in the airlines' frequent flyer literature to expose how a kind of travel elitism from yesteryear has been resurrected in contemporary air travel. They show how Bourdieu's theory of capital, especially symbolic and cultural capital, is central to constructing and sustaining the notion of elitism in air travel.

Methods

Thurlow and Jaworski targeted the websites of 51 major international airlines that flew into London's Heathrow Airport. Although these particular airlines were not meant to be 'representative or comprehensive', the fact that Heathrow is one of the world's busiest international airports suggests that many if not all of the world's major airlines would be using its facilities. Each of the 51 airlines had a frequent flyer scheme, sometimes shared between different airlines,

resulting in a total of 46 different schemes covered by the data. The researchers downloaded 'any online documents that related to each airline's airmiles scheme, elite frequent-flyer schemes, airport lounge services, and other information about on-board/ticketing class configurations and Business Class services' (p. 105).

A critical discourse analytic (CDA) framework was chosen as the most suitable approach for data analysis because it enables an orientation 'less to the inner workings of texts and more to the distinctive "texturing" of social processes' (p. 106). In this regard, they cite Fairclough (1999: 79–80):

> Critical discourse analysis aims to provide a framework for systematically linking properties of discoursal interactions and texts with features of their social and cultural circumstances…. Particular discursive events … are described in terms of the potentially innovative ways in which they draw upon the orders of discourse which condition them.

CDA also functions well as a means of displaying how cultural and symbolic capital are constructed through discourse, which is central to understanding the thinking behind and purpose of frequent flyer marketing programmes. The analysis in this study was organised by way of 'a series of discursive processes by which the social practice of super-elite, frequent-flyer travel is textured: performative speech acts, lexicalization, synthetic personalization, status symbolism, exaggeration of difference, narrative detail, expressive utility, and aestheticization' (p. 106). See the original article for detailed analysis and results.

Contribution to theory–practice nexus

This case study shows very clearly how the elite frequent flyer is very largely a discursive fabrication by airline marketers. The elite frequent flyer is constructed through Bourdieu's notions of capital, in particular cultural capital (cultural awareness, competencies, strategies and skills) which lower status individuals seek in order to raise their status, and symbolic capital (prestige founded on personal knowledge, experience and expertise) which membership in a frequent flyer programme fabricates and signifies through its connotations of power, prestige and privilege.

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3

Who's Involved in Discourse?

Chapter 2 explored discourses on discourse and introduced some important concepts that enable us to better understand the richness and complexity of discourse. In this chapter we investigate participants, roles and behaviours, and focus on the processes of indexing, inscribing and accounting in discourse. The chapter is divided into two parts in order to capture two key aspects of the theme. In Part 1 we focus on participants, actors and locating performances; in Part 2 we turn our attention to what we call 'the discourse analytic program' (i.e. how best to understand and go about researching discourse where the focus is on participant interaction). Key scholars whose ideas feature in this theme are sociologists Erving Goffman and Harold Garfinkel.

Part 1

Summary of Concepts

What can and can't be asked/said/written/done in discourse? What and whose conventions govern discourse? Discourse participants as actors, agents and subjects: issues of coercive and collusive power. Events, activity types and genres; actions, discourse types and strategies

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C.N. Candlin et al., *Exploring Discourse in Context and in Action*,
Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-31506-9_3

3.1 Participants and Actors: The Interaction and the Institutional Order

In speaking about participants and actors in any situation or context, there are a number of matters that we need to keep in mind. At the outset, it is central to distinguish what we may call the *interaction order* (Goffman 1983) and the *institutional order* (Berger and Luckmann 1967).

Quote 3.1 Goffman on social interaction

Social interaction can be identified narrowly as that which uniquely transpires in social situations, that is, environments in which two or more individuals are physically in one another's response presence…. My concern over the years has been to promote acceptance of this face-to-face domain as an analytically viable one—a domain which might be titled, for want of any happy name, the interaction order—a domain whose preferred method of study is microanalysis.

(Goffman 1983: 2)

Quote 3.2 Berger and Luckmann on institutional order

The primary knowledge about the institutional order is knowledge on the pretheoretical level. It is the sum totals of "what everybody knows" about a social world, an assemblage of maxims, morals, proverbial nuggets of wisdom, values and beliefs, myths and so forth.

(Berger and Luckmann 1967: 65)

In other words, every institution has a body of transmitted knowledge providing appropriate rules of conduct for that institution.

There are three important points to note here. Firstly, there is a natural tendency to define participants by the physical persons who *are* in some sense *there* in any interaction. This is too limiting a definition. In understanding *who* are the actors in any event in a workplace, it may be more accurate and explanatory to widen this to include not only the persons who actually *are* co-present on a given occasion, but those who *might be*, but happen not to be, and those who *influence* (encourage or constrain)

those who are or might be present. Such influences might also be actual and current, or historical. Certainly their *presence* will be variously felt by those who are actually there.

As Levinson emphasises in his exploration of Goffman's concepts of participation roles:

Quote 3.3 Levinson on participant roles

We could take some participant roles as basic or primitive, and then define derivative participant roles in terms of the basic ones. For example, we could set up a simple scheme… in which we make a distinction between source and speaker (or utterer) noting that sources may not be participants in an utterance event; and a similar distinction between addressee and target at the receiving end (targets being not necessarily, but possibly, participants) Employing the same notion of participant we could say that an audience is constituted of those participants who are not producers (= sources of speakers) and not recipients (= addresses or targets).

(Levinson 1988: 170–1)

In Chap. 4 we show how Levinson (1988: 169) sets out Goffman's 1981 description of *participation management* in a framework of production and reception roles.

The second important point to note about participants is that we need to recall that they will not all be equally *valued*: they may be variously and to varying degrees full members of the communities of practice of the workplace, and their contributions to the discourse of that workplace will carry differential weight. As we saw in Chap. 2, participants carry with them (and augment or decrease) what Bourdieu called different amounts and types of *capital*—capital by virtue of their rank and position, capital by virtue of what they know, capital by virtue of the power of their persuasive arguments and so on.

Thirdly, participants are always *plural* in that they will manifest various *identities* in their actions and adopt distinctive roles. In talking about *hybridisation* (or *interdiscursivity*) in the context of workplace communication, Sarangi and Roberts (1999) suggest that professionals may display at least three distinguishable but overlapping identities in their work-related discourse: a *professional identity*, an *institutional identity* and a *(inter)personal identity.*

3.2 Discourses and Professional, Institutional and (Inter-)Personal Identities/Roles

Each of these three identities is connected with a particular Discourse, but they are not kept separate, but overlap. For example, when we talk of such people as participants we need to distinguish among a number of what have sometimes been called 'voices': between them as *members of a profession*—that is their talk as part of their professional work (*talking as a doctor, say)*; or as a *member of an institution*—that is how they refer to the rules and regulations of the workplace in which they work (*talking as an employee*); and as voices of their own personal experience—that is how they introduce personal narratives and anecdotes into their talk or writing (*talking as a fellow human being with shared experiences)*. For Sarangi and Roberts a *professional membership* is a kind of licenced belonging on the basis of skill and knowledge; while an *institutional membership* involves the potential exercise of authority, if you like, gatekeeping by virtue of that licence; and a *personal membership* is like saying that you and the person you are talking with belong to the same world of human experience.

Quote 3.4 Sarangi and Roberts on professional and institutional discourses

It is possible within a particular setting to distinguish between professional and institutional discourses. For example, a medical setting would include the clinician's narratives which work up patients as cases, the diagnosis of a medical problem in doctor-patient interaction, or the display of medical authority as evidence. The institutional discourses would include the gatekeeping functions of selection, training and assessment, the discourses around the management of hospitals, General Practitioners' surgery and so on, and the voices of the institution to represent itself to the outside world. However, having attempted to make these distinctions, it is the common elements, the interplay of the two, and above all the dominance of the institutional order over professional discourses which emerge from workplace studies.

(Sarangi and Roberts 1999: 16)

They go on to further distinguish personal identity talk:

Quote 3.5 Sarangi and Roberts on three modes of talk

[W]e would like to propose a distinction between three modes (of talk): (i) personal experience mode, (ii) professional mode and (iii) institutional mode. We go on to argue that all three modes of talk are present in the oral exam in different configurations but that the institutional mode dominates. What is involved is a transformation of the 'what' and 'how' of general practice (the professional mode) to the 'why' of medicine, health and illness (institutional mode)…. Atkinson (1995) finds plenty of evidence of doctors having recourse to voices of personal experience (as opposed to voices of textbook science) as part of their professional talk. For Atkinson, personal experience is utilised by professionals to deal with uncertainties and to back up claims and these can take the form of anecdotes, reminiscences, cumulative observations.

(Roberts and Sarangi 1999: 480)

Reflection task 3.1

Consider a typical encounter/interaction that you have experienced in your workplace.

To what extent can you recall whether, and to what degree, the encounter requires you to display these different memberships and different identities?

Can you identify these differences by changes in your particular Discourses and those of the persons with whom you were interacting?

As we indicate above, for Sarangi and Roberts, professional discourses will be characterised by particular Discourses and texts (including all manner of semiotic codings) of the profession concerned: becoming a professional is a matter of mastering its codes, its genres and activity types, its Discourses and its social practices. At the same time, it is these practices and the authority to act that they bestow on those licenced to exercise them, which constitute *institutionality* and which is realised through an institutional Discourse.

These practices are hedged about with conventions, they are regulated, and participation is a matter of a gradual and certified process

of *apprenticeship*. It is this apprenticeship which is featured in the work of anthropologist Jean Lave and social theorist Etienne Wenger, and by Wenger, particularly in the latter's discussions about *communities of practice* (see below). At the same time, participants always inject their own *personality* into what they say, write or do (see Theme #6). They employ their own personal Discourses. All three identities, and all three Discourses, are thus co-present and co-occurring. In this sense they are *hybridised* and display *interdiscursivity*. The problem is to determine in any given critical moment which identity(ies) is/are being highlighted and foregrounded, and, more especially, which identity(ies) would it be appropriate and effective to foreground.

In their words:

> The institutional order is held together not by particular forms of social organisation but by regulating discourses. (Sarangi and Roberts 1999: 16)

3.3 The 'Front' and 'Back' Stages of Social Life

In the discussion about participants so far we have perhaps over-estimated the individual and under-estimated the interactive engagement of the participants with others in particular sites and spaces. Goffman's classic book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) is centrally constructed around the concept of social life as drama, with participants as actors, who, as Goffman puts it may be 'taken in by their own act' or 'be cynical about it' or occupy points between the extremes. Goffman quotes Park (1950) in saying:

Quote 3.6 Park on role playing

It is probably no mere historical accident that the word person, in its first meaning, is a mask. It is rather a recognition of the fact that everyone is always and everywhere, more or less consciously, playing a role… It is in these roles that we know each other; it is in these roles that we know ourselves.

(Park 1950: 249)

The key to Goffman's analysis of *participant as actor* is this *dramaturgical* and *performance* metaphor. Following stagecraft, the activities of participants (actors) can be seen as taking part in the 'frontstage' of social life, or its 'backstage' (although following what we have said above about hybridisation and interdiscursivity, it will be seen that these distinctions and divisions become blurred in interaction).

Concept 3.1 What is understood by the 'frontstage'?

For Goffman this is 'the place where the performance is given' (1959: 110), and for our work we can interpret this as the frontline encounters between, say, doctors and patients, lawyers and witnesses, social workers and clients, teachers and pupils *inter alia*. Goffman defined a performance as 'all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion that serves to influence in any way any of the other participants' (1959: 26). The performances of these actors take place in the frontstage, as Sarangi and Roberts indicate:

Quote 3.7 Sarangi and Roberts on performance and professionals

[T]here is an element of the setpiece, a relatively bounded encounter with each interaction (frequently an interview) having the status of an analytic whole. To the professional, or certainly to the observer-analyst, this is where the 'real work' is done and where their professionalism is displayed.

(Sarangi and Roberts 1999: 21)

And again as Sarangi and Roberts point out, research studies have frequently focused on issues of asymmetry, different framings of the event, different ways of reasoning and displaying knowledge, and, especially, the kind of Discourses that such frontstage performances elicit from the actors involved.

Concept 3.2 What then of 'the backstage'?

Goffman offers this definition: 'a place, relative to a given performance, where the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course'. (1959: 114)

Note here that (although inexplicit) the *audience* is constantly present in the definition both of the performance and its location, and in terms

of interpreting the actions of the actors. The audience is thus very much a 'participant' (see Quote 3.3 above). What this suggests is that the idea that the 'true business at hand' is conducted entirely in the frontstage is inappropriate. Much business is conducted backstage (in the 'off' as it were).

What participants say 'about' each other, or about others, in the backstage is likely to be significant in terms of what is being said in frontstage performance. More importantly, perhaps a concentration on the frontstage works to bias our analytical interpretation of what the institutional practices of our professional actors are: we tend to focus on what is being 'done' out front, forgetting that there are backstage practices which are equally important to our understanding of professional action—for example, case conferences, informal corridor chats, signals and recognitions between professionals that may be non-verbal, yet professionally significant, records and documents that in a way also constitute 'participants' (both frontstage and backstage) in our understanding of interactions. So, backstage practices may be both *performatively distinctive* to the frontstage in terms of actual practices and also *discursively distinctive* in terms of discourses employed.

Frontstages *and* backstages

Goffman is clear that this distinction is by no means clear-cut; in fact, again as Sarangi and Roberts illustrate (1999: 23–4) the stages shift, often quickly and radically in any given encounter. Here the concept of bringing together all aspects of relevance in understanding an encounter is important: what people say and do in the frontstage is always to be understood in terms of backstage conventions, previous practices, previous interpretations of 'similar' events and what the importance is of insider knowledge. We shall return to this discussion in Theme #4.

Concept 3.3 Workplace practices: conventions and the idea of *(im)permissibles*

Inherent in the construct of 'performance' and 'stage' and 'actors' is that of the *scripts* within the terms of which actors perform their roles. Any frontstaged encounter is characterised in part by what is regarded as being *permissible* or *impermissible behaviour* on the part of the *ratified actors* on that stage. (In the same way, though perhaps less formally conventionalised, backstages also have their conventions: they may however

be less obviously regulated, but no less interesting to discourse analysts for that!)

We now present below the anonymised responses of one professional to the set of questions which (as you will recognise) are inherent in the discussions presented in Chap. 2. They will serve as a way of exemplifying how conventionality and the concept of (im)permissible behaviours and actions permeate our understanding of a particular set of institutional and organisational performances.

Example 3.1

What social practices are you expected to perform?

I work as a XX. This means that my professional life is nearly never taking place within my own organisation but rather within my projects, i.e. within the organisations of my clients. Hence the expected social practices as well as what I am allowed or not allowed to do depend not so much on my organisation but rather on what is expected in the projects.

Generally I am involved in all phases of the projects I work in, i.e. I (initially) prepare feasibility studies as well as as-is analysis. Based on these I prepare conceptual designs and discuss the goals, constraints, risks and benefits of the proposed solutions with my customers. Furthermore I am in charge of the actual implementation of the system, the documentation of both system configuration as well as end-user manuals and I support my clients after they 'go-live'. Training forms a permanent part of my activities.

What social practices are relevant for XX consultants?

Informing (i.e. explaining to the client how XX works);
Advising (i.e. how to implement and use the system best);
Translating (i.e. transferring the client's information into XX terminology and vice versa);
Mediating (i.e. bridging potential communicative gaps on the client's side);
Counselling (i.e. soothing anxieties, which frequently arise with the implementation of XX changes);
Training (i.e. show user how to use the system)

What social practices are you allowed (or not allowed) to perform?

I am **not** *allowed to:*

- *Disclose confidential data;*
- *Give the clients' employees instructions/directions (as consultants we do not have direct disciplinary command);*

- *Lose my 'professional distance' and to side with a particular party of the client 'out of sympathy';*
- *Act emotionally in my projects;*
- *Keep my XX knowledge to myself;*
- *Discriminate in any form.*

I ***am*** *allowed to:*

- *Socialise both with colleagues and the clients' employees (and I sometimes need to do so in order to obtain information 'backstage'. Albeit as a woman in a men-dominated environment I have to be somewhat careful in what way I 'socialise');*
- *Take decisions.*

Actually, I am allowed to do many things, hence this enumeration is far from being complete and I think it's better to look at the things I am not allowed to do. What is not stated explicitly, that I am basically allowed to do.

To what extent are these permissibles and impermissibles realised in particular Discourses? What can you say/write and what can't you say/write as a member of the organization ?

In projects I can never write/say directly to my client, that some employees do not live up to the role they are supposed to enact within the project. I have to 'disguise' this criticism as 'giving face' and never to be 'personal' is essential for a constructive project atmosphere.

Reflection task 3.2

As a way of clarifying these concepts further, review Chap. 2 and make notes on what you consider to be (im)permissible practices and Discourses in your chosen context and site.

Concept 3.4 Participants as 'agents' and 'subjects'

Introducing the constructs of (im)permissibles, makes very clear that the workplace is an ordered environment with prescriptions and proscriptions on what may be done or said/written. Indeed, from a discourse perspective, understanding the orders of discourse and the marketplaces of discourse frequently involves us in seeing participants in contexts and sites of asymmetry. This is why we need to critique the terms *participant*

and *actor* in the sense that the former underestimates the idea of the performative script, while the latter underestimates the extent to which those involved in interactions are subject to the asymmetries of the orders of discourse.

As we shall see in Theme #5 and especially in Theme #6, the distribution of talk (and writing) is by no means equal. It varies according to the positioning of participants as agents or as subjects. The key portraits of Bourdieu, Foucault and Habermas serve to underline this variable positioning of participants and how necessary it is for a 'critical' discourse analysis (see Theme #7) to explain the conditions under which participants are categorised (or, better, *inscribed* in the discourse) as 'subjects' or as 'agents'.

3.4 Locating Performances: Events, Activity Types and Genres

Following Goffman's metaphor, as we have seen, actors perform their roles and demonstrate and create their identity/ies interactively on stage. Although our first understanding of such a stage might be in terms of physical setting (as Goffman also indicates) in Chap. 2 we suggested that a more valuable interpretation for us in discourse terms would be to reinterpret such stages as variably *crucial* 'sites of engagement', within which we (and the participants) can identify a range of *critical moments.* How have these stages and sites been described?

Concept 3.5 Events

Our answer largely depends on what particular sub-discipline of linguistics and language study one comes from. Classically, in the sociolinguistic tradition, the key reference is to the work of Dell Hymes (Hymes 1977). Hymes sees such 'stages' (although he doesn't use the term) essentially as *events* to be explored by drawing on a number of features of context, making use of a general methodology he refers to as 'the ethnography of speaking'. In exploring such events Hymes includes eight variables which he sees as being important for analysts to explore in their definition of a particular event in question.

These are:

addressor:	the speaker/writer or author
addressee:	the intended recipient
audience:	any overhearers/other readers
topic:	what is being talked/written about
setting:	the location of the event in place and time
code:	the language of the utterance/writing
channel:	the mode of communication: speech, writing, visual
event:	the social norms governing the interactions and their interpretation
message form:	how the event is typically structured and organised
key:	the tone of the event and how it is evaluated
purpose:	the intended outcome(s) of the event

We can readily see that all these features are potentially of relevance for anyone wishing to explore how communication in context is organised. In particular, we can note how such a set of features typically includes not only the immediate features of the physical context that may impinge on what is said (or not said) but also focuses on the participating actors, what they say and do, and what their ascribed or achieved social roles enable and permit them to perform linguistically, and what their purposes and goals are in the interactions at hand. The term may also extend to the social and personal histories of the participants, and certainly embraces what is interpreted, and how, as well as what is spoken and performed.

Concept 3.6 Activity types

Although Hymes does not directly make this connection, we could say that such events are seen in some way as the building blocks of onstage and off-stage interaction. To capture that perspective, however, the term event may appear at once too all-encompassing, even too broad as a means of capturing for the dynamic interplay of interaction that we have been characterising as typically discursive. For that we really need other constructs, one of which is that of *activity type*.

Such a construct directs us towards capturing not only the physical context or *setting* of the interaction (who, what and where) but also the

messages and *purposes* of the interaction, (what were the topics being talked about, how those topics were talked about, what the purposes of the interaction were and so on). At the same time, it invites us to look at how the particular events were staged**,** what *episodes* (or scenes) they contained and how fixed or flexible was the organisation of these stages or episodes. They offer us a picture of the *structured activity* that is going on within the activity type (i.e. Goffman's concept of the *interaction order*). Very importantly, understanding such structured activity provides us with an *interpretive framework* in terms of which it is possible for us more easily to work out (or infer) what people mean at that moment in that activity/event by (or behind) what they say or write. We shall be exploring this concept of interpreting through inferencing in Theme #3 when we talk about 'schemata' and 'frames'.

So, as a construct, *activity type* is clearly very valuable for our understanding of institutional, organisational and professional domains of language use in that it focuses our attention not only on the structure of the events/activities that typically 'go on' in such sites, but also offers a means of exploring the nature of the dynamics of the interaction between the participants.

In his well-known, indeed, classic article on activity types Stephen Levinson defines them in the following way:

Quote 3.8 Levinson on activity type

'[An activity type is] … a fuzzy category whose focal members are goal defined, socially constituted bounded events with constraints on participants, settings and so on, but above all on the kind of allowable contributions' (p. 368)….Types of activity, social episodes if one prefers, play a central role in language usage. They do this in two ways especially: on the one hand they constrain what will count as an allowable contribution to each activity; and on the other hand they help to determine how what one says will be 'taken'—that is, what kinds of inferences will be made from what is said.'

(Levinson 1979: 393)

Note here how the point about 'allowable contributions' relates directly to our examples above concerning (im)permissible actions and discourses in particular contexts and sites among particular participants.

Sarangi (2000) draws on Levinson's classic paper but goes beyond it in providing an example:

Quote 3.9 Sarangi exemplifying an activity type

If we were to regard medical consultations as an activity type, then we could work out the constraints that will normally apply for participation. For instance, in a clinical setting, when the doctor opens the consultation with "how are you?" the patient interprets this as a request to talk about his/her state of health rather than a ritual greeting to talk about the weather or something else… What is less likely, however, is for the patient to open the consultation with a "how are you?" question, directed at the doctor, and for the doctor in turn to respond with a catalogue of his/her illnesses and work-related stress.

(Sarangi 2000: 2)

So, although activity types can be defined in terms of structure, that is, the sequence of episodes they typically contain, more interestingly, as Levinson argues, it is our knowledge of the structure and purposes of the activity type that enables *inference*, that is, to work out from a range of possible meanings, what is likely to be being meant at that particular moment in that particular activity type.

It is as if we possess a *prototypical* concept of what an activity type consists of, and how it is structured, even though on any given occasion there may be modifications and differences, and this knowledge helps us in our inferencing. Central to the construct of activity type, is, therefore, the ways in which participants variably *categorise* the activity types in which they find themselves, and how this categorisation and recategorisation of this activity type further illustrate the dynamics of discourse.

Such an idea of a prototype is a construct we will take up in Theme #3 where we discuss the cognitive as well as ethnographic and social resources we draw upon in making sense of what is happening in discourses (whether spoken or written), and the notion of *categorisation* introduced in Part 2 in the present chapter.

Concept 3.7 Genres

The third construct which researchers have found useful in describing the goings-on of actors with their scripts on Goffman's stage is that of *genre*.

The term is often used to describe different types of artistic creation, for example, we talk of novels, films, plays, poems being different genres. In discourse analysis, we have essentially taken over the term to represent all the different kinds of text-types that communicative interactions in activity types and events bring us in contact with, or which we use when we speak, write or use any other semiotic means: for example, text-types like *letters, reports, Powerpoint presentations, agendas for business negotiations, minutes of meetings, formal records of speeches, transcriptions of panel discussions* and so on.

In other words, what the term *genre* does is to focus on the textual/semiotic *objects* which are associated with different types of communicative performances, and which serve to classify, categorise and identify them. They are in a sense windows to the activity types in question. Like the activity types with which they are associated, these distinctive genres will of course vary the one from the other in terms of their *purposes*—letters do not have the same purposes as reports—they will differ in terms of their *authorship* and expected or *preferred audiences*—a friend writing to a friend is not the same as a collaborative pair of authors writing a report for a designated manager—they will certainly differ in terms of their *textualisation or semioticisation*—they will employ different choices of lexico-grammar and wording and their display and their visualising (perhaps being more or less *intertextual* in their composition)—they will also evoke different responses by the audience—something to be attended with special care—say a contract—and something that is more ephemeral—say a note stuck on the front of a fridge.

But, we always need to be cautious in that the *original* purpose of a genre example might not be its *actual* purpose on a given occasion; for example, a receipt may be more than a record of sale—it could be evidence for the taxman! So genres are not always so pure and distinctive—in fact Bhatia (2004) offers some extensive analyses of what he calls 'blended' genres, but also shows that genres infrequently occur in isolation, in fact in his view, genres are typically seen as 'colonies' of genres, where for example, advertisements of all kinds, promos, press releases, book cover blurbs, even personal webpages can be seen as members of a colony of genres all of which have to do with *promotion* of one kind or another. In such colonies of genres, some genres may be

said to be *chained*—that is, they are connected to each other perhaps sequentially but almost certainly in terms of a common thread or argument. In what follows we look at the construct of *genre* a little more systematically.

Genre has been viewed broadly in three different, yet overlapping ways, all of which are focused on addressing the question of *why* and *how* members of a speech community make use of language resources to communicate their various purposes in the contexts in which they act. As you will see, the distinctions between event, activity type and genre are somewhat blurred in the definitions below, so we offer some clarification in what follows:

- Genre as *typified rhetorical and social action*

Carolyn Miller draws on the notion of the recurrence of particular rhetorical situations, and links this to the typicality of participants' responses (in speech and writing) in such situations. From this she constructs her view of *genre*, as a form of *social action* (Miller 1984)**.** Genres may emerge and continue, but they may also decay and die. The number of genres in any society is indeterminate and depends on the complexity and diversity of the particular society (and its institutions).

- Genre as a *staged, goal-oriented social process*

Jim Martin, a leading scholar in the Sydney School of Systemic Functional Linguistics, defines *genre* in terms of a 'staged, goal-oriented social process' (Martin 1992). By this he emphasises the way genres gradually achieve their social purposes; how a genre includes a variety of texts which are purposefully sequenced in some way to achieve a particular goal.

- Genre as *conventionalised communicative event*

John Swales, the most influential scholar in this conception of genre, states:

Quote 3.10 Swales defines genre

[A genre is] a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. Communicative purpose is both a privileged criterion and one that operates to keep the scope of genre… narrowly focused on comparable rhetorical action.

(Swales 1990: 58)

So, Swales is saying that:

- A *genre* is a class of communicative 'texts' (or as Hymes (see above) would call them 'communicative events')
- What turns such texts/events into a genre is some shared set of communicative purposes
- Instances of *genres* may be more or less prototypical
- *Genres* carry with them constraints on what is allowed in terms of their content, their design, their positioning in communication
- How members of communities of practice label *genres* is an important source of insight into the nature of such communities.

Note that there is a resonance here concerning the ideas of 'prototype' and 'categorisation' we refer to earlier in relation to *activity types*.

3.4.1 Methodology: Analysing Genre

One way of approaching the construct of genre is to reflect on a sequence of *analytical steps* proposed by Bhatia (1993 and 2004), as a means of defining the construct. Bhatia (2004: 163–5) proposes seven tools that can assist in a multiperspectival approach to genre analysis, namely:

1. Placing the genre-text in a situational context
2. Surveying existing literature on different aspects of point 1

3. Refining situational/contextual analysis
4. Selecting corpus
5. Textual, intertextual and interdiscursive perspective
6. Ethnographic analysis
7. Studying institutional context

Following Bhatia's lead, we suggest a three-step approach to analysing genre as follows:

(Step 1) The *contextual* perspective on genre:

This includes both the immediate context and the general context in terms of background conditions in which the given example of a genre is situated, constructed and used, and asks you to address the following aspects.

- Who is or are the writer(s) of the text?
- Who is or are the intended audience(s)?
- What kind of social relationship(s) do you consider exists between the author(s) and audience(s) of the text?
- Do you consider this to be a typical text from that kind of author(s) with those readers in mind?
- What purpose(s) do you think the author(s) have in mind with this text?
- Is your textual example mono-modal (i.e. just print) or multimodal (i.e. withpictures/diagrams etc.)?
- Could you assign this text to a particular *genre* (e.g. a *report*, or a *news editorial*, or a *letter*, or a *story*, or a *contract*, or a *record sleeve*, or a *set of instructions* or a *travel brochure* etc.)?

(Step 2) The *textual* perspective on genre:

From the perspective of your particular selected text being an example of a *genre*, this step asks you to address the following questions:

- What are the typical choices of wording and display in the text?
- What are the typical selections from the grammar and visual features in the text?

- How is the text typically organised (in terms of layout, argument etc.)?

(Step 3) The *ethnographic and social* perspective on genre:

This perspective will focus on the typical *sites of engagement* where the text (as an example of a genre) is used.

This step asks you to address the following questions:

- Where would you expect to find a text of this kind?
- What would be the conditions under which this text is seen and read?
- Is there any particular site for which this text is especially relevant?
- Does this text need to be read in a particular way?

3.5 Actions, Discourse Types and Strategies

Although activity types, events and genres, and how they are described and interpreted, are central to the understanding of site- and institution-specific discourses, there remains a sense in which they may be rather too *static* as constructs, and any analysis using such a framework as Hymes', for example (giving its tradition in sociolinguistics) might look too much like ticking off boxes. Perhaps also, such models do not get close enough to the actual relationship between social practices and Discourses that we have been emphasising throughout the book so far. Perhaps they sit uncomfortably with the approaches to discourse inherent in the works of Bourdieu, Foucault and Habermas (and, indeed, Goffman). Perhaps also they fail to allow for enough flexibility in how an activity is indeed structured, driven by participant contributions. Perhaps their problem is that they are too *structuralist*, even too *linguistic* for discourse analysis? Most of all, they may not give enough emphasis to the particular purposes and actions that participants wish to construct and display through their discourses *within* the activity type.

Let us look at this issue of *role, purpose* and *action* in a workplace context, as a way of emphasising the need to focus more on what happens *dynamically* within the activity type and less on how the activity type is to be defined as an object.

Concept 3.8 Actions

Quote 3.11 Gee on discourse and action

Whos and whats are not really discrete and separable. You are who you are through what you are doing and what you are doing is partly recognised for what it is by who is doing it. So it is better, in fact, to say that utterances communicate an integrated, though often multiple or heteroglossic who-doing-what.

(Gee 1999: 14)

From Gee's analysis we see not only that communication and action are interlinked but that communication is itself framed as *creating* the workplace world, not just as an activity that is done within that world. How people communicate, and what strategies they employ, becomes a way into understanding how the workplace and the leisure space themselves *function* and what they *do*. The resonances with Bourdieu are obvious. It reminds us also of the quotation from Sarangi and Roberts (1999) that we included earlier:

> The institutional order is held together not by particular forms of social organisation but by regulating discourses. (Sarangi and Roberts 1999: 16)

In a paper to do with the relationship between workplace discourse and participant roles and behaviours called *The New Work Order*, Iedema and Scheeres (2003) emphasise how the restructured workplace is characterised by a focus on *performativity*—by which is meant its focus on consultative and participatory processes, emphasising the actions and discursive activities of the *team* and what Iedema and Scheeres call 'from doing work to *talking work*'.

Quote 3.12 Iedema and Scheeres on 'talking work'

This discursive work occurs, in the main, in meeting rooms (away from the 'doing' work), where newly-formed teams explain, describe, account for, discuss, problem-solve and negotiate work 'from a distance'. Here, workers

> are expected to speak and write in ways not commonly or directly associated with their work in the here-and-now. These literacy tasks are new and different…
>
> As workers shift from doing to talking work, the work of discourse analysts is shifting from examining 'language in a practical context', to engaging with enactments and management of workplace self, manifested through language as well as other semiotic modes.
>
> (Iedema and Scheeres 2003: 318 and 335)

Characteristic of this idea of *talk-actions* is not only the discourse *tasks* that Iedema and Scheeres refer to above as occurring within particular activity types, but also the relative *performativity* of the participants. This suggests a need for two further categories of analysis which will better accommodate this dynamism. We shall return to this relationship between talk and action in Theme #6.

Concept 3.9 Discourse types

The second construct (after actions) Sarangi (2000) refers to as *discourse types*, by which he means the kinds of *purposeful discursive actions* which typically occur *within* a given activity type. For example, within the activity type of a *service encounter*, we may expect that there will be discourse types of *advising* and *informing,* and similarly within the activity type of *Counselling* we may expect not only to find instances of the discourse type *counselling* (with a small 'c') but also that of *informing* (though NOT *advising*) (as Candlin and Lucas (1986) indicate in their early study of Family Planning Counselling).

Concept 3.10 Strategies

The third construct is that referred to by Candlin and Lucas (1986), namely the idea that discourse involves the deployment of a resource of *strategies—how the communication is done*—which cluster *within* particular activity types associated with given institutional and social practices and which are associated with the discourse types (and serve to define them) in the manner we refer to above.

For example:

A medical consultation can be seen as a type of activity or event, within which are contained a range of particular institutional practices

with their associated discourse types such as *medical history-taking, troubles talk, instructing, counselling, advising*.

Each of these discourse types is realised through a range of often overlapping and hybridised strategies—such as *talking plainly, talking obliquely, giving face and deference, justifying actions, thinking aloud, imagining situations, reporting problems, complaining about third parties and so on*.

In turn each of these strategies is realised by particular choices of *wording* and *articulating (but also choices of gesture, bodily positioning etc.)*, which may co-occur with wording, or stand in replacement for wording.

3.5.1 A Nested Arrangement

In this way we can imagine a *nested arrangement* in which activity types or events are realised through particular practices with their associated discourse types, which in turn draw on a range of *strategic communicative resources*, that is, what people as actors on the stage actually perform. These in turn are realised by *actual usages of language or other semiotic codings*, what they actually say or write or do. Of course, there is no one-to-one relationship here, although it may turn out to be the case that particular activity types or events typically are linked to sets of discourse types and they, in turn, in the context of this or that event, draw on preferred communication strategies.

For example, in a medical consultation it would be highly unlikely that we would find the discourse type of *commanding someone* (though it isn't unknown!) and when it happens it is always *strategically significant.*

Reflection task 3.3

As a way of fixing your understanding of this nested arrangement, think of a particular, rather well-defined activity type or event in your workplace. Usually these activities have a defining label or a name. For example, *a sales meeting* or a *consultation* or an *appraisal interview.* Now think about the various *practices* and their associated *discourse types* which you would expect to find in that activity type or event. Finally, think about the typical *communication strategies* that participants are likely to draw upon when involved in that particular practice in that particular activity type and when performing that particular discourse type.

Part 2

Summary of Concepts

How do we account for discourse? What is to be accounted for? What systems of categorisation define domains, institutions, communities of practice? Is categorisation governed by conventions and maxims? How can discourse play a role in recategorisation? How is discourse inscribed in a culture?

3.6 Some Background to Our Discourse Analytic Program: Contexts and Explorations

Following on from the 'nested arrangement' presented in Sect. 3.5.1 it is time now to set such a descriptive and interpretive means of accounting for discourse in a wider frame, both in terms of the *contexts* of discourse analysis and in terms of how *grounded* and *exploratory* discourse analytical research can be undertaken within an appropriate research program. (We note here that Part II of this book is devoted to how the reader might approach research of their own at sites of particular interest to them.)

What follows in this section is a *prospectus* for a socially relevant discourse analysis, with an emphasis on *contextualisation* and *exploration*. We begin with a summary *account* of what such a program might look like.

Concept 3.11 Contextualisation

The study of professions—law, education, healthcare, social welfare—from the perspective of language and communication (in the broad sense of discourse) has a long-standing history, beginning with the mid-1970s and early 1980s. This body of literature can be generally grouped under three categories:

1. ***descriptive***, genre-based studies focusing on specialised registers, mainly involving written texts, chiefly from the academy;

2. ***interpretive*** studies of talk and interaction in professional settings, sometimes involving critical sites such as team meetings, cross-examination in the courtroom, delivery of bad news in healthcare contexts and so on; and
3. ***problem-centred, interventionist*** studies in the spirit of applied linguistics, often involving close collaboration between discourse analysts and members of various professions.

We believe that applied linguistics focused on the study of discourse in context and in action can make a significant contribution to our understanding of communication processes, participants and their roles, their objectives and goals, and the communication contexts within which knowledge-based professional practice takes place. This will inherently become an interdisciplinary undertaking, which privileges a broad view of language and communication to include both formal studies of text and discourse in a range of modes, grounded ethnographic studies of contexts of use, and more social psychological studies of participants' attitudes, identities and interpretive processes.

Such a perspective cannot only build on the cumulative insights gained from discourse-based studies and the vast body of literature in the sociology of professions and the sociology of work, it can also foreground a problem-orientation, deeply embedded in methodological and analytical challenges, so that research outcomes are made practically relevant. Such a perspective will open up fresh avenues for application of linguistic research beyond the mainstream focus on the education sites, while renewing the established paradigm of Languages for Specific Purposes (e.g. see Gollin-Kies et al. 2015). A particular challenge for applied linguists is to access the tacit knowledge base that underlies professional practice in their chosen sites of engagement, making indispensable a reflexive approach both for themselves and for members of their target groups.

Concept 3.12 Domains

In the above context, it will be important to narrow down and identify certain *fields* (see Bourdieu) of professional (institutional/organisational) inquiry as being especially salient. These fields (or *domains*) will

be discursively characterised by the interplay among a number of (at times contested) orders of discourse (Foucault), and will certainly exhibit *inter alia* the distinctions between public and private worlds emphasised by Habermas. We nominate several of these fields/domains below, with the intention that, despite contextual variations, analytic practices and findings may well be generalisable across professions and institutions/organisations:

- Law (both court-related and community-related)
- Healthcare (to include both medical and allied health, both in institutional sites and in the community)
- Social Work (to include counselling, mediation)
- Business and Management (to include both professional and commercial activity and also organisational communication within the firm)
- Organisations and Bureaucracy (to include the study of organisational processes in a range of particularly public sites, viz. government, service delivery)
- Education (to include participant practices, relationships between participant social categorisations and histories and learning/teaching performance)

An innovative feature of what is being suggested above is the organisation of the analysis of professional practice in terms of selected *crucial discoursal sites* which are shared and overlapping within such practice. Such an organisational structure is a point of departure from earlier work which has tended to black-box different professions as if they belonged to completely different communities of practice. Although individual contributions will be locatable in specific professional sites, interprofessional synergies in processes of reasoning, in orientations to purpose, must remain focal.

Concept 3.13 Content (sites, modes and themes)

Accordingly, we may identify within selected *domains (fields)*, exemplary *sites of engagement* for each domain in question (say, for example, in the domain of Law, the courtroom and the lawyer–client conference or the interpreter-mediated trial). It will be important to specify for each of

these *domains*, those *modes* of communication which may occur in this or that *site* (e.g. so in the *domain* of healthcare, the typical professional-client face-to-face interaction as well as the less familiar engagement of practitioners and clients/patients with written medical records or with IT-mediated or tele-mediated communication). Finally, and pervasively throughout the *domains* and *sites,* it will be important to highlight a number of key pervasive *focal themes* which we believe are characteristic now in discourse-oriented studies of professional communication, and which extend its reach beyond the merely *descriptive* and *interpretive* to the *explanatory*.

As examples of such interconnecting focal themes we could suggest the following:

- The nature and importance of *evidence*
- The difficulty and importance of maintaining professional *neutrality*
- The extent and interdisciplinarity of relevant *knowledge*
- The nature of professional *expertise* and the role of communication
- The differential quality of professional and lay *reasoning and argument*
- The communicative aspects of *action and practice*
- The role of communication in *assessment and appraisal* of professional practice

This configuration of *Domain, Site, Mode and Theme* within an overarching presentation of *Context* needs then to be subject to an overarching commitment to issues of *motivational relevancy* (Sarangi and Candlin 2001), *practical relevance*, *co-participation* of professionals and applied linguists, and the *joint problematisation among them* of research topics and subjects of study. Such a configuration will address, in each case, particular *methodological* issues and concerns, for example:

- The nature of applied linguistically relevant *data*
- The appropriateness and the nature of applied linguistic *methodological tools* and *perspectives*
- The *modes of representation and dissemination* of the results and outcomes of applied linguistics research

Such a schema falls rather short of sufficient detail to make its intentions clear. It needs to be complemented by a more site-specific focus, but one which nevertheless offers a window on a more generalisable process of *accounting for discourse*, through the ways we understand these sites, modes and themes in a particular domain (field), and how we can build a research resource to enable them to be described, interpreted and explained.

In their publication *Language Practices in Social Work: Categorisation and Accountability in Child Welfare*, Hall, Slembrouck and Sarangi (2006) open their second chapter (p. 15) with a statement which can serve well as an illuminating example. It serves also to highlight the constructs of *accountability* and *categorisation* which are key points of focus in the present chapter. (Note that the use of italics and boldface in what follows is not in the original text.)

Quote 3.13 Hall, Slembrouck and Sarangi exemplifying 'accounting for discourse'

In this chapter we outline some of the theoretical formulations which underpin the analysis of professional discourse and which shape our investigation of social work, text and talk. In particular we discuss the concepts of **accountability** and **categorization**. Our approach is discourse analytic. This means that we wish to foreground how professional processes are constructed in everyday activity and how they depend on communicative processes. It is suggested that any claims to truth by social workers, clients or other professionals have to be acted out in professional settings for them to matter. Facts, opinions and assessments have to be worked on and worked up in talk or in writing. The professional and the client will gather pieces of information and comment to support their version of events and to persuade others of its veracity. Such performances in meetings, interviews or in writing will require a range of persuasive and interactional devices.…It is suggested then that the everyday processes of social work inevitably involve setting in motion processes which aim to produce assessments of what type of case is going on here. Furthermore such activities will involve paying attention to concerns about how such assessments are presented and justified. Such processes can be explored in terms of key themes from discourse theory and research: **categorisation** and **accountability**. **Accountability** refers to the way in which assessments and action are justified in terms appropriate to contexts and events. For example, a description of a 'failure-to-thrive' case displays the opinions of doctors and records of weight loss

(Hall et al. 1997). **Categorisation** involves a set of processes which result in facts, opinions, or circumstances being established as one type or category rather than another: for example that this is a case of 'failure-to-thrive', not 'delayed development'. (Hall et al. 1997: 93). Whereas for social workers categories are a means to an end (e.g. to set in motion an effective intervention or treatment), we are mainly interested in how categories come about and the kind of work that needs to be done to establish, define, defend, refute, etc. them. As Shotter (1993: 9) puts it: 'what matters is not so much the conclusions arrived at as the terms within which arguments are conducted'. In making claims that a particular category is appropriate, the actor will deploy a set of textual and verbal devices to justify that the claim is true and that s/he can be held accountable for the claim in terms appropriate to the context….We prefer to see **categorization** and **accountability** as interactional and rhetorical processes which can be observed in the everyday talk and writing of professionals.

(Hall et al. 2006: 15–6) [Our emphasis]

This may now all be familiar territory, captured by the quotation from Candlin (1997) we set out in the Introduction to this book, repeated below:

Quote 3.14 Candlin defines 'discourse'

Discourse is a means of talking and writing about and acting upon worlds, a means which both constructs and is constructed by a set of social practices within these worlds, and in so doing both reproduces and constructs afresh particular social-discursive practices, constrained or encouraged by more macro movements in the overarching social formation.

(Candlin 1997: viii)

and this equally relevant quotation from Sarangi and Coulthard that we also introduced earlier:

Quote 3.15 Sarangi and Coulthard on 'discourse'

When it comes to linking micro discourse analysis with socio-political structures, we need to see discourse not as a unit beyond the sentence, but as social practice.

(Sarangi and Coulthard 2000: xxii)

Reflection task 3.4

In a paper introducing the then new journal *Communication & Medicine* titled 'Towards a communicative mentality in medical and healthcare practice', *Communication & Medicine* Sarangi (2004) poses some key questions for professionals engaged in the discourse analytically based exploration of their own professional practices. [NOTE: We have made some adjustments to the wording of these.] These questions have great generalisability and applicability for our discourse analytical program beyond medical and healthcare practices. You may like to note down your own responses to them:

- What do you understand by a 'communicative mentality' in your contexts of practice and among those with whom you work professionally?
- What would you call yourself ('applied linguist'? 'discourse analyst'? 'researcher into professional communication'?), that is, if they asked you?
- How would you define *discourse analysis*? If they were to say 'we (i.e. the professional practitioners) analyse talk and text, so how do you do it differently?'. How would you respond?
- What are your tools of trade and to what extent are these transferable across professional boundaries?
- What are you looking for in exploring practice-based discourse?
- What do you call data, and by extension, what do you call evidence?
- How would you categorise their professional practice/identity drawing on discourse data?
- Can discourse analysis validate assessment of communication skills?
- Does discourse analytical work have predictive validity?

And, a further related reflection task:

Reflection task 3.5

Here are some relevant questions to ask about a field/domain/site and its participants:

- What is the nature of the *crucial site* and what are its *critical moments*?
- What particular *purposes*, *participants* and *processes* are engaged?
- What particular *discourse strategies* are displayed in action and what are their *linguistic/semiotic realisations?*
- How do the interactions demonstrate how particular profession-specific *constructs* are built up and *categorised*?
- How are different participants in the activity *characterised* both as *persons*, as significant *participants,* and in terms of their *moral and social identities?*

The following remark by Sarangi captures where we have got to in the book so far, and also looks ahead to the content of Theme #3.

> **Quote 3.16 Sarangi on applied linguistics in discourse-based studies**
>
> As we know, much applied linguistics work, especially in the interaction/discourse-based studies, is oriented to answering the Goffmanian question: 'what is it that's going on here'. But this is also the question that practitioners whose conduct we make our business to study may increasingly ask of us. And this is more so in the case of professional discourse studies, thus compelling us to think what is or is not applied or applicable in what we do.
>
> (Sarangi 2005: 389)

3.7 Accounting for Accountability

We have already signalled the importance of *accountability* (together with *categorisation*—see below) in the understanding of the significance of discourse in action. We owe the concept of accountability primarily to the work of Harold Garfinkel (whom we will encounter in Theme #5) and his studies in what he called *ethnomethodology*, by which he meant a new methodology in which researchers could approach the analysis of social structure through an exploration of the discourse and action of the members of those social orders and those institutions themselves. (Key references to Garfinkel's body of work include: S*tudies in the Routine Grounds of Everyday Activity* (Garfinkel 1964); *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (Garfinkel 1967); and *Ethnomethodology's Program* (Garfinkel 2002).)

As the extract from Hall et al. (2006) in Quote 3.13 indicated, for many professional practices a concern for adequate categorisation is a central institutional and professional occupation. As they say in that extract:

> We prefer to see categorization and accountability as interactional and rhetorical processes which can be observed in the everyday talk and writing of professionals. (Hall et al. 2006: 16)

Accounts according to Garfinkel are offered by participants in terms of categorisations which are 'not independent of the socially organized occasions of their use' (Garfinkel 1967: 3); 'the activities whereby members produce and manage settings of organized everyday affairs are identical with member's procedures for making those settings "account-able"' (Garfinkel 1967: 1). For Garfinkel, the important aspect of institutional accounts and descriptions is to show how they are evaluated, interpreted, accepted or contested by institutional members.

The key concepts of Garfinkel's work on which Firkins and Candlin (2013) draw for their paper on Child Death Review Reports are that of 'accounts', that is, texts of social importance as objectified sense-making devices, and that of 'accountability' or 'accounting practices', that is, the process of sense-making. Garfinkel suggests that people are engaged in an exploratory sense-making process with one another during a substantial proportion of their daily routines and that where professional practices are concerned, members are pre-occupied with a concern for adequate accounting of this process.

Accountable here is not to suggest that descriptive accounts in themselves provide unproblematic access to the nature of the activities they describe. On the contrary, Garfinkel emphasises that accounts have a 'loose fit' with the circumstances they depict, and the nature of the fit between accounts and their circumstance is to be established through an active course of analysis; in relation to this book, through discourse analysis. The 'sense' of an account is therefore *indexically* linked to the context of its production (Heritage 1987; Heritage 1984: 141). So, any written account of an action or a sequence of actions, such as Child Death Review Reports, is *indexically* linked to the review process.

The term *indexicality* (and its closely correlate term, *reflexivity*) can be defined as follows:

Concept 3.14 Indexicality

Indexicality is a term intended to suggest that we make sense of situations in which we are in by referring to them (and ourselves) on the basis of our prior experience (see Bourdieu's construct of *habitus*) which we bring as a point of reference against which to make inferences and interpretations. In this sense, *indexicality* is a product of the immediate

experience of contexts of use in dialogue with our past experience, and referred to in our talk/writing and our actions.

Concept 3.15 Reflexivity

Reflexivity implies that once we have *indexed* a situation, event, critical moment, these become available to be referred to, and reflexively act as indexical features of the next interaction and its associated interpretive and inferencing processes. Reflexivity implies, however, more than mere reflection—rather it implies effective and consequent action, either physical or the active construction of a new context against which we can interpret what that context means for us.

We may say, then, that our discourse is a means by which we can actively construct an intersubjective world of indexicality and reflexivity, and, by extension, when we analyse discourse we are seeking to explore that indexical and reflexive world.

3.8 Categorising Membership in Communities of Practice

In our brief introduction to the concept of 'community of practice' (see Chap. 2) what was emphasised there was the idea of *membership* by which was meant the conventional requirements (in terms of practices and discourses) incumbent upon those who claim 'belonging' to a particular social, institutional, professional or organisational group.

Concept 3.16 Communities of practice

Candlin and Candlin explore the construct of *community of* practice, from a critical and historical perspective, in relation to the practices of nursing over time and space.

Quote 3.17 Candlin and Candlin on community of practice

The construct of community of practice has been since its invention centrally linked to three sets of defining concepts: the domain of interest and domain-related competence; membership, relationship and community; and activity, practice, and shared repertoires of experience. Members are

said to be 'mutually engaged', their engagement is located in a 'joint enterprise', and the pursuance of this enterprise over extensive periods of time and within recognisable routines in established space is seen to develop among them a 'shared repertoire' of recognised and mutually intelligible performances and interpretations, including, we may assume—although Lave and Wenger do not single this out especially—common discourses. Performance and interpretation signal the twin cognitive and social bases of the construct. The emphasis on participation and reification of these membership practices points to the alacrity with which it has been adopted in a range of professional fields, latterly in the context of education and training. Indeed, Wenger, either singly or with colleagues, continues to be active in promoting the construct and its application in diverse sectors of government, business organizations, education, professional and local associations, even in philanthropy, and either face to face or Internet-mediated, also in the context of international development (Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder 2002; Wenger and Snyder 2000; Wenger 2004a, 2004b).

(Candlin and Candlin 2007: 245)

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) link the construct of communities of practice to the construct of identity:

Quote 3.18 Eckert and McConnell-Ginet on community of practice

[A]n aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavour. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations—in short practices—emerge in the course of this mutual endeavour. As a social construct, a community of practice is different from the traditional community, primarily because it is defined simultaneously by its membership and by the practice in which that membership engages.

(Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992: 464)

Beyond the defining characteristics of agency, historicity and mutuality noted by Candlin and Candlin there is the goal orientation of the membership.

Quote 3.19 Scollon on community of practice

A community of practice is a group of people who over a period of time share some set of social practices geared towards some common purpose … Everyone is multiply membered in various communities of practice.

(Scollon 1998: 13)

Candlin and Candlin also link the construct of communities of practice to discursive practices:

Quote 3.20 Candlin and Candlin on parallel discursive practices

Along with Wenger himself and commentators like Scollon (1998) and Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999), the emphasis on the social practices of a community of practice suggests some clear linkages to parallel discursive practices (see Fairclough 1992; Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999), but not just to particular uses of the forms of language, but to practices such as: acknowledging and claiming identities in interactions; representing in appropriate genres what is accepted and conventional knowledge; signalling membership by a range of semiotic and sociolinguistic performances; managing inter- and intra-community relationships by acknowledgement of rights, duties and roles; and enabling and achieving outcomes for agreed and determined tasks in which processes of resourceful and appropriate deployment of communication competency are clearly at a premium.

(Candlin and Candlin 2007: 248)

They suggest that given that individual members belong to many different communities of practice, there is scope for enriching one community through a member's experience from another community. And, they note the need for a sense of order within the orders of discourse of a community of practice.

Concept 3.17 Categorisation

Key to the understanding of these communities of practice is the construct of categorisation. Sarangi and Candlin (2003), in talking about 'categorisation practices in action', have the following to say:

Quote 3.21 Sarangi and Candlin on categorisation practices in action

Categorisation—generally understood as definition of situations (including events, actions, roles/identities, knowledge claims etc.) in everyday and professional and institutional settings—is a meaning-making activity, deeply embodied in human experience and understanding. Language and discourse play a significant part in how we categorize events and things in discipline-specific ways. (p. 115)….Categories are spectacles through which we routinely, albeit largely unconsciously, observe and classify events and experiences.

(Sarangi and Candlin 2003: 116)

The concept of what has come to be called *Membership Categorisation* originates in the work of the conversation analyst Harvey Sacks (see Theme #5) who defines it as a process involving making classifications of social types that may be used to describe persons, for example, as 'politician', 'nerd', 'skinhead' and so on.

Such classification can be extended from persons to collectivities and non-personal objects, for example, institutions or professional associations, or bureaucracies and so on. What is of interest here is the way in which such non-personal objects are attributed categorisation labels which are also deployed in respect of persons, for example, referring to a bureaucracy as a 'nanny'. Sacks and later writers argue that such *membership categorisation* 'devices' *(MCDs)* can be grouped into *systems* which combine some terms, but exclude others. As Hester and Eglin (1997) exemplify:

Quote 3.22 Hester and Eglin on membership categorisation collections

The idea that membership categorizations form collections refers to the fact that in the locally occasioned settings of their occurrence, some membership categories can be used and heard commonsensically as 'going together' whilst others cannot be so used and heard. For example, the collection or MCD 'family' may be so heard to include such membership categories as 'mother', 'father', 'son', 'daughter', 'uncle', 'aunt' etc. and to exclude 'trumpet player', 'dog', 'Marxist feminist', and 'Caucasian'. One particular type of

> membership categorization device is the 'standardized relational pair'. Sacks developed this concept in relation to his study of calls to a suicide prevention centre helpline. These were calls made in the course of a 'search for help' by the caller. According to Sacks, the search was organized in terms of such paired categories as 'husband-wife', 'parent-child', 'friend-friend', 'cousin-cousin', 'neighbour-neighbour' and 'stranger-stranger'.
>
> (Hester and Eglin 1997: 4)

In order to recognise what he saw as the systematic way in which participants categorise the membership of others, Sacks developed two 'rules' for MCDs.

- The *economy rule*: i.e. use a single membership category to describe a member of some population. People may have more than one category but usually one will suffice for introducing or referring to them.
- The *consistency rule*: i.e. 'if some population of persons is being categorized, and if a category from some device's population has been used to categorize a first member of the population, then that category or other categories of the same collection may be used to categorize further members of the population' (Sacks 1974: 219). According to Hester and Eglin (1997: 5): 'This means that, for example, if a person has been categorized as "*first violin*" then further persons may be referred to in terms of other membership categories comprising the collection "members of the orchestra".'

Extensions of the MCD construct have focused on what Sacks terms 'category boundedness' that is those actions, statements, performances which can routinely be expected from members of this or that categorisation.

Hence, Sacks' famous elucidation of the phrase: 'The baby cried. The mommy picked it up'. Here both categories are routinely 'heard' or 'expected' as belonging to the same category 'family', and the utterances are heard as being coherent. As Hester and Eglin indicate, we can extend this idea of *expectables* to include rights, obligations, entitlements, attri-

butes and competencies. Again, the relevance of the MCD concept should be apparent for our studies of discourse in action in a wide range of communities of practice.

Reflection task 3.6

Consider some of the categorisations that are relevant (and drawn upon/uttered/written about) in a site in which you have a research interest.

- What is the 'category boundedness' of some of these categorisations?
- What are the 'expectables' and what form do they take?

The best way to approach this concept of *categorisation* is, firstly, *conceptually*, that is fixing the construct of MCD analysis in your mind, and secondly, *applicationally*, that is seeing how the concept can illuminate your own research interest and the practices of a particular research site.

Quote 3.23 Paul Drew on membership categories and characterising

An importance of Membership Categories is that they are a conventional basis for ascribing activities (and other characteristics) to persons. Given that a person group etc. may be characterized in an indefinite number of ways, in someone's activity a speaker may depict that person with that category which is, conventionally, especially relevant to doing that activity.

(Drew 1978: 3)

As part of your inquiry into categorisation, it would be valuable therefore to explore the theme of categorisation and MCDs and to discover in which terms such categorisation is being carried out, and which features are relevant to the analysis of the MCDs in question. Important here is the argument of Sarangi and Candlin (2003: 122) that categorisations are *both* the object *and* the means of analysis. In short, we use categorisations in order to explore locally relevant categorisation. This raises the over-

Quote 3.24 Sarangi and Candlin on warrants for categorisations

Now, for description to be enacted in the narrow sense, researchers can (and often do) claim proprietary rights; it is their models and their categorizations which they seek to warrant from the data. For interpretation, however, participants in the encounters have proprietary rights; it is their categorizations which make sense to them, and it is in terms of these personal categorizations that they warrant their own accounts of what has gone on. Researchers who seek access to such categorizations cannot operate without some collaborative and cooperative enterprise, itself not easy to establish, and one in which the ensuing categorizations may cut across or restructure the categorizations the researcher might have initially purveyed.

(Sarangi and Candlin 2003: 122)

arching issue of participant and analyst knowledge which we will develop in the discussions in Theme #4.

This paradox (or better, this challenge) is likely to accompany you throughout your study of discourse in context and in action. Have you any thoughts about how such a challenge could be met? What actions would be open to you?

3.9 A Case Study

Winiecki, D. (2008). The expert witness and courtroom discourse: applying micro and macro forms of discourse analysis to study process and the 'doings of doings' for individuals and for society. *Discourse & Society, 19*(6): 765–1.

In this study Winiecki is concerned with expert witness accounts given in a court of law, and how what is said by the expert witness is categorised by lawyers and judges and used subsequently in courtroom proceedings. The trial involves a legal case against a school district in the United States which was promoting Intelligent Design (ID), also known as 'biblical creationism', as 'a theoretical position worthy of equal-standing with Darwinian evolutionary theory, and as such, something that should be taught in high school biology classes' (p. 767). However, under the

American constitution, there must be a separation between church and state, hence this court case. The expert witness in this particular study is a scientist testifying for the defence (i.e. the school district). His testimony involves an interplay between scientific and legal discourses and, in particular, what counts as science.

Rationale

Courtrooms provide a highly specialised context for social interaction, with both significant constraints on who can speak and when, and what they are permitted to say, as well as having potentially very 'high-stakes' consequences for those on trial. Expert witnesses are routinely called upon by the legal teams of both defendants and plaintiffs as a means of enhancing the authority of their respective arguments. Once an expert witness speaks, what they say is indexed and becomes an account in itself in subsequent courtroom discourse. Expert witnesses are expert in their particular specialty and its discourses, while in the context of a trial, courtroom discourse relies on rules of the law and legal determinations of what counts as relevant expert testimony. In this case study, Winiecki examines how an expert witness is first categorised and then how his status and contributions as an 'expert' are problematised and subsequently used by the plaintiff's lawyer to diminish the credibility of his testimony.

Methods

The data in this study were drawn from a wider collection of video recordings of expert witnesses 'on the stand', as well as from courtroom transcripts and interviews with expert witnesses. The data analysed consist of cross-examination interactions between a plaintiff's lawyer and an expert witness testifying for the defence, and a judge's subsequent written ruling in the case. Winiecki adopts a two-stage approach to analysing the data, in order to link both a micro and a macro perspective on the case. For the micro analysis (used with the plaintiff's lawyer-expert witness transcript), he draws upon Sacks' Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA); while for the macro analysis he uses a Foucaultian post-structuralist approach. Together these two approaches combine powerfully to shed light on institutional talk in interaction and how it

relates to the social order. See the original article for detailed analysis and results.

Contribution to theory-practice nexus

This case study demonstrates the compatibility of MCA with post-structuralist discourse analysis as an effective combination of micro and macro analyses of discourse. As Winiecki states: 'The conversational tactics employed, face-to-face with the norms and forms of the institutions made present in an interaction, have weighty affect on the subject or target of those tactics' (p. 774).

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4

'What Is It That's Going on Here?'

Having set the agenda of our exploration of discourse in Chaps. 2 and 3, we are now ready to explore the agenda in context and in action. In this chapter we investigate the key question posed by Goffman—What is it that is going on here?—and how, using insights from Geertz, we can understand and interpret discourse. In Part 1 we focus on frame, footing and strategy in discourse, while in Part 2 we turn to methodology and ethnographic and sociocultural analysis.

Part 1

Summary of Concepts

How are strips of interaction framed? What's in a frame? How are frames realised in discourse? What roles are played out in discourses? Managing face and facework in discourse

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C.N. Candlin et al., *Exploring Discourse in Context and in Action*,
Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-31506-9_4

4.1 Introduction

In his book *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (1974), sociologist Erving Goffman makes this fundamental statement which will serve well to introduce Theme #3 of this book:

Quote 4.1 Goffman on individuals in interaction

My perspective is situational, meaning here a concern for what one individual can be alive to at a particular moment, this often involving a few other particular individuals and not necessarily restricted to the mutually monitored arena of a face-to-face gathering, I assume that when individuals attend to any current situation, they face the question: **"What is it that's going on here?"** Whether asked explicitly, as in times of confusion and doubt, or tacitly, during occasions of usual certitude, the question is put and the answer to it is presumed by the way the individuals then proceed to get on with the affairs at hand.

(Goffman 1974: 153) (emphasis added)

At the same time as posing the question, Goffman raises a number of what he calls 'suspect' points about its meaning:

- What is its 'span', its 'focus'? (i.e. what is its location and coverage?)
- What is its 'perspective'? (i.e. what are the points of view of the participants?)

Different participants have different interests and generate what Goffman refers to as 'motivational relevancies' (i.e. differing perspectives and engagements) in viewing the particular interaction in which they are engaged, and other interactions of relevance.

Also, as Goffman points out, the reference to 'it' and to 'here' in the quotation above biases our interpretation to the *simple and singular*, and to the timespan of the *here and now*, neither of which conditions may in fact be central to our interpretation, since we may be dealing with multiple, co-occurring events and what is going on in the present always has historical connotations and influences (cf. Bourdieu and Foucault). Finally, he argues, when we look back on 'what *was* going on *there*', our

retrospective accounts, as participants or as otherwise involved parties, are quite likely to differ markedly.

Goffman's project (and ours) is, as he says:

Quote 4.2 Goffman's 'project'

… to try and isolate some of the basic frameworks of understanding available in our society for making sense out of events and to analyze the special vulnerabilities to which these frames of reference are subject.

(Goffman 1974: 155)

4.2 Frames, Strips and Footings

Concept 4.1 (a) Frames

The first of these constructs (Frame) is used by Goffman (following its introduction as a term by Bateson (1972)) as referring to 'definitions of a situation (that) are built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events, and our involvement in them' (Goffman 1974: 155), and what he calls 'the organization of experience' or 'the structure of experience individuals have at any moment of their social lives'. In this sense Frames are close to what is captured in Bourdieu's term *habitus* and is inherent in Derek Layder's 'Resource Map'[1], which we shall draw on extensively in this book. In sum, the term Frame relates to how we may refer to knowledge and experience being cognitively stored, and augmented by experience, such that our latent Frames can be activated and continuously monitored and, where appropriate and necessary, updated.

Quote 4.3 Goffman exemplifying 'frame'

The relation of the frame to the environing world in which the framing occurs is complex. An illustration. Two men sit down at a game-equipped table and decide whether to play chess or checkers (draughts). In terms of the game-generated realm in which they will soon be lodged, the difference between chess and checkers is quite considerable; quite different dramas will unfold involving quite different game-generated characters. But should a stranger or employer or a janitor or policeman approach the two players, it will be usually quite sufficient to know that the men are playing a board game.

(Goffman 1974: 158)

To fully understand what is implied by Frame here we would need to identify all the other relevant matters for this activity to be understood as a 'game', and then more, if we wish to differentiate the two (at least) potential games in play. All this knowledge is borne out of experience and constitutes the substance of what Goffman refers to as a Frame. Different participants can assume different perspectives and interpretations of the context of the events in which they find themselves, according to, for example, the roles they play in such an event. Such events, or better, experiences and interpretations underpinning or invoked by such events, may be labelled and categorised (see Chap. 3) in particular ways in the society, culture and institution in question; for example, they may be categorised as a joke or a telling-off or an error-correction. It is these labelled experiences that Goffman refers to as Frames, and the movements between them, or the different perceptions of what they are by the different participants, as frame shifts or frame mismatches.

Note that these Frames or Frameworks can be seen not only as relating to matters of cognition but also to actions.

Quote 4.4 Goffman on frames and matters of cognition and action

[T]hese frameworks are not merely matters of mind but correspond in some sense to the way in which an aspect of the activity itself is organized—especially activity directly involving social agents. Organizational premises are involved and these are something cognition somehow arrives at, not something that cognition creates or generates. Given their understanding of what it is that's going on, individuals fit their actions to this understanding and ordinarily find that the ongoing world supports this fitting. These organizational premises—sustained both in mind and in activity—I call the frame of the activity.

(Goffman 1974, cited in Lemmert and Branaman (1997: 158))

As a research procedure in relation to analysing frames, Goffman advises the cutting of a 'slice of reality' selecting a moment or part of a situation and to isolate this part as the starting point for analysis:

Quote 4.5 Goffman on 'frame analysis'

[D]efinitions of a situation are built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events—at least social ones—and our subjective involvement in them; frame is the word I use to refer to such of these basic elements I am able to identify. That is my definition of frame. My phrase "frame analysis" is a slogan to refer to the examination in these terms of the organization of experience.

(Goffman 1974, cited in Lemmert and Branaman 1997: 155)

A Brief Interlude: Frames and Schema(ta)

It is worthwhile at this point just to add a brief interlude about the relationship between the two constructs of *schema* (plural *schemata*) and *frame*, since they often co-occur and, since both are dynamic and changeable with experience, they are often seen as interchangeable terms. One possible way of differentiating them is to note that 'frame' seems more to be a term within the province of anthropology and sociology, while (knowledge) 'schema' is more drawn upon in artificial intelligence and cognitive psychology.

Both of these constructs relate to how we may postulate knowledge and experience are cognitively stored and augmented by experience such that they can be activated as 'structures of expectation' (Tannen 1979). Drawing very much on Goffman's work and in edited books that are an excellent source of examples of frame analysis, Tannen (1979, 1993) argues that frames provide in a sense definitions of what is 'going on' in an interaction without which the interaction and episodes and moments in the interaction, 'could not be interpreted'. It is as if, in Tannen's words (following Goffman), a frame is a 'game that is being played'. Our capacity to influence strategically the actions of the 'game' (in particular the discourses of the game) successfully, depends to a large degree on our ability to frame a situation or an interaction. How we do this is the essence of our conversational competence.

(Knowledge) *schemata* in contrast have more to do with a person's prior knowledge of events, activities and so on in the world, that condition what they may 'expect' to hear, take part in or read. In short, what we bring with us to any communication. This knowledge (schema), like our awareness of frames, changes through experience.

Quote 4.6 Tannen and Wallat on 'knowledge schema'

We use the term 'knowledge schema' to refer to participants' expectations about people, objects, events and settings in the world, as distinguished from alignments being negotiated in a particular interaction.

(Tannen and Wallat 1993: 60)

In sum, frames refer to what the participants believe 'is being done' and alignment they take up in relation to this activity. Schemata, on the other hand, say Tannen and Wallat, 'are patterns of expectations and assumptions about the world, its inhabitants and objects'. (Tannen and Wallat 1993: 73)

The following illustrative extract from Tannen and Wallat (1993) (whose paper chiefly focuses on a medical examination involving a paediatrician, a mother and a child with cerebral palsy) provides an everyday example of *framing* at work, against the background of schemata.

Quote 4.7 Tannen and Wallat exemplify framing at work against background schemata

One author (Tannen) was talking to a friend on the telephone, when he suddenly yelled, "YOU STOP THAT!" She knew from the way he uttered this command that it was addressed to a dog and not her. She remarked on the fact that when he addressed the dog, he spoke in something approximating a southern [American] accent. The friend explained that this was because the dog had learned to respond to commands in that accent, and to give another example, he illustrated the way he plays with the dog: "I say, 'GO GIT THAT BALL!'" Hearing this the dog began running about the room looking for something to fetch. The dog recognized the frame "play" in the tone of the command; he could not, however, understand the words that identified an outer frame "referring to playing with the dog," and mistook the reference for a literal invitation to play.

(Tannen and Wallat 1993: 61)

Tannen and Wallat comment that people identify frames in interaction not only by what people say but *how* they say it. At the same time, one's particular frame at any moment in the interaction is underpinned by possibly long-standing schemata—in this case the knowledge that the

'friend' was taking care of someone's dog. One might here draw a distinction between 'conceptual' framing and 'contextual' framing (see Casson 1983).

Returning to frames (which are the main focus of our attention) a further example is provided by Manning in his analysis of Goffman's work:

Quote 4.8 Manning exemplifying framing

Opposing lawyers have at least three ways to challenge eyewitness testimony: they can undermine the credibility of the witness ("he was drunk at the time"), they can question the possibility of an observation ("The street was poorly lit"), or they can insist that the witness merely interpreted observations that could be interpreted quite differently ("the kiss was ritualistic not sexual"). Goffman's interest in frames concerns issues raised by this last sort of attack. He believed that our observations are only understandable in terms of the frames we put around them.

(Manning 1992: 118)

Randall Collins also explicates Goffman's theoretical stance regarding frames.

Quote 4.9 Collins on Goffman's theory of interaction

Goffman argues [see *Forms of Talk*, 1981] … that 'frame space' is a more precise referent for what older sociological theory called 'norms'. Social constraints are not encoded in the form of verbal prescriptions, but are something deeper. These are not rules that people have learned to carry around in their heads, but are ways in which situations unfold, so that participants feel they have to behave in a certain way, or to make amends for not doing so. It is the frames that are the constraints. Even when they are broken, the situation that emerges remains constraining in a predictably transformed way. Similarly, Goffman … sees 'role' as an imprecise concept; on finer examination, it (e.g. the role of the lecturer, or of the radio announcer) really consists of multiple voices and a way in which changes in footing are managed.

(Collins 1988: 57)

We will return to this issue of frame-shifting and footing in Concept 4.3 below.

Collins (1988: 58–61) offers some further examples (here in summary form) of Goffman's use of *frame*, in particular referring to the complex and dynamic way in which Goffman views what for him is the highly dynamic construct of 'situation':

- Situations are multidimensional and multilayered
- Each participant can have different layers of definition of the same situation (*at the same time*)
- Frames are built upon frames, some more fundamental than others
- People rarely have problems with this multiple reality. (Why is this?)
- People can deceive others into false interpretations of what is going on
- Where 'frame breaks' occur, participants move to correct the frame

Collins concludes:

Quote 4.10 Collins on the importance of framing

Framing permeates the level of ordinary social action. We live in a world of social relationships, in which roles are acted out, with various keyings and deceptions played upon them. This is the core of practical activities and occupations, of power and stratification. Here again, Goffman leads us to the brink of seeing the micro-reality upon which macro-structures are based.

(Collins 1988: 61)

Concept 4.1(b) Frame terms

In his book on Goffman, Manning (1992: 122–9) identifies Goffman's 'Basic Frame Terms' as follows (in summary form):

- Social interaction is made meaningful by frames: what Goffman refers to as *primary frameworks*. These include *natural* and *social* frameworks. Natural frameworks define situations in terms of physical events over which we have no control, for example, the weather. Social frameworks make sense of events in terms of human intervention—they guide our understanding of strips (see Concept 4.2 below).

- We mostly become aware of social frameworks when they are *disturbed* or *contravened* or *accidentally infringed.*
- Any primary framework can be *keyed*. These *keys* work to signify frames or indicate their change of nature. For example, a game may suddenly become a fight, or a wedding is signified by a particular announcement of roles ('Will you take this man to be…'), or a conference presentation is interrupted by someone speaking seeking advice from an associate. Frameworks can therefore be *rekeyed*.
- Primary frameworks can be transformed by *fabrications*. These occur when someone deliberately misleads another as to what frame they are so to speak, 'in'.

Keys and fabrications undermine frames—as Manning says, 'they leave people unsure as to what is happening around them' (Manning 1992: 126). Frames can be *anchored* against this—that is that purported and actual meanings are kept constant. *Anchors* 'use a series of devices to convince us that what appears to be real is real' (Manning 1992: 127). How do they do this? By 'bracketing', by announcing roles, by assuming that people have selves which exist independent of roles, by understanding of the interaction order and the ritual.

Reflection task 4.1

As a teacher, or as an interpreter or translator, or a professional communication specialist, what frames do you think engage your interpretation of what is going on in the activities in which you are engaged?

Here's one example from the teaching context:

For example: you may *counsel* a student, you may *reprimand* a student, a student might *complain* and you may *respond to that complaint*.

- What opportunities are there for *frame mismatches* and *frame shifts* in such actions?
- To what extent do you think that other participants would have a different perspective on your perception of the *frames* in question?

Quote 4.11 Firkins and Candlin on frames in child protection practice

We argue that frames in relation to risk are the basic units of interpretive situation and the means through which practitioners organize their conceptions of what is happening at that time and location. The process of framing the child at risk is therefore the complex linking and layering of different frames to construct a situationally based account of what is happening.

(Firkins and Candlin 2006: 278)

Concept 4.2 Strips

Quote 4.12 Goffman on 'strips'

[A strip is] any arbitrary slice or cut from the stream of ongoing activity, including here sequences of happenings, real or fictive, as seen from the perspective of those subjectively involved in sustaining an interest in them.

(Goffman 1974, cited in Lemert and Branaman 1997: 155)

Frames are drawn upon to analyse these strips, and constitute the data on which frame analysis can be undertaken. In short, strips are those sequences of happenings in which an analyst is interested, rather than necessarily any sequence which may be ratified or determined by some institution or convention. They are, thus, not sociolinguistic but rather *analytic* constructs. Nonetheless, the strips that analysts (and people) identify will have some significance for them; they may signal what they see as significant about a structured event—such that it involves this or that talk, these or those actions. Strips thus can tell us something about how participants orient to what they and others are saying and/or doing. As Manning (1992: 122) indicates, 'strips are the empirical materials subjected to frame analysis'.

Goffman goes on to write:

Quote 4.13 Goffman on strips and episodes

Any more or less protracted strip of everyday, literal activity seen as such by all the participants is likely to contain differently framed episodes, these having different realm statuses. A man finishes giving instructions to his postman, greets a passing couple, gets into his car, and drives off.

(Goffman 1974, cited in Manning 1992: 162)

In explaining this strip of activity, Goffman stresses that from it we could potentially construct various situations from each of the participants' perspectives, drawing on a number of institutionally ratified categories. The analytical issue for discourse analysts is to explore these episodes and work out what the categorisations might be, what limitations of role or action they impose, what discourses they suggest or even require, and, how these discourses may, if necessary, be verbalised or semioticised.

Concept 4.3 Footing

This term refers to 'another way of talking about a change in our frame of events' (Goffman 1981: 128), in particular, what Goffman refers to as 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' (Goffman 1981: 128). In brief, any change of footing implies a shift in frame.

What then are these footings?

For Goffman, they are essentially signals participants make by means of conscious and strategic semiotic choices—from the resources of language, discourse, gesture that we all possess (to varying degrees of competence and communicative expertise). In his chapter on Footing in his book *Forms of Talk* (1981), Goffman provides a number of examples.

It is clear that Goffman regards such shifts in footing as reflecting 'the capacity of a dexterous speaker to jump back and forth' (Goffman 1981: 156) and offers as evidence the strategic linguistic choices that such speakers make. Shifts in footing are not only a product of some misunderstanding—they can be used (and frequently are) to refer to strategic changes in direction of the argument, perspective or position of a speaker.

In this same chapter on Footing, Goffman takes up this issue of how footing is closely related to the overall structure of participation in the interaction. Rather than restricting himself to the canonical roles of speaker and hearer, he extends his understanding of what he calls 'participation structure' or 'participation management' to include a range of other discourse roles in the interaction.

As a means of doing this he distinguishes (see Chap. 3) between what he calls *ratified* and *non-ratified* participants—that is those whose place in the interaction is formally accounted for (say the main speaker or hearer)

and those whose social place in the talk is not ratified—that is the listeners (though of course, listeners can become ratified as speakers or hearers by custom or invitation). Now if there are more than two ratified participants (which is frequently the case) the one ratified participant may or may not be the addressee. So it is quite likely that one may have speakers and addressed recipients and unaddressed recipients. What occasions a change in such relationship may be carried out by a shift in footing.

For example, someone may say something to a ratified participant (addressee) but its significance may suddenly be picked up by an unratified bystander who intervenes, shifts the footing and the frame, and becomes, for that moment, ratified. A good example might be a group of friends at a dinner where several conversations may be going on at once and participants may join, leave and rejoin different conversations as the dinner proceeds. Goffman invented the term 'with' to identify those participants who were *with* a particular framed talk at a particular time.

What other participant or discourse roles than the traditional speaker and hearer can we imagine? Among them might be *author*, or *principal*, or *audience, bystanders, spokespersons*. We can then typologise events in terms of the kind of participation they involve. For example, the participation structure in a service encounter in a shop is distinct from the participation system in a court, or in a church or in an interview.

In Stephen Levinson's key article which seeks to link Goffman's frames, via the construct of footing, to selections and choices in the linguistic forms of utterances, Levinson (1988) offers not only a succinct presentation of Goffman's overall approach to discourse in interaction, but explores in particular the construct of 'footing' (or as Levinson prefers to term it) *participant role*. In essence the article argues that changes in footing are occasioned by changes in *participation* and are signaled by linguistic (we might now say, semiotic) cues and markers.

It is worth noting that in exploring Levinson's summarising of Goffman's analysis on this topic it is useful to compare its sophistication and delicacy with the more limited, and to an extent more static scheme of Dell Hymes (see Chap. 3).

The challenge for Goffman is to go beyond speaker and hearer and to recognise, as we suggest above, that there are always a range of types of participant operating within a 'participant framework'. Levinson brings

Table 4.1 Goffman's participation roles (1981 page references)

Production format (henceforth *production roles*)	
1. animator	'the sounding box' (p. 226)
2. author	'the agent who scripts the lines' (p. 226)
3. principal	'the party to whose position the words attest' (p. 226)
Participation framework (henceforth *reception roles*)	
A:	*ratified* (p. 226)
1. *addressed recipient* 'the one to whom the speaker addresses his visual attention and to whom, incidentally, he expects to turn over his speaking role' (p. 133)	
2. *unaddressed recipient* (p. 133) 'the rest of the "official hearers" who may or may	not be listening'
B:	*unratified*
1. *over-hearers* 'inadvertent', 'non-official' listeners (p. 132) or *bystanders*	
2. *eavesdroppers* 'engineered', 'non-official' followers of talk (p. 132)	

together these types or roles in a table we reproduce below (Table 4.1), from Levinson 1988: 169, drawing on examples in Goffman's (1981) book *Forms of Talk*. (The pages in brackets refer to *Forms of Talk*.)

Levinson draws on this participation framework to extend Goffman's categorisation, and very significantly makes a link between *participant* roles and *institutional* roles.

Levinson comments:

Quote 4.14 Levinson on participation roles

As Haviland (1986) points out … much insight into the nature of participant roles may accrue from consideration of talk in specialized 'institutional' settings—law courts, seances, religious services, committee meetings and the like—where the gross roles of producer and receiver may be surgically dissected for institutional purposes, testing any analytical set of categories severely. Thus, for example, when a counsel interrogates a witness in court, that interrogation is conducted in order to be assessed by (and partly on behalf of) channel-linked adjudicators, namely judge and jury. Hence in cross-examination in a crown court, say, there is an assignment of *participant roles to institutional roles*.

(Levinson 1988: 196–7)

Levinson then exemplifies such an assignment of roles by referring to Carr (1983) and English Magistrates' Courts, and suggesting a suitable framework for these roles:

Example 4.1 Levinson's Framework: Cross-examination roles in an English court of law (Levinson 1988: 197)

Counsel	(1)	speaker (of questions), but not fully source. Since counsel speaks on behalf of client, we perhaps need here to split source into *sponsor* (client) and *spokesman* (counsel). So counsel is speaker and spokesman;
	(2)	addressee (of witnesses' answers; and of judge's rulings on objections, etc.);
Witness	(1)	speaker (of answers), here more wholly source—however, note that *sponsor* is prosecutor or defence, who may be *ghostor* [NOTE: This is a new term of Levinson's referring to a co-present 'script writer' or 'rehearser'];
	(2)	addressee (of counsel's questions);
Jury	(1)	audience;
	(2)	indirect targets;
Judge	(1)	speaker (and source) of rulings;
	(2)	addressee of objections;
	(3)	indirect target;
	(4)	audience;
Public Gallery		audience or ratified overhearers.

Reflection task 4.2

Given the above classification (and categorisation by Levinson) consider what changes you might have to make if you were seeking to describe who is involved in the 'goings on' in a court where the witness (or the defendant) was not a native speaker of English, and where the proceedings have to be mediated through the services of a legal interpreter.

- What are new (or changed) participant roles?
- What is the new participant framework?

The issue for discourse analysis, then, is to mark how footings are realised, how they relate to frames and strips, and how, ultimately, they relate to the different discourses that may be in contestation within an individual, or between individuals within an overall institutional order of discourse. What is important is that these signals of footing may be

realised through talk but they may equally be realised not by talk at all, but by touch, by gaze or by gesture.

These semiotic signs of footing will be among the topics of Themes #4 and #5.

4.3 Managing Face and Facework in Discourse

Concept 4.4 Face and facework

The constructs of *face* and *facework* are ones typically associated with the work of Goffman and elaborated by him, as we saw in Chap. 3, in a number of publications all concerned in various ways with what he terms the study of *the interaction order*.

Quote 4.15 Goffman on the 'face-to-face' domain

My concern over the years has been to promote acceptance of this face-to-face domain as an analytically viable one—a domain which might be titled, for want of any happy name, the interaction order—a domain whose preferred method of study is microanalysis.

(Goffman 1983: 2)

We have already illustrated earlier Goffman's participation framework with its emphasis on participant roles, and have also stressed how apparently routine strips of interaction can reveal intricate patterns of behaviour and suggest rich accounts in terms of interpretation if we examine them closely enough. It is in this context that as with frames and footings, the equally central constructs of *face* and *facework* have their place in Goffman's writings and in discourse analysis more generally.

In his account of Goffman's work, Philip Manning (1992) makes the following comment:

Quote 4.16 Manning on Goffman's notions of 'face' and 'face saving'

Instead of analysing people as calculative manipulators seeking personal gain, these papers (i.e. Goffman's paper 'On face-work' and 'Embarrassment and social organization' reproduced in Goffman 1967) suggest that we are all guardians of face-to-face situations. The motive for behaviour is no longer to maximize personal gain but to protect social situations. In all situations individuals are obliged to project a self that has a 'positive social value'. This image of self is a person's 'face' and we try hard to protect it. There is a general conspiracy to save face so that social situations can also be saved: loss of face at a party, business luncheon, or even a casual meeting undermines the entire event. The desire to save our own leads us to monitor our actions carefully….Face-work makes our actions consistent with our projected selves. Consistency is maintained either through avoidance or through corrective actions, the success of the former making the latter redundant. The result of face-work is self-regulating interaction that sustains a 'ritual equilibrium'.

(Manning 1992: 38–9)

Goffman himself puts the argument as follows:

Quote 4.17 Goffman on 'taking a line'

Every person lives in a world of social encounters, involving him either in face-to-face or mediated contact with other participants. In each of these contacts, he tends to act out what is sometimes called a line—that is, a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which he expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants; especially himself. Regardless of whether a person intends to take a line, he will find that he has done so in effect. The other participants will assume that he has more or less wilfully taken a stand, so that if he is to deal with their response to him he must take into consideration the impression they have possibly formed of him.

The term face may be defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image self-delineated in terms of approved social attributes—albeit an image that others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing of himself.

(Goffman 1967: 5)

We have seen earlier in this chapter how framing is the means on which events and actions and people themselves and their utterances depend for achieving meaning. Such framing is however always conditional, essentially constrained not only by social structures and social organisations, but also by this interpersonal and dynamic construction of face. Goffman discusses the individual's social face as follows:

Quote 4.18 Goffman on 'social face'

The individual's social face is "only on loan to him from society"—approved attributes and their relation to face make of every man his own jailer; this is a fundamental social constraint even though each man may like his cell.

(Goffman 1967: 10)

Reflection task 4.3

How do you think you could relate Goffman's position here on 'face' with Bourdieu's concept of 'capital'?

Goffman's construct of face is closely connected with his understanding of *self* (see in particular his book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959)).

Quote 4.19 Branaman on Goffman's concepts of 'self' and 'face'

The self, as Goffman portrays it, is simultaneously a product of dramatic performance, an object of social ritual and a field of strategic gamesmanship…. We maintain face by following social norms, showing deference for and affirming the dignity of others, and presenting ourselves in accordance with our places in the status hierarchy. The main function of 'face-work'—interactional work oriented towards affirming and protecting the dignity of social participants—is to maintain the ritual order of social life.

(Branaman 1997: lxiii)

Reflection task 4.4

Consider Goffman's constructs of *face* and *facework*. Try to identify a situation in which either your 'face' has been 'threatened' or you have 'threatened' the face of another.

- How would you interpret and characterise these face-threatening acts?
- What kinds of repairing facework would you expect another to exercise towards you, or you towards another, when this threat to face has been identified?
- To what extent is this facework constrained by the social and interactional order in which you are situated as a participant?

In a paper concerning the discourse of social work (Hall et al. 1999) redefine facework as 'face management' (including within this the face wants, rights and needs of interactants) and make the point that such management plays what they term a 'key part in identity negotiation in professional discourse settings' (Hall et al. 1999: 297).

Quote 4.20 Hall, Sarangi and Slembrouck on 'face management'

Following Goffman (1955) we view "face" as an important social good. Since the construction of client identities in social work settings centres on "problems", threats to face are inevitable and the management of face-relations becomes an intricate part of identity negotiation.… when a client's "face as a mother" is being appreciated, her "face as a parent may be at risk"; similarly, where a social worker's "face as befriender" may be appreciated, her "expert face as a counsellor" may be undermined. Face management is thus linked to role differentiation and identity construction.

(Hall et al. 1999: 297)

Concept 4.5 Politeness theory

In Levinson (1988), the author acknowledges that Goffman's ideas have been filtered through intermediaries who may not always have succeeded in passing credit back to its source. For example, Levinson writes, 'the face-work ideas have been recycled as a theory of linguistic politeness

by Lakoff (1973), Brown and Levinson (1978), Leech (1983), and others…' (Levinson 1988: 160).

4.4 Relationship of Politeness Theory to Face and Facework

How then is politeness theory related to face and facework? Brown and Levinson's (1987) publication makes the claim that all competent adults have (and know each other to have) 'face', which they define and explain as follows:

Quote 4.21 Brown and Levinson defining 'face'

'[F]ace'… is the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself, consisting of two related aspects:

(a) negative face: the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction—i.e. to freedom of action and freedom from imposition
(b) positive face: the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants.

(Brown and Levinson 1987: 61)

Interaction is a site where a person's face can be threatened, lost, maintained or even enhanced. As a consequence of its central significance (and here we see the resonances with Goffman above) face is constantly attended to in such interaction.

How is face so attended to? Essentially, Brown and Levinson argue, via the choice and particular realisation of speech acts. Certain speech acts (e.g. requests, apologies, compliments, offers) are, they argue, inherently *face-threatening*, and such face-threatening acts (or FTAs) demand in consequence great care in their articulation. Extending the ideas of Goffman and defining them more precisely, they propose that interacting

participants 'weigh up' the seriousness of the 'weightiness' of any utterance in relation to conditioning factors:

- The power difference between the participants
- The distance-closeness (or solidarity) of the participants
- The degree of imposition on the participants posed by the message content

On the basis of such a 'weighing up', there are various strategies of communication available to the participants. Brown and Levinson set out a scheme for the weighting of utterances in terms of selecting an appropriate strategy on the basis that the more a speech act is appraised as likely to threaten a co-participant's face, whether speaker or hearer, the more appropriate it will be to choose a higher-numbered strategy, as in Fig. 4.1.

Concept 4.6 Strategies for performing FTAs

For an understanding of redressive action note how bald-on-record utterances (i.e. utterances which make a statement or claim without any conditions (cf. 'I don't believe you')) attract in particular contexts of interaction, ameliorating and negative politeness forms.

A further example of putting Brown and Levinson's theories of politeness (and by inference Goffman's theory of face) into practice is provided

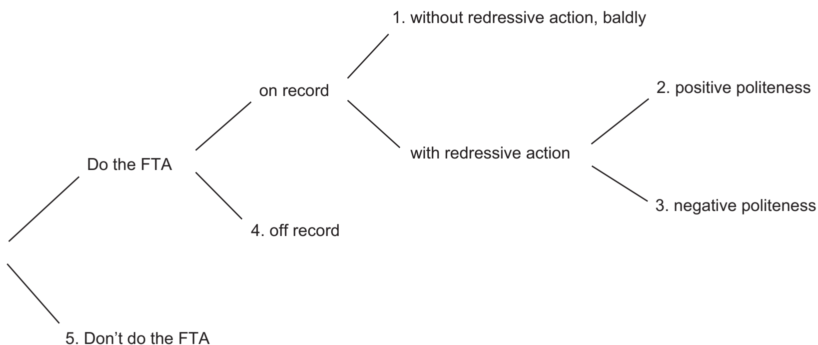

Fig. 4.1 Brown and Levinson's possible strategies for doing FTAs (Brown and Levinson 1987: 69)

by Janet Holmes and her colleagues in New Zealand with their extensive *Language in the Workplace* project.

Quote 4.22 Holmes, Stubbe and Vine on face and verbal strategies in the workplace

Workplace interactions are seldom neutral in terms of power. Any analysis which focuses on the construction of professional identity in this context is therefore inevitably concerned with the ways in which power and solidarity are enacted through discourse. Here politeness theory, interactional sociolinguistics [see Chap. 5] and critical discourse analysis [see Chap. 8] provide productive explanatory frameworks.

Social and pragmatic factors such as the relative status and social distance of participants, and the 'ranking of the imposition' represented by an utterance, as identified by Brown and Levinson (1987) in their model of politeness, are of particular relevance to the analysis. Brown and Levinson develop Goffman's (1967, 1971) notion of 'face', exploring in particular the implications of the concept of negative face (the individual's need for space and self-determination) and positive face (the individual's need for appreciation and friendship) in verbal interaction. Verbal strategies which express avoidance-based negative politeness often attenuate the force of a proposition. They include devices such as lexical hedges (e.g. perhaps, probably) epistemic modal verbs (e.g. might, may) and pragmatic particles, such as I think and sort of, which include the expression of tentativeness among their possible meanings… Positive politeness, on the other hand, involves the expression of solidarity or friendliness. Verbal strategies expressing positive politeness include endearments, expression of approval and agreement, and addressee-oriented pragmatic particles such as you know and you see.

(Holmes et al. 1999: 354)

Finale: A note of caution

This is not the place to enter into an extensive critique of Brown and Levinson's theory, although there have been a number. What we can note is that its base is essentially from pragmatics, in particular from speech act theory (see Searle 1969), and is concerned with meaning, while Goffman's construct of face, and in particular the action-oriented associated construct of 'facework' is essentially interactional.

Facework implies a mutual and co-constructed 'working out' of the issues of politeness adumbrated by Brown and Levinson much later, and,

as we note, without reference to Goffman's work. There is another issue: for those in power, whether or not they articulate their power overtly to varying degrees (as in Brown and Levinson's model) is significant. They may not articulate it overtly at all, however hedged, relying on what Gramsci the Italian Marxist critic and philosopher in his study of hegemony (*egemonia*) referred to as 'collusive power' by which manipulation and authority are accepted and self-subjected to by those with lesser power, thus making overt coercive power unnecessary to be articulated baldly, or indeed redressively, by those in power.

Part 2

In this part of Chap. 4 we focus on methodology, namely ethnographic and sociocultural analysis. In doing so, we continue to draw on Goffman's ideas, but also turn to Geertz for his key insights into ethnography.

Summary of Concepts

How is discourse rational? What makes participant accounts indexical? What is reflexive about discourse? What are the tools of a 'thick' description? What is the relationship between 'thick description' and 'thick participation' in research? Researcher-participant roles in discourse analysis and the importance of 'joint problematisation' and 'reflexivity'.

4.5 Exploring Ethnography

In Chap. 3, we have already signalled the importance of accountability (together with categorisation) in the understanding of the significance to participants and their institutional and community belongings of discourse in action. We saw there that we owe the concept of accountability primarily to the work of sociologist Harold Garfinkel and his studies in what he called ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1967), by which he meant a new methodology in which researchers could approach the analysis of social structure through an exploration of the discourse and action of the members of those social orders and those institutions themselves. In discussing accountability we also introduced the two constructs of indexicality and reflexivity (which we will discuss in more length below). This focus on accountability immediately raises the issues of how such

accounts are formulated in discourse in action. We can identify two principal ways:

1. Through the narratives of experience of the participants (in the fullest sense of Goffman's participant framework (see Table 4.1 earlier in this chapter)); and

2. Through the study of participant performance in interaction.

Studying such accountability, and the historical, cultural and social underpinnings of it, is principally the domain of ethnography and its associated methodologies. It is this ethnographic focus which will be the main topic of Part 2 of this chapter, with a further discussion of the place of reflexivity in the explanation of the relationship of the researcher to her/his discourse data. A good point to begin is that taken by one of the key researchers in this field and one of the key scholars associated with this Theme, namely social anthropologist Clifford Geertz.

Quote 4.23 Geertz on ethnography as an intellectual effort

In anthropology, or anyway social anthropology, what the practitioners do is ethnography. And it is from understanding what ethnography is, or more exactly what doing ethnography is, that a start can be made toward grasping what anthropological analysis amounts to as a form of knowledge. This, it must immediately be said, is not a matter of methods. From one point of view, that of the textbook, doing ethnography is establishing rapport, selecting informants, transcribing texts, taking genealogies, mapping fields, keeping a diary, and so on. But it is not these things, techniques and received procedures that define the enterprise. What defines it is the kind of intellectual effort it is: an elaborate venture in, to borrow a notion from Gilbert Ryle, 'thick description'.

(Geertz 1973: 2)

For Geertz, in a later collection of essays (Geertz 1983), he writes that achieving what he calls this 'thick description' is essentially an 'ongoing, iterative interpretive process' (Geertz 1983: 58). It is a search to understand how and why behaviour is shaped in one way as opposed to

another. This interpretive ethnography involves searching out and analysing the symbolic forms—words, images, categorisations, roles, institutional practices, behaviours more generally—through which people actually represent themselves to themselves and to one another.

Concept 4.7 Ethnographic description

In his now classic book *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), Geertz discusses the nature of ethnographic description. Broadly, he writes, the ethnographer's aim is to observe, record and analyse a culture. More specifically, it is to interpret what is said or done *within* the culture. This interpretation must be based on what he calls a 'thick description', in order to see the range of possible meanings.

Geertz's reproduction of Ryle's example of the 'wink of any eye' clarifies this point. 'Thin' description would be the winking itself. 'Thick' description on the other hand involves teasing out the meanings behind and underlying the winking and, in particular, its symbolic import in society or between communicators. (It is worth noting here the potential link to the work of Bourdieu and his constructs of *habitus* and *capital*.)

Geertz's point is that social actions are larger than the actions themselves. They speak to larger issues, and larger issues speak *through* them. The difficult challenge for ethnographers is to select which 'meanings' are especially relevant to a given context, interaction or study, and to do so in a collaborative process with the participants in the actions themselves in the search for relevance.

Sarangi and Candlin (2003) likewise reflect on the different kinds of research stance/role towards participants and data that researchers in discourse analysis can adopt. Here is a list of these researcher roles, which we elaborate further in Part 2 of Chap. 5.

Concept 4.8 Researcher role (1)

1. Researcher as outsider/insider
2. Researcher as resource
3. Researcher as befriender
4. Researcher as target audience and assessor of performance
5. Researcher as expert/consultant and agent of change

Quote 4.24 Sarangi and Candlin researcher roles

It is also the case that some types of role might be more expected than others in a given situation. It seems that the researcher has to be on his/her guard throughout the research process and beyond.... Although ethnographic observation can be a rich resource for validating discourse analytic claims, any rupture in the sphere of participation will jeopardise the authenticity of what one gets to observe and the impact such observation might have on what is being observed.

(Sarangi and Candlin 2003: 281)

Ethnographic investigation thus explores how everyday experience is organised by, and articulated towards, organisational/institutional structures, social processes and to power relations. In doing so, it seeks to explain and unfold the social processes and practices that 'organise' people's daily lives from the standpoint of direct experience, drawing on narratives of such experience offered as 'accounts' by members. As we have seen, such 'accounts' may be offered within the community of practice (i.e. to other members) or outside (i.e. to Others, e.g. researchers) (Smith 1987: 151). Exploring how micro and macro dimensions are grounded and fit together becomes the research strategy, and the activity or behaviour of individual participants becomes not the object of the study but its starting point.

Note that this relationship between the macro and the micro is a key one for discourse analysis and will be elaborated in Theme 4 where we discuss the contribution of Aaron Cicourel and his construct of 'ecological validity'.

Quote 4.25 Geertz summarising the process of 'accounting'

What ethnography seeks to do rests on the capacity of the researcher to persuade readers … that what they are reading is an authentic account by someone personally acquainted with how life proceeds in some place at some time, among some group.

(Geertz 1988: 143)

Concept 4.9 Ethnographic practices

The aim of interpretive ethnography is 'to aid us in gaining access to the conceptual world in which our subjects live' (Geertz 1973: 24). Ethnographers are concerned with everyday interactions within an

immediate or local framework and the broader contexts in which the events/situations happen; what Roberts refers to as 'the informal experiences within the formal institutions' (Roberts 2001: 325). Research 'sites' are changing environments of interacting events and ideas. They involve the discourse types of *participating, reacting, perceiving* and *evaluating*, as well as deciding on courses of action and taking action (which in turn can influence future events, ideas, perceptions, judgements and actions).

It is important to note that it is not only practices and activities that are investigated in ethnographic research, but also *how* these activities are organised, that is, how the *ongoing* production and conducting of social processes are made visible and explicated. Through this focus we may be able to demonstrate how the institutional order of society is constructed and reconstructed through people's daily activities. Ethnography enables the researcher to explore, describe, interpret and in some measure to explain the complex of relations that such a process of (re)construction encompasses. To this extent, ethnographers seek to explicate how it is that phenomena are there to be observed, and how they are sustained.

Note also that this process is different from that of a narrowly descriptive method—say the analysis of texts or discourses as objects—which seeks merely to describe the features of the phenomena. Such a descriptive method, as it is generally used, describes what is there, and not how what is there came to be or how it is sustained. That is why the resource map of Layder (see Fig. 9.1 in Part II) is of clear and important relevance.

Smith proposes that the ethnographic researcher defines the everyday world as both the entry point and the locus for research (Smith 1987: 90). The everyday world is, however, not itself the object or phenomenon for study. It is not a particular 'case' in itself which is of concern, but the 'case' presents itself as the entry point for fitting the local experience into the larger social, economic and political processes. This is the position taken by Layder, as we have seen, but also more generally sociologically by Giddens:

Quote 4.26 Giddens on macro and micro phenomena of the everyday world

[T]he phenomena of everyday behaviour are implicated in the macro phenomena as deeply as macro or 'structural' or 'institutional' phenomena are implicated in the micro world of everyday interaction.

(Giddens 1987: 67)

Following are two insightful commentaries about ethnographic research, the first from Graham Smart, the second from Dell Hymes:

Quote 4.27 Smart on interpretive ethnographic research

The methodology I have employed in the study is interpretive ethnography, a qualitative approach that enables a researcher to explore a professional organization's repertoire of shared symbolic resources, or discourse, in order to learn something of how its members view and function within their particular, self-constructed corner of the world....[It] also allows a researcher to investigate how members of an organization differentiate among, characterize, and communicate with outside audiences.

(Smart 2006: 9–10)

Quote 4.28 Hymes on ethnographic research

Ways of doing and being cannot be assumed in advance of inquiry … [this can] only be discovered through participation and observation over time.

(Hymes 1996: 10)

Summary: Towards an ethnographic methodology in discourse analysis

We might identify the following assumptions and practices that can form part of ethnographic approaches to research (adapted from Davis and Henze 1998: 401):

- the belief that realities are multiple, constructed and complex
- the acknowledgement of the researcher's positionality
- the concern with documenting variation and change
- a prolonged engagement and observation
- a triangulation of data sources
- a 'thick' description, interpretation and explanation
- an application of research findings to social issues.

What this summary implies for methodology is that in ethnographic research it becomes difficult (and is significant) that researchers avoid drawing rigid divisions between data and interpretation. This is important for managing (and changing) the growing body of ideas, connecting the parts of an event, situation, context and integrating reflection and recorded data. Obtaining a range of data is important, but equally important is how this range of data is to be interpreted and integrated. Such an iterative process should involve comparing and cross-referencing information, perceptions and representations, and treating as data the 'record' of subjects' ideas (not only about the situation/event but also about the research) and their reflections on them.

Because the participants in ethnographic research are usually more knowledgeable about their practices than is the researcher (see Sarangi and Candlin 2003: 283), the research task involves seeking their insights—social, cultural, professional, institutional, personal.

4.6 Participant's Knowledge and Beliefs

What participants know and believe is important to any understanding of 'what it is that is going on', that is:

- What activities they engage in
- What values they attribute to such activities and their constituent actions
- What meanings they conventionally ascribe
- What the relationships are that bond members into communities of practice

However, the goal of understanding what participants know or believe is not itself adequate as a research framework. To have this as a goal would be to assume, incorrectly, that there is somehow a body of existing knowledge and values which is lying in wait for the researcher to be 'discovered'. Thus, while working on the assumption that subjects/participants'

knowledge and perspectives are particularly valuable, ethnography should also challenge and problematise what is familiar to research subjects, balancing a respect for their accounts with critical scepticism.

Ethnographic research allows for, and must be prepared for, the study of both anticipated and unanticipated outcomes, and of changes in understandings and perceptions. As we shall explore further in Theme 4 in this book, interactions have multiple symbolic meanings and there are, as a consequence, multiple ways to represent understanding. Research participants and situations are themselves multidimensional, and the relationship between those who are interacting can change qualitatively. Thus, rather than exploring 'truths' about 'Others', the task for ethnography is to examine varying versions and visions of truth, and 'their making'. In this way, ethnographic research functions as a vehicle for identifying multiple voices and it involves issues of cultural complexity and evolution as well as issues of validity.

Accordingly, writing accounts of research is itself a process of recording of meaning and interpretation.

Quote 4.29 Geertz on writing accounts of research

[Writing accounts of research involves changing the research situation] from a passing event, which exists only in its own moment of occurrence, into an account, which exists in its inscriptions and can be consulted.

(Geertz 1973: 19)

Reflection task 4.5

Consider the following key points and statements which are drawn from a key paper for this Theme by Geertz (1973):

What do they mean to you?
Do you agree with them?
How would you offer an explanation of them?
Could you identify contexts in which the points in question could be exemplified and illustrated?

- *Culture is essentially semiotic.*
- *If you want to understand (a science) look at what practitioners do.*
- *Ethnography is an 'uncovering' of meaningful structures.*
- *Contrast the observational with the interpretive: 'ask not what its ontological status is—ask what is its import'.*
- *Culture is public because meaning is.*

- *Understanding a people's culture exposes their normalness without reducing their particularity.*
- *Ethnographic research is intent on arranging entities into patterns.*
- *Ethnographies inscribe social discourse.*
- *What we write is always a 'gist'—it is the meaning of the speech event, not the event as an event.*
- *We do not inscribe raw social discourse but only that small part which our informants can lead us to understanding.*
- *Our inferences begin with a set of presumptive signifiers and we attempt to place them in an intelligible frame.*
- *There are three characteristics of ethnographic description: it is interpretive; what is interpreted is the flow of social discourse; and the interpreting involved consists in trying to rescue the 'said' of such discourse from its perishing occasions and fix it in perusable terms.*

A critical set of thoughts

Some of the critical questions you might ask yourself could be:

1. How could you guard against 'particularity'?
2. How could you control 'subjectivity'?
3. How would you ensure 'relevance'?

4.7 Linguistic Ethnography

Quote 4.30 Weatherall on an ethnographic approach to language-in-use

[I]t is not necessary to say everything about the argumentative fabric of a society [in order] to say something, and something … insightful concerning participant orientations, and … those orientations … [are] constructed by more than what is immediately relevant or set by the previous few turns of the conversation.

(Weatherall 1998: 403)

As another way of locking in the characteristics of ethnographic research, we reproduce below a number of focal points concerning ethnography drawn from a Discussion Paper titled *UK Linguistic*

Ethnography—authored by a Coordinating Committee of the UK Linguistic Ethnography Forum in December, 2004.

Note that linguistic ethnography—as the term suggests—marks its language and discourse focus clearly. It involves an analysis of language/communication behaviour and close observation of the actual social/cultural practices in which the language is embedded, and in and through which such language achieves meaning. In this way, the ethnography of communication provides a useful methodological strategy for locating key communication practices and the mediational means by which these are carried out.

As a method of social research, ethnography seeks to capture and understand the meanings and dynamics in particular cultural settings. Ethnographers spend time observing and participating in environments they seek to describe, and use a range of more or less systematic data collection techniques to record what goes on. It can generally be attributed the following connected characteristics:

Regard for local rationalities in an interplay between 'strangeness' and 'familiarity'

Ethnography typically looks for the meaning and rationality in practices that may seem strange at first from the outside, and it tries both to enter the informants' life-world and to abstract (some) of its structuring features in a process that entails continuing alternation between involvement in local activity and orientation to exogenous audiences and frameworks (Todorov 1988). Ethnography tries to comprehend the tacit and articulated understandings of the participants in whatever processes and activities are being studied, and it tries to do justice to these understandings in its reports to outsiders.

Anti-ethnocentricity and relevance

Ethnography normally questions the over-simplifications in influential discourse, and interrogates prevailing definitions. It often seeks to produce 'telling' (rather than typical) cases which demand our attention for the 'delicacy of [their] distinctions [rather than] the sweep of [their] abstractions' (Geertz 1973: 25).

Cultural ecologies

Ethnography focuses on a number of different levels/dimensions of sociocultural organisation/process at the same time and assumes that the

meaning and significance of a form or practice involve an interaction between these (and other) levels/dimensions.

Systems and particularity

Ethnography looks for patterns and systematicity in situated everyday practice, but recognises that hasty comparison across cases can blind one to the contingent moments and the complex cultural and semiotic ecologies that give any phenomenon its meaning.

Sensitising concepts, openness to data and worries about idealisation

Ethnographic analysis works with 'sensitising' concepts, 'suggesting directions along which to look' rather than with 'definitive' constructs 'providing prescriptions of what to see' (Blumer, 1969: 148). Questions may change during the course of an inquiry, and the dialectic between theory, interpretation and data is sustained throughout. Although it recognises that selectivity and idealisation are intrinsic to data, analysis tries to stay alert to the potential consequentiality of what gets left out.

Attention to the role of the researcher

Ethnography recognises the ineradicable role that the researcher's personal subjectivity plays throughout the research process. It looks to systematic field strategies and to accountable procedures to constrain self-indulgent idiosyncrasy, and expects researchers to face up to the partiality of their interpretations (Hymes 1996: 13). But the researcher's own cultural and interpretive capacities are crucial in making sense of the complex intricacies of situated everyday activity among the people being studied (Blommaert 2001: 2) (and tuning into these takes time and close involvement).

The irreducibility of experience

> Ethnography's commitment to particularity and participation … combine with its concerns about idealization … to produce a strong sense of what is unique and 'once-only' in situated acts and interactions….Ethnographic writing is often tempered by a sense of the limitations of available forms of representation, and it recognizes that there is an important element in actions and events that eludes analysis and can only be intimated or aesthetically invoked… (UK linguistics ethnography 2004: 3)

Clearly, the above focal points provided by the UK Linguistic Ethnography Forum show how ethnography that focuses on language needs to be atten-

tive to the dynamic nature of cultures, social interactions and individuals' knowledge and beliefs. Interpreting and explaining such phenomena require a substantial and deep understanding of the research site and the objects of study.

4.7.1 Two Examples of (Linguistic) Ethnography in Action

Example 1

While researching in Samoa, Elinor Ochs saw her role and purpose as a researcher as simply to record speech, but her Samoan subjects saw her quite differently. For them she was a 'guest and a foreigner' (Ochs 1988: 2). This meant that they treated her as a 'relatively high ranking person and defined the social event [of data collection] as formal' (Ochs 1988: 2). This was reinforced by the physical positioning—she was seated on a mat in an important part of the house—which defined the event as a formal visit. As a result Samoans saw the relationship with Ochs as one where their role was to serve her needs; and her request to ignore her 'was not heeded' (Ochs 1988: 2). Such a request was to them 'absurd'.

Example 2

Extract from:

The Nature of Expert Communication for the General Practice of Medicine—a Discourse Analytical Study (C. O'Grady & C. N. Candlin)

Discussion Paper 2: Focus on Empathy and Rapport

Introduction and background

The purpose of this discussion paper is to provide feedback to Medical Educators, Examiners, Fellowship candidates and other interested parties on progress of the on-going research project, 'The Nature of Expert Communication for the General Practice of Medicine'.

State of play with the project

The project is now in an extensive discourse analysis phase, involving transcription and fine-grained analysis of a wide range of Practice Based Assessment consultations in light of examiners' judgements of communication skills. Ultimately, our aim is to uncover those patterns of interaction upon which perceptions about successful communication are based, to describe what constitutes relative degrees of communicative expertise in the eyes and ears of experienced practitioner-examiners, and to make this analysis available to the profession of General Practice in a useful form.

The role of ethnography

The project seeks to describe, interpret and offer explanations of clinical interaction in meaningful, practical and relevant ways, and for this to be achieved the discourse analyst needs to draw upon insider knowledge. Ethnographic research has preceded and now informs analysis of the discourse data. It has included observations of briefing sessions and workshops for examiners, of registrar training sessions and trial examinations, including educator feedback on communication skills, as well as intensive interviews with educators and examiners. This, together with a review of texts that inform clinical education, has allowed us considerable insight into those beliefs, values and principles that shape what counts as appropriate and effective doctor-patient communication for General Practice, such as patient-centredness, a bio-psycho-social approach, acceptance and non-judgementalism, and informed and shared decision making. To be accepted by the profession as accomplished communicators, doctors need to display commitment to these principles, to varying degrees for varying contexts, through their interactions with patients.

Ethnography has also highlighted those categories of language use through which educators and examiners routinely observe and classify the communicative performance of registrars and Fellowship candidates. These categories, prescribed in examiner rating forms, announced in examiners' reports, and deduced from the comments of educators and examiners in wide ranging discussions, include the display by the candidate of an appropriate mix of open and closed questions, the ability to perceive and respond to subtle verbal and non-verbal cues, sharing of clinical thinking, lucid explanations that avoid jargon, responsive listening and the achievement of empathy and rapport.

4.8 Reflexivity and 'Thick Participation'

In what we have written about ethnography so far, and its relation to language and discourse analysis, we have incidentally been focusing on the place and positioning of the researcher. The construct of 'reflexivity' is useful here as a means of leading researchers to consider their own position as professionals and the roles they may occupy when undertaking research into a community of practice, and the research activities they undertake, and for what purposes and to whose advantage.

Concept 4.10 Reflexivity and the researcher

Explicitly, reflexivity challenges you to define for yourself where you stand in relation to your data and your practices. In particular, they ask

Quote 4.31 Taylor and White on 'realist' or 'objectivist' position

[P]rofessional practice in health and welfare is not generally characterized by the pursuit of objective truth. Rather, it is more aptly perceived as the messy and complex business of trying to sort out, from among a variety of competing perspectives and multiple versions, what is occurring in a particular situation and what should be done in response.

(Taylor and White 2000: 19)

And, in relation to *social constructionism,* they add:

Quote 4.32 Taylor and White on 'social constructionism'

Social constructionism contends that these [accounts of an event] are alternative ways of describing the same thing and that rather than trying to designate one of these as the truth it is more relevant to look at how each of the competing claims is made and at what is the context of the claim making.

(Taylor and White 2000: 26)

They go on to argue that the key to understanding this complexity lies in grasping the significance of 'professional reflexivity'.

Quote 4.33 Sarangi and Candlin on professional reflexivity

[Professional reflexivity concerns how] a given professional group contextualizes its intellectual practices (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992), and how 'professional vision' (Goodwin 1994) manifests itself discoursally through context-specific and contested practices of coding, highlighting, and material representations.

(Sarangi and Candlin 2003: 271–2)

(Note that we shall be discussing Goodwin's construct of *professional vision* in some detail in Theme #6 in this book.)

One of the important objects of this reflexivity are our modes of practice as researchers, how we reflect on the relationship between knowledge and practice (knowing 'what' and knowing 'how'), how we reflect both

within what we do (in action) and *outside* what we do (about action) and how we relate as researchers with those with whom we work. At the same time, reflexivity in applied linguistics has *par excellence* addressed itself to the 'so what' question. Roberts makes the unequivocal point:

Quote 4.34 Roberts on the 'so what?' question for applied linguistics researchers

If applied linguistics is to be practically relevant and to have some intervention status, then the design and implementation of the research needs to be negotiated from the start with those who may be affected by it.... Applied linguistics is a social linguistics but it is a social linguistics that is put to practical use.

(Roberts 2001: 132)

Even a weak interpretation of such a call would have to acknowledge that reflexivity has to be something more than merely *reflection* on what we are undertaking; more than just 'thinking about what we are doing'. At the same time this reflexivity cannot be just a matter of action either; it has to concern itself with critical appraisal of knowledge claims, while at the same time interpreting reflexivity in terms of perspective and visions of and by the 'other'.

As Taylor and White go on to argue:

Quote 4.35 Taylor and White on reflective practice

We are not interested simply in what we have done and how we have gone about things when we reflect on our practice, we must also concern ourselves with the (tacit) assumptions we are making about people, their problems and their needs when we apply knowledge about child development, mental health, learning disability and so forth.

(Taylor and White 2000: 35)

How does Sarangi's construct of *thick participation* relate to reflexivity?

Concept 4.11 'Thick participation'

In our discussion about participants and their perspectives in Chap. 3 we described these constructs in terms of 'accounts' in which participants give their interpretations of the discursive practices in which they are

engaged, and where the research aim is to develop what Layder calls 'an empathetic understanding of the behaviour of those people being studied' (Layder 1993: 38). This is a form of ethnography in which the task is to describe how the actors themselves act towards the world on the basis of how they see it, and not on the basis of how that appears to the outside observer (Blumer 1966: 542).

As Layder says, each participant has a 'subjective career' which informs the meanings they attribute to social interactions and their responses to it. The objective is to discern participants' own experiences of 'what it is that is going on'. More generally, as we have seen above, and will see more clearly in the Ontology Diagram (Candlin and Crichton 2011; Crichton 2004, 2010) displayed in Fig. 9.2 in Chap. 9, the incorporation of participants' perspectives is part of what contributes to what, as we have seen earlier, Geertz calls a thick description.

At the same time, what comes through is the need to match that 'thick' description with the necessary 'thick participation' of the researcher with the participants in the research project (see Sarangi and Candlin 2001).

What would seem to be key is the following position, again enunciated by Sarangi (2005):

Quote 4.36 Sarangi on 'thick participation'

> Thick participation constitutes a form of socialisation and it should not be equated with becoming a professional expert. There is more to expertise than a familiarisation of experience from the periphery. What I have in mind here is more of an acquisition of professional/organisational literacy that would provide a threshold for interpretive understanding. Without an adequate level of literacy, it is difficult to imagine how a researcher can understand and interpret professional conduct in a meaningful way…. As Malinowski (1935: 320) points out, one cannot 'understand the rules of the game without a knowledge of the game itself'. It is the knowledge of the game that becomes accessible via 'thick participation'.
>
> (Sarangi 2005: 377)

Sarangi's quotation is very much embedded in ethnographically based discourse analytical practice, as Smart (2006) sets out, quoting Goetz and Le Compte (1984):

Quote 4.37 Goetz and Le Compte on answering the 'so what?' question

The implications of [an ethnographic] study indicate how the research is useful beyond an intriguing analysis of a unique case…. It is difficult to respond to the question, 'So what?' However, any study is weakened if the researcher cannot answer that question.

(Goetz and Le Compte 1984, cited in Smart 2006: 187)

Such a call for generalisation beyond the case may focus itself on a particular profession or site or more generally in terms of an overarching and socially pervasive and significant construct as, say, issues of discrimination and culture. Addressing this call may engage us in a quantifiable analysis of the occurrence of particular phenomena—say features of interaction, or at a more schematic level the occurrence of particular genres—or it may highlight certain more qualitative accounts which focus more on the presumed patterns of inferencing from data from the standpoint of particular frames of reference by persons within that nominated community of practice.

Smart captures this well:

Quote 4.38 Smart on interpretive ethnography

As the study shows, interpretive ethnography, with its capacity for showing how a social group uses a particular configuration of symbol systems to construct a distinctive conceptual world, can serve well for researchers wishing to study a professional organization's use of technology-supported, symbol-based analytic practices and representations in producing and applying specialised knowledge.

(Smart 2006: 205)

Exploring how such 'analytic practices' can be both beneficent or malign, 'customer-' or 'organisation'-centred, or indicative of the expert or the novice practitioner, offers another example of the potential generalisability of the case.

Concept 4.12 Researcher role (2)

Such distinctive stances vis-à-vis the data call up issues already highlighted in this chapter, in particular highlighting that of researcher role. Sarangi (2005: 374) argues that,

Very crudely, the applied linguist [researcher] can be profiled along the following lines:

- Applied linguist as mediator (linguistics applied in a post-hoc mode)
- Applied linguist as problem-solver (in a responsive, consultancy mode)
- Applied linguist as educator (in a proactive, futurist mode)
- Applied linguist as joint collaborator and co-researcher (in a consultative, reflexive mode).

It will come as no surprise that we take the last of these roles as this book's inspiration, difficult though this role is to achieve. Note that while this position may be an article of professional faith, it remains the only position which can hope to guarantee that 'thick' participation which will enable Geertz's 'thick' description, and it is only a 'thick' description which will enable that reflective take-up of matters of relevance which sustain the generalisability of the study in question.

As a way of summary of this sub-section, Sarangi provides an account of 'thick description' of professional practice, drawing on Geertz's work:

Quote 4.39 Sarangi's account of 'thick description' of professional practice

A 'thick description' of professional practice, in Geertz's (1973) sense, can only be premised upon what I would call 'thick participation'. The notion of participation has to be taken broadly to include continuity of involvement in a research setting, including the maintenance of relationships with participants in temporal and spatial terms.... 'Thick participation' for me, extends beyond data gathering and data interpretation—it also includes the provision of feedback and the facilitation of conditions for potential uptake of discourse analytical findings.

(Sarangi 2005: 376–7)

Achieving such an engagement is neither going to be easy nor unproblematic, mutuality of participation is desirable, necessary even, in the light of the above, but at the same time, distancing is important. Smart, in his study of the discourses of the Bank of Canada, summarises the situation in the following way:

Quote 4.40 Smart on an ethnographically based discourse analytical practice

At the same time, the study underscores the importance, for researchers, of maintaining a balance of *engagement with* and *detachment from* the local reality of the professional organization under study. I have argued that such a balance is necessary if the researcher is to portray the organization in a way that encompasses both the intersubjectivity that enables intellectual collaboration and the differences in perspective that animate it, and that represents the organization's ideology while also acknowledging other perceptions and versions of reality.

(Smart 2006: 205)

4.9 A Case Study

Cutler, C. 2007. The Co-Construction of Whiteness in an MC Battle. *Pragmatics. 17*(1): 9–22.

In this study Cutler investigates how identities are discursively constructed and co-constructed in popular rap music competitions known as 'MC (Master of Ceremony) battles'. These contests involve rappers competing in a freestyle rap in which, to a background of beats and melodies, they insult their opponent using spontaneous rhymes for about a minute. The audience decides the winner through the amount of applause each contestant generates.

Rationale

Rap music is a popular component of hip hop culture, and is enjoyed by audiences the world over. Given its historical roots, in rap, black is normative and whiteness is marked. In this study Cutler investigates how a white identity is discursively constructed and displayed in an MC battle, both by a white rapper and by his black opponents. MC battles are public and high-stakes displays of a competitor's verbal skills, and face-threatening acts *par excellence*: Not only does a competitor have to rap spontaneously, but he/she has to do so in rhymes that insult an opponent's appearance, place of origin, family, supporting 'crew' and rhyming ability. Moreover, this spontaneous discourse must be carefully timed to the musical beat provided by a DJ.

Methods

The data used in this study come from six performances videotaped from MC battles televised in the United States. Three of the performances are by a white rapper (Eyedea), one is by a black rapper (RK) and two are by another black rapper (Shell). The data are analysed in terms of the interaction between competitors in paired rounds. Any discursive allusions to skin colour or race, or to phonological features commonly associated with ethnicity were noted. Thus, central to the analysis, is how the rappers interact with one another not only in terms of what the opponent said during his turn, but also in terms of how the opponent is reacting to the live performance of the other rapper (e.g. through body language; facial expressions; etc.). Goffman's notion of the 'interaction order' of any encounter as a viable analytic construct for face-to-face communication is clearly relevant in this context, as is his notion of 'footing' ('an alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance' Goffman, 1981: 128). See the original article for detailed analysis and results.

Contribution to theory-practice nexus

This case study shows the importance of accounting for the interactional order in face-to-face communication, and how interactants are constantly changing their footings in order to maintain their face and to gain advantage (as the case may be) over their interlocutors. A wide range of linguistic resources can be drawn upon to achieve this effect. Indeed, it is the superior rapping skills (demonstrating a sort of linguistic virtuosity) that enables Eyedea to claim victory over his opponents, and this in spite of his own marked ethnicity.

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5

How Do You Know That?

Following our exploration of discourse through Goffman's quintessential question 'What is it that is going on here?' we now need to consider the natural follow-up question 'How do you know that?' In this chapter we focus on processes of inferencing, reasoning and evidencing in discourse and the notion of 'ecological validity'. The key scholars here are Gumperz and Cicourel.

Part 1

Summary of Concepts

How do we 'understand' discourse? How do we interpret and explain discourse and not just describe it? What are the hidden processes of participant (and our analytical) reasoning? How is discourse linked to purposeful action?

5.1 Overview: Retrospect and Prospect

As a way of bringing together all the areas and themes which we make reference to when understanding discourse, both so far and in what

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C.N. Candlin et al., *Exploring Discourse in Context and in Action*,
Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-31506-9_5

follows in the book, the following is a very useful *mnemonic* of the *keys* we draw on, from Sarangi (2004a: 6):

Concept 5.1 Discourse Analysis: mapping the keys

- **D *Description*:** based on different units of analysis (sentence, clause, utterance, speech act, tone unit, speaking turn)
- **I *Inferences and Intentionality***: implicature [what people imply by what they say, or don't say] and presupposition; sense and force [definitional vs pragmatic meanings]; what is said and unsaid, [and what could have been said])
- **S *Structure***: (sequential, thematic, rhetorical mappings) & ***Style*** (narrative, argumentative, expository, etc.)
- **C *Context***: links between the micro and macro levels of context; physical, behavioural, linguistic/indexical, extra-situational contexts
- **O *Orderliness***: recognisable patterns of structure and style (genre and register) principles of cooperation, relevance, politeness and facework
- **U *Understanding***: negotiation of meaning; shared schemata and frames of reference; mutual knowledge
- **R *Role relationships***: subject positions, social and institutional identities; power asymmetries, appropriation of voices, target audiences
- **S *Subjectivity***: points of view, stance of both participants and analysts, authority and authenticity
- **E *Evaluation/Evidence/Explanation***: accountability (both by and of participants and analysts)

Reflection task 5.1

See if you can flesh out this mnemonic by doing the following:

- Try to provide an explanatory written gloss for each of the dot-pointed concepts in the list above
- Now try to think of an example from interaction in a particular site which would illuminate the concept in question

5.2 Negotiating Meanings in Discourse: Exploring Interpretive Potential

We are concerned in this chapter principally with the letter 'I' in the mnemonic above (Inferences and Intentionality)—what we might call, with Sarangi (2004b), the *interpretation potential* of the semiotic representations of all kinds of texts (spoken/written/visual) that we engage with in the study of discourse in a whole range of interactional and other contexts and settings.

In essence this phrase is an extension of the more well-known construct of Michael Halliday—that of *meaning potential*—but with the distinction that rather than emphasising the outcome—meanings—interpretation potential emphasises the different ways and processes by which participants make sense out of, and make meanings from, the encounters and their utterances (written, spoken, multimodal) in which they engage. In short, it focuses on the negotiative process and on the cognitive actions of the participants in this negotiation themselves in that process. It emphasises how participants bring with them the bases for their potential interpretations—their knowledge, their experiences, their ideological and institutional/professional positions and value systems, their own personal stances, their experiences of discourses—as well as their built-in ways of analysing the ongoing creation of meanings in interaction—their own personal methodologies of understanding, if you like. The key question then, and that of Theme #4, is: 'How do you know that?'

Concept 5.2 Inference

A key scholar in the description of this process, and with a particular interest in intercultural communication in a range of settings, is the sociolinguist John Gumperz. Gumperz locates his response to our question above by focusing on the processes of *inference*. In a brief definitional paper (Gumperz 2001), he writes:

Quote 5.1 Gumperz on inference

Individuals engaged in a verbal encounter do not just rely on literal or denotational meaning to interpret what they hear. At issue is communicative intent—that is, what a speaker attempts to convey at a particular time and place in the interaction, not what an utterance means in the abstract. More often than not, listeners build on what they remember about preceding talk, their expectations about what is to follow, as well as on culturally specific background knowledge acquired through previous communicative experience, in order to fill in what is left unsaid. I use the term inference or conversational inference to refer to the mental operations we engage in to retrieve such knowledge and integrate it into the interpretive process.… From this perspective, talk can be treated as communicative practice, a form of goal-oriented human action, and as such its interpretation is contingent on power relations as well as culturally based typifications and premises.

(Gumperz 2001: 126)

It is worth noting here that this analysis has certain connections with the work of Garfinkel on *accounts* and *accounting practices* that we discussed in Theme #2 and in Goffman's work on *frames* and *framing* which we discussed in Theme #3.

In the same brief paper, Gumperz continues:

Quote 5.2 Gumperz on inferencing

(1) we rely on such inferencing both to interpret and to construct the contextual premises or presuppositions in terms of which content is understood. (2) Although … [an] interpretation goes beyond what was literally said, it is important to note that inferences here are directly grounded in linguistic form. (3) To the extent it builds on listeners' ability to perceive and recall interdiscursive relationships learned through shared communicative experience, the inferential process is by its very nature culture-bound. Culture, when seen in these terms, becomes a resource we rely on to participate in situated discursive practice. (4) Finally, … there are always many possible interpretations. The interpretive process yields plausible assessments that must be then either confirmed or defeated by what fol-

lows in the exchange. That is, it is the discursive exchange as a whole rather than an individual utterance that constitutes the basic unit of analysis.

(Gumperz 2001: 126–7)

If we are interested in intercultural communication (see Roberts and Campbell 2005) then we need to focus on what Gumperz writes after the above:

Quote 5.3 Gumperz on culturally shared inferencing

Comparative analyses of discursive practice following the above principles can account both for shared inferencing and the societal forces that affect it … [S]uch analyses should not just provide insights into how inferencing works. They should also show how and in what ways the inferential process is culture-bound. Cultural knowledge and power come to be seen as integrally involved in discourse. The ways in which they work are subject to empirical analyses that do not depend on a priori assumptions about ethnicity or group membership. In this way discourse analyses may among other things show how communicative practices create and maintain cultural identity.

(Gumperz 2001: 127)

In other words, such intercultural communication may indeed be interethnic but it can also be intercultural as within an organisation, profession or institution. (For a further reading of particular relevance, and with a focus on contextualisation cues and conversational inference, see Gumperz 1996.)

In this view of interaction, then, texts (and all kinds of codifications) pose challenges, as Sarangi (2004b) points out, to participants' interpretative and negotiative repertoires—their resources for understanding. One of our key tasks is to work out what these resources consist of and how they can be enumerated and categorised, and how they are acquired

(and drawn upon) by different persons in different contexts of discourse. At the same time, no one can possibly focus as a participant on all aspects of an interaction—we all narrow our focus to what is salient and important to us. Indeed, that narrowing is primary evidence to those we are interacting with of those matters that are driving our participation, and which they need to address (or ignore). Our task then as analysts is somewhat similar—we have to deploy our various interpretive frameworks and repertoires—or ways of analysing—as a means of achieving as targeted and as rich an understanding as we can of those meanings that the participants are engaged in constructing in interaction. At the same time, we have to recognise that no analyst (like no participant either) can ever hope to grasp or even match all the interpretive resources that actual participants bring to bear! Whatever way of analysing we choose, it will always be partial, and, more especially, it will always be biased, in what we select to look at and how we look at it.

Reflection task 5.2

Think for a moment about the kinds of **interpretive and negotiative resources** you believe you bring to bear when you are trying to understand what someone else is saying to you.

- What do you concentrate on most? (for example, on what they are saying, or on how they are saying it?)
- What resources do you draw on to help you understand? (obviously, your knowledge of the language, but what else? What assumptions do you make, for example?)
- What makes it *difficult* to understand? (not just whether something is *intelligible* but whether and how it is *interpretable*). (Note: These terms are related, but are not the same thing!)

Now think about *other* modalities:

- If you are reading something, do you draw on the same resources as in a spoken interaction? How might they be distinct in resource terms?
- If you are looking at an image—say a photograph or a painting, or even a collage of images, do you draw on the same resources as in spoken interaction? How might such resources be distinct?

Gumperz identifies the area of inquiry into the relationship between interaction and interpretation as 'Interactional Sociolinguistics'.

5.3 Interactional Sociolinguistics

Quote 5.4 Gumperz on interactional sociolinguistic analysis

Interactional sociolinguistic 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 shared interpretations.

(Gumperz 1999: 454)

An expanded description of the approach of interactional sociolinguistics is provided by Lillis and McKinney (2003):

Quote 5.5 Lillis and McKinney on interactional sociolinguistics

Interactional sociolinguistics (IS), as the name suggests, focuses on ways in which participants interact in conversation. Researchers working within this approach believe that communication is not only simply about decoding what participants mean, but it is an ongoing process of negotiation. In negotiating specific intentions, participants draw on their background knowledge about other participants and the sociocultural context of the interaction … much work in IS centres on diversity. For example, IS is often used to examine how participants from diverse social and cultural backgrounds engage in spoken interaction.

(Lillis and McKinney 2003: 11)

Key constructs in interactional sociolinguistics are ones that we have to a large degree already met in earlier Themes in the book. Some examples of these are:

- schemata (or schemas)
- frames
- presuppositions
- rules of speaking
- speech events
- practical reasoning

It is clear (and Gumperz acknowledges this debt explicitly) that Goffman's work provides a grounding for interactional sociolinguistics.

Quote 5.6 Gumperz on Goffman's communicative perspective

Goffman has given us the outline of a communicative perspective on the social world. He sets aside traditional categorical approaches to social roles, status, identity and similar social phenomena to focus on the interactive processes through which interactants display shared perceptions of identity, manage interpersonal relationships and otherwise position themselves vis-a-vis others.

(Gumperz 1999: 457)

A central starting point for understanding interactional sociolinguistics is the assumption of differences in interpretation and what Gumperz terms 'procedures of understanding'. As he points out:

Quote 5.7 Gumperz on shared assumptions and interpretive procedures

[T]here is no assumption that communicative resources are shared. On the contrary, the aim is to find empirical ways of showing through discourse analysis whether or not interpretive procedures are shared….

In each of the above examples, my interpretations relied on my ability to retrieve the background knowledge to reconstruct possible scenarios or envisionments, or in some instances to intertextually recall specific expressions in terms of which the speakers' words made sense.

(Gumperz 1999: 458 and 463)

Gumperz (1982) highlights his application of interactional sociolinguistic method to interethnic communication, and we highly recommend his Chaps. 7 and 9 to interested readers.

Concept 5.3 Contextualisation cues

Contextualisation cues are the key constructs of interactional sociolinguistic analysis, as they provide salience for interaction and especially for interpretation.

Quote 5.8 Gumperz defines contextualisation cues

A basic assumption is that this channelling of interpretation is effected by conversational implicatures based on conventionalized co-occurrence expectations between content and surface style. That is, constellations of surface features of message form are the means by which speakers signal and listeners interpret what the activity is, how semantic content is to be understood and *how* each sentence relates to what precedes or follows. These features are referred to as *contextualisation cues*. For the most part they are habitually used and perceived but rarely consciously noted and almost never talked about directly. Therefore they must be studied in process and in context rather than in the abstract.

Roughly speaking, a contextualization cue is any feature of linguistic form that contributes to the signalling of contextual presuppositions. Such cues may have a number of such linguistic realizations depending on the historically given linguistic repertoire of the participants. The code, dialect and style switching processes, some of the prosodic phenomena we have discussed as well as choice among lexical and syntactic options, formulaic expressions, conversational openings, closings and sequencing strategies can all have similar contextualizing functions. Although such cues carry information, meanings are conveyed as part of the interactive process. Unlike words that can be discussed out of context, the meanings of contextualization cues are implicit.

(Gumperz 1982: 131)

Thus, interactional sociolinguistics and contextualisation cues are concerned primarily with discourse level signs (as opposed to what might be happening at clause level). Indeed, it is helpful to think of contextualisation cues as 'triggers' for discourse expectations that come about through inferential chains that are to some extent shared amongst participants in interaction. Gumperz goes on to explain that the signalling value of contextualisation cues depends on participants' tacit acceptance of their meaningfulness:

Quote 5.9 Gumperz on understanding and misunderstanding contextualisation cues

When all participants understand and notice the relevant cues, interpretive processes are then taken for granted and tend to go unnoticed. However, when a listener does not react to a cue or is unaware of its function, interpretations may differ and misunderstanding may occur. It is important to

note that when this happens and when a difference in interpretation is brought to a participant's attention, it tends to be seen in attitudinal terms. A speaker is said to be unfriendly, impertinent, rude, uncooperative, or to fail to understand. Interactants do not ordinarily notice that the listener may have failed to perceive a shift in rhythm or a change in pronunciation. Miscommunication of this type, in other words, is regarded as a faux pas and leads to misjudgements of the speaker's intent; it is not likely to be identified as a mere linguistic error.

(Gumperz 1982: 132)

Gumperz provides examples of interactions that illustrate interpretive differences of contextualisation cues and provides commentary that makes explicit unverbalised perceptions and presuppositions that underlie interpretations. Here is one example:

A husband sitting in his living room is addressing his wife. The husband is of middle class American background, the wife is British. They have been married and living in the United States for a number of years:

Husband: Do you know where today's paper is?
Wife: *I'll* get it for you.
Husband: That's O.K. Just tell me where it is. *I'll* get it.
Wife: No, I'LL get it.

The husband is using a question which literally interpreted inquires after the location of the paper. The wife does not reply directly but offers to get the paper. Her "I'll" is accented and this could be interpreted as 'I will if you don't.' The husband countersuggests that he had intended to ask for information, not to make a request. He also stresses "I'll."

The wife then reiterates her statement, to emphasize that she intends to get it. The "I'll" is now stressed to suggest increasing annoyance. (Gumperz 1982: 134–5)

Having considered Theme #4's guiding question 'How do we know that?' from the perspective of inferences and intentionality, let us now consider it in terms of a different perspective.

Part 2

In this part of the chapter we focus on ecological validity and participant accounts.

Summary of Concepts

How do we access and describe discourse data? How do we link micro analysis with the macro? How do we achieve 'ecological validity' and manage 'representativeness'?

5.4 Ecological Validity and Participant Accounts

Concept 5.4 Participant accounts

If you look back at Chap. 3, we set out there some basic ideas about participation in discourse, and we augmented those ideas by our discussion regarding Garfinkel's construct of accounting, especially as it related to indexicality and reflexivity. Further, the discussion in Chap. 4 on Goffman's construct of participation management suggested ways in which the design of participation in particular institutional contexts could be described, added to our understanding. Finally, Gumperz's focus on interactional sociolinguistics and the negotiation of meaning in discourse (as set out in Part 1 of this chapter) provided the link to the key contribution of participants to understanding what we termed, with Sarangi (2004b), 'interpretation potential'.

From this collation of connected and inter-relevant ideas we can conclude, then, that participants' perspectives on 'what is going on' can take the form of participant accounts all of which address our central concern in Part 2 of Theme #4 with the question 'How do we know that?'

Such accounts take the form, as Derek Layder indicates, of 'recounts in which participants give their interpretations of the discursive practices in which they are engaged', where the research aim is to develop what he calls 'an empathetic understanding of the behaviour of those people

being studied' (1993: 38). This is a form of ethnography in which the task is 'to describe how the actors themselves act towards the world on the basis of how they see it, and not on the basis of how that appears to the outside observer' (Blumer 1966: 542).

Thus, Part 2 is centrally concerned with this methodological challenge, both in terms of our methodological tools of trade, as it were, but also of our stance as researchers and the challenges such stances pose. As Layder says, each participant has a 'subjective career' which informs the meanings they attribute to social interactions and their responses to it. The objective, as Gumperz indicates, is to discern participants' own experiences of 'what is going on'. More generally, the incorporation of participants' perspectives is part of what contributes to what we have seen in Theme #3 that Geertz calls a thick description of situated communication.

Let us now look at some of the problems and issues that may arise in accessing such participant experiences and accounting for such participant accounts.

5.5 Some Issues and Some Challenges with Participant Accounts

Concept 5.5 Ecological validity

In a paper published in 1992, sociolinguist Aaron Cicourel used the term *ecological validity* to refer to the ways in which research methodology and what is 'counted as' data is shaped by the tacit knowledge of researchers and participants.

What we 'take for granted' as such tacit or hidden knowledge affects all aspects of the research process—what we consider worth collecting as data, how we go about analysing it, what conclusions we draw, whose participation in this process is 'allowed', and what beliefs and ideologies underpin the interpretations we make and the conclusions we draw.

Note the following critique of Goffman's perspective in Cicourel (1974: 23–4) (reproduced in Sarangi 2007).

Quote 5.10 Cicourel's critique of Goffman's perspective

Implementing Goffman's perspective is difficult because:

1. Goffman's assumptions about the conditions of social encounters are substantively appealing but lack explicit analytic categories delineating how the actor's perspective differs from that of the observer, and how both can be placed within the same conceptual frame.
2. All of Goffman's descriptive statements are prematurely coded, that is, interpreted by the observer, infused with substance that must be taken for granted, and subsumed under abstract categories without telling the reader how all of this was recognised and accomplished.

Consider the following:
When an individual enters the presence of others, they commonly seek to acquire information about him or to bring into play information about him already possessed. They will be interested in his general socio-economic status, his conception of self, his attitude toward them, his competence, his trustworthiness, etc. (1959: 1)

How the actor acquires information (the interpretation of external symbols, the use of language categories) or utilises information already possessed so as to link the presumed knowledge 'appropriately' to a particular setting, requires explicit reference to inference procedures and a theory of how the actor assigns meaning to objects and events. But Goffman's model of the actor does not reveal how the actor (or observer as actor) negotiates actual scenes, except through the eyes of an ideally situated and perceptive 'third party'.

(Sarangi 2007: 568–9)

Cicourel notes that this presumed knowledge includes 'extensive folk theories or cultural mental models about objects, events, language, causality, rules or regularities, beliefs, other creatures and interpersonal relationships' (Cicourel 1996: 222).

This critical, reflexive stance very much anticipates how Cicourel would set out to repair Goffman's 'third party' accounts with a commitment to two key analytic constructs: actors' reliance on 'interpretive procedures' (Cicourel 1974) and researchers' sensitivity to 'ecological validity' (Cicourel 1996).

Reflection task 5.3

As a way of exploring something of Cicourel's tacit knowledge, and focusing maybe on an encounter you know like a *healthcare* encounter, consider your visit to a doctor in a healthcare facility, or being treated by a doctor in a hospital.

- Note down what you think these 'folk theories' and 'mental models' Cicourel refers to above might contain/consist of, in relation to clinics, the participants in a clinic, hospitals, nurses and doctors, in that healthcare context.
- How do you think that these folk theories and mental models might differ among different participants—patients/clients and doctors/other healthcare workers?

Central to discovering what this 'hidden knowledge' might consist of is to take account, as far as this is possible, of what we have referred to earlier in this book as participants' perspectives.

We need to remember that these participants are not of course, only those actually engaged in the interaction. Researchers are 'participants' also (as discussed in Chap. 3). So we need to take into account, in a reciprocal way, what we might for the moment call *analysts'* perspectives. As Cicourel (1980: 101) remarks in relation to the researchers' analytic reasoning with that of the participants:

Quote 5.11 Cicourel on researchers' analytic reasoning

Forms of reasoning are viewed as central to the researcher's understanding of the way speakers and hearers presumably understand each other. The forms of reasoning we attribute to the participants of discourse parallel the reasoning we employ as researchers in making sense of the speech acts we record and listen to in arriving at some form of analysis. But as researchers we can, of course, specify formal aspects of discourse, produce systematic descriptions, and note emergent properties of the interaction. Yet we cannot attribute such properties unequivocally to the knowledge base of the participants.

(Cicourel 1980: 101)

5.6 Researcher/Participant Paradoxes

Sarangi, in a number of publications (2000, 2002, 2005) and with Candlin (Sarangi and Candlin 2001, 2003), and, in particular in Sarangi (2007), argues that there are *three* paradoxes involved in negotiating research boundaries in professional discourse studies:

1. The *observer's paradox* (originally formulated by the sociolinguist William Labov in the context of seeking not to influence the speech patterns of informants) argues that we only obtain authentic data when we are not observing. This paradox relates to access to data. (Note: In his fieldwork training, Labov argued that researchers always obtained 'more authentic' examples of participant speech when the researcher had apparently finished the encounter. 'Keep the tape recorder running' is what he told one of this book's authors (CNC) and fellow students!)
2. The *participant's paradox* relates to the activity of the participants observing the observer. This paradox relates to participation by the participants in data production and observation. How can they be both 'researched' and 'co-researchers'?
3. The *analyst's paradox* relates to the activity of obtaining members' insights to inform analytic practice. This paradox relates to interpretation by all participants of the data. What this means in practice is that what one hears or reads explicitly as an analyst, or sees 'going on', may not be what the participants implicitly understand by 'professional practice'. So we may have a distorted vision of the encounter. This is generally true, Sarangi argues, but particularly so in professional encounters where we may not appreciate fully what the core practices are, what is considered 'frontstage' or 'backstage' (Goffman 1959). In professional-client encounters we may be better positioned because we have experience of being 'clients', but even there we cannot avoid the paradox. As the knowledge gap increases between analysts and participants as a consequence of new domains of inquiry, and new contexts, analysts are increasingly unable to categorise events *without* participant involvement.

5.7 Researcher Role and Researcher Stance

Associated intimately with these paradoxes is the concept of researcher role (which we touched upon in Chap. 4). In particular, it is clear from what has been said so far that research involvement such as that outlined above, will engage us with determining more clearly what we mean by researcher role and in particular how these different roles imply distinct positionings or stances between researcher and research participants and their likely distinctive understandings of relevant data.

Before outlining what these roles might be, however, it is worthwhile recalling the following positions which we introduced earlier in Chap. 4. Recall Sarangi's statement where he provides an account of 'thick description' of professional practice, drawing on Geertz's work:

Quote 5.12 Sarangi on 'thick participation'

A 'thick description' of professional practice, in Geertz's (1973) sense, can only be premised upon what I would call 'thick participation'. The notion of participation has to be taken broadly to include continuity of involvement in a research setting, including the maintenance of relationships with participants in temporal and spatial terms….'Thick participation' for me, extends beyond data gathering and data interpretation—it also includes the provision of feedback and the facilitation of conditions for potential uptake of discourse analytical findings.

(Sarangi 2005: 376–7)

Achieving such an engagement, as we have seen in Chap. 4, is neither easy nor unproblematic. Mutuality of participation is desirable, necessary even, in the light of the above, but at the same time, distancing is important. Refer again to Graham Smart's views in Quote 4.40 about balancing engagement with detachment.

Sarangi (2005), again in discussion of current research issues in professional communication, offers the following challenging insights from other commentators. They are all matters which we would do well to keep in the forefront of our professional vision, and they are all worthy of reflection in the task below.

Reflection task 5.4

Consider and record your reactions to the following positions, and in particular the impact they have on your view of the *researchability* of discourse.

- Brumfit's comment in Brumfit and Crystal (2004) that:
- '[A]ll studies of social phenomena have on the one hand a concern to idealise, which is essentially a metaphorical pretence that you can isolate the phenomenon that you're looking at, and on the other hand the need to be embedded in real-world practice'.
- Geertz's (1973) focus on what he calls 'interpretive ethnography' (the 'thick' description of a social group's 'interworked systems of construable signs', its 'structures of meaning … and systems of symbols') and the social group's 'local knowledge' ('its mutually reinforcing network of social understandings'). Geertz's position is that it is the task of the researcher to take the informant's own indigenous, locally produced concepts (what he calls 'experience near') and 'place them in illuminating connection' with 'the concepts theorists have fashioned to capture the general features of social life', (what he calls 'experience-distance').
- Cicourel (1992) points out that there is a continuing problem of interpreting 'tacitly assumed meanings that are not clearly indexed'.
- Polyani's (1958) view that 'the aim of a skilful performance is achieved by the observance of a set of rules which are not known as such to the person following them.'
- Brice Heath's (1979) comment that:
- '[F]irst, the language of the professional sets him (sic) apart from the client or patient. His (sic) language was a mark of the special province of knowledge which was the basis of what it was the patient was told, though the knowledge itself could not be transmitted to the patient … a second feature of the language of the professional was his (sic) articulated knowledge of ways to obtain the information from patients while restricting the amount and types of information transmitted to the patient. … professionals have, therefore, been socialized to have certain perceptions of their role in communicative tasks, and they have been trained to use that language as an instrument to maintain that role and to accomplish ends often known only to them in interchanges.'
- Levinson's (1997) comment that:
- 'If it takes a context to map an interpretation onto an utterance, how can we extract a context from an utterance before interpreting? The idea that utterances might carry with them their own contexts like a snail carries its home along with it is indeed a peculiar idea if one subscribes to a definition of context that excludes message content.'
- In Sarangi and Candlin's Editorial Preface to a Special Issue of *Health, Risk & Society* on the theme of risk, and in a paper in that Special Issue

(continued)

Reflection task 5.4 (continued)

by Jones and Candlin, the point is made that what characterises professional activity is the reliance on *categorisation.* This is a theme we have already raised and discussed in earlier chapters. Each profession, they argue, develops its own system for categorising and organising (and labelling) its professional world. This categorisation is not just a matter of terminology; it pervades the ways of interacting, discoursing multimodally, behaving and acting, and thus continually reinforces the orders of discourse of the profession in question. Categorisation is important because it is not only the subject of our research—how professionals order their world—but also the means for *our* research—how we study that professional world as researchers. Sarangi refers to Lakoff (1987) when he writes:

- 'Categories are spectacles through which we routinely, albeit largely unconsciously, observe and classify events and experiences.'
- What we are dealing with, then, is a kind of classificatory instrument which is filtered through our own perceptions and those of the professional world we are seeking to interpret.

From the above statements it is clear that researchability of discourse is both problematic and challenging. What is also clear is that inquiry into professional role, the potential and cautions surrounding participation, the dubieties of relevance, all contribute to that central question of interpretability and understanding. At the same time, they also contribute to the issue of generalisability from the observed case. Cases are not just generalisable in relation to other, potentially 'similar' cases; cases engender generalisability through the challenges they pose, both philosophical and methodological. Nevertheless, 'thick participation' and the achievement of 'thick descriptions' remain the goals. Apart from everything else of value, what they do is to enhance the evidential warrants for any claims we jointly make. That objective is the *most* important of all.

In Sarangi and Candlin (2003), and in the context of a discussion concerning what they call 'reflection *in* and *on* action', the authors address the issue of the range of roles open for researchers to adopt:

Quote 5.13 Sarangi and Candlin on positioning of the researcher

It is commonplace that the positioning of the researcher in any workplace setting is fraught with tensions. In ethnography, Agar (1980: 55) writes: "Explaining who you are is more than a local methodological problem. It is an act for which you are held accountable by your profession and your funding source". Such a dilemma also extends to the ethnographers attempt as a complete stranger in requesting the status of an insider: "[Group members] will listen to you and watch your behaviour, and they will draw on their own repertoire of social categories to find one that fits you". (Agar 1980: 54). The difficulty lies in the lack of opportunity, and space in most studies for the researcher to define and negotiate his/her position with all members of a group … even if s/he is at the same time a member of the community in question. This problematic of role relationships in the ethnographic tradition is not unique: it can readily be extended to applied linguistic work involving a discourse-analytical mode of inquiry in professional settings. Indeed such work regularly permits the researcher to combine an ethnographer persona and a discourse analyst persona. What is the nature of these personae, and what relationships do they enter into?

(Sarangi and Candlin 2003: 278)

5.8 Roles and Their Relationships

Sarangi and Candlin voice caution about researcher roles and their relationships:

Quote 5.14 Sarangi and Candlin on role relations

Cicourel, among others, alerts us to the fact that these role relations are not just fixed categories, but that researchers are required to move among them in context-sensitive ways…. It is also the case that some types of role might be more expected than others in a given situation. It seems the researcher has to be on his/her guard throughout the research process and beyond… It is not just that researchers vary greatly in the ways in which they position themselves. It is also the case that the researched are not a homogeneous group either…. As Cicourel points out, the mundane realities not only affect the researchers; they are also part and parcel of the life of the researched.

(Sarangi and Candlin 2003: 281)

Concept 5.6 The researcher as outsider/insider

Quote 5.15 Sarangi and Candlin on the researcher as outsider/insider

In the ethnographic tradition, the role of the researcher is either to blend in or keep a distance, with the aim in either case to least influence the activity under observation…. The notion of trust seems central to this collaborative enterprise at all levels: data collection, sphere of participation, categorization, dissemination etc. Inevitably, however, once obtained, the data cannot remain as some neutral and *etic* record. Interpretation of the data at once highlights the dichotomy between the *etic* record and the *emic* account…. No record is ever neutral. This dichotomy, and the inevitability of taking an emic perspective, at once throws into relief the issue of researcher knowledge.

(Sarangi and Candlin 2003: 278)

Concept 5.7 The researcher as resource

Quote 5.16 Sarangi and Candlin on the researcher as resource

Resource can be interpreted in terms of researcher contribution to professional practices at the research site. In the context of an ethnographically informed project in multicultural classrooms, (Roberts et al. 1992), the researcher was requested to provide help with assignments and learning tasks, and from time to time was approached in the coffee bar and asked clarification questions relating to the day's lessons.

(Sarangi and Candlin 2003: 279)

Concept 5.8 The researcher as befriender

Quote 5.17 Sarangi and Candlin on the researcher as befriender

The convention of research interviewing encourages the development of 'rapport' with the respondent… However such supportive encounters can also be seen to encourage respondents to develop their ideas in their formulations in ways which they have not previously established. The interview can become an occasion for inventing and concretizing opinions, not merely presenting already fully formulated ones.

(Sarangi and Candlin 2003: 279)

Concept 5.9 The researcher as target audience and assessor of performance

Quote 5.18 Sarangi and Candlin on the researcher as target audience and assessor of performance

This raises the fundamental issue about pure observation… This tendency on the part of informants to put on a justifying performance needs to be seen in terms of the wider view of 'accountability'. In the contemporary workplace setting, concerns about quality assurance and good practice tend to be conflated with the commissioning of research programmes. This ultimately leads to the researcher assuming an evaluative role. On a contingent basis, the researcher (as participant observer) is asked to provide feedback on current practice. Alternatively, the researcher is perceived as the visible hand of the establishment, with a brief to conduct systematic surveillance.

(Sarangi and Candlin 2003: 280)

Concept 5.10 The researcher as expert/consultant and agent of change

Quote 5.19 Sarangi and Candlin on the researcher as expert/consultant and agent of change

The actor-audience roles are reversed in a consultative model of workplace research. Once the outsider researcher is presented as an expert, the onus is on the researcher to perform as one. Hall found that in observational meetings of senior social work managers, he was being asked to provide comments on what he was observing (if not answers) …. [as a kind of] 'hot feedback'… The senior managers were very sensitive to research … and reacted to the research event as an inspection. They were eager to defend their position and display their good practice.

(Sarangi and Candlin 2003: 280)

In concluding this section, we reproduce here some of the final paragraphs of Sarangi and Candlin 2003:

Quote 5.20 Sarangi and Candlin on professional practitioners and discourse analysis

[W]e would suggest that workplace practitioners are discourse experts in their own rights, since their workplace practices are constituted in discourse (Sarangi 2002) and they can easily reflect upon their practices in a metalinguistic sense (as can be the case in interview-based studies of professional practice). The role of the applied discourse researcher then becomes one of finding patterns based on evidence, with the hope that such patterns will explain unambiguously the tacit levels of professional knowledge and action.

This invites us to revisit the role of discourse analysis as a methodological toolbox, and an extremely relevant one at that. As we cross different professional boundaries, and find that our findings align with professional practitioners' tacit understandings, the methodological apparatus gains its share of approval. There are of course occasions where discourse analytic findings are viewed with suspicion, even when framed in terms of empowerment and social justice. Our concern here has been with the optimist practitioner… It is feasible for professional practitioners to become discourse analysts of their practices.

(Sarangi and Candlin 2003: 283)

Envoi

A good point to conclude our discussions in this chapter is the following quotation from Clifford Geertz:

Quote 5.21 Geertz on understanding participants' inner lives

Understanding the form and pressure of, to use the dangerous word one more time, 'natives' inner lives is more like grasping a proverb, catching an illusion, seeing a joke—or, as I have suggested, reading a poem—than it is like achieving communion.

(Geertz 1983: 70)

5.9 A Case Study

Vine, B., Holmes, J., Marra, M., Pfeifer, D., and Jackson, B. 2008. Exploring Co-leadership Talk Through Interactional Sociolinguistics. *Leadership, 4*(3): 339–60.

In this study Vine et al. explore the phenomenon of co-leadership in business organisations. Co-leadership, which comprises and involves the top leader and the colleagues who report directly to her/him, is critical to an enterprise's success. Yet, from the point of view of analysing actual interactional data from a discourse perspective (empirical and discursive perspectives,) co-leadership is a theme that has been under-researched in the literature of discourse and organisations. Meetings in three different businesses in New Zealand constitute the site of this particular study.

Rationale

Traditionally, research in leadership has focused on the psychology of leadership and collected its data through surveys and interviews. However, in recent years there has been interest in approaching leadership discursively, that is, through a focus on the language used by and with leaders. While much is typically known about an organisation's top leader, relatively little is known about their 'second in command'. Yet it is often the case that these second-tier managers are vital to an organisation's success. The current study explores this co-leadership relationship from a discursive perspective to shed light on how such leadership partnerships actually function in the workplace.

Methods

The data analysed in this study are drawn from a larger data set of workplace communication collected over a number of years and across a variety of 22 different organisations in New Zealand [This larger project is the Wellington Language in the Workplace Project]. The researchers drew on ethnographic methods to collect their data: participants were observed in their workplace environments; they carried mini-disk recorders to record their spoken interactions; some of their workplace meetings were video-recorded. Various interactional sociolinguistic techniques are applied to the data to analyse the workplace talk both in terms of what was said and how

it was said. In particular, attention is paid to the clues that participants use to interpret conversational interaction within the workplace context. As the authors indicate: 'this includes such features as turn-taking and content, as well as pronoun use, discourse markers (e.g. *oh*, *okay*, *well*) pauses, hesitations and paralinguistic behaviour, amongst a much wider range of relevant features' (p. 345). Also noted in their analyses are the leadership's use of humour, expressions of approval and compliments.

The data selected were chosen on an appreciative inquiry approach basis, in which the three organisations studied 'were recommended to us by internal and external colleagues as exemplars of effective leaders'. (p. 346). One participating organisation was the national office of a multinational corporation; another was a medium-sized organisation with a staff of around 50; and the third was an organisation in the same industry as the second, but half its size and Maori in cultural orientation. The data used in this study were drawn from video-recordings of 6–12 weekly or monthly meetings. The principal focus of the researchers was on 'co-leadership talk aimed at promoting task accomplishment and maintaining relationships within the group' (p. 346) which, according to Vine et al., are two salient and recurring dimensions of leadership behaviour. See the original article for detailed analysis and results.

Contribution to theory-practice nexus

This case study shows how leadership is discursively constructed and enacted, and how effective co-leadership is evidenced in the workplace discourse of co-leaders. The use of interactional sociolinguistics sheds light on leadership processes and how, in the words of the researchers, leaders '*do* effective leadership. Leadership is an on-going process, which must be constantly enacted, maintained and negotiated through language and communication' (356).

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6

Why That Now?

Chapter 5 was concerned with considerations of our interpretations of discourse in context. In this chapter we turn our attention to talk in action, that is, to actual utterances and their fine-grained analysis. We focus on micro analysis of discourse, and issues of sequence and membership; and processes of contextualising and localising inquiry. The key scholars we draw upon include Garfinkel, Sacks, Schegloff and Heritage. Our methodological concerns lie with ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis.

Part 1

We commence our investigation of this theme by exploring ethnomethodology and the subsequent emergence of Conversation Analysis.

> **Summary of Concepts**
>
> **How is talk in action related to the construction of the social order? How do people deploy discourse to achieve goals?**
>
> **Focus on spoken interaction, intentionality and interactivity.**

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C.N. Candlin et al., *Exploring Discourse in Context and in Action*,
Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-31506-9_6

6.1 Introduction

We begin with a familiarisation activity. Conversation often appears to be chaotic and perhaps too 'messy' for any rules to be governing it. Nevertheless, conversations do have beginnings, middles and ends. Can you think of any 'rules' that might apply to any of these parts of a spoken interaction?

Reflection task 6.1

Consider the following extract from a conversation. Try to match each utterance of A with one from B in a way that completes a pair.

A: so if there's a hardware store we could call in and get one on the way back
B: do you think there is one
A: yes
B: OK then *
A: that would be nice wouldn't it?
B: yes it would
A: I mean the job not the hardware shop
B: yes I REAlize what do you keep telling me for

[Source: Cook 1989: 57]

How effectively do these pairings work to impose order on the interaction?

6.2 Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis

In this chapter our objective is to offer some insights into, and practice of, micro-analytic techniques for describing and interpreting discursive interactional data—in short, talk in action. Even this is too circumscribing since, in principle, such analysis would extend to a range of other semiotic means, for example, gesture, posture, facial expressions and the like. Because of the limitations of space and time, however, we focus here particularly on *talk*. Specifically, we address the mode of inquiry generally known as Conversation Analysis (CA) and its precursor and associated inquiry, Ethnomethodology.

In the following extract from an edited book on the social psychology of language and discourse, Sue Wilkinson and Celia Kitzinger provide a succinct account of the roots of CA and ethnomethodology, and describe the key notion of 'talk-in-interaction':

Quote 6.1 Wilkinson and Kitzinger on CA and ethnomethodology

Conversation analysis (CA) is a theoretically and methodologically distinctive approach to the study of social life. It was developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s by Harvey Sacks, in collaboration with Emmanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson, from intellectual roots in the sociological tradition of ethnomethodology. Ethnomethodology (from the Greek ethno = people or members of a society; and methodos = way or method) is concerned with social members' ways of making sense of the everyday social world …. For ethnomethodologists, social phenomena such as power and oppression are primarily accomplishments (Garfinkel 1967), processes continually created, sustained, and (sometimes resisted) through the practices of social members in interaction. Ethnomethodology offers a model of people as agents, and of a social order grounded in contingent, ongoing interpretive work—an interest in how people do social order, rather than in how they are animated by it. For Sacks, talk-in-interaction was simply one site of human interaction that could be studied for what it revealed about the production of social order. Talk as such is not given any principled primacy in CA: the key interest of CA is in talk not as language, but in talk as action: that is, in what people do with talk.

(Wilkinson and Kitzenger 2007: 206–7)

6.3 Ethnomethodology

Ethnomethodology is a 'sociological representative of what has become known as the "linguistics turn" in philosophy' (Marshall 1998: 203), that is, in which philosophers have become interested in the nature of language and language use (e.g. see Austin's work on speech acts (Austin 1962/1975) and Grice's work on cooperative principle (Grice 1975)). As Marshall notes,

> Social life, and the apparently stable phenomena and relationships in which it exists, are seen by ethnomethodologists as a constant [practical] achievement through the use of language. It is something we create and recreate

> continuously …. The emphasis is on doing things: we 'do' friendship, being a sociologist, walking along the street, and everything else. (Marshall 1998: 203)

Thus, ethnomethodologists study how 'members' (i.e. of a society or, indeed, a sub-culture within a society) 'concertedly produce and assemble the features of everyday life in any actual, concrete, and not hypothetical or theoretically depicted setting' (Maynard and Kardash 2007: 1483). Since people are not generally aware of what norms they use to make sense of their everyday world, asking members how they do it is a bit like asking a monolingual speaker about grammatical rules: they can unconsciously use them, but cannot consciously explain them, especially in a rigorous, consistent way. Ethnomethodology gets around this problem by focusing on the behaviours of members as they 'do' things. As noted in Chap. 3, 'accounts' are produced of how various social activities are 'done'. Thus, ethnomethodologists' work is highly descriptive, and they do not engage in explanation or evaluation of the accounts that emerge because they are interested in the construction of the social order only. As Maynard and Kardash (2007) state: '… behaviour is to be accountable to rules and this means engaging in concrete and embodied practices that are orderly in their own right and are not explained or provided for in the rules that these practices make visible' (p. 1484).

Two central ideas in ethnomethodology are 'indexicality' and 'reflexivity', both of which we introduced briefly in Chap. 3 (see Concepts 3.14 and 3.15). Marshall (1998) provides further useful insights into these concepts as follows:

Quote 6.2 Marshall on indexicality and reflexivity

[Indexicality] is the insight that there is no such thing as a clear, extensive definition of any word or concept in a language, since meaning comes from reference to other words and to the context in which the words are spoken. It is always possible to ask 'What do you mean?' about a statement, and then go on indefinitely, asking the same question to whatever answer is given. There is no final answer …. [When questioned in this manner] the result is that people become distressed and angry when the taken-for-granted rules we use for establishing meaning are undermined. They lose their sense of social reality [emphasis added].

> Reflexivity refers to the fact that our sense of order is a result of conversational processes: it is created in talk. Yet we usually think of ourselves as describing the order already existing around us. For ethnomethodologists, to describe a situation is at the same time to create it.
>
> (Marshall 1998: 203–4)

To appreciate the particular contribution of what Conversation Analysis (CA) brings to explicating context in language use, it is worth first exploring this notion of human interaction.

6.4 Human Interaction: A Foundation for CA

When two (or more) people are in each other's physical presence, it is the usual case that each of the parties' behaviour allows the other regularly to infer 'updated' information about how each is experiencing the scene they are both in. If you see my eyes travel to a certain object, you know I am viewing that object, and you can infer that something about it has captured my attention. Ordinarily you (my interlocutor) can read rather a lot about my responses by being aware of my facial expressions, my slight body movements, sounds I make, and so on.

These responses of mine, which you can see, necessarily include my responses to what I am observing about you. We are both in fact aware of each other being aware of each other: we are conscious, in other words, of an interaction going on between us, and are aware of how this interaction changes as we go about doing whatever it is that we—singly and jointly—are engaged in doing, through ongoing present time.

So you are an entity in my field, the present interaction is an entity in my field, and I normally cannot help providing you with messages which refer to these things and which tell you how I am 'taking' them. I give you (through my behaviour, mainly inadvertently) a significant amount of information about how I am experiencing events which occur—a bird flies by overhead, a car backfires nearby, or whatever.

This process is virtually inevitable. What occurs is this: whereas previous to the present moment you had standing before you a person who

had not glanced up and registered the fact that a bird was flying by, *now* you have before you a person who *has* seen and registered a bird flying by. You not only see my eyes flick upward in the fleeting moment, but you also now know that *from now on* you need to take into account the fact that my self—an entity in your world—has changed, has become something slightly different from what it was previously. I, for my part, can now fairly safely proceed on the assumption that you now know this new fact about me (however minor or major it may be). And you can assume that I probably realise that you know this new fact about me.

Thus it is perfectly ordinary that our joint sense of 'what is' (including our joint sense of our interaction itself and what *that* approximately amounts to) constantly gets updated. It is consequently also perfectly ordinary that we are always in a position to refer to and act in relation to our perceived sum of the interaction itself, that is, in relation to what we are now jointly—collaboratively or conflictually—taking as (approximately) the nature and content of our interaction and its component parts.

Concept 6.1 Spoken interaction: intentionality and interactivity

From this perspective, when we consider everyday conversation, its interactivity can be viewed simply as a specialised extension of this mutual updating and guiding of interaction which is an inherent concomitant simply of people being present together. By verbal (as well as, of course, non-verbal) means, I acknowledge receipt of your immediately prior message, and also let you know *how* I am 'taking' it, how I am taking *you*, and how I am taking our interaction as it has unfolded up to this point; as well as how I see it as developing from here—where I would like to have it go (and thus where I would like you to let me take it).

This progressive to-and-fro exchange of acknowledgements, updates and interaction-guiding information is usually embedded fairly unnoticeably, 'subliminally', within the referential messages we send each other, that is, within what we are more overtly 'talking about'. This information, however, though typically non-salient in discourse, is in reality as much a part of what we are talking about as are the more foregrounded referential and illocutionary contents of our messages. The fact of the existence of a present ongoing interaction, which is after all a

real entity in my present field, must necessarily loom large when I open my mouth and say something, whatever it may be, within that interaction. Crucial factors include, for example, the ‘point’ of the interaction, its current status and the identification of where we have arrived in an anticipated sequence of meanings. Also necessarily looming large (and closely inter-related with the current status of the interaction) is the current informational and intentional state of my interlocutor, since affecting that state constitutes much of the reason for my uttering anything in the first place.

In the same way, interactants’ mutual recognitions and shapings of what they are taking their discourse to have amounted to, up to the present point, give them both a basis upon which they can construct further referential and pragmatic meanings—including information and illocutions which relate directly to, and further update, the definition and character of the evolving interaction.

To sum up, the management and structuring of discourse can thus be viewed as consisting of intentional acts of meaning. In any current turn at talk, there will be elements which (incidentally or saliently) display the interpretive taking-into-account of a prior turn or turns, and/or of the surrounding discourse in a wider sense; elements, thus, which convey speaker-intentions-as-contextualised-by-the-speaker’s-interpretation-of the present discourse and of his/her projected development of it.

(It is worth recalling here the discussion in Chap. 5 on people’s interpretive repertoires and the interpretive procedures associated with research in interactional sociolinguistics (cf. the work of Gumperz and Sarangi inter alia)).

6.5 Conversation Analysis

Conversation Analysis, drawing heavily on ethnomethodology, focuses on explaining how context is mutually understood by interactants in spoken discourse: context here is largely co-created by the interactants as they interact through speech, gaze, gesture and so on. Put another way, the kind of interaction known as ‘conversation’ (i.e. fairly informal, not obviously institutional or status-conscious, with participants alternating

in relatively brief responding turns) shows particularly well the defining feature of all interaction: that is, its interactive nature.

There are a number of excellent books, chapters and articles which further develop the fundamental concerns of CA. We offer a brief selection of references here, with accompanying extracts addressing the key foci of CA.

Quote 6.3 Hutchby and Wooffitt on CA

The aim of CA is thus to reveal the tacit, organized reasoning procedures which inform the production of naturally occurring talk. The way in which utterances are designed is informed by organized procedures, methods and resources which are tied to the contexts in which they are produced, and which are available to participants by virtue of their membership in a natural language community.

(Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998: 1)

CA can be characterised therefore as the very close study of actual, authentic discourse for the purpose of finding regularities in the way it is structured, but no claims for generalisability to other texts or situations are made. The ongoing nature of the attempt to find patterns is an important feature of CA.

In a more recent book focusing on the theme of child counselling, Hutchby (2007) provides a good description of language as social action:

Quote 6.4 Hutchby on investigating talk as interaction

The hypothesis with which this programme was begun [i.e., into the discourse of child counselling] is that ordinary conversation is not a trivial, random, unorganised phenomenon but a deeply ordered, structurally organised social practice. This hypothesis could best be explored, Sacks reasoned, through the use of naturally-occurring data which could be recorded, transcribed and therefore examined in close detail on repeated occasions .... In all these applications CA's aim is to reveal how the technical aspects of speech exchange represent structured, socially organised resources by which participants perform and coordinate activities through talk-in-interaction. Talk is treated as a vehicle for social action: and also as the principal means by which social organization in person-to-person

> interaction is mutually constructed and sustained. Hence it is a strategic site in which social agents' orientation to and evocation of the social contexts of their interaction can be empirically investigated.
>
> (Hutchby 2007: 20)

The key points made by Hutchby (and all other CA scholars) are thus the following:

- Ordinary conversation is deeply ordered and structurally organised
- Audio-recording [and now video-recording] and delicate detailed transcription is necessary
- Sites of study could range from the mundane to the highly institutionalised, often focusing on 'troubles talk' or talk at 'critical moments' in interactions

In another article (Markee and Stansell 2007), which focuses on using e-technologies to address visual and textual analyses of natural data using CA techniques, the authors write:

> **Quote 6.5 Markee and Stansell on how CA reveals underlying order**
>
> Using recordings and transcripts of naturally occurring conversational data, conversation analysts seek to show how, despite initial impressions that talk-in-interaction may seem chaotic and unstructured, the ways in which participants take turns, repair breakdowns of various kinds, and develop extended sequences of talk in both ordinary conversation and institutional talk are in fact characterized by an astonishingly high degree of underlying order.
>
> (Markee and Stansell 2007: 25)

In their Introduction to their edited book Bhatia, Flowerdew and Jones (2008), the authors write:

Quote 6.6 Bhatia, Flowerdew and Jones on CA and 'why that now'

By analysing the properties of conversation, conversation analysts attempt to understand the patterns of social life. The assumption is that such patterns can be used to develop procedural rules governing talk-in-interaction. Echoing Austin and Searle, conversation analysts regard discourse as a kind of social action—we are always 'doing things with our own words'. What is unique about their approach is their concern with the sequential organization of actions, and in particular the mechanics of turn-taking. CA's guiding analytical principle … is asking of each utterance in a conversation: 'Why that now'…. In contrast with the ethnographer's data which consist of interviews, field notes, lived experiences or narratives of participants, conversation analysts work on naturally occurring and closely transcribed conversational data.

(Bhatia et al. 2008: 4–5)

It is clear from the above that CA has a concern for the relationship between structured talk-in-interaction and the construction, by the use of what ethnomethodologists call 'members' methods', within such interaction of the social order. Less obviously, perhaps, is its implied (and not always acknowledged) and parallel engagement with members' interpretive procedures and their making of meanings. Scholars working in the CA tradition frequently make the point however of insisting that they are not interested *for its own sake* in the process of ongoing meaning-construction by 'members'. They say, rather, that they are studying the ways in which this meaning-construction is put to service by members for the purpose of 'exhibiting'—'accountably', that is, fully recognisably—the 'orderliness' of the small-scale social order which members are constituting in and by their interaction. Thus, for the conversation analyst what is most important is the fact *that* such interactive constructions are taking place. For CA, the structuring of the process tends to be taken as—in itself—what is most important, because it is through this process that 'members' confirm for each other their sense of the 'orderliness' of their current social undertaking. We may conclude that whatever the value of this distinctiveness of emphasis what results is a focus on processes of meaning-making in discourse context.

In doing so, as we have seen, conversation analysts stay essentially within sociological paradigms. They typically seek to utilise transcribed instances of micro-social structuring by individuals in order to build up a basically sociological depiction, viewing events rather externally and 'objectively'. (CA practitioners choose to use, for example, the word 'token', with its economic, bartering connotations, as their term for signals of acknowledgement and guidance such as 'oh' and 'yeah' and 'I mean'.) The sociological orientation of CA, which nonetheless does seek an ultimate basis in 'members' recognitions and understandings of their social reality, has been neatly summarised by Graham and Rodney Watson as follows:

Quote 6.7 Graham and Rodney Watson on researchers and CA

The initial analytic issue in [conversation analysis] has to do with the social orderliness of conduct, settings, or the like as recognisable states of affairs for members. For researchers, the orderliness of the social world is recognisable in the first instance in terms of the commonsense understandings that operate from within the settings concerned.

(G. Watson 1984: 360)

Members have, then, understandings born of and constituted by inhabitation. The problem of social order, for researchers, becomes: How is order produced as a visible and recognizable matter? How are "transparency arrangements" (arrangements that render objects perspicuous not only as orderly in some general sense of that term but also, specifically, as just what they are in themselves) built into actions, interactions, and settings.

(R. Watson 1992: 6)

Because they are most interested in precisely describing the process of meaning-construction in detail, conversation analysts rely, as we have seen from the definitions, on meticulously and thoroughly examining a large number of transcripts of actual conversational interactions. This empirical and descriptive orientation necessarily prevents them from leaping quickly to broad theoretical generalisations. Indeed, and as a matter of principle, CA ventures few, if any, large-scale explanatory or predictive generalisations about actual social behaviour. In the main areas to which CA has devoted attention, analysts have in fact studiously

avoided attributing observed regularities to any identifiable causative factors, whether social or cognitive. It is primarily here that they fail to make connections (some would say deliberately so) with the demand for 'ecological validity' raised by scholars like Cicourel (see Chap. 5) and in particular the need to combine the close *micro* analysis of texts with the broader but informative context of the *macro* (see Chap. 4 and the work of Geertz) and the focus on relevance to practice (see Chap. 3). Having said that, and as Schegloff et al. 2002 indicate, this 'purist' principle is now breaking down and the procedures and methodological tools of CA are widely being used in purely CA focused, but also increasingly multi-methodological approaches to analysing discourse data, and in particular in professional and institutional contexts.

Reflection task 6.2

Consider the apparent paradox of CA as a data-driven approach to analysing spoken discourse, yet one which makes no claims to generalisability to other texts or contexts.

Would you agree that in the case of linguistics (as opposed to sociology), CA may provide quite a lot of evidence that is generalisable to other texts and contexts?

What might this evidence actually consist of?

Part 2

In this part of the chapter we address the question 'Why that now?' by focusing on the micro analysis of discourse as performed in conversation analysis.

Summary of Concepts

How is 'talk' internally ordered and structured? How do people demonstrate that they are 'sense-making'?

Focus on turns at talking, topic control, repairs and recipient design.

6.6 The Mechanics of Talk: Micro-Level 'Systematics'

It is time to turn our attention to the structure and organisational patterns of conversation, that is, to what could metaphorically be called the *mechanics* of conversation or, perhaps more appropriately, micro-level systematics.

In spite of the reluctance of conversation analysts to claim any generalisability of their findings, empirical observation of spoken interactional behaviour *has* permitted conversation analysts (rather as a by-product of their work) to characterise several micro-level 'systematics'—sets of quasi-rules or algorithms of sequential expectations, which interactants 'orient to' in one way or another, in constructing conversation. Following are some key constructs:

Concept 6.2 Openings, closings and overall organisation

Despite the general impossibility of specifying syntax-like *rules* for the sequencing of speech acts in conversation, CA has described several overall organisational *principles* which participants *orient to* in producing their interactions. Conversations tend to be given clear openings and closings, and some regularities for what comes in between (Schegloff and Sacks 1973). The opening of a (goal-oriented) telephone conversation, for example, typically follows a summons-response pattern, with the ring functioning as the summons. This is followed by identifications of who is speaking, and by personal greetings if the callers are friends. Then there are formulae for the introduction of the main topic. The closing (some form of 'good-bye') is canonical.

Internal structuring across segments of the discourse is provided, for example, by:

- **announcements of intention** (e.g., 'this won't take a minute, Bill, I just wanted to let you know...')
- **pre-sequences**, which prefigure or prepare the ground for future moves (e.g., a pre-invitation like 'are you busy Saturday night?'; a pre-request like 'By any chance are you planning to use the car on Saturday

night?' (Schegloff and Sacks 1973); a pre-announcement like 'Have you heard what happened to Jane?' (Levinson 1983); or a pre-closing like 'So-oo…') (Schegloff and Sacks 1973)
- **post-expansions**, where one adjacency pair follows and expands another (A: *Do you like Virginia? B: Yeah. A: You do? B: Well, not really*.) (Fox 1987: 13)
- **formulations of gist** ('I guess what we've been saying so far is…')
- **formulations of upshot** ('what I've said, I've meant only as a warning…') (cf. Heritage and Watson 1979; Thomas 1985)

The structural basis of conversational moves is, then, treated by conversation analysts as a 'mechanics' of discourse. It would not be possible within their methodological approach to go much further and to formulate a priori structural properties native to a particular discourse type, or the topical and referential substance native to such a type, or the means of achieving coherence specific to it. As Levinson (1983) summarises:

Quote 6.8 Levinson on topical coherence

The point is simply that topical coherence cannot be thought of as residing in some independently calculable procedure for ascertaining (for example) shared reference across utterances. Rather, topical coherence is something constructed across turns by the collaboration of participants.

(Levinson 1983: 315)

This amounts virtually to a radically existentialist view of discourse construction, honouring the novelty of each new interaction, and refraining from pre-emptively specifying the topical or illocutionary possibilities which might be inherent in it as a discourse type.

Concept 6.3 Topic management

Topic management includes an awareness of how speakers maintain a topic, and how they deal with changes to a topic. As Paltridge (2000: 94) notes, 'there are often culture-specific rules for who initiates a topic and how it's done, and who develops the topic and how it's developed'. (An informative paper drawing on this construct is to be found in S. Candlin 2000.)

Concept 6.4 Turn-taking

The classic CA account of turn-taking (Sacks et al. 1974) calls itself a 'systematics'. The perceivable shape of a speaker's current contribution, making identifiable one *turn-constructional unit* (i.e. typically, one minimally complete 'idea', most often a sentence) allows the 'projection', in advance, of when a *transition relevance place* (TRP) is going to come. At such a point, several rules apply: for example, if the current speaker has selected a next speaker in the current turn, then at the transition relevance point that selected person must take the turn. If that person does not take the turn with split-second accuracy, then this fact in itself has meaning. Levinson (1983: 320) gives this example (C is current speaker, N is next speaker):

C: So I was wondering would you be in your office on Monday by any chance
N: [pause 2 seconds]
C: probably not

The pause is immediately interpretable by C as reluctance on N's part. The point here is that there is a learned system of expectations by means of which interactants regulate their conversation.

The basic rules which members orient to in taking turns, as described by Sacks et al. (1974) (summarised by Levinson 1983: 298) are these:

Turn-taking rules

Rule 1—applies initially at the first TRP [transition relevance place] of any turn

a. If C [current speaker] selects N [next speaker] in current turn, then C must stop speaking, and N must speak next, transition occurring at the first TRP after N-selection
b. If C does not select N, then any (other) party may self-select, first speaker gaining rights to the next turn
c. If C has not selected N, and no other party self-selects under option (b), then C may (but need not) continue (i.e., claim rights to a further turn-constructional unit)

Rule 2—applies at all subsequent TRPs
When Rule 1(c) has been applied by C, then at the next TRP Rules 1(a)–(c) apply, and recursively at the next TRP, until speaker change is effected.

Reflection task 6.3

Consider this closing extract from a conversation between a native English speaker (N) and a foreign student of English (F).

What does it illustrate about how turn-taking in a foreign language might be learned or taught?

N: anyway ...* well anyway ...* I'm going * goodbye
F: but you have not finished your sentence
N: what sentence
F: you have said 'anyway ...'
N: yes
F: anyway * and what

(Source: Cook 1989: 58)

Concept 6.5 Adjacency pairs

Some portion of the total exchanges in an interaction will proceed by couplets like greeting-greeting, question-answer, invitation-acceptance, offer-acceptance, apology-minimisation and the like. What has been most useful about this notion from the point of view of participants' interpretive procedures in discourse analysis is the light which is shed on speaker intentions when the first pair part is *not* followed by the normally expected second pair part, when, for example, instead of the acceptance of an invitation, there is a silence (or a 'well…', etc.). Because of the expectations arising from the turn-taking system, the silence can be attributed to someone in particular, namely the recipient of the invitation. Moreover, this silence will normally be read as *meaningful*, due to the 'preference', in this case, for an immediate acceptance.

Concept 6.6 Preference organisation

The term 'preference' (in its social or normative sense, rather than in any sense of individual preference) is the conversation analyst's way of talking about the fact that the options—the possible second pair parts in adjacency pairs—are not equally weighted in a given cultural context. Alternative, but non-equivalent, courses of action are available to the participants. There is a socially preferred type of response. To an invitation there is the expectation of acceptance; to the statement of an assessment there is the expectation of agreement; and so on. Pomerantz (1984)

shows that the fact of preference is empirically demonstrable: a preferred response will be produced without delay, whereas a 'dispreferred' response will be prefaced by a show of reluctance: a longer turn-transitional pause, and hesitation markers like 'umm', 'well' and so on; and there will be apology and mitigation in the response.

The existence of 'preference' (like linguistic 'unmarkedness'), described thus broadly, may well constitute a universal. However, the values and situations which occasion any particular instance of it are socially determined, we might say 'socially scripted'. Pomerantz's observations were based on the study of particular types of exchanges, such as compliment-response (1978), as they occurred in actual social situations; however she generalises (rather freely) from this empirical data to other cultural contexts. Wolfson (1983), in connection with her own work on compliments and responses, makes very strongly the further point that these phenomena are highly culture-specific:

Quote 6.9 Wolfson on validity of analysis and cultural context

With respect to the validity of the analyses… [a] methodological problem must be pointed out. …Although I have spoken throughout of speech patterns in American English, this is, in reality, a great oversimplification, since the data upon which … the studies were based were, of necessity, gathered in specific places and within specific speech communities. Thus, the study of complimenting behaviour (Manes and Wolfson 1981) was carried out primarily in Charlottesville, Virginia and in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.… It is important to recognise that a strong claim for the validity of the analysis can only be made for the two speech communities in which compliments were studied, and not for the language as a whole or even for all of American English.

(Wolfson 1983: 83)

This caveat argues that preference organisation is indeed an expression of social scripting.

Concept 6.7 Feedback: markers of receipt and acknowledgement

Some of the most frequent discourse markers in English serve to signal the interactive evolution of informational states between participants. For example,

- 'y'know' solicits the activation of presumed shared given information ('y'know, he's not the only fish in the sea').
- 'Oh', 'OK', 'mm-hmm', 'yeah', 'all right', and affirmative head nods indicate recognition of given information which has become conversationally relevant, or acknowledge receipt of new information (cf. Heritage 1984; Schiffrin 1987). When uttered during the course of an interlocutor's turn, these markers are referred to as back-channel cues, though in this position they are not significantly different in function from when they occur as independent responses. The final in a series of back-channels provided during an interlocutor's speaking turn often doubles in fact as the first word of one's own turn.
- 'Well' is a stand-alone marker used by a new speaker, generally to signal simultaneously that information has been received and that the new speaker feels that her contribution will be relevant to that information in some clear way, e.g., by filling a gap in it, adding something relevant to it or diverging from it in some respect.

Heritage (1984) and Schiffrin (1987) characterise the markers 'well' and 'oh' as 'change-of-state' tokens: that is, the speaker who utters them is signalling that her informational state has now changed (cf. also Watts 1989). This change of informational status is usually the result of the to-and-fro of information exchange interpersonally. However, it can also be the result of an individual's independently having *noticed* something ('Oh, and this must be Danielle!') or remembering ('Oh now it all comes back to me').

Concept 6.8 Upshots and formulations

Upshots or formulations are utterances which explicitly refer to and topicalise other utterances in, or implicatures from, the nearby discourse, and seek to comment about them. The discourse marker 'so' may be used, for example, in its sense of summing up, to introduce the drawing of a conclusion. It may thus confirm, or invite confirmation of, an upshot or formulation. Such an invitation and the reply to it are often aimed at clarifying the speaker's intention (e.g. 'What you're basically saying is that we, the management, are a pack of fools. Isn't that more or less it?').

Claiming the right to 'formulate' and to issue explicit metapragmatic comment and other illocutionary-force-indicating-devices (IFIDs) in relation to one's own or the interlocutor's contributions, often constitutes an attempt to exercise power in an interaction. Formulation in its use in clarifying speaker's meaning may, however, refer simply to the level of sense, that is, of propositional content.

Concept 6.9 Repairs and clarifications

Conversation analysis has been particularly concerned with describing details of conversational 'repair' as collaborative dealing with communicative 'trouble'. In interaction, unsatisfactory comprehension (or social or interpersonal unacceptability, for any reason) of a prior speaker's turn is frequently overtly flagged for subsequent attention. This is done by the recipient in a variety of ways. For example:

- Slight look of puzzlement
- Minimal query
  ('Sorry?' 'Eh?' 'Huh?' 'Beg your pardon' etc.)
- Questioning repeat (1) ('echo question')
  (one form of 'request for confirmation')
- Questioning repeat (2)
  (with contrastive stress on the repairable) (e.g. 'He **drank** his breakfast?')
  (rising tone)
- Questioning partial repeat
  (with repairable portion left open) (e.g. 'You visited Paris, Rome and ….?')
  (rising tone)
- Questioning paraphrase
  (often with 'so' and/or question tag)
  ('So it completely stopped working, did it?') (another form of 'request for confirmation')
- Explicit request for clarification (1)
  (e.g. 'What do you mean, exactly?', 'I'm sorry, I didn't get that', etc.)
- Explicit request for clarification (2) proposing a specific replacement
  ('You mean … X?') (another form of 'request for confirmation')

- Explicit request for clarification (3) proposing alternatives ('Do you mean X …. or Y?')
- Explicit request for elaboration (e.g. 'Could you explain a bit more what you mean by X?')

In response to any of the above signallings of trouble (referred to in CA as 'troubles talk') (i.e. repair initiations, or even in a self-initiated way without the need for an overt initiation by the interlocutor), there are a number of possible repair moves. For example:

- slow down/repeat more clearly
- paraphrase/circumlocute/reformulate
- explicitise/contextualise/topicalise
- explicate/elaborate
- code-switch
- approximate
- appeal-for-assistance/give assistance

Concept 6.10 Insertion sequences and side sequences

Repair and clarification 'moves' (and the move(s) in response to it) are typically 'inserted' into the main flow of dialogue, in what conversation analysts have called an 'insertion sequence' (Schegloff 1972) or 'side sequence' (Jefferson 1972). Such sequences put the main dialogue temporarily on hold, until some puzzling or troublesome aspect (usually minor, though necessary in order to continue the conversation) can be fixed. Such insertions occur in a format like the following:

A: *Where did you spend your early childhood?*
B: *What do you mean by* 'early childhood'*?*
A: *Let's say, birth to four.*
B: *Wangaratta, Victoria.*

It is worth noting here that most of the above terminology which identifies specific types of discourse moves (request for clarification, comprehension check and the like) names phenomena which have been studied

in greatest empirical detail by conversation analysis. The terms themselves, however, have been employed most often by social psychologists (cf. Hopper 1989) and second language acquisition researchers (cf. Long 1983; Pica 1988), in order to quantify these discourse moves and perform statistical analysis upon them.

Concept 6.11 Recipient design

From the foregoing description of micro-level systematics, it should be apparent that central to successful human interaction is the need to adjust our speech to better fit with our particular interlocutor's ability to understand our intended meanings. In CA, this notion is known as 'recipient design'. Consider, for example, the difference in how a medical specialist speaks to fellow medical professionals and contrast this with how they speak to patients from non-medical backgrounds. Clearly, the use of jargon and presupposed knowledge is considerably different with these different interlocutors; the reason for this can be put down to recipient design and the expectation of likely comprehension.

6.7 A Research Note: Working with Transcribed Data

It is important to clarify that in CA, transcripts are *not* data. The data consist of audio or audio/visual recordings of talk.

Quote 6.10 Hutchby and Wooffitt on CA transcripts

[Conversation analysts] aim to analyse the data (the recorded interaction) using the transcript as a convenient tool of reference. The transcript is seen as a 'representation' of the data; while the tape itself is viewed as a 'reproduction' of a determinate social event.

(Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998: 74)

Transcription data are often difficult to work with because of the fragmented and unpredictable nature of real spoken interaction, as opposed to idealised versions where each speaker takes their turn with no overlap

and speaks in perfectly well-formed sentences. Nevertheless, order can be brought to bear on transcription data by focusing on two main concerns (Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998):

1. dynamics of turn-taking (e.g. overlaps, gaps, pauses, audible breathing etc.)
2. characteristics of speech delivery (e.g. stress, intonation, pitch etc.)

Envoi

It seems appropriate to leave the last word to CA's great founder, Harvey Sacks:

Quote 6.11 Sacks on naturally occurring versus hypotheticalised data

In that the kinds of observations on stories and storytelling that I'll be making … involve catching some of their details …, then we can come to find a difference between the kind of way I'll proceed and one characteristic kind of way that social science proceeds, which is to use hypotheticalized, proposedly typicalized versions of the world as a base for theorizing about it …. What I want to argue is that if a researcher uses hypotheticalized or hypotheticalised/typicalised versions of the world, then, however rich his imagination is, he is constrained by reference to what an audience, an audience of professionals, can accept as reasonable …. Now that might not appear to be a terrible constraint, except when we come to look at the kinds of things we'll be seeing as occurrent …. These materials could not be successfully used as a base for theorizing if they were urged as imagined …. [We can then come to see that a warrant] for using close looking at the world as a base for theorizing about it is that from close looking at the world you can find things that we couldn't, by imagination, assert were there: One wouldn't know that they were typical, one might not know that they ever happened.

(Harvey Sacks 1992: 419–20)

6.8 A Case Study

Stokoe, E. 2010. "Have you been married, or …?": Eliciting and accounting for relationship histories in speed-dating interaction. *Research on Language & Social Interaction, 43*(3): 260–82.

In this study Stokoe explores the recent social phenomenon of 'speed-dating', 'a match-making service run by companies who organize events with the aim of introducing lots of (heterosexual) single people to each other in one evening' (p. 261). Participants are paired in rotations of about five minutes and, at the end of the evening indicate whether or not they would like to see any particular person again. The study explores how speed-dating participants account for their personal circumstances and, in particular, how talk about prior relationships and current relationship status are occasioned and accounted for.

Rationale

Most research on the issue of personal relationships has relied on experimental studies, questionnaire surveys, interviews or focus groups. Very few have focused on the actual discourse people use as they engage in contexts and action relevant to developing personal relationships. By examining in rich detail the real discourse of couples in personal relationship-building encounters, Stokoe argues such social interactions can be much better understood.

Methods

The data analysed in this study consist of 30 real-life speed-dates at an event organised in the United Kingdom. Each date lasted between three and eight minutes and involved single people aged 30–45. The women remained seated while the men rotated when the organisers rang a bell. The women operated the recording devices used for this research, but only if both they and their male partner had consented to be recorded. The recorded data were transcribed using a CA-style protocol. As noted by Stokoe:

> Like other institutional materials, these short dating encounters between previously unacquainted parties are ideally suited to conversation analytic study because each date is self-contextualizing: The analyst, like the participants, knows just what each party chooses to reveal to the other. (p. 263)

Stokoe collected ‘all instances in which speakers first disclosed a relationship-relevant item of their personal biography’ (p. 263). She then examined ‘the way relationship history talk was elicited and occasioned, how questions about the topic were designed and, finally, what sorts of relationship histories were treated as problematic and how participants accounted for their romantic biographies’ (p. 263). See the original article for detailed analysis and results.

Contribution to theory-practice nexus

This case study shows how an attention to detail in analysing the way in which interactants in talk contribute to their ongoing, collaborative meaning-making can reveal a great deal about how personal relationships can (or cannot) develop in initial encounters with new people. CA techniques provide an extremely powerful discourse analytic tool for fine-grained analysis of spoken interaction, and can very effectively complement the standard tools of enquiry used in other disciplinary fields, such as that of social psychology in the present case.

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7

What Actions Are Being Taken Here, by Whom and Why?

Following the fine-grained analysis of spoken text explored in Chap. 6, we now adjust our object of study in Chap. 7 to focus on tools, tasks and mapping behaviours, and exploring discourse in social action. We also focus on identities and roles in discourse. The key scholars we draw upon are Scollon, Goodwin and Tajfel. Our methodological interest is directed at Mediated Discourse Analysis and 'Professional Vision'.

Part 1

Summary of Concepts

When we watch/hear discourse in action, what are we doing and how do we do what we do? What do we understand by 'professional vision'? In what ways are sites objects of knowledge and scrutiny? Conditional relevance in discourse: how are our perceptions socially organised and located? How are they learned?

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C.N. Candlin et al., *Exploring Discourse in Context and in Action*,
Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-31506-9_7

7.1 Introduction

In Part 1 of this chapter we focus on two related themes in discourse analysis, both of which in turn are closely related to themes from earlier chapters, and serve to bring together ethnographic analysis (see Geertz), interactionally oriented sociological analysis (Goffman), interactional sociolinguistic analysis (Gumperz, Roberts) with ethnomethodology (Garfinkel) and conversation analysis (Schegloff, Heritage) which we explored earlier. Furthermore, as we shall see, these themes also point forward to the discussion of so-called Critical Discourse Analysis which we will explore in Chap. 8.

Concept 7.1 Mediated Discourse Analysis

The first of these themes, referred to by its proponents as Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA), is closely associated with the work of Ron Scollon and his co-workers and other scholars especially from social psychology.

The essence of MDA is quickly stated: it is an attempt to integrate discourse with social action, but its characteristic is to privilege neither, arguing that discourse is only one of many *tools* (a term, like *mediated action*, borrowed originally from Wertsch) that participants draw upon to take action. Others might be a whole range of performances involving a gamut of media and modalities, from handing out leaflets to making notes on a napkin which is turned subsequently into a conference paper, to making use of case notes in a case conference, to drawing on a commonality of experience of action as a basis for being less explicit than one might otherwise be.

Concept 7.2 Professional Vision

The second of the themes in Part I is that captured by Charles Goodwin's classic paper on what he terms 'professional vision' (Goodwin 1994). Central to Goodwin's concept of professional vision is how actors in engaging in an action regard that action, and how we as researchers and analysts come to discover what that particular professional vision of the participants might be in performing that action, and how, in doing so, what our professional vision as analysts might be in relation to these

actions. There are thus two professional visions involved; that of the participant (professional actor) and that of the researcher (professional analyst). Clearly, there is a connection here with our discussion of the distinctive roles of the analyst/researcher which we explored earlier, especially in Chap. 5.

One can readily see, then, that not only do these two themes intertwine, but that they also call up and resonate with earlier Themes in the book and with particular topics that we have dealt with in the discussions of previous chapters.

7.2 Mediated Discourse Analysis

Neville (2005) expertly exemplifies MDA in action in a memorable context. In this paper Neville employs MDA analysis to 'consider the processes of interaction in an airline cockpit as pilots collaborate to develop necessary understandings and perform action to land their plane' (Neville 2005: 32). As he goes on to say:

Quote 7.1 Neville on mediating talk-in-interaction in the cockpit

The airline cockpit is a task-oriented high-technology work setting where it is critically important to perform activities and complete actions in strict sequence. That is, one activity or action becomes appropriate, or even possible, only when some other activity or action has been completed, and is understood to be so by both pilots. The pilots routinely orient to and achieve this sequential organization of their work, moment-by-moment, by drawing upon and coordinating a range of available resources. That is, talk-in-interaction for actions in the airline cockpit is mediated by textual materials such as formal procedures, wordings and checklists, information available from visual displays, aural alerts and other sounds, and non-talk activities such as moving levers and pushing buttons. Mediated actions in the cockpit involve not only the use of, but the situated and temporal organization of these resources in ways that are constitutive of the work of airline pilots.

(Neville 2005: 32)

Neville concludes his paper as follows:

Quote 7.2 Neville on timing of sequential actions

The timing suggests that part of accomplishing the sequentiality of action is a readiness to perform relevant non-talk activity immediately it is called for, and so ensure minimal delay between talk and the non-talk activity it initiates. The PNF [pilot not flying] does not move his hand to the required lever until after the PF [pilot flying] has uttered relevant wording to call for this, but does so immediately such wording appears .... In short, what the segment here shows is that if you are helping to land an airliner, and you are asked to do something, you do it as soon as you can, even to the point of doing it as it is asked for.

(Neville 2005: 42–3)

Reflection task 7.1

Can you identify other talk-and-actions which would parallel Neville's air-line pilot example?

It is clear from the foregoing that MDA sees discourse as merely part of 'what it is that is going on', in Goffman's sense. Discourse and social practices create what Scollon refers to as a *nexus* where discourse provides (partly at least) the warrant for claims that are being made about, say, identity, agency, meaning in general and in particular. Its focus is on what is being done, or accomplished in Garfinkel's sense, at this nexus, rather than enumerating static features of context. At the same time, as Norris and Jones (2005) note, texts themselves occupy no privileged position either. They, too, are subservient to action, or, as Wertsch argues, to *mediated* action involving a range of *tools*. There is clearly a close link here between Wertsch and Vygotsky, the Russian psychologist, whose theories on sociocultural approaches to mind and learning are currently very influential in second language learning, for example.

What then are these tools (or better, these 'cultural' tools)? Wertsch (1998) argues that they encompass a whole range of objects, technologies, practices, identities, even social institutions and communities,

Quote 7.3 Lantolf and Poehner 2013 on mind, culture and mediated action

Vygotsky brought the dialectic into psychology and argued that human consciousness, the proper object of study of psychology, results from the dialectical unity of two distinct though necessary components: our biological endowment and our cultural inheritance. Without both of these a human psyche was impossible. Biology endows us with the necessary foundation, a brain, but a brain is not a mind. For this, we also need culture, which endows us with the capacity to intentionally organize and control those processes that come ready made with a brain. The synthesis of these components results in uniquely human mental life. A brain without culture is capable only of thought similar to what is documented in other primates. Culture without a brain is simply impossible. Taken together, however, the two components give rise to uniquely human ways of thinking. ….

Human consciousness is unique in that Culture, including all those artifacts (e.g., language, numbers, art, music, etc.) and activities (e.g., play, work, leisure, worship, etc.) is inserted between the human organism and the world and thus creates an indirect, or mediated relationship. Vygotsky reasoned that just as humans can change and control the world through the use of physical tools (culturally created artifacts) we can also change and control our mental life through the use of symbolic, also culturally created, tools such as language. Hence, humans do not merely react and adapt to the world; they act on and change the world. In the same way, they act on and control their mental life.

(Lantolf and Poehner 2013)

including, as we are emphasising here, discourses and their utterances. These tools are associated with a range of what Wertsch refers to as *affordances* and *constraints*. In sum, affordances *afford*, that is, they enable purchase, contact, usability, while constraints have the reverse and in that they *constrain* effects. So, some tools facilitate messages, others do not. Such messages, when discourse-mediated, are, in Wertsch's terms (borrowed from the Russian philosopher, stylistician and literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin) 'voiced', that is, they are enunciated (see also here the construct of Foucault—the *énoncé*—in Chap. 2), or in Bakhtin's terms 'ventriloquated' (since we never speak purely in our own voice) in a range of ways. So all utterances are in Bakhtin's terms 'heteroglossic' (i.e. 'many-voiced'), and at the same time dialogic (or interactional). Identifying, describing, interpreting and explaining these 'voices' are of course central to the work of discourse analysis.

Quote 7.4 Hafner on tools as affordances and constraints

I turn now to the … question [concerning]… what are the key components of a social psychological theory of learning? A central construct identified by Wertsch is that of 'mediated action'. This can be further defined as 'agents-acting-with-mediational-means' (Wertsch 1998: 24). According to SCT [sociocultural theory], we do not act directly on the world, rather our action is mediated by the use of either physical or cultural tools (Vygotsky 1978: 25–7). The use of tools, also referred to as 'artifacts' (Lantolf 2006) and 'mediational means' (Scollon 1998; Wertsch 1998) shapes our interaction with the physical world, with people in the social world and also with ourselves. It is helpful to illustrate this concept with reference to a physical tool, as Scollon does (2001: 17). Scollon provides the example of how the use of a physical tool can act as both an affordance and a constraint in interaction with the physical environment. He cites the example of a stick used to knock fruit down from a tree. While the stick affords greater reach, it also constrains the activity because it does not allow its wielder to judge which fruit are ripe enough to be knocked down. Similar affordances and constraints can be found with regard to more sophisticated mediational means, such as computer tools and language. For example the use of a computer to mediate an interaction using email or chat affords easy communication over a distance, but constrains the interaction in the sense that the usual non-verbal cues present in face-to-face communication are missing. In the present context, the online resources developed mediate learning by supporting students' construction of legal texts. Like other mediational means, the online resources offer both affordances and constraints. (Hafner 2009: 56–7)

Words, then, like other mediational means, are *tools*, as it were in a toolkit:

Quote 7.5 Wittgenstein on words as 'tools'

Think of tools in a toolbox: there is a hammer, pliers, a saw, a screwdriver, a rule, a glue-pot, nails and screws. The function of words is as diverse as the functions of these objects. (And in both cases there are similarities.) Of course what confuses us is the uniform appearance of words when we hear them spoken or meet them in script and print. For their application is not presented to us so clearly.

(Wittgenstein 1972, cited in Norris and Jones 2005: 6)

If the relationship between discourse and action is dynamic, as Scollon and others argue, then it will certainly not be the case that one can 'read' the social meanings of that relationship, as it were 'off the page'. As we have been at pains to point out throughout this book, no such readings can be possible without asking (and paraphrasing) Goffman's essential question: 'what is it that is going on here?' and seeking an answer to that not just in the uttered words, but in and through *all* significant semiotic forms, and in the context of an understanding of the broader social context argued for by Cicourel (1992, 2007) amongst others. There will inevitably and always be contestations between what is being said and what is being done. What MDA allows us in this way is to reinforce the link with ethnographic analysis, in particular with the study of the ways that members appropriate and use various tools, and in so doing assert themselves as competent members of particular communities of practice.

The essential and key focus, then, is on practices—what members do as members. In making this point, it would be wrong to regard MDA as simply another means of analysing discourse—indeed, as we have said—its methods owe a very great deal to well-established existing models; it displays a strong moral and action-oriented engagement with its subject matter which positions it rather closely, as we shall see in Chap. 8, to Critical Discourse Analysis (see Fairclough 1992 *inter alia*) in its concern with engagement with the conditions of the social and with social change.

7.2.1 MDA: Some Constructs and Some Methods

What then are the central constructs of MDA?

- ***Mediated action***

  [As discussed earlier in this chapter]

- ***Sites of engagement***

  [See below from Scollon 2001]

Quote 7.6 Scollon on sites of engagement

A site of engagement is defined as the convergence of social practices in a moment in real time which opens a window for a mediated action to occur. While the concept of the mediated action focuses upon the unresolvable dialectic between agency and mediational means, the concept of site of engagement focuses upon the social practices which enable the moment of mediated action. A site of engagement may be momentary—reading the exit sign from a fast trunk road in a second or so—or somewhat extended as in a conversation with a friend, viewing a film or theatre production, or reading a novel on a bus ride.

(Scollon 2001: 147)

- ***Mediational means***

[See the discussion earlier in this chapter, but note this example from Scollon 2001]:

Quote 7.7 Scollon on mediation means

A mediational means is defined as the semiotic means through which a mediated action, that is any social action, is carried out (communicated) … the material objects in the world which are appropriated for the purposes of taking a social action. This would include, for example, the layout and design of the room as well as the grammatical structure of any utterances made by the social actors.

(Scollon 2001: 148)

- ***Practices***

Discussion of practices is bound up with the idea of our *habitus* (see Bourdieu in Chap. 2) and of course the work of Garfinkel and Goffman (see Chaps. 3 and 4). They are recognisable mediated actions taken by recognisable actors. These practices ‘carry with them’ (and resonate in our minds and experience) with bundles of mediational means, which may be formed of wordings, exchanges, turns at talking, actions, behaviours and so on.

- ***Nexus of practice***

Actors come to recognise through experience certain sequences and intersections of practices as 'belonging' in some sense to the same action. These actions, as we have seen, are constituted of social actors working with mediational means. As Scollon explains:

Quote 7.8 Scollon on nexus of practice

The concept of the nexus of practice simultaneously signifies a genre of activity and the group of people who engage in that activity.

(Scollon 2001: 150)

- ***Community of practice***

[The construct of community of practice (CoP) was introduced in Chap. 2 and featured in Chap. 3]

Turning now to the methodologies (or perhaps better methodological principles) for analysing discourse in action, Scollon (2001) identifies the following:

- ***Nexus analysis***, a methodology which Scollon divides into three steps:

1. ***Engaging the nexus of practice:*** by which is meant researchers as stakeholders in the action and the site reflexively considering their own stance, and that of the participants, to the issues at hand in that site. Sarangi and Candlin (2001) refer to 'motivational relevancies' and the need to be aware of these, and engaging in a process of 'joint problematization' with participants.
2. ***Navigating the nexus of practice***: by which is meant beginning the data collection and analysis, but always from a multimodal and multiperspectived orientation. (See here the discussions around Layder's resource map for research in Chap. 3 and in Part II), in collaboration with participants, and the stance taken towards research and researching discourse in terms of its historical, grounded, transformative, and always 'motivated' perspectives.

3. ***Changing the nexus of practice***: by which is meant making use of the process and outcomes of discourse analysis, within such a process not only 'after' it to engender positive change.

The actual methodologies proposed for MDA by its advocates are those traditionally canvassed in the broad conceptualisation of discourse analysis in context and in action advocated in this book, and are well captured by Layder's model (1993) as mentioned in Chap. 3 and presented in Part II . They include: close analysis of the semiotic action, involving multimodal analysis at the level of detail outlined by conversation analysts (see Chap. 6); ethnographic work involving participant and mediational means surveys; scene and environmental scans; surveys of events and actions; and, focus group and structured interview analysis. What MDA does emphasise, as we have done throughout this book, is the need to integrate these forms of analysis into a multiperspectival model of research. Key to such a research agenda is the call for 'ecological validity' (Cicourel 1992, 2007) in research practice which we have referred to in Chap. 5.

Quote 7.9 Cicourel on ecological validity in social sciences

Validity in the non-experimental social sciences refers to the extent to which complex organisational activities represented by aggregated data from public and private sources and demographic and sample surveys can be linked to the collection, integration and assessment of temporal samples of observable (and when possible recordable) activities in daily life settings. Fragments of discourse materials always are shaped and constrained by the larger organizational settings in which they emerge and simultaneously influenced by cognitive/emotional processes despite the convenience of only focusing on extracted fragments independently of the organizational and cognitive/emotional complexity of daily life settings .... the challenge remains how daily life activities simultaneously constrain and shape more complex organizational structures.

(Cicourel 1992: 736)

Seeking to achieve this ecological validity raises a range of issues. For example, how participants in 'daily life activities' are positioned and subjectivised, and how tacit models of professional understandings, discur-

sively realised, invoke 'standards' against which people are judged and their identities constructed in particular domains and sites. Further, how differential understandings of these 'cognitive/emotional processes'—in which persons are involved—are to be understood and explained. Finally, what the nature, purposes, procedures of these organszational structures can be that work in crucial sites to constrain and shape what Cicourel terms 'cognitive and emotional complexity'.

Characteristic of such a research program is that no single methodology, however well-grounded and finely applied, will be able to match its descriptive, interpretive and explanatory demands. The interdiscursivity of the domains and sites will make a parallel interdiscursive methodology necessary, seeking to connect organisational-structural contexts and their institutional and professional histories with the micro management of their equally characteristic interaction orders.

Such a research program will require a considerable broadening of traditional research planning in applied linguistics and discourse analysis focused on professional and organisational discourse. Following Candlin (1997); Sarangi and Candlin (2003) discuss this issue of research program design, suggesting that it will need to include: textual and semiotic analyses of discursive performances on site; interpretive, ethnographic and grounded studies of professional and organisational practices; accumulated accounts of expertise by ratified members of the communities of practice in question together with first-hand accounts of interpretations of experience by actively involved members. Such performances and accounts will need to be located within particular domains—say, healthcare, law, business and management, social work, organisations and bureaucracies, and within these in specific sites.

Such an approach is represented in Candlin and Crichton's multiperspectival model (see Fig. 9.2 in Part II of this book). In this model, to the left side, the analyst's perspective identifies the motivational relevancies of the analyst and the practical relevance of the study as emerging from collaborative engagement between the analyst and the participants. Each of the overlapping circles in the Venn diagram represents a distinctive but mutually implicating analytical perspective all of which are relevant to the investigation of discursive practices at a particular site. The mutuality of these perspectives is indicated by their convergence at the centre of

the circles. The different perspectives foreground descriptive, interpretive and explanatory modes of analysis that may be brought to bear in the investigation, and the overlaps between them highlight the interdiscursive nature of research that seeks to combine these perspectives in the exploration of a particular discursive site. Entry points to the analysis will vary in relation to particular sites and their relevant focal themes (Roberts and Sarangi 2005) and to the particular research questions that are being addressed, but no perspective is prime. What is central is that *all* perspectives are necessary and mutually informing.

One point that Fig. 9.2 reflects, although perhaps not explicitly, is one that MDA scholars make, and which we have not yet stressed, namely, that all analysis is a process of *resemioticisation* and *transformation*—that is, the extent to which analysis of discourse in action becomes an engine for new discourses and actions to emerge.

7.2.2 What Are the Sites for MDA?

We have already indicated the engagement of MDA with sites of institutional, professional and organisational discourse, although, of course, its focus is by no means limited to these. An excellent source of appreciating this extensive landscape of MDA (which in fact is no less rich than 'Discourse Analysis' per se, or many of its influencing models of analysis) is the edited volume by Norris and Jones (2005). What we can emphasise as characteristic of MDA in these sites is what Blommaert (2004), cited in Norris and Jones (2005: 13), calls 'layered simultaneity'—that is, layering of different modes of analysis as it were one on top of another, evidenced through sites such as new technologies in adoption management, computer gaming, business interactions, watching science exhibits, computer-mediated communication, agency in relation to person-bureaucracy interactions and married versus divorced woman interaction. Clearly, MDA offers rich possibilities for communication-focused discourse analytical research. What is interesting is how they all, in various ways, engage with the issues of motivational relevancies we have discussed earlier, with the need for historical and dynamic engagement with discourses, and the central importance of locating discourse *in context* and *where the action is*.

7.3 'Professional Vision'

Central to Charles Goodwin's seminal paper *Professional Vision* (1994) are *three* practices that he identifies as characteristic of those engaged in the analysis of language (discourse) in action:

1. ***Coding***: By which he means transforming what we see/hear/read into objects which can be studied
2. ***Highlighting***: By which he means marking specific phenomena as salient
3. ***Producing and articulating representations***: By which he means documenting how we interpret these phenomena and these objects as a socially situated activity and not just as a cognitive process. How we 'accomplish' this interpretation of 'a meaningful event' (i.e. an object plus action) against a background of our history (see also Chap. 2 on Bourdieu and *habitus* and Chap. 5 on Gumperz and *interpretive potential*).

These practices are all part of what Goodwin refers to as our professional vision which is directed at events within a specific activity. These events have in themselves to be viewed from three perspectives:

1. as an object of knowledge
2. as a domain of scrutiny
3. as a discursive practice

As such these events need to be both heard and seen, and our practices of hearing and seeing are also relevant to our analysis.

7.3.1 Defining the Practices

- How we code events is part of our culture and our disciplinary orientation. Coding schemes (e.g. CA or IS or MDA or SFG) are part of our organisational systems, our ways of professionally accounting for phenomena.

- How we highlight phenomena always involves us in making the distinction between *figure* and *ground* (foreground/background). What we choose to make (or regard as) prominent tells us and others about our ideas of what is relevant. For those things we determine to be communicative, there has to be some agreement with others not only on what these phenomena are and how we define them, but also on how we evaluate and judge them.
- Becoming a professional is about learning a *mode of practice*, and understanding how people become professionals involves examining any instance(s) of talk and gesture in this mode of practice from three perspectives:

1. What is its meaning (semantically)?
2. What does the object or action refer to (its perceptual field)?
3. What is the particular object/action doing in relation to that field (its scope of action)?

Understanding these three perspectives in relation to a group of professional persons gives us insights into the community of practice to which they belong.

7.3.2 Exploring Professional Practices

As we have seen earlier in relation to Scollon and the constructs of MDA (also see Candlin and Candlin (2007)), being a member of the community of practice of a profession (or indeed of any group) implies the following abilities:

- The ability to define a domain of scrutiny within which are phenomena around which particular discourses are organised
- The ability to draw upon coding schemes, highlighting procedures and also ways of producing and articulating representations of an event in a range of modalities
- The ability to analyse human action and cognition as socially situated phenomena; to see activities as being accomplished through ongoing

work (see Garfinkel) within historically shaped settings and sites of a particular social world (see Goffman; and Layder)
- The ability to describe, interpret and explain social practices involving the unequal production and distribution of such discursive phenomena (see Fairclough)
- The ability to recognise that professional vision is always relative and perspectival and its understandings and performances unevenly allocated (see Foucault)
- The ability to understand that professional vision is accomplished through the competent deployment of situated practices in relevant settings, and that such practices must be learned (see Wenger)

In summary:

- Processes of classification are central
- Such processes are organised as bureaucratic knowledge structures
- New structures are always historically shaped
- Professionals are accountable for their perceptions, which are always subject to contestation

Part 2

In this part of the chapter we focus on identity in discourse to explore the theme of 'What actions are being taken here, by whom and why?'

Summary of Concepts

What role(s) do(es) our personal/group identity(ies) play in our participation in discourse? How does our membership influence our motivations, goals, cultural belonging? When we engage in discourse how are we being positioned as actors? Can we enter into dialogue with several discourses? How do we manage negotiating of boundaries among discourses?

7.4 Social Psychological Approaches to DA: Identity(ies), Role(s) and Accommodation

Here, and in Chap. 8, we move from what has been essentially a descriptive, interpretive and mainly qualitative account of discourse analysis towards two distinctively new dimensions: the first emphasises the *social psychological* analysis of interpersonal and personal discourse, but very much focused on group (and intergroup) membership, involving new methodologies of an experimental and quantitative kind; the second (in Chap. 8) focuses on the engagement of micro analysis with macro analysis but now more *sociologically* focused, in what has come to be called *critical discourse analysis* (CDA), with its focus on the contribution of the analysis of discourse phenomena to the *explanation* of social issues, the understanding of social institutions and organisations, and exploring the relationship between discourse and social change. Conceptually, neither of these new dimensions is truly new: the former is underpinned by much of the work of Goffman, Garfinkel, and Geertz which we have discussed in earlier chapters, and the latter is already prepared for by our discussion of the work of Cicourel, some applications of CA and Scollon et al.'s MDA.

Weatherall, Watson and Gallois (2007) provide the following overview of this social psychological connection with discourse analysis, much of which resonates closely with our work so far in this book. Note especially here their focus on the objects of such social psychologically motivated research.

Quote 7.10 Weatherall, Watson and Gallois on researching language and social psychology

In general, research on language and social psychology is comprised of related approaches based on the contextualized negotiation of social relations and action, as well as the manipulation and/or production of identity and language to those ends. Research has focused on a variety of groups and intergroup processes, including gender, age, ethnicity and institutional role, placing increasing importance on negotiated identities or identities mobilized in the service of local actions in interaction …. More recently, in recognition that individuals belong to multiple groups simultaneously and this need to manage multiple identities, researchers have begun to examine the impact of multiple identities on inter-group communication.

(Weatherall, Watson and Gallois 2007: 2–3)

Methodologically, the links between social psychology and discourse have taken two routes:

1. ***Experimentally***, using quantitative methods, involving such tools as Likert scales and survey questionnaires in which underlying constructs such as *identity*, *attitude* and so on in relation to the key themes indicated above (cf. *gender, age authority* etc.) were treated as cognitive ‘givens’ to be seen as causes of particular discursive behaviours.
2. ***Discursively***, using qualitative methods, where such constructs rather than being seen as a priori ‘givens’ were held to be constructs of particular types of discursive encounters, such that *attitude*, for example (in relation to those key themes above) was to be seen as an outcome rather than as a cause, of particular social and discourse practices.

This distinction is not firm: for example, as Weatherall et al. (2007: 4) point out, a construct like ‘attitude’ (in relation to the key themes above) may be explored both in terms of how it is discussed and dealt with in interaction, as a construct, as well as emerging, as it were, as a construct of importance from a close analysis of actual discourse data from encounters. As the following quotation indicates, there is a strong link to be forged between their social psychological work and the more sociological/anthropological and social interactional/conversational approaches to discourse analysis we have discussed so far in the book.

It is worth noting here that Watson and Gallois (2007), is an excellent case study example of putting these two approachess into action in the healthcare context.

Concept 7.3 Identity: a key construct in social psychology and discourse

The relationship of language/discourse and identity is one of the most complex in applied linguistics. Theoretical work on identity in a number of areas, particularly sociology and social psychology, has informed work in applied linguistics for half a century, and more recently in discourse analytical studies. In recent times, some of the more fixed and deterministic assumptions of these social science approaches have been questioned in the climate of post-structuralism, which has stressed (as we note above)

Quote 7.11 Weatherall, Watson and Gallois on language and social psychological approach

So … the study of language and discourse in social psychology also owes great theoretical and methodological debts to sociology, sociolinguistics, anthropology and communication studies …. In its early incarnation, a language and social psychology approach involved an effort to do two things. The first was to bring a psychological perspective to the close analysis of the more social factors in language and communication …. Therefore psychological aspects of interactions such as identification and status, and processes such as cognition and affect, were introduced as being consequential for language and communication. The second was to bring an intergroup perspective to the at that time resolutely interpersonal psychological research on communication across roles and social identities (e.g., doctor-patient interaction, interethnic encounters).

(Weatherall et al. 2007: 1–2)

the plural, shifting, contingent and contextually dependent construction of identities in discursive interaction. All contemporary approaches to identity share something in common: they share an understanding that identity is overwhelmingly *socially* constructed. This may be initially surprising, as one's identity as *self* is necessarily experienced as something inner, even private, and the link between inner and outer, and the source of the inner in the outer, may not be at all self-evident to individuals in their experience of their own identity as *persons*. Here the work of Goffman on the presentation of self in everyday life (Goffman 1959), to which we have referred in earlier chapters, is crucially relevant, even though the individual experience of social identity, its shifts and changes and how these are intimately linked to language and discourse, has until recently been a somewhat neglected topic.

As one classic example in social psychology, the work of Henri Tajfel provides a general explanatory framework for the phenomenon of self-stigmatisation (closely interwoven with identity) frequently experienced by members of minority groups.

7.4.1 Henri Tajfel and Social Identity

Henri Tajfel, a Jewish émigré from Poland whose family perished in the Holocaust, sought to understand the social and cultural dynamics that

made such violence directed at members of a stigmatised minority possible or even likely. Tajfel emphasises the social in social identity, stressing that we perceive ourselves and others in terms of membership and non-membership of distinctive social groups relevant to our social context (see Tajfel 1974). In this his work has clear affinities with the early work of Harvey Sacks who proposed a study of the 'membership categorisation devices' (see Chap. 3) that categorise membership in the course of casual conversation. These social groups are seen as being in a competitive relationship with each other, so that social identification serves competitive ends. We want to see ourselves as belonging to groups which we perceive to have some kind of social advantage, and seek out dimensions of comparison with other groups on which the groups to which we are seen as belonging have a competitive advantage, whether it be in terms of socio-economic status, international position, historicity, or desirable cultural values as diverse as artistic achievement, sense of humour or sporting prowess. Language and discourse is thus a cue to identification in terms of membership of social groups.

7.5 Communication Accommodation Theory

A major consequence in social psychological research, and one which has considerable relevance for a range of applied linguistic research of Tajfel's original thinking, is the focus on what has become a key field in social psychology, namely *Communication Accommodation Theory* (CAT) (sometimes referred to as *Speech Accommodation Theory* (SAT)), associated closely with the work of Howard Giles and his colleagues (e.g. see Giles et al. 1973), where exploring contexts of adoption by persons of the linguistic signals of preferred group membership is a central research theme.

(Note here the potential link to the work of Wenger and Scollon in relation to the construct of the *Community of Practice*, which we discussed in Chap. 3.)

Following the arguments in Weatherall et al. (2007: 110 ff), and those much earlier in Tajfel's work, key to all social psychological approaches to the construct of identity is the adoption of an 'intergroup approach', within which a number of types of, or stances towards, adaptation by

group members of themselves vis-à-vis members of other social groups can be identified:

- *Assimilation* (desire to return or move to a recognised other identity)
- *Integration* (desire to switch to another identity or to blend identities)
- *Separation* (desire to maintain a distinction from others' identities)
- *Individuation* (desire to be treated as an individual, perhaps different, identity)

The role of discourse analysis lies in the identification of the realisations of such stances in members' interaction and in members' responses to experimental questions. Watson and Gallois (2007), in the context of health communication research, argue that health communication is just such an intergroup encounter that occurs at an interpersonal level, and that complex intergroup relations and motivations are always present in such encounters. They argue, for example, that a shift towards 'patient-centredness' in contemporary medical practice must involve researchers in understanding the underlying motivations, goals and cultural norms in each interaction in order to fully understand how such a construct plays out in a medical encounter. In this they are close, as we have seen in this book, to the work of Cicourel. Relationships of identity will vary with participants' social historical background and experience (e.g. what Bourdieu would include in his *habitus*). Where social psychologists like Watson and Gallois would, however, differ from discourse analysts, interactional sociolinguists or conversation analysts is in their reliance on a series of predetermined models of human interaction and behaviour. Among these models is that of CAT which we refer to above. Perhaps more important is the harmonisation Watson and Gallois see as possible and desirable between the models of social psychology and research into modes of interaction analysis. Like them, they focus on strategy in interaction, and identities being constructed in discourse; where they differ is, as we say, in their deductive rather than in the inductive model of the interaction analysts. Clearly, what is needed (as they argue in our reference and their quotation earlier) is an accommodation between both models.

As another example, again depending on the intergroup setting, Giles and his colleagues argue that individuals may wish to display or conceal their linguistic badge of membership. In times of harsh conflict, individuals may attempt to disguise their linguistic affiliation completely, as in the case of the Shibboleth test in the Book of Judges in the Bible, where a fine detail of pronunciation was a tell-tale sign of membership of a defeated ethnic group whose members (where detected) were put to death by the victors. It was said that in World War II the same was true in relation to the pronunciation of the Dutch town name *Scheveningen* (which would be differently pronounced if you were Dutch or German). Tajfel discusses the way in which social representation may be used to the strategic advantage of social groups. The social, dynamic and conflict-based nature of his work offers significant potential for understanding the underlying motives for such matters as minority language maintenance and shift in multilingual and multicultural settings. The link to discourse and the interaction order (Goffman) can be discerned in Tajfel's work in the way he emphasises the contingency, instability and relativity of identity categories, their plurality, and the way in which they may or may not be salient in particular encounters or particular contexts, and the work of Giles and Beebe (e.g. Beebe and Giles 1984) has strong implications for second language acquisition research.

The sociologist Zygmunt Bauman offers a different account of the motivation of self-representation, but otherwise writes in terms which Tajfel would readily have recognised:

Quote 7.12 Bauman on motivation of self-representation

One thinks of identity whenever one is not sure of where one belongs; that is, not sure of how to place oneself among the evident variety of behavioural styles and patterns, and how to make sure that people around would accept this placement as right and proper, so that both sides would know how to go on in each other's presence. 'Identity' is the name given to the escape sought from uncertainty. Hence 'identity', though ostensibly a noun, behaves like a verb, albeit a strange one to be sure: it appears only in the future tense.

(Bauman 1996: 19)

This dynamism offers a useful link to the work of the Russian literary theorist Bakhtin, for whom 'language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other' (Bakhtin 1981: 294). Bakhtin sees language use as *dialogic*, in a number of ways. Firstly, it is always in the context of another person (the listener), and is shaped by anticipation of 'the answering word'. We can note here that this is exactly the position adopted in Garfinkel's ethnomethodological analysis, and that of Conversation Analysis (see Chaps. 3 and 6, respectively) which the latter, according to Schegloff (2008: 234–5), citing Goodwin 1979 and 1981, holds that 'the final form of a sentence in ordinary conversation [has] to be understood as an interactional product' and calls for 'the inclusion of the hearer in … the speaker's processes'. As we have seen, conversation analysts not only assert this position as a matter of theoretical principle, but represent it as a methodology for demonstrating the principle empirically in their close accounts of the micro processes of interaction.

Secondly, for Bakhtin, language itself bears the traces of its use by others, so that individual meaning must be wrested from it: 'the word … exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own' (Bakhtin 1981: 293–4).

Thirdly, language is subject on the one hand to pressures towards unity, and on the other to the pressures of diversity (what Bakhtin calls *heteroglossia*): unity, in order to achieve maximum common understanding at the level of values and ideology; diversity, to express various identities: 'languages of social groups', 'professional' and 'generic' languages, 'languages of generations'. The act of language use, therefore, is always the site of struggle of competing identities. Bakhtin stresses the powerful ideological force of language, so that the discourses of others may constitute an 'authoritative' and 'internally persuasive' influence on the individual: 'a variety of alien voices enter into the struggle for influence within an individual's consciousness (just as they struggle with one another in surrounding social reality)' (Bakhtin 1994: 79). Once again one can hear the resonance of this position in the work of Foucault, of Bourdieu, and in that of the 'critical' discourse analysts

such as Fairclough, all of whom have featured in earlier Themes and chapters of this book.

7.6 Some Further Examples of the Relationship Between Discourse and Identity

7.6.1 Language, Identity and Language Maintenance

The connection between identity, language use and language maintenance and the procedures of social psychology are well exemplified in the work of the Canadian social psychologist Wallace Lambert. Lambert studied threats to the maintenance of French in French-speaking Canada by the way in which French-speaking Canadians saw themselves in relation to English-speaking Canadians, that is, how they felt about their identity as French speakers. As an apposite methodology he developed what he called the 'matched guise' technique, whereby subjects were exposed to the speech of fluent bilinguals reading aloud a reading passage in each of their languages (French and English). The study was designed so that the samples in each language were presented to subjects randomly within a much larger set of samples from a substantial number of speakers. In this way subjects did not realise that they were being exposed to two performances by the same speaker, one in each language, but assumed that the speakers were different individuals. Subjects were asked to evaluate the individual speakers in terms of a number of social and personality attributes. The study revealed that French-Canadian subjects tended unwittingly to evaluate a speaker more negatively when he or she was reading the passage in French than when he or she was performing in English. This covert preference for English among Lambert's subjects was interpreted as showing the social psychological pressure French was under among French-Canadians in Canada at the time the study was carried out, in the 1950s and 1960s. Interestingly, although not in the experimental social psychological paradigm developed by Lambert, Labov's studies of the speech of whites in the predominantly black southern states

of the United States conveyed a similar message of positive or negative evaluation depending on perceived linguistic attributes of ethnicity.

7.6.2 Institutionally Relevant Construction of Identity

This issue of identities is further taken up, although in a distinctive context, in the work of Cicourel (see Chap. 5) with its focus on institutionally relevant identities, as analytically revealed through detailed ethnographic analysis of the contexts of language use (see here also the work of Geertz in Chap. 4 on 'thick descriptions' of ethnographic context). As we have seen, at issue for Cicourel is the relevance of such identities to the analysis of institutional discourse. This is sometimes known as the 'micro/macro' issue, that is, the way in which larger social identities and social structuring are manifest in, or relevant to the micro analysis of language in face-to-face interaction. As we saw in Chap. 4, such a challenge arises when, as one particular example, Goffman defined an 'interaction order' in terms of the immediate face-to-face situation, an order which in his view generated its own structuring, one which could not be revealed by thinking in terms of the usual grand categories of sociology—roles, functions, social identities and the like—but only by examining interaction itself.

The question we raised earlier in Chap. 5 is pertinent here also: what is the relationship of these two levels of social structuring? Cicourel, as we observed, argues against what he sees as the unnecessarily 'purist' position of some working in conversation analysis, particularly Schegloff, who, at least in the early days of CA, eschew reference to the macro in analysis of the micro until it can be shown from analysis of the micro data that features of the macro context, including social roles and identities, are being oriented to by the participants themselves. Using discourse data from interaction in a teaching hospital, Cicourel (1992) gradually reveals information on the identities of the participants in terms of social role in the discourse to illuminate the details of the encounters through his exploration of the data in a way that would not be possible, he argues, from a CA analysis alone.

7.6.3 Identity and Issues of Intercultural (Mis) Communication

We have already alluded to the close affinity of studies which connect language and identity in contexts of acute social concern. Indeed this will be a major focus of Chap. 8 on CDA. Diana Eades in her research has shown how communicative conventions which are characteristic of particular ethnically marked varieties of language can lead to intercultural miscommunication in legal settings. Her example involves a close study of the communicative style of Aboriginal Australians involved in the legal process. In the research presented by Eades (1996), significant, potentially tragic, miscommunication occurred between a defendant, an Aboriginal woman accused of murdering her lover, and her own lawyers. The defendant did not inform her lawyers of crucial evidence of sustained and severe domestic violence prior to the death of the lover. Eades shows that this omission was because, for various reasons to do with communicative conventions in Aboriginal English, the defendant had no opportunity to communicate this information. The conventions observed by the defendant clashed sharply with those of the legal interview, where the lawyer sought to elicit information relevant to the defence by sustained direct questioning. The communicative clash led each of the participants to make attributions about the other's personality and character that were damaging for the chances of success of the defence. The defendant found the lawyers to be 'not interested', 'not listening' and 'not communicating'… the lawyers … described her [the defendant] as 'extremely reticent in her communication with [them]', 'appear[ing] passive and uninterested in the entire process of the preparation of her defence', and generally 'a difficult client' (Eades 1996: 221). The result was a failure to adduce crucial evidence in court, which led to the Aboriginal woman's wrongful conviction for murder. A series of (mis)identifications, then, resulted from the communicative styles associated with the identities 'Aboriginal' and 'white lawyer'. The ultimate misidentification was by the jury, who quickly and without hesitation found the defendant 'guilty'. Eades' research illustrates work in the field of forensic linguistics, which includes the use of linguistic evidence for purposes of identification

relevant to the legal proceedings. A recent example of this practice is the use by several governments of language evidence in the investigation of the identity claims of refugee claimants, a practice increasingly criticised by forensic linguists and others in the applied linguistic community. For a further illustration of these themes see Walsh 2011.

7.7 Building a Model of Social Psychological Approaches to DA

Ng et al. (2004) provide a framework for organising and understanding social psychological approaches to discourse analysis, one which seeks to bring together linguistic/discursive, social and social psychological concepts into an overall search for ways of explaining the different meanings that participants derive from, and attribute to, social and communicative encounters in which they are engaged. This model is displayed in Fig. 7.1

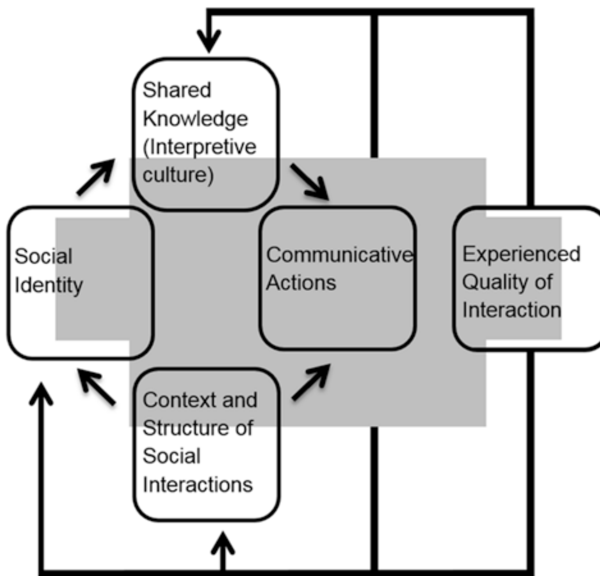

Fig. 7.1 Language matters: Dynamic interactions of communication, identity and culture, from Ng et al. (2004: 12). © City University of Hong Kong. Used with permission

Note that in the middle of Fig. 7.1 is a shaded area which represents discourse and language as a system of signs and symbols used to convey (and to negotiate) meanings in interaction and which is involved in all the processes indicated in the boxes in the figure, interlinked by the arrows between the constructs. This model provides an understanding of how communicative actions and experiences of social interactions can be related to the structure of social interactions, social identity and shared knowledge.

Quote 7.13 Ng, Candlin and Chiu on social identities

[S]ocial identity, shared knowledge, and the context and structure of social interactions are key variables in the model for explaining communicative actions …. Social identity evokes shared knowledge including shared beliefs that people hold about attributes characteristic of a social group. Such beliefs may be organized into group stereotypes … social stigmas can be regarded as shared representations of groups attached with strong negative evaluations … much shared knowledge about a social category is highly contextualized … for example men are expected to dominate in some contexts and be submissive in other contexts, and the same can be said about women … Every society is situated in a unique social historical context. The same social identity may be given different meanings in different societies, and in different institutions within a given society.

(Ng et al. 2004: 14–5)

Reflection task 7.2

In many ways the central task facing the social psychological approach to the analysis of discourse in context and in action (this book's macro theme) is to document and explain tensions between stability and change. Powerful groups have a vested interest in preservation of the status quo, challenging groups have a vested interest in redistribution and psycho-social change. Nowhere is that struggle more highlighted than in critical moments in crucial sites where values, beliefs, attitudes, and normative behaviours are under challenge and stress.

- Can you think of a particular critical moment in your workplace or personal circumstance where your own beliefs, norms, values

(*continued*)

Reflection task 7.2 (continued)

were under challenge? Perhaps by something someone said, or did?

- How far do you think the challenge derived from a stereotyped view of how they believed you had behaved, or you believed they had behaved?

7.8 Methodology in Social Psychological Approaches to DA

As we have noted earlier, chief among the constructs and methodologies of a social psychological approach to discourse analysis is Communication (or Speech) Accommodation Theory.

In their paper in the Weatherall et al. collection (2007), Bourhis and colleagues provide the following snapshot of CAT:

Quote 7.14 Bourhis, El-Gehedi and Sachdev on CAT

CAT was developed partly as a counterpoint to the sociolinguistic tradition of explaining code-switching strictly in terms of language norms determining who speaks what to whom and when … Without ignoring normative factors CAT sought to account for language use in terms of interlocutors; motives, attitudes, perceptions and group loyalties in a broad range of experimental and applied settings …. CAT proposes that most communicative behaviours involve either an approach or an avoidance orientation between speakers, a process known as interpersonal accommodation….

(Bourhis et al. 2007: 36–7)

What CAT does is to propose three *communication strategies* which are open to individuals to adopt, constrained by certain circumstances, in relation to particular personal, interpersonal and intergroup identities, and in certain contexts:

1. ***Convergence***: Where individuals adapt their communicative behaviour across a range of modes (including linguistic, paralinguistic, kinetic) to become more similar to their interlocutors' behaviours
2. ***Divergence***: Where individuals change their communicative behaviours to become less similar to their interlocutors' behaviours
3. ***Maintenance***: Where individuals resist convergence or divergence and seek to sustain their own communicative behaviours

It should be noted here that such strategies or social identity processes are not held by social psychologists to be personal only or interindividual; in fact they can be seen (and perhaps more usually are seen) more as signals of *group behaviour* on the part of the individual.

Convergence may signal a desire to be like another, and convergence signals may indicate a growth in such 'liking'; wishing also to highlight similarity rather than difference. As such convergence may act to lessen or ameliorate intergroup differences, make people value you more highly and make people more mutually intelligible. It may be also that convergence is a cost-benefit game; converging ('upwards' or 'downwards') may be to your economic advantage and personal or group reward/benefit.

Divergence or ***Maintenance****,* in a similar way, may be used strategically; it may be to your advantage to differentiate yourself communicatively on occasion (or even regularly) from members of another (perhaps rival) group, for a range of reasons, among which is asserting your own individual identity.

Such strategies can be researched either in terms of snapshots synchronically, or over time diachronically, the latter emphasising perhaps long-term attitudes of affiliation or the reverse. Importantly, CAT is seen to be influenced not only by immediate features of context but also by the sociohistorical context in which the interaction is embedded. (See the discussion on Layder's resource map in Part II.) Also, CAT sees communication not only as a matter of 'exchanging information about facts, ideas, emotions, as often salient category memberships are also negotiated in interaction through processes of accommodation' (Giles et al. 2007: 133–4). There is a clear link here to the discussion on membership categorisation devices (MCD) earlier in Chap. 3.

As one example of an effect of CAT research, Bourhis et al. 2007 indicate the importance of acculturation orientations:

Quote 7.15 Bourhis, El-Geledi and Sachdev on CAT strategies

As seen in CAT, language [i.e., 'discourse' or 'communication'] strategies such as convergence, maintenance and divergence provide a vivid reflection of relational outcomes emerging between speakers of contrasting language communities. Current research should help uncover the acculturation orientations most likely to yield harmonious, problematic and conflictual relational outcomes as expressed through the code-switching strategies proposed within CAT.

(Bourhis et al. 2007: 41)

In light of such a position, as Giles et al. (2007: 131) indicate, in recent years CAT has expanded from its 'initial roots in speech style and accent to [being] an interdisciplinary model of relational and identity processes in communicative interaction'.

Quote 7.16 Giles et al. 2007 on CAT as an interdisciplinary model of relational and identity processes in communicative interaction

Research has applied the theory in a wide variety of nations, cultures and languages; to study communication between different social groups (cultures, genders, generations and abilities); in different social and institutional contexts (in organizations, in the healthcare system, the courtroom, or simply the streets); and through different media (face to face interactions, but also radio, telephone, email etc.). Although most of the work has been conducted from neo-positivistic and experimental frameworks to enhance control of the variables being investigated, the methodologies and disciplines invoked, have nevertheless been impressively broad.

(Giles et al. 2007: 131)

7.8.1 How CAT Research Is Carried Out and Its Methodological Tools

Most experimentally oriented CAT research selects from a restricted set of methodological tools, commonly made available in sociological and psychological research. Essentially, such research seeks to provide quan-

titatively assessable and displayed results from inquiries into personal, interpersonal and intergroup attitudes and beliefs. Usually this takes the form of requiring subjects to make qualitative judgements about themselves or others, either directly, or in response to cited opinion data or scenarios, usually, but not always, contextualised to particular situations. As such, this research is in fact both qualitative and quantitative: qualitative in that the constructs and questions underpinning the research may be arrived at by introspection or as a result of data and information gathered from various 'stimulating' contexts such as focus group discussions or personal narratives of experience, quantitative in that the results of the questions or judgements can either be simply calculated, or more sophisticatedly by means of inferential statistics they can be shown to group, or correlate with each other and across subjects, in certain significant ways.

7.8.2 An Example: Applying Social Psychological Approaches to DA

We recommend Johnson (1988) as a CAT case study. It draws from a social psychologically motivated study of courtroom and police interrogation discourse, and applies CAT to authentic courtroom data. (It is worth noting that this was unusual at that time in that a great deal of social psychological research on language and discourse issues had been on experimentally designed situations and not on authentic discourse. Clearly, this is no longer the case at all as the book by Weatherall et al. (2007) and the other references there and in this book make clear.)

7.9 A Case Study

Scollon, R. (2005). The rhythmic integration of action and discourse: work, the body and the earth. In S. Norris and R. H. Jones (Eds.). *Discourse in Action: Introducing mediated discourse analysis*. London: Routledge. (pp. 20–31).

In this study Scollon explores Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA) through an examination of the discourses and actions that surround and comprise the laying of pine floorboards in a house in Alaska. The

Quote 7.17 Johnson on accommodation in trial settings

[I]t shows how accommodation (mainly convergent) strategies can be ascribed to both the defendants and the professionals when they meet in court hearings. The convergence of the part of the professionals consists of simplifications in their speech style when addressing the defendants i.e., they use a much less technical and complex language during the examination phase of the trial than during the more formal opening and closing phases, when it is mainly the court and other professionals (prosecutor or defence lawyer) who are addressed. The defendants on the other hand, contribute to the creation of a middle ground by using a more unmarked conversational language during the trial than in the following (police) interview, where they used more swear words and criminal argot. The analyses also show that the professionals' accommodation of speech style is not only dependent on a general preconception of defendants' abilities. Instead, professionals are shown to calibrate and accommodate to the speech style of individual defendants. The defendants were divided into two groups according to whether they exhibited a 'strong' or 'weak' speech style, in terms of information density, level of expressed certainty and activity level .... The professionals were found to be sensitive to differences in the defendants' behaviour. Thus, for example, they accommodate by reducing the information density of their utterances when talking to defendants with a weak speech style.

(Johnson 1988: 12)

main issues he investigates are the level at which action can be analysed, and how discourses are 'resemioticised', that is, repackaged as meaning-making tools for different and multiple discourses.

Rationale

Scollon's point is that even what might appear to be simple actions are in fact quite complex. He gives, as an example, the action meant by the expression 'we are going shopping'. The verb 'going' in this activity could be unpacked as 'we are walking or we are stepping or we are lifting a foot and placing it ahead of the other, leaning forward onto that foot while lifting the other' (p. 21) (though we suspect that most of us wouldn't have thought of 'going' quite like that!). He asks why we understand the interplay between language and action in the way that we do, making the key point that constraints of time and space impact on our discourses and related actions. Ultimately, his argument is that to understand the

complexity involved in that understanding it is best to examine real-life illustrations and examples of discourse *in* action as practised by social actors.

Methods

Scollon's case study derives from his experience of working with his brother-in-law when they laid pine floorboards in his house in Alaska. Although he is not explicit about his methods, we can sense that he has acted as a participant-observer and has taken notes after performing the activities that he reports. He is interested in how the activity of floor-laying seems to be nested within cycles of time and space and how particular types of discourse are seen as relevant to particular cycles. See the original article for detailed analysis and results.

Contribution to theory-practice nexus

This case study allows us to explore the complexity of actions and the relationship between language and action. Scollon points out that in some situations language *is* action (e.g. pragmatics and speech acts); in others language *anticipates* action (e.g. plans); and yet in others action *precedes* language (e.g. narratives). Within MDA, discourse is seen as a kind of mediated action. In Scollon's words: 'discourse is not just the action, not just the language; it is the bit of language as it is used in taking an action' (p. 20).

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8

How Do Discourse and Social Change Drive Each Other?

In this final chapter of Part I we focus on going beyond 'pattern-seeking' and explore interdiscursivity and social/institutional change. We draw on the key contributions of Fairclough and Wodak, while our methodological focus is on Critical Discourse Analysis.

Summary of Concepts

Discourse as a form of social practice; discourse as a mode of action and a mode of representation. How discourse constructs identities, displays social relationships and reveals systems of knowledge and belief. Discourse as reproductive and transformative; discourse analysis and social, institutional and political change. Discourse as recontextualisation and interdiscursivity; discourse analysis as discovery versus discourse analysis as search.

8.1 Towards Critical Discourse Analysis

In introducing the construct and theory of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) it is important NOT to see CDA as essentially distinctive to many of the ideas and readings we have discussed throughout the book.

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C.N. Candlin et al., *Exploring Discourse in Context and in Action*,
Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-31506-9_8

Like MDA, it represents a particular perspective on discourse; however it is one which is entirely motivated by the premises of this book as a whole, and in particular those ideas and positions explicitly discussed in Theme #1. It might be valuable to read over these again before we embark on CDA.

There is a vast literature on critical linguistics (CL) and CDA, but for the purposes of this brief and introductory survey, only a few of the most relevant works will be cited. (We recommend Wodak (2001) for a comprehensive review of the evolution of CL and CDA, and Weiss and Wodak (2003) for a good account of the deeper roots of 'critical' studies.)

Fowler, one of the first critical linguists, clarifies that '"linguistic criticism" is not simply criticism of language, but criticism using linguistics' (Fowler 1996: v). He sees CL as a branch of linguistics concerned with investigating and understanding values in linguistic usage, in contrast to the orthodox approaches of descriptive and prescriptive linguistics (Fowler 1991: 5). Wodak, another of the early critical linguists and discourse analysts, suggests that '*Critical* means distinguishing complexity and denying easy, dichotomous explanations' (Wodak 1999: 186). van Dijk, another pioneer in critical linguistics, lists six criteria for critical analysis, ranging from its explicit partisan positioning in support of dominated groups in society to its activist goal of not only describing the world but also changing it (van Dijk 1989: 108).

In his Inaugural Professorial Lecture at Lancaster in 1981 'Criticising applied linguistics' (and subsequently published in a much expanded form in Candlin (1990)), Candlin offered three interpretations of the term 'critical':

1. Making *oppositional*
2. Identifying the *crucial and critical*
3. Ensuring *explanatory and socially grounded* accounts and also ensuring *reflexivity and relevance*

These views of a critical approach to linguistic analysis coalesced around CDA in the 1990s, and it has become the dominant 'school' of contem-

porary critical analysis. Indeed Billig (2003: 36) draws attention to the acceptance of CDA as a 'recognized field within the current academic context'. As noted by Wodak,

> **Quote 8.1 Wodak on CDA**
>
> CDA is not a homogenous theory with a set of clear and defined tools; rather, it is a research program with many facets and numerous different theoretical and methodological approaches.
>
> [In other words, it is a paradigm] which is bound together more by a research agenda and programme than by some common theory or methodology.
>
> (Wodak 1999: 186)

8.2 CDA

Fairclough, perhaps the key 'pioneer' of CDA (see Fairclough 1989, 1995a, b, 2010) collaborated with Wodak in putting forward eight principles of CDA in Fairclough and Wodak (1997). Paltridge (2000: 154–5) usefully fleshes out these principles as follows:

1. Critical discourse analysis addresses social problems by examining the linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures. Thus, social and political processes have a (partly) linguistic or discursive character that is reflected in the use of certain linguistic and discourse strategies and choices.
2. Power relations are exercised and negotiated in discourse. Thus, power operates through language and is negotiated through language.
3. Discourse constitutes society and culture in that language not only reflects social relations but is a part of them and reproduces them.
4. Ideologies are very often produced through discourse. Their production includes ways of representing and constructing society such as relations of power, relations of domination and exploitation, and relations based on gender and ethnicity.
5. Discourse cannot be considered separately from the discourses that have preceded it and that will follow it. Nor can it be produced, or

understood without taking these intertextual relations and sociocultural knowledges into consideration.
6. Critical discourse analysis makes connections between social and cultural structures and processes and properties of texts. These connections are, however, complex, and more often indirect than direct: that is, they are very often mediated.
7. Critical discourse analysis goes beyond description and is both interpretative and explanatory. Further, these interpretations and explanations are open and may be affected by new readings and new contextual information.
8. Critical discourse analysis, by uncovering opaqueness and power relationships, is a form of social action that attempts to intervene and bring about change in communicative and sociopolitical practices.

Research concerned with the relations between language, culture, power and ideology, conforms to the CDA paradigm established by these eight principles.

Within the CDA paradigm, there are a number of methodological tools which researchers have drawn upon. Which tools are chosen is very much a reflection of which research perspective one is emphasising. A commonly used tool to analyse data from a textual perspective is drawn from studies in the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics developed by M.A.K. Halliday and his colleagues which views language as a social semiotic system (Halliday 1978). As such, it is often used in CL and CDA studies (Fairclough 1995b; Wodak 2001). It is a powerful tool which lends itself not just to analytical description, but also to explanation and interpretation.

In a similar way, from a social action perspective, as we have seen in earlier chapters, Conversational Analysis and interactional sociolinguistic analysis provide the means for detailed critical analysis of moment-by-moment interaction, and from a narrative and participant perspective, the work of Geertz in ethnography and Scollon and colleagues in MDA have provided powerful tools for a CDA account. Such a multiperspectival approach to discourse involving multiple and interdiscursive methodologies is likely in our view to provide a richer account of communicative behaviour

and one which is committed not only to description and interpretation but also to *critical explanation* (see Candlin 1990).

8.2.1 Some Reflections on Fairclough and Wodak's 'Eight Principles' of CDA

A first reflection on the eight CDA principles (see above) is that they are not all of the same kind. For example, if you read them carefully some of the eight are really to do with background, about the nature of language, how language is related to ideology and beliefs. So, although these principles are quite useful, they would be more useful if they were organised in a more transparent way. What we might do in reorganising them would be that principles 2, 3 and 4 go together better as *background*; principle 5 would then be about *how one chooses data*; principles 1 and 6 would better be seen as having to do with how you *bring text and social structure and the interaction order together*; principle 7 focuses on how any critical discourse analysis has to be *more than merely descriptive*; and principle 8 is left as the key 'so what' question and what do you do with your critical discourse analysis once it has been accomplished and with whom and how you achieve that accomplishment.

Reflection task 8.1

'We decide who comes here and the manner in which they come.'
(Australian Prime Minister John Howard, 28 October 2001).
Consider the following:

- Why do you think this statement, spoken during a federal election campaign, was so powerful for John Howard's party? Think carefully and make a few notes before proceeding.
- Now read the following excerpt reconstruing the above utterance 18 months later at the time of the west's Coalition invasion of Iraq:

'John Howard paused. His eyes hardened. His arm lifted, his forefinger wagged. "We will decide who comes to this country, and the circumstances in which they come." That line became his election slogan. The crowd exploded, their feet pounded the floor, their cheers deafened the ears of those who sat frozen, appalled' (Margo Kingston, Sydney Morning Herald, 18 March 2003).

- How would you approach a critical discourse analytical account of this passage?
- What would be the key features you would focus on, and why?

8.3 Development of CDA: A Brief Historical (and Personal) Account

One can make a distinction between seeing CDA as the operationalisation of these eight principles and necessarily having always to engage oneself in the practice of critical discourse analysis with social problems and issues of social change. Original thinking about critical discourse analysis really came as an attempt to reveal how in the uses of language there was more going on than just the words on a page; that various messages were being sent almost subliminally through the text, so that if you read a newspaper article, for example, it did not represent the truth, as it were, but represented a particular perspective on the truth. To go back to the beginning, what discourse analysts were trying to do back in the 1960s, exclusively in the United Kingdom, was look at ways in which one would ask such critical questions about texts. On that basis, in the early 1980s, it seemed that such an approach towards texts suggested a rather different way of looking at language as a whole; that one should not look at language just in terms of the forms of language set out on the page as if you were trying to approach the text descriptively as one might view an undescribed language. One needed to take into account all of those other factors which have been central to the previous Themes of this book: for example, asking who the participants were, what the nature of the interaction order among them was, what the nature of the social institution was in which, and through which they were engaged, and what the relationship was between their social practices and their discursive practices. So from that perspective, the critical discourse analytical study of language in context and in action became much broader.

As a major stimulus to this new and broadened dimension, Norman Fairclough's position was essentially Marxist—deterministic of the relationships between participants, discourse and language choice, very

much determined by matters of place within the social order and not at all especially focused on the individual, but allowing for the possibility that such an individual, as a member of a group, might offer some discursive resistance to what Fairclough (and others) regarded as a kind of discursively mediated hegemony. (See here the Introduction to Fairclough (2010).)

On this position we can align the writings of Foucault, Bourdieu, Habermas and others which have formed a substantial basis to this book. Among these we can recall Foucault's construct of the *order of discourse*, the idea of the values in the *linguistic marketplace* and the power of 'capital' in the writings of Bourdieu, the need to strive for a balancing of communicative forces in Habermas' construct of 'communicative competence' and his distinction between *public and private spheres* of interaction. All of these influences pointed to discourse being seen as a site of struggle, of contestation among and between different forces. Associated with this was the idea of developing one's own (or one's group) communicative capacity so that you could make a change in your social and personal circumstances by the way you could challenge and question, you could raise your voice, you could put your ideas forward. So, through the early 1980s and later, the concern among some discourse analysts was that there was an opportunity of a coming together of text and genre analysis, political position and stance, sociological study of the social order and social philosophical study of the position of the individual and the group within that order.

What was missing largely at that time, however, was an engagement with matters of social change in any especially practice-oriented way. Notwithstanding CDA's focus on texts sourced from particular contexts, this very largely did not involve the fieldwork and interaction analysis characteristic of, say, the work of CA, MDA and the interactional sociolinguists we have discussed elsewhere in this book, and CDA was in large measure an intellectual exercise rather than what one might be called an applied and practical program. Building on this intellectual engagement, however, the latter part of the 1980s and beyond provided an opportunity for these debates to have some practical effect. To achieve that, what one would have to do was to move outside of the academy and into the world of work.

So, there are two quite distinct dimensions to CDA. One is a theoretical dimension and the other is an engagement with practical action. What has happened since those early intellectual discussions in the early to mid-1980s is that the practical action dimension has become much more significant and important. Furthermore, it is having a reflective effect on the nature of the theory because it is compelling scholars, as we have seen throughout this book, to become engaged with people in the real world. So, one might conclude this brief reflective account, by saying that what is curious about CDA at the end of the 1980s was that it was a rather coherent sociodiscursive theory that was looking for a mission, for a kind of an effect. But at that time the people largely involved in it by and large were less concerned with the 'so what' effect than they were with the theory. As we have seen, and as subsequent publications make clear, this is no longer the case and CDA has added to its principles one which focuses on practical and jointly enterprised engagement. One might nominate that stance as a *macro principle* for current concerns with CDA.

8.4 CDA in Action: Description, Interpretation and Explanation in Discourse Analysis

We have already introduced the idea of a three-part perspective on discourse analysis as characteristic of CDA: *description*, *interpretation* and *explanation*.

Consider the following definitions (drawn from Fairclough 1989):

- **Description** is the stage of analysis which is concerned with formal properties of text.
- **Interpretation** is concerned with the relationship between text and users' interaction—with seeing the text as the product of a process of production, and as a resource in the process of interpretation. For example, in the case of a newspaper report, interpretation is concerned with seeing the text as a product bearing the imprint of many hands

(i.e. reporter; sub-editor; editor; copy editor) as well as a resource of new or reshaped information.

- **Explanation** is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context—with the social determination of the processes of production and interpretation, and their social effects. For example, again in the case of a newspaper report, explanation is concerned with who decides what gets reported and from what point of view it gets reported, as well as how readers' acceptance of this point of view contributes to social cohesion.

All three of these perspectives have been amply represented in this book. It would be useful if you could associate them with particular scholars and positions on discourse analysis.

What the works of key scholars in CDA indicate is that CDA privileges a particular way of approaching and understanding texts (of various modalities). The following extract from Thomas (1985) captures this neatly:

Quote 8.2 Thomas on power relationships in interaction

[I wish] to show how and why the participants in the interactions I describe are able to exploit the features which the system makes available in order to achieve a particular goal …. My main argument will be that the power relationship obtaining between the participants in an interaction and the institutional norms within which that interaction takes place are central to the way in which the discourse is developed and the individual utterances are interpreted.

(Thomas 1985: 766)

Reflection task 8.2

Undertaking Critical Discourse Analysis

Step 1: Theory

- Reflect on the following three extracts, and consider the questions below.
- What do they tell you of the orientation of critical discourse analysis to the question of the relationship between discourse itself and the social institutions it both reflects and reinforces?

(continued)

Reflection task 8.2 (continued)

- From your reading of the extracts what would constitute a methodology for critical discourse analysis?
- How would you proceed as a researcher?
- What data would be relevant?
- What features would be important to identify?
- What uses would you put your research outcomes to?

Extract 1

Discourse, then, involves social conditions, which can be specified as social conditions of production and social conditions of interpretation. These social conditions, moreover, relate to three different 'levels' of social organization: the level of the social situation, or the immediate social environment in which the discourse occurs; the level of the social institution which constitutes a wider matrix for the discourse; and the level of society as a whole. Seeing language as discourse and as social practice, one is committing oneself not just to analysing texts, nor just to analysing the processes of production and interpretation, but to analysing the relationship between texts, processes and their social conditions, both the immediate conditions of the situational context and the more remote conditions of institutional and social structures. (Fairclough 2013: 20–1)

Extract 2

While the analysis of discourse may offer a promising approach for the study of language and ideology, the various forms of discourse analysis have yielded results which are disappointing in many ways …. there are two limitations which are most prominent in this regard. First by focussing on extended sequences of expression, the discourse analysts have tended to emphasize form and structure at the expense of content. These analysts have examined exchange structure, conversational structure and the structure of 'semantic domains'; but they have tended to neglect the question of what is said in discourse, that is, the question of meaning and the interpretation of meaning. The second limitation of these methods is that … they fail to provide a satisfactory account of the non-linguistic sphere and of the relations between linguistic and non-linguistic activity …[the English-speaking literature] seldom explores the social relations within which discursive sequences are embedded. (Thompson 1984: 8–9)

Extract 3

[A] procedure for the interpretation of ideology consists of three principal phases which together constitute a form of depth hermeneutics. The first phase, which may be described as 'social analysis', is concerned with the social-historical conditions within which agents act and interact. It is essential to analyse these conditions—both in terms of their institutional features and in terms of their historical specificity—because we cannot

Reflection task 8.2 (continued)

study ideology without studying the relations of domination and the ways in which these relations are sustained by meaningful expressions. The second phase of the … procedure may be described as 'discursive analysis'. To undertake a discursive analysis is to study a sequence of expressions, not only as a socially and historically situated occurrence but also as a linguistic construction which displays an articulated structure …. However … I do not believe that a study of the structure of discourse can be treated as an autonomous and exhaustive concern, let alone as a sufficient method for the investigation of ideology. Such a study must be complemented by a third phase of analysis, a phase which may properly be described as 'interpretation'. In interpreting a form of discourse we may seek to move beyond the study of discursive structure and construct a meaning which shows how discourse serves to sustain relations of domination. The interpretation of ideology may thus be conceived as a form of depth hermeneutics which is mediated by a discursive analysis of linguistic constructions and a social analysis of the conditions in which discourse is produced and received. (Thompson 1984: 10–1)

Step 2: Application

Now, reflecting on your own possible methodology for research, what do the above extracts imply for the following?

How would you proceed as a researcher to identify:

- particular social institutions
- relevant social situations and instances of social practice
- potentially significant lexicogrammatical, discoursal and pragmatic features.

Also, what do the extracts imply for:

- the relationship of analyst to subject
- the relationship between the research and action.

And, what do they say about the directionality of research? That is, from the social order to discourse (the macro to the micro) or the reverse?

Fairclough (1985, 1992, 1995a) (following Pécheux's 'discursive formation' and Althusser's 'ideological formations'), proposes the concept of the ideological-discursive formation (IDF) (i.e. 'the inseparability of the "ways of talking" and "ways of seeing"') (Fairclough 1995a: 40) as a way of linking the macro world of the social formation with the micro world of the social discourse.

Fairclough further makes the following comment:

Quote 8.3 Fairclough on the naturalising effects of ideology

[S]ubjects, then, are typically unaware of the ideological dimensions of the subject positions they occupy. This means of course that they are in no reasonable sense committed to them, and it underlines the point that ideologies are not to be equated with views or beliefs. It is quite possible for a social subject to occupy institutional subject positions which are ideologically incompatible, or to occupy a subject position incompatible with his or her overt political or social beliefs and affiliations, without being aware of any contradiction.

(Fairclough 1985: 753)

Given this comment, how would you define one of the purposes of the critical discourse analyst in relation to our discussions about the *person* and the *self* within the interaction order?

Thomas (1989) and Heritage and Watson (1979) set out and exemplify some further features that we can identify which reflect a critical perspective on the analysis of discourse. These range from 'discourse control acts' (which occur when one speaker uses 'controlling talk' in order to constrain the contributions of others, particularly subordinates) to 'metadiscursive comments' (which can disallow a subordinate speaker's contribution).

8.4.1 Features of Description, Interpretation and Explanation

The question of which features you deem to be relevant for the *Descriptive* perspective on CDA (cf. Fairclough 1989) is dependent in large measure on the model of analysis you prefer. Clearly all 'levels' of language can be significant: phonology, lexis, grammar as well as the discursive and pragmatic features identified so far in this book. Fairclough (1989) gives a very useful list.

As far as the *Interpretive* perspective is concerned Fairclough poses an equally useful set of questions, all of which resonate with the various positions on discourse analysis in context and in action which have been introduced, associated with particular scholars and theories about discourse, and discussed throughout this book:

- What's going on? (activity, topic, purpose)
- Who's involved? (what are the participants' subject positions)
- In what relations? (what is their power, distance and the burden of their interaction?)
- What's the role of language in what's going on? (instrumentally? intertextually? illocutionarily? schematically?)

And, for the *Explanatory* perspective, he asks the following questions:

Social Determinants:

- What power relations at situational, institutional and societal levels help shape the discourse?

Ideological Position:

- What elements of members' interpretive resources which are drawn upon have an ideological character?

Social/Institutional Effects:

- How is the discourse positioned in relation to the struggles at the situational, institutional and societal levels?
- Are these struggles covert or overt?
- Is the discourse normative with respect to members' resources or creative?
- Does it contribute to sustaining power relations, or transforming them?

8.5 Discourse and Social Change

In this section, we examine the discursive construction and the discursive character of social institutions such as the school, the clinic and the workplace. By this we mean not only the way in which particular patterns of discourse are distinctive of, and indeed crucially constitutive

of, such institutions, but also the way in which the institutions themselves can be said to exist in and by virtue of historically and culturally located discourses. Discourse can thus be understood to be constitutive of institutionality in two senses: at the micro level, as patterns of verbal interaction between participants in an institutional context; and at a macro level, as a collection of historically configured ways of talking, acting and thinking within which the institution emerges. All of these issues have been canvassed to a degree in the preceding chapters of this book.

Referring back to Foucault (see Theme #1), we have seen how discourse (whose elements he terms 'statements' (*énoncés*), again borrowing a term from linguistics) is a cultural formation, historical and contingent, which constrains the representation of reality, authorises certain forms of knowledge, and constructs the individual's experience of subjectivity—the individual's various 'identities' (see here also the work of Bourdieu).

Discourses in this sense constitute the grounds for the very existence and forms of familiar institutions such as medicine, education and the prison system, as Foucault demonstrated in a series of studies. In his book the *Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault focuses on the institution of medicine as it began to assume its familiar modern form at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. He discusses three elements of the discourse of medicine as it emerged at this time: who has the right to speak with authority in medical discourse (the doctor); the institutional sites in which the discourse can legitimately occur (the hospital, the private clinic, the laboratory, the documentary archive); and the subject positions created by the discourse—these include the position of the doctor as the subject who questions, listens, perceives, observes, describes, teaches and so on. As we have seen, he argues that it is the relation between these elements that constitutes what he refers to as the order of discourse (*l'ordre du discours*); and such a discourse is not attributable to the 'founding consciousness' of any individual. In this text, Foucault sets out his view of the subject as a function of discourse and hence necessarily 'dispersed', rather than constituting the unifying centre of a discourse. This notion of *dispersal* is fundamental to Foucault. He draws upon it again in his famous metaphor of the *capillary* nature of power, ever-present, multipolar, and infiltrating all interaction and

meaning-making. Institutions, in Foucault's terms, position us as subjects of discourse: we are positioned as teachers, learners, doctors, patients, managers, employees.

In his original work on the relationships between ideology, discourse and power, Fairclough (1989), as we have seen earlier in this chapter, draws on Foucault in his conceptualisation of the way in which broader discursive formations create conditions in terms of which communication is constructed and interpreted. Following Foucault, he also speaks of orders of discourse, and shows how at successively finer-grained levels of delicacy of analysis, these orders are linked through activities and genres to the organisation of spoken and written text. Unlike Foucault, however, and as we commented at the outset of this chapter, Fairclough's view of the ultimate organisation of discourse at the macro and the micro level is expressed in ideological terms, drawing its inspiration ultimately from a neo-Marxist analysis of the oppressive character of the social order, a position which is developed more fully in his 1992 book *Discourse and Social Change*. It is the structuring of discourse in this way, and the emphasising of its relationship to the social order, which are revealed by the close critical textual reading known as CDA.

Thus, CDA, by uncovering opaqueness and power relationships, can be seen as a basis for forms of social and institutional action that attempt to bring about change in communicative and sociopolitical practices. It is important to add one important caveat: Fairclough has consistently made the point that no discourse analysis, whether 'critical' or of any other kind, can itself 'bring about social change'. What it can do is provide data, on the basis of which, through processes of 'joint problematisation' with those best equipped to engage with innovation and change, it can make a crucial evidential contribution. To the established analytic 'adequacies' of language research, then, namely *observational or descriptive adequacy* emphasising the analysis of the displayed evidence of data, we may add (as we have discussed above) *interpretive adequacy* emphasising the engagement of participant interpretations of the actions which give rise to the texts, Fairclough adds a third: *explanatory adequacy* by which he means the extent to which historical and actual understandings of the macro order are reflected in our analysis of a range of semiotically diverse and situated texts.

Fairclough's view of the relationship of the macro to the micro appears perhaps deceptively straightforward: it posits a close engagement between ideological position and the structuring of interaction down to the detail of textual organisation, and argues thereby that our access to the macro, while not of course direct, finds its evidence in the close analysis of the micro. In fact, although present from his earliest work at Lancaster University, more recently, Fairclough has turned more explicitly to Halliday's systemic-functional grammar as the most appropriate discourse analytic tool for carrying out the work of CDA. It would have to be said at this point that the totalising systematicity of such a position sits oddly with the post-modernism of Foucault, or indeed with the position adopted by other influential social theorists on CDA, namely the Frankfurt sociologists like Habermas, or, as we have seen in Chap. 2, the work of Bourdieu. These issues of interconnection between social theory and sociolinguistics and applied linguistics have been argued in Coupland, Sarangi and Candlin (2001).

A further fundamental challenge to any simple and straightforward relationship between the macro and the micro comes from those who argue that interaction is jointly constructed, and that as such there is a level of micro organisation of interaction and hence of discourse which is in principle independent of the larger social structuring and in terms of which that structuring needs to be articulated—an issue that was raised in earlier chapters, in the work of Goffman, Schegloff and CA authors, and, extensively in the work of Cicourel. Its institutionally discursive correlate is characteristic, as we have seen, of the work of Sarangi and Roberts *inter alia*.

8.6 A Case Study

Moore, S. H. (2008). Realising a discourse of the 'basket case'. *Critical Discourse Studies, 5*(2): 181–99.

In this study Moore explores the issue of discourse and social change in the context of a Western media outlet (*The Economist* magazine) reporting on an impoverished, foreign country (Cambodia). A corpus of over 100 articles published in a crucial post-civil war period (1991–2002) are

explored using a CDA framework and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as an analytical tool to explain contextual and textual contrasts. The findings show how Cambodia is positioned for failure and how blame is apportioned to its political leader, Hun Sen.

Rationale

This study investigates how an influential Western media outlet consistently represents a country which is fundamentally different in terms of language, culture and traditions from those of the outlet itself. To understand the extent of the 'misreporting', one has to appreciate the contextual settings of both the reporting institution and the object of its reports. To measure Cambodia through a lens of democracy, rule of law and free markets is setting it up for failure and scapegoating. A 'discourse of the basket case' ensues as a result of the misfit between cultural norms and expectations of the rich West and the poor Third World.

Methods

This study uses a CDA framework to situate its objects of study, namely *The Economist* as an institution operating in a particular society and Cambodia as an impoverished country struggling to emerge from a war-torn past. CDA is particularly appropriate as a methodological approach because it is a model that integrates social practices, discursive practices and textual realisations of these practices. As Fairclough has argued, SFL is particularly well-suited to CDA as a means of exploring and analysing textual meanings. Thus, the macro views presented by descriptions of the contexts of *The Economist* and Cambodia are complemented by the micro views of the analyses of reported speech in a sub-set of 18 key articles in the corpus.

Contribution to theory-practice nexus

Through the CDA analysis we see how discourse and social change are inextricably linked. *The Economist* seems determined to change Cambodia to be more like the West, that is, where democracy, rule of law and free markets are the norm. Its relentless publishing of articles that show how Cambodia is performing poorly by these measures reinforces the feeling that Cambodia must be a 'basket case', and the only hope for Cambodia's

future is for a local politician to champion these ideals. However, the CDA analysis also shows how other issues of relevance to Cambodians are excluded from representations, such as political stability, reduction in land mines, and steady improvement in human development (e.g. education and healthcare). SFL provides a powerful tool to show how language is used to construe ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings which, in *The Economist*'s writings, marginalise and vilify Cambodia's leadership.

This concludes Part I of the book and our exploration of concepts and issues in discourse in context and in action. In Part II we focus our attention on the multiperspectival approach to analysing discourse, with a view to enabling the reader to 'mobilise' the resources we have introduced in Part I. The question guiding Part II of our exploration is, appropriately, 'What next?'

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Part II

A Multi-perspectival Approach to Analysing Discourse

9

What Next?

9.1 Introduction

This chapter brings us to the question of how a researcher is to use discourse analysis in their research. More specifically, the question concerns how the ground covered in the previous chapters can be drawn upon to create a workable program of research in context and in action.

Why do we come to this question now? It may seem superfluous, already answered in the previous chapters, a matter of selecting from the analytical tools and resources available according to …. what?

And this is the issue. On the basis of what do we warrant these selections when each will narrow in advance our understanding of and conclusions about 'discourse'? How do we make this narrowing accountable? And to what? This question invites us to revisit what we mean by 'discourse' and 'discourse analysis', stand up and look around, to lift our gaze from the organisation of text, the traditional starting point and model for 'analysis', to the world in which it and we exist. This question extends our horizon beyond the description of text to include how it is interpreted by others, and beyond this to the explanation of why it means as it does.

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C.N. Candlin et al., *Exploring Discourse in Context and in Action*,
Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-31506-9_9

What are the limits of this context for the purposes of our analysis of 'discourse'? How do we identify what is relevant and what is not? Who is best placed to decide this? How are we going to justify these decisions in light of a potentially limitless, unstable and undifferentiated context that spans the present and the past? And what do our answers to these questions imply for what we mean by 'discourse' and its 'analysis' and how we understand the 'site' of our research?

As will be clear from Part I, discourse is a field replete with analytical resources that might address these questions, spanning micro and macro scales of focus, and from a diverse range of disciplines. And these resources have under the rubric of discourse analysis been conceived, combined and applied according to a wide range of research foci, interests and agendas.

9.2 The Question of Warranting

Part I has addressed guiding questions that have given direction and shape to our account of the field, all the while pointing to the need to foreground and keep these questions in play in relation to particular sites of research and the research agendas that are negotiated and implemented at these sites. However, overarching these is the fundamental question of *how a researcher is to warrant their decisions* in conceiving and conducting a discourse analytical study.

The problem that lies behind this question has been put succinctly by Duranti and Goodwin:

Quote 9.1 Duranti and Goodwin on 'context'

A relationship between two orders of phenomena that mutually inform each other to comprise a larger whole is absolutely central to the notion of context (indeed the term comes from the latin contextus, which means 'a joining together')…. When context is viewed in this light a number of questions can be posed. For example, what precisely is to be included within the system being examined (ie the conjunction of focal event and relevant context). And what is the boundary to be drawn between context and the behaviour that it is context to.

(Goodwin and Duranti 1992: 4)

And the quandary this problem creates for analysis is set up starkly by Brown and Yule:

Quote 9.2 Brown and Yule on relevance

A problem for the discourse analyst must be, then to decide when a particular feature is relevant to the specification of a particular context and what degree of specification is required. Are there general principles which will determine the relevance or nature of the specification, or does the analyst have to make ad hoc judgements on these questions each time he attempts to work on a fragment of discourse?

(Brown and Yule 1983: 50)

We should here pause to reflect on what gives rise to this need for warranting. Here we reach the *bedrock questions*: what is it that discourse analysis as envisaged here is seeking to achieve? What does it promise, to whom is the research accountable and what does it require from the researcher to keep this promise?

Of course, these questions matter to any research that aims to make claims about meaning in the lives of others. This places the researcher at the junction of two ways of interpreting the world that may seem at odds: one comes naturally and is ready to hand, that of making sense of the lives of others with reference to one's own prior understandings; the other may seem alien and out of reach, that of drawing on the understandings of others in their terms according to their worlds. The distinction was perhaps most succinctly captured by the sociologist Alfred Schutz:

Quote 9.3 Schutz on understanding

We shall make the crucial distinction between understanding our own experiences of the other person and understanding the other person's experiences.

(Schutz 1967: 14)

But discourse analysis is confronted by this distinction with particular ferocity. This is because at ground, as we argue here, the promise of discourse analysis involves claims about meaning in the lives of others, with

specific reference to the close analysis of (their) language (in context) and that these claims will matter in the lives of those concerned (in action). The upshot is that unless the perspectives of participants are taken as foundational to our understanding of discourse analysis, the game will be lost before we start:

> **Quote 9.4 Duranti and Goodwin on the participant perspective**
>
> It demonstrates the crucial importance of taking as a point of departure for the analysis of context the perspective of the participant(s) whose behaviour is being analysed.
>
> (Duranti and Goodwin 1992: 4)

These participants may be physically present in a study as participants or further afield, 'absent participants' (Crichton 2010) who are not involved directly but nonetheless implicated by and in claims made. How might these claims be warranted, given that in making them the researcher necessarily invokes analytical resources that entail discourses that are as often as not alien to the worlds of these participants?

9.3 Revisiting Ecological Validity

Indeed, stepping back a little, what kind of challenge does this question of warranting present?

The significance of the challenge was seminally put by Aaron Cicourel (1982, 1992, 2007), whose work we introduced in Chap. 5, as the problem of 'ecological validity'. This is the problem of how to acknowledge that 'all social interaction and/or speech events presuppose and are informed by analogous prior forms of socially organized experiences' (1992: 308). In other words, any meaningful social world is necessarily made up of contexts that are profoundly 'interpenetrated', and this includes the practices associated with discourse

analysis, and the tacit assumptions of the researcher, which are themselves situated within these interpenetrating contexts.

To get closer to what is going on here, imagine a scene in a movie which starts with a blank screen in the darkness of the cinema. The audience just hears the sound of two voices; gradually the shot comes into focus and we see the characters, two people talking face to face, close up; and then the camera pans back further and further, the shot widening, revealing more and more of the characters and others present, to the surrounding situation and then wider still, encompassing the environment beyond. The point is that in this expanding focus from the micro to the macro, the ever widening shot continuously renews the challenge to the audience to understand what 'it' is that is going on, where 'it' is going on, when 'it' started and when 'it' will finish, and why 'it' is happening in this way, never allowing the audience to settle on a particular understanding. As the camera pulls back, their successive interpretations may be confirmed or confounded by the revealing of what was hitherto concealed from them. Of course, to make sense of what is before them, to distinguish what is relevant from what is not, the audience will necessarily be drawing on their own 'analogous prior forms of socially organized experiences'. And in this sense they too are implicated in what is going on.

The upshot is that there is no 'view from nowhere' (Nagel 1986) available for the researcher in deciding on or making sense of the 'site' of their research; they are implicated with their participants from the outset, either presently or absently, in their account of the worlds of the participants. Of course, at this point the metaphor of the movie falls short of what we need to explain about the relationship between researcher and the worlds of the participants. In a movie the settings and behaviour of the characters are designed in advance to give the audience the visual and verbal cues they need to understand what is going on. But the actual world, and the research envisaged here, is different. As Goffman (1974) emphasised, the question that we need to answer is not 'What is going on?', as if there could be one agreed-upon answer, but 'What is *it* that is going on?' (see Chap. 4), where the italicized *it* potentially has a different answer depending on who is answering the

question. This shortcoming does not vitiate the movie metaphor, but rather underscores Duranti and Goodwin's (1992: 4) idea that the starting point for such research must be the 'perspective of the participant(s) whose behaviour is being analysed'.

But how, then, can this emphasis on the 'micro' perspective be reconciled with the value of pulling the camera's focus back to the 'macro'—in effect beyond the view of participants—and how then can a researcher do as we said in Chap. 2 and 'Focus on the site!'?

As a first step in acknowledging the mutual implication of discourse analyst and participants, Cicourel argued that the analyst needs to make explicit their methodological choices and the assumptions about the world that inform these choices. In becoming accountable for recognising and reflecting in these choices and their understanding of this interpenetration of contexts, they are 'obligated to justify what has been included and what has been excluded according to stated theoretical goals, methodological strategies employed, and the consistency and convincingness of an argument or analysis' (Cicourel 1992: 309).

Key here are issues of relevance and accountability. How can researchers ensure that their research is relevant and accountable? To whom is such research to be relevant and accountable? How are relevance and accountability to be established? Indeed, how are these notions to be understood here?

Candlin and Crichton (Candlin 1997; Candlin and Crichton 2011, 2013; Crichton 2004, 2010) have argued that due consideration of these questions leads to a 'multiperspectival' approach to discourse analysis. Such an approach seeks not only to offer a way of 'doing' discourse analysis that addresses questions of accountability and relevance, as underscored by Cicourel, but also, and as a consequence of this, ways of creating and opening up new research agendas and foci as part of a broader research program in discourse analysis.

We lay out the approach in detail below but some groundwork will be needed first. Starting points are a closer look at the work of sociologist Aaron Cicourel, in particular his account of 'ecological validity', and that of social theorist Derek Layder.

Quote 9.5 Cicourel on ecological validity in the social sciences

Validity in the non-experimental social sciences refers to the extent to which complex organisational activities represented by aggregated data from public and private sources and demographic and sample surveys can be linked to the collection, integration and assessment of temporal samples of observable (and when possible recordable) activities in daily life settings. Fragments of discourse materials always are shaped and constrained by the larger organizational settings in which they emerge and simultaneously influenced by cognitive/emotional processes despite the convenience of only focusing on extracted fragments independently of the organizational and cognitive/emotional complexity of daily life settings .... the challenge remains how daily life activities simultaneously constrain and shape more complex organizational structures.

(Cicourel 1992: 736)

As Cicourel makes clear, seeking to achieve this ecological validity raises descriptive, interpretive and explanatory demands that require us to rethink the project of discourse analysis. For example, how do we describe 'daily life activities' and interpret what they mean in the lives and from the perspectives of the people involved, how are they positioned and subjectivised in these activities, what activities antecede and are anticipated by the people involved, and with what consequences, and how are different understandings of the 'cognitive/emotional processes' to be understood and explained? Finally, how and in what terms are we to discover the nature, purposes and procedures of social/organisational structures that constrain and shape this 'cognitive and emotional complexity'?

No single methodology, however well-grounded and finely applied, could address such questions and do so simultaneously.

9.4 Introducing the Research Map

A very important reference we consider now is a central chapter from Layder's influential book: *New Strategies of Social Research*. Cambridge. Polity Press (1993). What Layder's *Resource Map for Research* does is to provide us with just that schematic plan for our discourse analytical program, taking into account the orientation towards a historically and contemporaneously oriented discourse that we have been arguing for, one which is situated and one which is at the same time, sociological, linguistic and social psychological.

	Research element	Research focus
HISTORY	CONTEXT	*Macro social organization* Values, traditions, forms of social and economic organization and power relations. For example, legally sanctioned forms of ownership, control and distribution; interlocking directorships, state intervention. As they are implicated in the sector below.
	SETTING	*Intermediate social organisation* Work: Industrial, military and state bureaucracies; labour markets; hospitals; social work agencies; domestic labour; penal and mental institutions. Non-work: Social organisation of leisure activities, sports and social clubs; religious and spiritual organizations.
	SITUATED ACTIVITY	*Social activity* Face-to-face activity involving symbolic communication by skilled, intentional participants implicated in the above contexts and settings. Focus on emergent meanings, understandings and definitions of the situation as these affect and are affected by contexts and settings (above) and subjective dispositions of individuals (below).
	SELF	*Self-identity and individual's social experience* As these are influenced by the above sectors and as they interact with the unique psychobiography of the individual. Focus on the life career.

Fig. 9.1 Resource map for research, from Layder (1993: 72). © Polity Press. Used with permission

Layder's *Resource Map for Research* attempts to provide what we might term a 'textured' analysis of social reality, in which the 'levels' he identifies are best seen not as *separated entities* but as *interwoven*. Layder makes this point himself when he writes:

Quote 9.6 Layder on macro and micro phenomena in social activity

Although I have presented the resource map as a series of separable elements with their own properties, I have also continually stressed their interconnected nature in relation to the analysis of specific research problems. In

> this regard, macro phenomena make no sense unless they are related to the social activities of individuals who reproduce them over time. Conversely, micro phenomena cannot be fully understood by exclusive reference to their internal dynamics so to speak; they have to be seen to be conditioned by circumstances inherited from the past. In other words, micro phenomena have to be understood in relation to the influence of the institutions that provide their wider social context. In this respect, macro and micro phenomena are inextricably bound together through the medium of social activity and thus to assert the priority of the one over the other amounts to a 'phoney war' (Giddens).
>
> (Layder 1993: 102–103)

In this research cartography, Layder sets out four *research elements*, each of which is interconnected with the others, and each of which has a particular, and equally connectable, *research focus.* Layder argues that none of the elements is prime, and research may begin with any, providing that all are severally and differentially addressed. From the interplay of the data arising from each element, theory 'emerges'. We take this as the basis of his construct of 'adaptive theory' (Layder 1998).

It is significant also that the four research elements: *context, setting, situated activity, self* are all set within a frame of *history*, although we need to note that in Layder's conception, all elements, as social processes, have their own time-space frames. Interactions among persons for example, operate within a different time-space perspective than do changes in social institutions, although both may influence the conduct and practices of the other, and these differences are significant.

Concept 9.1 Context

Layder combines micro and macro contexts, as the 'micro phenomena have to be understood in relation to the influence of the institutions that provide their wider social context. In this respect macro and micro phenomena are inextricably bound tighter through the medium of social activity' (Layder 1993: 102–103). More specifically, context focuses on the distribution of power in society; what values and ideologies determine normative behaviour in a social setting; and the nature of the political, religious and economic setting related to the subject of analysis. Layder identifies *context* as that element which implicates the macro social organisation, the values, traditions, forms of social and economic organisation and power

relations within the social formation, and illustrates these in terms of what he terms 'legally sanctioned forms of ownership, control and distribution: interlocking directorships, state intervention' (Layder 1993: 71).

Concept 9.2 Setting

This aspect focuses on the nature of the setting, 'the typical forms of attachment and commitment that individuals have in these types of setting … the characteristic forms of power and authority in the setting' (Layder 1993: 98), and the extent to which the broader social context impinges on the setting. This element focuses then on the intermediate social organisation, categorised as *work-related* and *non-work related*. Important to setting is what Layder identifies as its already established character, that is, the social and institutional structure and practices within which a particular *situated activity* occurs.

Concept 9.3 Situated activity

If settings are in Layder's terms *established*—although we should be cautious here not to equate establishment with stability, as such stability will be highly relative across and within social formations, and certainly relative to sectors of the population—then Layder's third element of *situated activity* involves a focus on that face-to-face, or mediated social activity involving what he calls 'symbolic communication by skilled, intentional participants implicated in the contexts and settings' (Layder 1993: 71). Note here how Layder explicitly draws on the discursive turn in sociological research referring to 'emergent meanings, understandings and definitions of the situation as these affect and are affected by contexts and settings, and the subjective dispositions of individuals' (Layder 1993: 71). This aspect of social reality focuses on symbolic communication by skilled participants:

- What is the underlying meaning of the patterns of interaction taking place and to what extent are these intended by the participants?
- What forms of communication are being used to achieve these meanings?
- 'What aspects of setting are pertinent to the analysis of particular episodes of activity?
- How do they influence the action?' (Layder 1993: 88)

Concept 9.4 Self

This aspect focuses on the individual's sense of identity and conception of the world—how a person functions within and responds to their social environment. Do the perceptions of the individuals change over time? And, what is 'the interplay between social and psychological factors involved in the formation of these subjective feelings and experiences' (Layder 1993: 80). If we see self, with Layder, as invoking identity within the context of social experience, what he refers to as the 'unique psychobiography of the individual' (Layder 1993: 71) located within the time-space of a life career, then the struggle between the individuality and the collectivity of the self as at once body, mind and person is revealed.

The message is plain: the accounting of discourse in action requires a clearly defined program of sociolinguistic and discourse analytical study of a range of differentiated encounters, and one which goes beyond what may otherwise be a reductionist reliance on uttered text. But *description* is not enough. As we have argued earlier, description needs to be accompanied by *interpretive*, ethnomethodological accounts of the meaning-making of individuals in interaction in particular situated activities, emphasising the members' resources that can be brought to bear, or are prevented from being brought to bear, on the communicative challenges of the moment.

However, even such a focus on interpretation will not adequately include and bring to bear in and of itself, Layder's elements of *context* and *setting*, and certainly not the overarching construct of *history*. The significance of context and setting only emerges from the talk and writings of the participants, from their narratives when set against sociohistorical accounts and studies of organisational change, shifts in national policies and analyses of decision-making over time. Including this dimension, as Layder argues one must, moves the research agenda from description and interpretation to what one can call *critical explanation*.

It is not at all difficult, however, to map onto Layder's resource map discourse analytical practices which are familiar to us in our explorations so far in this book. For example, *Conversational Analysis* focusing on charting interaction, *interactional sociolinguistics* focusing on participant interpretation and inferencing, can both be readily married to, say, *systemic-functional grammatical* and *prosodic* analyses of textualisations, whether they be drawn from spoken, written or otherwise semiotically

realised modalities. In a similar way, analytical studies of narratives of experience will be relevant, to which, for example, studies of metaphor are increasingly common.

From our perspective, what Layder's model research framework calls for is the discursive and textual analysis of identified texts, linked to an ethnographically motivated dimension which draws on qualitative evidence from participants' narratives and accounts, in response to the siting of such texts in terms of their conditions of production and reception. Following our argument throughout this book, such accounts will need to be set within an account of the sociohistorical and institutional-organisational conditions under which particular social practices arise and are privileged in various ways, and under the constraints imposed by which social practices, particular discourse types and discourse strategies are either promoted or proscribed.

What seems important is that the ***multiple perspectives*** of this research are not prioritised: entry is possible in a variety of ways and drawing on different but complementary discourses of research. What is central is maintaining the mutuality and the integrity of the perspectives. In this way, distinct research discourses evoke each other and permit an inbuilt corroborating and warranting of the data produced by the workings of the research discourses associated with each perspective. Most obviously, of course, what it foregrounds is the need for the broadly 'textual' analysis and the broadly 'contextual' analysis to inform each other, as emergent analyses with institutional significance arise in the process of the research, allowing both for ongoing corroboration of candidate interpretations arrived at so far and the impetus to further data collection and analysis.

9.5 Multiple Perspectives in Researching Discourse in Context and in Action

The adoption of a multiple perspectival approach to research has almost become an axiomatic way of conducting discourse analytical research. Rarely do researchers approach data from a single perspective; and rarely do they employ a single methodology. They combine perspectives and methodologies so as to get as rich a picture as they

can of the data, in particular setting it in the context of its occurrence. For example, among methodologies, researchers commonly feature the descriptive analysis of semiotic forms, but combine that with qualitative studies of attitudes, perceptions, and human understandings by the participants of those encounters and those data. They may also link both these to an analysis of the actions that accompany or *mediate* the discourse. The rationale behind adopting these multiple methodologies may vary. Sometimes it is experimental (e.g. Can these two different methodologies be combined?). Most often, it is an attempt to increase the degree of objectivity and authenticity of the research by examining data from different perspectives with different methodological tools.

It is not really satisfactory, however, simply to adopt more than one perspective in a rather random and unmotivated way, nor is it especially helpful to arbitrarily select a particular research methodology or tool and use it for any perspective. Each methodology, each perspective on the data brings with it certain theoretical baggage: how language is viewed, what constitutes the boundaries of discourse, the connections being asserted between 'texts' and 'context', whose 'voice' is being highlighted, what historical circumstances are being taken into account and so on.

9.6 Modelling the Relationships Among Perspectives

One way of approaching the issue of perspectives is to start off from the assumption that any 'text' (or semiotic form) is better seen not as something frozen, but rather as something *interactional*, as we said, more like an 'event' than an 'object'. Further, if we revisit the linkage between social practices and discursive practices and the different orders of discourse that are in play in any site of engagement in an institution or organisation, then we already make it necessary to envisage different perspectives on that discursive practice.

So, rather than being seen as some single entity, any discursive practice is a complex interaction of the semiotic (or 'textual'), the social interactional, the personal and the organisational/institutional. What is more, these elements are each interconnected with the others. None

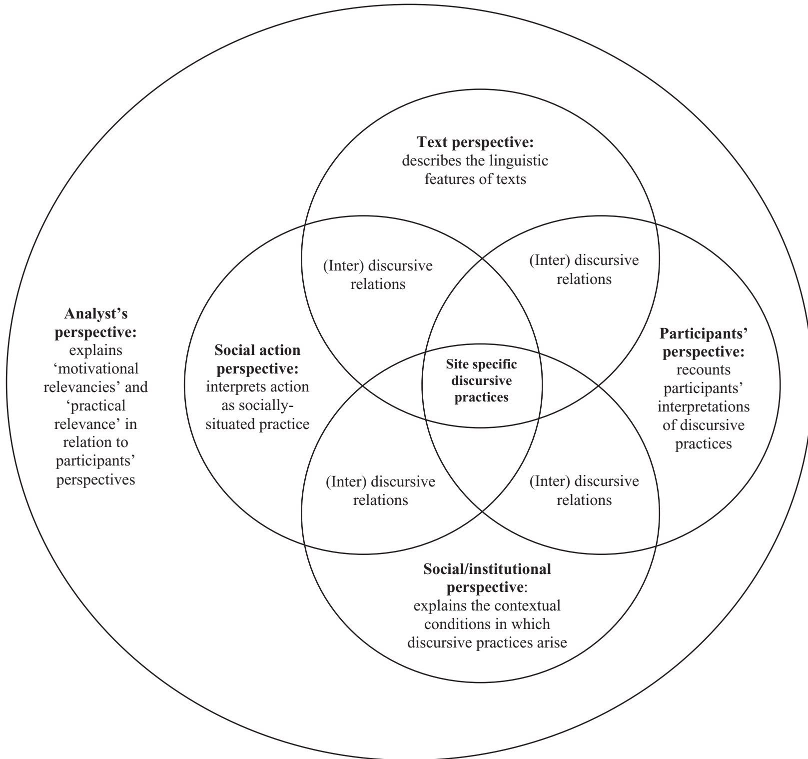

Fig. 9.2 Outline of the multiperspectival approach to discourse analysis (Candlin and Crichton 2011; Crichton 2004, 2010)

of them is primary, but each implicates the other in an *interdiscursive* relationship.

In Fig. 9.2 (Candlin and Crichton 2011; Crichton 2004, 2010), the issue of interdiscursivity is approached by means of a Venn diagram.[1] The model outlines how different perspectives on the analysis of discursive practices can be represented as interconnecting and interdependent. The perspectives invite consideration of a range of

[1] [1] Venn diagrams are useful in that they display how different 'worlds' or different 'perspectives' can be shown to be interconnected in a *system of communication*.

candidate methodologies, principally those encompassed in the earlier chapters of this book, that open pathways towards Cicourel's ecological validity.

To the left side in Fig. 9.2, the analyst's perspective identifies the motivational relevancies of the analyst and the practical relevance of the study as emerging from collaborative engagement between the analyst and the participants. Each of the overlapping circles represents a distinctive but mutually implicating analytical perspective all of which are relevant to the investigation of discursive practices at a particular site. The mutuality of these perspectives is indicated by their convergence at the centre of the circles. The different perspectives foreground descriptive, interpretive and explanatory modes of analysis that may be brought to bear in the investigation, and the overlaps between them highlight the interdiscursive nature of research that seeks to combine these perspectives in the exploration of a particular discursive site. Entry points to the analysis will vary in relation to particular sites and their relevant focal themes (Roberts and Sarangi 2005)—see later in this chapter for elaborated examples—and to the particular research questions that are being addressed, but no perspective is prime. What is central is that *all* perspectives are necessary and mutually informing.

One point that the diagram reflects, although perhaps not explicitly, is one that MDA scholars make, and which we have not yet stressed, namely, that all analysis is a process of *resemioticisation* and *transformation*—that is, the extent to which analysis of discourse in action becomes an engine for new discourses and actions to emerge. This is indicated on the diagram at the overlaps between the perspectives at which we see that their coming together is not merely a matter of 'co-presence'—as if the different perspectives and their associated methodologies might be laid inertly side by side—but is always and inevitably the convergence and interaction of distinct discourses in the process of research. In other words, the 'overlaps' mark *interdiscursive and dynamic processes in which distinct research traditions and their associated discourses are brought into play, each with the others, and engaging together through the research process to yield an integrated account of the discursive practices that form the focus of the research.*

Reflection task 9.1

Look carefully at the model and first of all identify the perspectives which are in bold. They are:

- Text perspective
- Participants' perspectives
- Social/institutional perspective
- Social action perspective
- Analyst's perspective

Each of these perspectives has a few explanatory words associated with it. Before moving on, consider what the perspectives, individually and together, entail:

- Text perspective: describes the linguistic features of texts

NOTE: You should extend this so that when you are thinking about 'texts' *which are not verbal texts—for example visual texts—you can nonetheless describe their features, though not necessarily linguistically. Looked at in this more far reaching way, you can see this as the* 'semiotic perspective'.

- Participants' perspective: recounts participants' interpretations of discursive practices.

NOTE: In other words, their narratives or accounts of the discourse, what their attitudes, impressions, and beliefs are about what has been said, read, listened to, seen or experienced.

- Social/institutional perspective: explains the contextual conditions in which the discursive practices arise.

NOTE: In other words, it sets the discursive practices in relation to the social (professional/organisational) practices and social/workplace memberships, taking account of the social structure of the site and its history, its characteristic conditions, its conventions and communities of practice, and

how these are reproduced over time as part of broader and potentially more pervasive 'interpenetrating' *(Cicourel 1992) contexts.*

- Social action perspective: interprets action as socially situated practice

NOTE: In other words, it examines the detail of how participants interact with each other, how they come to understand each other's meanings, how they collaborate in co-constructing knowledge, how they interpret each other's discourses, how their actions and discourses reflect their community of practice.

- Analyst's perspective: explains the 'motivational relevancies' and the 'practical relevance' in relation to the participants' perspectives

NOTE: In other words, explaining your perspective as an analyst on the discourse and seeking in a collaborative way to align the researcher's perspective with that of those who are being 'researched'. *Also, it involves collaborating in achieving relevance for the research findings, so that it has practical value to those participants.*

9.7 Focusing on a Perspective

Each of the perspectives that we have identified above provides us with a means for accessing particular kinds of data. For example, a ***textual*** perspective provides us with descriptions of the kind of language, or the kinds of images, that constitute tangible evidence in the shape of different semiotic forms. A ***social action*** perspective provides us with accounts of interactions among participants, a social ***institutional*** perspective provides us with documents, histories, organisational manuals, codes of behaviour, narratives, all of which help us to understand the kind of organisation and institution we are dealing with. A ***participant's*** perspective provides us with accounts of experiences, personalised memories and evaluations. Finally, an ***analyst's*** perspective provides us with a reason for reflectively accounting for why we chose certain data and not others, how we went about analysing that data, how much we collaborated with participants in the research and so on.

So, we can see that each of these perspectives contributes something distinctive to the overall analysis, and each perspective has a particular research methodology associated closely (but not exclusively) with it. ***Text***: linguistic and semiotic analysis; ***Social Action***: Conversational Analysis and interactional sociolinguistics; ***Social/Institutional***: study of documents, histories, trend data, social-theoretical accounts; ***Participant*** and ***Analyst***: narratives and ethnographic accounts. Of course things are not so cut and dried; there is always a useful mix of methodologies in relation to each perspective.

Let's focus on one such perspective, that of **Participants.**

Concept 9.5 Participant perspectives

In the perspectives' map above, we described Participants' Perspectives as recounts in which participants give their interpretations of the discursive practices in which they are engaged, where the research aim is to develop what Layder calls 'an empathetic understanding of the behaviour of those people being studied' (1993: 38). This is a form of ethnography in which the task is 'to describe how the actors themselves act towards the world on the basis of how they see it, and not on the basis of how that appears to the outside observer' (Blumer 1966: 542).

As Layder says, each participant has a 'subjective career' which informs the meanings they attribute to social interactions and their responses to it. The objective is to discern participants' own experiences of 'what is going on'. More generally, the incorporation of participants' perspectives is part of what contributes to what the social anthropologist Clifford Geertz calls a *thick description* (Geertz 1973) of workplace communication. Let's now look at some of the problems and issues that may arise in accessing such participant experiences.

9.7.1 A Closer Look at Participant Accounts

As noted above, Cicourel used the term *ecological validity* to refer to the ways in which research methodology and what is 'counted as' data is shaped by the tacit knowledge of researchers and participants. What we 'take for granted' as hidden knowledge affects all aspects of the research process, that is, what we consider worth collecting as data, how we go

about analysing it, what conclusions we draw, whose participation in this process is 'allowed' and what beliefs and ideologies underpin the interpretations we make and the conclusions we draw.

Cicourel writes that this knowledge includes: 'extensive folk theories or cultural mental models about objects, events, language, causality, rules or regularities, beliefs, other creatures and interpersonal relationships' (Cicourel 1996: 222).

Reflection task 9.2

As a way of exploring this notion of 'folk theories', and focusing on healthcare encounters, consider your visit to a doctor in a healthcare facility, or being treated by a doctor in a hospital.

- Note down what you think these 'folk theories' and 'mental models' Cicourel refers to above might contain/consist of, in relation to clinics, the participants in a clinic, hospitals, nurses and doctors, in that healthcare context.
- How do you think that these folk theories and mental models might differ among different participants—patients/clients and doctors/other healthcare workers?

Central to discovering what this 'hidden knowledge' might consist of is to take account, as far as this is possible, of what we have referred to as *Participants' Perspectives.*

These participants are not of course, only those actually engaged in the interaction. Researchers are 'participants' also. So we need the reciprocity of the *Analysts' Perspectives*. Sarangi and Candlin (2001) talk about the relationships between the perspectives of the analyst and those of the actual participants in the interaction, and suggest that broadly two perspectives are possible. Either:

1. *the analyst stands outside and* 'transforms' *the data s/he has collected into a predetermined order, informed by whatever theoretical model the analyst is working with*

   Or:

2. *the analyst and actual participants come to view the world in the same way, using the same kind of coding devices.*

Clearly, to achieve the second perspective we—as analysts—have to have some ways of recognising what the actual participants' views *are* on the interactions in which they are engaged, how to recognise such accounts and how to accommodate our analytical perspectives with those of the actual participants. In short, how to access what Schutz calls *commonsense knowledge*.

Quote 9.7 Schutz on 'commonsense knowledge'

… that each term in such a scientific model of human action must be constructed in such a way that a human act performed within the real world by an individual actor as indicated by the typical construct would be understandable to the actor himself as well as to his fellow men [sic] in terms of commonsense interpretation of everyday life.

(Schutz 1962: 64)

However, accessing this knowledge begs some further questions which you might want to consider:

- What is 'knowable' from these different perspectives and how capturable and statable (or how ineffable) is it?
- Who determines whether the analysts' and the actual participants' accounts concur and match?

The psychologist Blumer makes the following pertinent point:

Quote 9.8 Blumer on understanding the actor

Since action is forged by the actor out of what he perceives, interprets and judges, one would have to see the operating situation as the actor sees it, perceive objects as the actor perceives them, ascertain their meaning in terms of the meaning they have for the actor, and follow the actor's line of conduct as the actor organizes it—in short we have to take the role of the actor and see the world from his standpoint.

(Blumer 1969: 73–74)

Reflection task 9.3

Now, imagine that you were carrying out some research into social and discursive practices in a workplace.

- How possible do you think it would be to put yourself in the 'actor's' shoes and see the world from her/his standpoint?
- What would be the obstacles that could get in your way?

How might you minimise or manage these obstacles?

It is this challenge posed by Blumer's position, and its associated issues, that underpins what Sarangi and Candlin (2001) refer to as 'motivational relevancies'; namely how the analyst's tacit values and research assumptions either 'transform' or 'align with' (see above) the participants' perspectives.

Making these assumptions clear is a challenge to research, but also to the potential *practical relevance* (see Sarangi and Roberts 1999) of the research. Motivational relevance and practical relevance thus stand in a reflexive relationship in which the 'members resources' of analysts and participants are mutually shaping: the analyst's decisions on how to balance the analyst's and participants' perspectives both shape and are shaped by the analyst's mode of engagement with the problems of the participants. They both become engaged in what Sarangi and Roberts (1999: 473) call a process of 'joint problematisation'.

Reflection task 9.4

As a follow-up to Task 9.3, consider the fact that in studying professional encounters it seems that analysts routinely find it difficult to adopt a participant's perspective.

- Why do you think this might be so?
- What would be the participants' perspectives that the analyst needs to understand/adopt?
- What if the analyst is the professional himself/herself?

9.7.2 Research Methodologies or Techniques for Participant Accounts

In this section we suggest some typical types and modes of collecting data. Discerning participants' perspectives and experiences requires careful selection and combination of research techniques. It may be helpful to distinguish between two classes of techniques, specifically those related to the interaction with subject-participants and those related to the recording of data. We are assuming here that audio-recording or video-recording is at least possible (if not feasible as well).

Concept 9.6 Interactional techniques

- Interviews (these tend to be one-on-one and structured)
- Focus group discussions (these tend to be less structured and more dynamic than interviews and involve multiple participants)
- Observations (these tend to require the use of predetermined observation schemes)
- Participant observations (these emphasise empathy through participation and observation)

Concept 9.7 Recording techniques

- Transcription (this tends to apply to interactions involving a small number of individuals)
- Introspective accounts/think-aloud protocols (these are recordings done simultaneously with an interaction or replay of interaction; they often require written and specific guidelines to bring issues into focus; they may involve an extra researcher-participant or subject-participant)
- Observation schemes (these tend to focus on quantifiable and other 'objective' measurement tools such as rating scales and checklists)
- Retrospective accounts/narratives of experience (these often include personal diaries of experiences, e.g. critical incident diaries)

9.8 Creating a Conversation Among Perspectives

But what about these different ways of capturing participant accounts in combination with methodologies that you might select to represent the other perspectives? On what basis might you select these and how might you bring them all together in a research project? Not just as 'laid side by side' but as an integrated whole, mutually and interdiscursively working together in the interests of your research agenda?

To work through these questions, it may be helpful to go back for a moment to the original and most basic motivation for the multiperspectival approach. Isn't this a bit late? No, now is the right time because it is these questions that take us to the heart of the multiperspectival approach. Unless we can answer these questions in general and in particular research projects, we will be condemned to juggle multiple methodologies that will never form a whole, will never yield a coherent response to a research question, will never—in other words—talk to each other.

This last point gives the clue to what is going on here. When we think back to what 'a Methodology' most fundamentally is, we find that there are no Methodologies apart from people, the people who—as you will recall Goodwin (1994) highlighted in his notion of 'professional vision'—expertly make visible the world with and for others through those discourses that, in this case, are deemed 'methodological'. Here we can also take our cue from a similar point made by art historian Ernst Gombrich about 'Art':

Quote 9.9 Gombrich on 'Art'

There is really no such thing as Art. There are only artists. Once these were men who took coloured earth and roughed out the forms of a bison on the wall of a cave; today some buy their paints, and design posters for hoardings; they did and do many other things. There is no harm in calling all these activities art as long as we keep in mind that such a word may mean very different things in different times and places, and as long as we realise that Art with a capital A has no existence.

(Gombrich 1994: 21)

The upshot is that, just as Gombrich here brings the work of art back into inseparable connection with the artist's world, leaving 'Art' empty of meaning, the multiperspectival approach is concerned with discourse analysis as 'peopled'. The approach was inspired by a concern to acknowledge that the discourse analytical process is heavily populated: potentially crowded with present and absent participants, analysts and, crucial here, those scholars whom any methodology invokes as its authors and practitioners. In other words, methodology is an expert process and all such processes come with a rich complexity and diversity of people and their discursive worlds.

The different perspectives, then, offer pathways for achieving ecological validity through their potential to embrace not only the perspectives of researchers and participants, but with them to bring together scholars—and their work—who might not otherwise 'meet' around a common agenda. And all of these are as it were subjected to what we have called the analyst's perspective—explaining the motivational relevancies and the practical relevance in relation to participants' perspectives.

Extending this metaphor of the research process as a 'meeting' or—more convivially—a dinner party, the question for the multiperspectival discourse analyst becomes not what methodologies to use and in what relations, but who to invite and why. The analyst, as the host, is already at the table, as are the participants, and we can take it that having taken on board the notion of 'joint problematisation' (Roberts and Sarangi 1999) the analyst has already been in close conversation with the participants with a view to achieving the mutual alignment of perspectives foreshadowed by Sarangi and Candlin (2001).

The other guests will, then, be invited to this conversation aimed at mutual understanding. Based on this conversation so far, who of the scholars available might be able to contribute to and further the conversation? And remember that as with any invitation list we cannot be certain in advance who will get on with who. There will inevitably be surprises once the party gets going. Who could represent in this conversation the textual, interactional and social/organisational perspectives? Who will get to sit with whom? What will enable and lubricate the conversation between them? What conversational starters—what focal themes (as we shall see below)—will you as the host introduce to

encourage the conversation? How will you ensure that the conversation continues without incident? How will you monitor how the guests are getting on? Would you be able to notice that, for example, 'over the far end of the table its looks as if Sacks and Foucault have found something in common at last'? And how will you make sure that no one is excluded or abandoned to silence? And that you bring the conversation—and the guests—together towards the end? And perhaps just as important, who would you not invite (again) and why? Who would, for example, likely not attempt to join the conversation, bring irrelevant assumptions or be intolerant of those present?

The metaphor highlights that the perspectives are essentially peopled, and underscores the interdiscursive methodology that is enshrined in the diagram. It is this interdiscursivity that brings into play and into relevance the mutual engagement of different perspectives through the research process. It thereby offers pathways towards Cicourel's ecological validity in the connections that emerge between participant accounts, linguistic/semiotic analysis, participant-focused micro-interactional interpretation and system-focused macro-sociological explanation.

So how do we get this conversation among the perspectives started? How do we bring the perspectives together to coalesce around a common agenda? As we foreshadowed above, this requires a focal theme that matters to participants and analyst, providing motivational relevance for both. This puts the analyst's understanding of the site of research in the 'first column': the motivation and rationale for the research agenda and design.

In sum, how the perspectives are brought together/integrated through this process depends on the analyst's emerging understanding of the relevance of the perspectives and the relationships between them to the issue(s) that is the focal theme of the research at the particular site.

9.9 Bringing the Perspectives Together: Concepts, Focal Themes and Crucial Sites

So what might these 'focal themes' look like? And how might they be identified and used? At this point it is important to remember that any study of the kind we envisage here fundamentally involves people coming together (literally or 'absently' as we saw early) with a mutual interest in

understanding 'what *it* is that is going on' in an aspect of practice—a focal theme—that is of practical relevance to participants. (*NOTE: It may seem odd that it is easy to forget that research is* 'peopled' *but recall that this is key to Cicourel's call for* 'ecological validity'.)

At the same time, the motivation for seeking and understanding such focal themes needs to start somewhere—much as at the dinner party the conversation needs to be initiated and monitored. Without this, the guests—ignored, misrepresented or misunderstood—may regret that they came. The identification and elaboration of a focal theme start with mutual exploration of answers—typically cautious—to questions—usually tentative—about issues that concern participants about their practice (*NOTE: Remember Duranti and Goodwin on* 'participant perspectives' *and Roberts and Sarangi on* 'joint problematisation'). The focus and content of a focal theme will then be refined, confirmed and elaborated according to how the analyst accounts for site- and domain-specific practices based on their emergent understanding of the different perspectives involved.

But have we gone back far enough in addressing the question of where to start? True, we have brought the parts together and given an account of the process, but still missing is an initial conceptual spark, a catalyst—as it were—to inspire the identification of a focal theme and hence the resourcing, mutual engagement and integration of the perspectives. In other words, what can we say in advance that will help us seek a research agenda that will not risk, from the outset, skewing this agenda away from what could turn out to be of practical relevance to participants?

One part of the answer has already been foreshadowed in Chap. 2. This is the notion of the 'crucial site' (Candlin 2000):

Quote 9.10 Candlin on 'crucial sites'

[Within crucial sites] occur what I have called critical moments, where the communicative competence of the participants is at a premium and at its greatest moment of challenge. This may be due to the heightened significance of the subject matter, for personal, professional, or ideological reasons. These moments may be defined generically across topics and conditions, such as the breaking of bad news, or individually sited within particular conditions in particular contexts …. What then becomes interesting is to map the critical moments on to the crucial sites and to calibrate these against the participant perspectives of those involved.

(Candlin 2000: 10)

The mutual location of such sites and within them critical moments where the communicative stakes are particular high for one or more participants provides a potential entry point for the development of a research agenda that will, ipso facto, be of practical relevance to these participants. But this focus by itself does not get us further in understanding what 'crucial' might mean at particular sites or how such critical moments could be identified, described, interpreted and explained within a program of research that is accountable to participants.

To address this need, Candlin and Crichton (2013) propose a range of concepts that can be taken as first steps towards developing focal themes as particular sites. The idea is that there are certain potentially shared concepts or 'categories of experience' that offer 'lenses' through which researcher and participants can start the conversation that will seek the mutual identification of potential focal themes that can inform the research agenda at particular sites. These concepts will inevitably be variously understood and their different interpretations emerge from the different experience, interests and expertise (i.e. 'motivational relevancies') of those in the conversation, as researcher and participant perspectives coalesce around a focal theme. Moreover, the research agenda that results offers the possibility of exploring how these 'categories of experience' may be differently understood, invoked, interrelated and discursively realised at different sites and across different domains.

Returning to the dinner party metaphor, we could think of such concepts as 'conversational starters' that offer potentially common ground and interest among the different perspectives at the table, or more formally as together constituting an open-ended 'conceptual framework' that models potential concepts that can inform research and practice at particular sites. If a concept is taken up as the focus of the conversation, its interconnections with other concepts, relevance and subject matter emerging, and being explored and refined through the interplay of the perspectives, then its status has thereby changed to that of the focal theme.

In Fig. 9.3, we illustrate—as a heuristic device—what such a conceptual framework and focal theme might look like, in this case including the focal theme of Trust.

Of course the focal theme we have chosen could just as well have been any of the other concepts illustrated in the figure, or a concept that has not yet been included. Concepts may enter and leave the figure,

Fig. 9.3 Focal theme: Trust (Candlin and Crichton 2013: 11)

and be promoted to a focal theme as their relevance waxes and wanes in the conversation to identify the focal theme(s) relevant to the particular site, warranted as the emergent outcome of 'joint problematisation' (Roberts and Sarangi 1999) among researcher and participants at a particular site(s). Moreover, and this point is key, in seeking consensus at particular sites there will inevitably be different interpretations among researchers and participants that emerge and are explored. These interpretations will concern potentially relevant focal themes, possible relations between them and other concepts, the combination and interconnections between them, how these inform the relevance and subject matter of the focal theme(s), how the conversation will proceed, who else may be

invited to join, who may not be invited back, and in what terms and at what point consensus is reached that the conversation has settled for the time being on a focal theme and who the final list of participants (present and absent) will be. This ongoing mutual sensitivity, responsiveness and emergent understanding and consensual trajectory that guides the research process is what is meant by 'Focus on the site'.

Below we illustrate a range of such concepts around which researchers and participants might coalesce, in this case focusing on the theme of Trust as this is developed as a research agenda through the *Discourses of Trust* volume (Candlin and Crichton 2013). In each example, we sketch issues of potential and mutual relevance that may arise for participants and researchers and thereby motivate a research agenda. The entries are necessarily suggestive and unbounded, of untried relevance at particular sites and open to diverse interpretations among different participants and researchers. (*NOTE: Illustrative references to the diversity of research agendas and designs that can be generated are provided in Part III—see in particular Crichton 2010; Candlin and Crichton 2011, 2013; Crichton et al. 2016.*)

Example 9.1 Focal Theme as Trust (Candlin and Crichton 2013: 10–13)

Characterization

Draws attention to processes by which qualities salient to Trustworthiness in particular activities and domains are ascribed and portrayed, and the categories that are drawn upon. In doing so, the theme invokes issues raised by the types of character available in the construction and performance of Trust, and how these are differentially consequential, situated and managed.

Credibility

Brings into focus issues of competence and expertise, plausibility and integrity, the grounds for belief in these, the expectations that they engender and how these grounds, beliefs and expectations are discursively created, maintained, enhanced and jeopardized; how credence in Trustworthiness may be differently ascribed to different individuals and groups; what the historical and institutional bases for and consequence of such ascriptions are, and how they may be discursively reinforced or disputed.

Expertise

Raises issues of performance, knowledge and proficiency and how these are evidenced, evaluated and warranted in relation to, for example, experi-

ence, membership, accomplishment, reputation, education and training; how expertise is discursively realised and distributed among and defining of individuals and groups; and how such expertise produces and is dependent on Trust, and is variously interpreted as constituting grounds for Trustworthiness among individuals and groups, and within and between sites and domains.

Risk

Foregrounds the ways in which uncertainty is calculated and perceived and the demands this makes on Trust and Trustworthiness; how risk is variously represented in relation to categories of responsibility and liability, advantage and disadvantage, costs and benefits, profit and loss, threats and security; the types of evidence and modes of argument and explanation in terms of which such risks are evaluated, the implications that are drawn and actions that they justify in relation to individuals and groups, and the institutional, professional and interpersonal discourses associated with the management of risk and the relationships between these at and across particular sites, synchronically and diachronically.

Responsibility

Evokes issues associated with lines of accountability and questions of liability and obligation; grounds for attributing/withholding credit and blame; ways of estimating and communicating Trust, managing boundaries, for example those of expertise; and explores modes of justification and how and for what purposes these are invoked.

Identity

Foregrounds the relationship between the self and issues of gender, class, age, ethnicity, history, language and culture. Raises issues of ethics and moral behaviours and expectations, bringing to the fore questions of the relationship between the person and the body, of the lifeworld and its relation to social/institutional structures and processes, and of how and why these are constructed as Trustworthy/unTrustworthy at particular sites and with what consequences. Associated with the theme are the social and institutional sources of the self and how particular identities are jeopardized, constrained, enabled and constructed.

Relationships

Brings into view issues of Trust raised by inter-subjectivity and social role, of the place of mutual knowledge and reciprocal interpretation in the management of interaction, what interpretive repertoires/perspectives are drawn upon, what (mis)framings are involved, how knowledge is differentially distributed, constructed and managed between lay/expert, researchers/participants; the risks posed to participants and the place of trust; and the roles available to participants and how these are subject to shifts, negotiation and (dis)enfranchisement.

Capacity

Invokes issues of measurement and standards against which (in)capacity and (dis)ability are judged as Trustworthy/unTrustworthy. The theme directs attention to the sources of such methods and how they are themselves constructed, implemented and evaluated; how they inform further practices and judgments and for what purposes; what modes of reasoning and argument are drawn upon; whether they are tacit/explicit; and for whom, how and why they are variously understood by, and consequential for, participants.

Recognition

Foregrounds questions concerning the grounds by which people are judged (not) to be entitled to acknowledgment or consideration of Trust. The theme directs attention to the methods by which people are constructed and identified as such; how such judgments are warranted; the social/institutional sources of such warrants and how these are constructed; how and why they may (not) be maintained or disputed; and the consequences for individuals and groups.

Agency

Highlights issues of personal, institutional and societal influence and instrumentality, and how these are differentially distributed, enabled, constrained, sourced and constructed. The theme raises questions of the nature of Trust between individuals, interactions, institutions and society; between action and structure, and between micro and macro social phenomena, and how and why these are (not) subject to change.

Membership

Raises questions of the nature of groups, of the purposes and consequences of inclusion and exclusion, and the risks, costs and benefits incurred for Trust between members and non-members; of the identities thereby conferred and constructed by membership; the implications for control of self/others, of differential knowledge, expertise and status of members and non-members; and of the methods for deciding, demonstrating, ranking and rescinding membership.

Purpose

Highlights social action as personally, institutionally and socially motivated, drawing attention to the potential for divergence between and diverse interpretations of such intentions and goals, to the representation and negotiation of these, and the implications for how meaning is interpreted and acted upon within practices at particular sites; and raises questions about how and why particular individuals and groups participate in such practices; and how collaboration, expertise and leadership in setting and achieving goals are negotiated, represented and understood, and the implications of these for Trust and Trustworthiness.

Reflection task 9.5

Now we have potential focal themes on the table, let's imagine that you are now about to embark, with one or more participants, on some actual research in a workplace and you want to try to integrate multiple perspectives into your research. What would be the main issues you would need to think about?

We provide a sample set of questions below:

- Identify the *crucial sites* of engagement
- Decide on a focal theme (this could be any of the concepts in the diagram above, including Trust, or another concept as a potential focal theme that will characterise what matters to the participants at the crucial sites that you have identified)
- Focus on the *social practices* that are salient, their topics, purposes, participants
- Identify the typical *events* or *activity types* that these social practices occur in
- Identify the *discursive practices* associated with the social practices/events
- Perhaps focus on one or more *critical moments* where these practices become or are significant to the participants

Think—would access be possible? How would you find these things out?

Begin planning and then carrying out your **data collection**, by taking the:

- **'Text' perspective**—what people say/write/visualise and how they do it

Think—what written/spoken/visual data? Would recording or note-taking be possible?

- **Social action perspective**—the actions people are involved in

Think—would information on relevant social practices be available?

- **Social/institutional perspective**—the organisation within which these practices take place

Think—would information on relevant institutions/organisations be available?

- **Participants' perspective**—what the participants say/believe about what they do and say/write

Think—would access to stakeholders/participants and their Discourses be possible?

And then remember that equally important is your

- **Analyst's perspective(s)**
 Think—what is your objective, what is your position on these actions and Discourses? How can you integrate or make your positions clear?

 Consider the **process as 'peopled'***—how would you* 'host' *(design) the research process as a conversation between (interdiscursive) these perspectives? How would you invoke the perspectives so that you could enable their mutual engagement around the focal theme? And how would you allow your (and your participants) understanding of the findings to coalesce out of this convergent conversation?*

In coming to the end of Part II, we do not mean to suggest that it is finished. On the contrary, in keeping with our argument for the 'peopling' of discourse research, we intend the 'What next?' of Part II as an invitation to join an ongoing and growing conversation among researchers and practitioners across disciplines, sites and domains. The multiperspectival approach constitutes just this invitation. At the same time the approach models how such an invitation is central to the research process and focus envisaged here and why the ensuing conversation among researchers and participants is generative of broader research agendas whose relevance spans sites and domains of practice. This of course implies a broadening of the relevance of research and practice in applied linguistics itself, extending the horizons of the discipline to interprofessional and interdisciplinary research and practice that lie, as yet uncharted, beyond its traditional domains and foci.

Most importantly, we hope you have found this to be a stimulating, perhaps even exhilarating journey, and one that has inspired and equipped you to set forth on your own adventures into new worlds of discourse in context and in action.

What follows in Part III is an overview of resources of particular import for restocking in preparation for your further discourse explorations. We wish you well in your travels!

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Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. New York: Harper Row.

Gombrich, E. (1994). *The story of art* (16th ed.). New York: Phaidon Press.

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Layder, D. (1993). *New strategies in social research: An introduction and guide*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

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Schutz, A. (1962). *Collected papers I. The problem of social reality*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Schutz, A. (1967). *The phenomenology of the social world*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University.

Part III

Resources

10

Key Sources

The following sections cover a wide range of sources that we hope you will find useful in your further explorations of discourse.

10.1 Books

The following books are, in our view, particularly important monographs in the field of discourse.

Berger, P., & Luckmann, T. (1967). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.
Bhatia, V. K. (1993). *Analyzing genre: Language use in professional settings*. London: Longman.
Bourdieu, P. (1972/1977). *Outline of a theory of practice*. (trans. R. Nice). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Fairclough, N. (1989/2013). *Language and power*. London: Longman.
Fairclough, N. (2013). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. London: Routledge.

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C.N. Candlin et al., *Exploring Discourse in Context and in Action*,
Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics,
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Foucault, M. (1966/1970). *The order of things: An archaeology of the human sciences*. New York: Pantheon Books.
Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies in ethnomethodology*. Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs: CA.
Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Doubleday.
Goffman, E. (1981). *Forms of talk*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
Gumperz, J. (1982). *Discourse strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). *Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning*. London: Edward Arnold.
Layder, D. (1993). *New strategies in social research: An introduction and guide*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
Sacks, H. (1992). *Lectures on conversation*. Vols. 1 and 2. Oxford: Blackwell.

We also highly recommend Crichton (2010), which is an elaborated account and example of the multiperspectival approach:

Crichton, J. (2010). *The discourse of commercialization*. Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

10.2 Edited Collections

Bhatia, V. K., Flowerdew, J., & Jones, R. (Eds.). (2008). *Advances in discourse studies*. London: Routledge.
Candlin, C. N. (Ed.). (2002). *Research and practice in professional discourse*. Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press.
Candlin, C. N., & Crichton, J. (Eds.). (2011). *Discourses of deficit*. Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
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Gunnarsson, B.-L., Linell, P., & Nordberg, B. (Eds.). (1997). *The construction of professional discourse*. London: Longman.
Hester, S., & Eglin, P. (Eds.). (1997). *Culture in action: Studies in membership categorization analysis*. Washington, DC: International Institute for Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis & University Press of America.
Ng, S. H., Candlin, C. N., & Chiu, C. Y. (Eds.). (2004). *Language matters: Communication, identity and culture*. Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press.
Norris, S., & Jones, R. H. (Eds.). (2005). *Discourse in action: Introducing mediated discourse analysis*. London: Routledge.
Sarangi, S., & Coulthard, M. (Eds.). (2000). *Discourse and social life*. London: Longman.
Sarangi, S., & Roberts, C. (Eds.). (1999). *Talk, work and institutional order: Discourse in medical, mediation, and management settings*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
Weatherall, A, Watson, B., & Gallois, C. (Eds.). (2007). *Language, discourse and social psychology*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

10.3 Handbooks

Candlin, C. N., & Sarangi, S. (Eds.). (2011). *Handbook of communication in organisations and professions*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
Tannen, D., Hamilton, H., & Schiffrin, D. (Eds.). (2015). *The handbook of discourse analysis* (2nd ed.). Malden, MA/Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
Sidwell, J., & Stivers, T. (Eds.). (2013). *The handbook of conversation analysis*. Malden, MA/Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

10.4 Readers

Lemert, C., & Branaman, A. (Eds.) (1997). *The Goffman reader*. Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell.
Outhwaite, W. (1996). *The Habermas reader*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
Rabinow, P. (Ed.). (1984). *The Foucault reader*. New York: Pantheon.
Shusterman, R. (Ed.). (1999). *Bourdieu: A critical reader*. Malden, MA/Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

10.5 Journals

10.5.1 Discourse Journals

- *CADAAD*
  http://www.cadaadjournal.com/
- *Critical Discourse Studies*
  http://www.tandfonline.com/action/aboutThisJournal?show=aimsScope&journalCode=rcds20#.VygpC3qjBbU
- *Discourse & Communication*
  http://dcm.sagepub.com/
- *Discourse & Society*
  http://das.sagepub.com/
- *Discourse Studies*
  http://dis.sagepub.com/
- *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Profession Practice (Formerly Journal of Applied Linguistics)*
  http://www.equinoxpub.com/JALPP
- *Language in Society*
  http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayJournal?jid=LSY
- *Research on Language and Social Interaction*
  http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/hrls20/current
- *Social Semiotics*
  http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/csos20#.Vygs6XqjBbU
- *Text & Talk*
  http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/text

10.5.2 Related Journals

- *American Anthropologist*
  http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/%28ISSN%291548-1433
- *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*
  http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayJournal?jid=APL
- *Applied Linguistics*
  http://applij.oxfordjournals.org/
- *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*
  http://www.alaa.org.au/page/aral_journal.html
- *Communication & Medicine*
  https://journals.equinoxpub.com/index.php/CAM
- *Corpora*
  http://www.euppublishing.com/journal/cor
- *Discourse Processes*
  http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/hdsp20#.VyguFXqjBbU
- *English for Specific Purposes*
  http://elsevier.com/locate/esp
- *Health, Risk & Society*
  http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/chrs20#.VygucXqjBbU
- *Intercultural Pragmatics*
  https://www.degruyter.com/view/j/iprg
- *International Journal of Business Communication*
  http://businesscommunication.org/jbc
- *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*
  https://benjamins.com/#catalog/journals/ijcl/main
- *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*
  http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/iral
- *Journalism and Discourse Studies*
  http://www.jdsjournal.net/
- *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*
  https://benjamins.com/#catalog/journals/japc/main
- *Journal of Business Communication*
  (See *International Journal of Business Communication*)
- *Journal of Language and Capitalism*

http://www.languageandcapitalism.info/
- *Journal of Language and Politics*
  https://benjamins.com/#catalog/journals/jlp/main
- *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*
  http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rmmd20#.VygvinqjBbU
- *Journal of Pragmatics*
  http://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-pragmatics/
- *Language*
  http://www.linguisticsociety.org/lsa-publications/language
- *Linguistics*
  http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/ling
- *Qualitative Research*
  http://qrj.sagepub.com/
- *Semiotica*
  http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/semi
- *System*
  http://www.journals.elsevier.com/system/
- *TESOL Quarterly*
  http://www.tesol.org/read-and-publish/journals/tesol-quarterly
- *The International Journal of Applied Linguistics*
  http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/%28ISSN%291473-4192
- *The Modern Language Journal*
  http://au.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-MODL.html

10.6 Principal Discourse Conferences and Associations

Please note that this brief list is merely indicative of the wide range of associations and conferences with a discourse focus around the world. Listing of conferences and associations in this section does not mean that we guarantee the academic quality or the peer review processes of a particular organisation. You may also find that certain well-established conferences such as those of *AAAL* (American Association for Applied Linguistics), *RELC* (Regional English Language Centre) and TESOL

International Association may have discourse-related themes from time to time in their annual conferences.

- *AILA* is the International Association of Applied Linguistics (http://www.aila.info/en/) AILA has a number of Research Networks (ReN) http://www.aila.info/en/research.html. They run discussion groups, and organise conferences and symposia, including a regular symposium at the triennial AILA Congress.
- *Applied Linguistics and Professional Practice* is an annual conference series. Use a search engine to locate upcoming conferences.
- *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis Across Disciplines (CADAAD)* runs biennial conferences: http://www.cadaad.net/conferences

10.7 Key Internet Sites

There are many very useful websites that deal with discourse and discourse analysis, and new ones are appearing on a regular basis. Rather than provide contact details here, we suggest that you simply use a good search engine to locate and explore sites of interest. One useful starting point might be the homepages of individual scholars we have referred to in this book. In the fields of CA and CDA, for example, there is a wealth of information (including in some cases data) accessible through these sites.

10.8 Other Relevant Resources

10.8.1 Doing Research

Brewer, J. D. (2000). *Ethnography*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Creswell, J. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Duff, P. A. (2008). *Case study research in applied linguistics*. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2005). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Heighham, J., & Croker, R. A. (Eds.). (2009). *Qualitative research in applied linguistics: a practical introduction*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hinkel, E. (Ed.). (2005). *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Koester, A. (2010). *Workplace discourse*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Machin, D., & Mayr, A. (2012). *How to do critical discourse analysis: A multimodal introduction*. London: Sage.

McEnery, T., Xiao, R., & Tono, Y. (2006). *Corpus-based language studies: An advanced resource book*. New York: Routledge.

McNiff, J., & Whitehead, J. (2006). *All you need to know about action research*. London: Sage.

O'Keeffe, A., McCarthy, M., & Carter, R. (2007). *From corpus to classroom*. Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (Eds.). (2009). *Methods of critical discourse analysis*. (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: design and methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

10.8.2 Software for Data Analysis

Concordancing

Scott, M. (2012). WordSmith tools version 6, Liverpool: Lexical Analysis. http://www.lexically.net/wordsmith/index.html

Text parsing and annotation

O'Donnell, M. (2007). UAM Corpus tool. http://www.wagsoft.com/CorpusTool/

SFL sentence analysis. http://www.isfla.org/Systemics/Software/Parsers.html

Qualitative data analysis software

QSR International. NVivo10. http://www.qsrinternational.com/products_nvivo.aspx
IBM Business Analytics Software. SPSS. http://www-01.ibm.com/software/au/analytics/spss/
ELAN software. https://tla.mpi.nl/tools/tla-tools/elan/

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Austin, J. (1962/1975). *How to do things with words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bakhtin, M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays*. (M. Holquist, Ed.; C. Emerson and M. Holquist, Trans.). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M. (1994). *The Bakhtin reader* (P. Morris, Ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bateson, G. (1972). *Steps to an ecology of mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Beebe, L., & Giles, H. (1984). Speech accommodation theories: A discussion in terms of second language acquisition. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language, 46*, 5–32.

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C.N. Candlin et al., *Exploring Discourse in Context and in Action*,
Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics,
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Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. (1992). *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourhis, R. Y., El-Geledi, S., & Sachdev, I. (2007). Language, ethnicity and intergroup relations. In A. Weatherall, B. Watson, & C. Gallois (Eds.), *Language, discourse and social psychology* (pp. 15–50). Houndmills, Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Branaman, A. (1997). Goffman's social theory. In C. Lemert & A. Branaman (Eds.), *The Goffman reader* (pp. xlv–lxxxii). Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell.

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Brumfit, C., & Crystal, D. (2004). Coping with change in applied linguistics. *Journal of Applied Linguistics, 1*(3), 383–398.

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Candlin, C. N. (1999). General Editor's preface. *Language and literacy in workplace education: Learning at work*. London: Routledge.

Candlin, C. N. (2000a). New discourses of the clinic: Rediscovering the patient in healthcare. *The Cardiff Lecture*. Cardiff, UK: University of Wales.

Candlin, S. (2000b). New dynamics in the nurse-patient relationship. In S. Sarangi & M. Coulthard (Eds.), *Discourse and social life* (pp. 230–245). London: Longman.

Candlin, S. (2008). *Therapeutic communication: A lifespan approach*. Melbourne: Pearson.

Candlin, S., & Candlin, C. N. (2007). Nursing through time and space: Some challenges to the construct of community of practice. In R. Iedema (Ed.), *The discourse of hospital communication: Tracing complexities in contemporary health care organizations* (pp. 244–267). Houndmills, Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

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C.N. Candlin et al., *Exploring Discourse in Context and in Action*, Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-31506-9

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