

1 Introduction: Classroom Discourse and Interaction Research

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1. Introduction

This book is written by and for educators and applied linguists who wish to get a comparative overview of research on classroom discourse and interaction. So it is concerned with both language learning and use, and how these domains of language are co-involved in understanding everything that routinely happens in language classrooms. More specifically, it is concerned with instructed second language acquisition (SLA) theory (see the eight chapters in the Cognitive–Interactionist and Sociocultural Theory Traditions in this volume, and Antón; Long, this volume), and is concerned with discourse analysis (DA) (see the 16 contributions to the Educational, Language Socialization, Conversation Analysis and Critical Theory Traditions in this volume); and how these perspectives overlap.

In addition, this book focuses on second, foreign and heritage language classrooms that are located in Canada, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor Leste, the United Kingdom, and the United States. However, in order to situate this volume within a broader educational perspective, some attention is also paid to academic and vocational classrooms in which content subjects are taught through the first language, as well as to the organization of talk in institutional contexts which lie somewhere in between traditional classrooms and completely informal contexts of language learning.

2. Rationale

The rationale for this Handbook is simple. First, even if we limit ourselves to English instruction—which this volume does not do: it also includes work on French, German, Spanish, Swedish and Mandarin data—the numbers of learners who formally study this language every day are huge. For example, in the People’s Republic of China alone, there were (as of 2012) 390 000 000 to 400 000 000 people who had learned or were learning EFL (Bolton and Graddol 2012; Wei and Su 2012). These figures comfortably surpass the total

population of the United States, which has some 310 000 000 inhabitants. Reliable figures for the numbers of English teachers in China are difficult to obtain, but they are clearly in the 100 000s, if not more. And when we consider how many people study S/FLs of *all* kinds worldwide, we can easily see why understanding how classroom discourse and interaction work is a fundamental question for applied linguists and educators.¹ Note, however, that—as Appleby, this volume, compellingly argues—the way in which the use of English in particular actually plays out as a viable (or even desirable) resource for social, economic or cultural development in underdeveloped countries is an extremely complicated, not to say controversial, issue.

Second, while educators and applied linguists share common interests in understanding what happens in language classrooms, we probably do not read across the artificial boundaries of these disciplinary traditions as much as we should. This Handbook therefore aims to provide applied linguists and educators with an authoritative resource that enables us to *compare*—or more precisely, *to engage in informed cross-disciplinary dialog about*—how different perspectives may answer the question: ‘What does classroom discourse and interaction look like?’ In this context, Green, Castanheira, Skukauskaite, and Hammond (this volume) lay out detailed proposals for how to construct ethnographic meta-analyses of the literatures that inform each Tradition in this Handbook. The aim of such meta-analyses is to identify ‘how, if, when and under what conditions, and for what purposes different traditions can be brought together (or not), how the perspectives relate to each other (or not), and what each contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of what is interactionally accomplished in and through classroom discourse.’

3. Organization of the Volume

In order to provide such a comparative reading, the book is organized in terms of a preliminary Research Methods and Assessment section, followed by six ‘Traditions,’ specifically, the Educational, Cognitive–Interactionist, Sociocultural Theory, Language Socialization, Conversation Analysis, and Critical Theory Traditions. The chapter in the *Final Words* section chapter summarizes new research issues emerging from each Tradition. This comparative organization provides for a reasonably comprehensive overview of the most important contemporary approaches to answering the question posed above. At the same time, a careful reading of this Handbook will reveal how classroom research often *transcends* rather than merely *conforms* to a priori theoretical parameters and will thus show *the extent* to which the various Traditions are actually quite porous. Now this is not an original idea. Nonetheless, note that while Sociocultural and Language Socialization Theory are different because they emerged from Soviet developmental psychology and ethnography of communication, respectively, they also share a common core of Vygotskian and Bakhtinian ideas (see the overlapping references used by the contributors to the Sociocultural Theory and Language Socialization Traditions and by Antón, this volume). Furthermore, some researchers in, say, the Language Socialization Tradition are also ideologically committed to *transforming* current classroom practices (see, especially, Lee and Bucholtz; Talmy, this volume)—a perspective which is shared by Thorne and Hellerman (this volume) and some other sociocultural writers, and which is foundational to the Critical Theory Tradition (again, see the references used by the contributors to the Critical Theory Tradition section, and by Collin and Apple, this volume). In addition, researchers from different traditions often use methodological tools that cut across Traditions. So, it has become increasingly common for the fine-grained transcripts and methodological techniques of conversation analysis to be appropriated by researchers working within other Traditions (see Miller; Talmy; Thorne and Hellerman, this

volume). And finally, there are certain intellectual themes that simply cut across the Traditions. Some of the most obvious examples include: 1) the trend to broaden the scope of terms such as *the classroom* (see Lindwall, Greiffenhagen and Lymer; van Compernelle; Kasper and Kim, this volume); 2) the emergence of *multimodal* approaches to discourse analysis (see Lindwall, Greiffenhagen and Lymer; Markee and Kunitz; Negueruela-Azarola, García and Buescher; Seedhouse; van Compernelle, this volume); and 3) interest in issues such as *resistance* (see, in particular, the interesting chapters by Miller and Talmy, this volume, who show that resistance is not necessarily a progressive or beneficial activity for the individuals who engage in it). These theoretical overlaps, methodological subtleties and cross-cutting topics complexify the disciplinary landscapes of research on classroom discourse and interaction in important ways and must be considered when trying to develop a comprehensive understanding of this important domain of education and applied linguistics.

Finally, let us now turn to the substantive issues of this chapter. First, what is *DA*, and relatedly, what is the difference between *discourse* and *interaction*? And second, if—as I argue throughout this chapter—the notion of context (a critical construct in all types of *DA*) crucially subtends all the Traditions in this Handbook, then what do we need to know in comparative terms about this theoretical construct in order to make sense of classroom discourse and interaction processes? The first question is answered in the next section, *Discourse analysis, discourse and interaction*; and the second is addressed in the final section of this chapter, *Understanding context*.

3.1 *Discourse analysis, discourse and interaction*

Skukauskaite, Rangel, Rodriguez and Krohn Ramón (this volume) show how these terms are *actually* used in the qualitative literature in education and applied linguistics, which is not necessarily the same thing as what these terms mean in the *theoretical* literature on *DA*. I therefore draw extensively on Mary Bucholtz (2003) (henceforth MB) to provide a theoretical overview of *DA*. I do this for five reasons. First, this chapter will allow us to develop a deep understanding of the diversity of approaches that count as *DA* work. Second, MB's piece is an example of *DA* that is designed to fit a particular research program (feminist approaches to language and gender), and this idea of using particular kinds of *DA* to do particular kinds of work is crucial to the subsequent discussion of context in this chapter (see also Lee and Bucholtz, this volume for a Language Socialization perspective on how talk in and outside the classroom are related). Third, this discussion of MB's work goes some way toward correcting the lack of feminist research in the body of this collection (see note 1). And lastly, I intend to use MB's chapter as a foil for interspersing critical commentary on issues that are of particular interest to readers of the present Handbook.

MB notes that the terms *discourse* and *DA* are not amenable to broad, overarching definitions. In linguistics, discourse is typically a formal construct, and is treated as one of the four traditional levels of language (i.e., phonology, morphology, syntax, and discourse). Thus, discourse is the level that specifically deals with how sentences are combined into larger units of spoken or written text and how it potentially organizes, or is organized by, these other levels of language. Other, more functional understandings of the term, according to which discourse is viewed as language in context (that is, how language is used in social situations), originate in developments in linguistic anthropology, sociology, text linguistics, and critical discourse analysis (CDA). These socially contexted approaches to *DA* are in general more useful than traditional linguistic accounts of *DA* for MB's programmatic interests as a feminist discourse analyst.

Under the rubric of *Discourse as Culture*, MB discusses work in linguistic anthropology, which includes the ethnography of communication tradition pioneered by Hymes (1962, 1974)

and the interactional sociolinguistics program developed by Gumperz (1982a, 1982b). Summarizing the contributions of these two linguistic anthropological traditions, MB notes that the former tradition emphasizes the fact that women are makers of culture, while the latter emphasizes how women's discourse is produced by culture. She also points out that, in this latter tradition, the primary point of comparison is between women and men, a perspective which has the effect of downplaying *intragender* variation and highlighting *intergender* variation in discourse (Bucholtz 2003, p. 50).

Under the rubric of *Discourse as Society*, MB reviews sociological work in ethnomethodology (EM) and its various offshoots, including purist conversation analysis (CA), feminist CA,² and discursive psychology (DP).

MB is refreshingly forthright about why she does not find purist CA useful for her purposes as a feminist linguist:

Both feminist stylistics and feminist critical discourse analysis put gender ideologies at the forefront of analysis. Where conversation analysis insists that power must be discovered in interaction and cannot be the point from which analysis proceeds, critical text analysis maintains that power permeates every aspect of society and hence is operative in all discourse. These scholars' refusal to shy away from politicized analysis provides a valuable model of engaged scholarship for researchers working within other approaches to discourse and gender. (Bucholtz 2003, pp. 57–58)

This distrust of purist CA is widespread among critical discourse analysts, and their wariness is traceable to a celebrated polemic among conversation analyst Emanuel Schegloff on one side, and critical discourse analysts Margaret Wetherell and Michael Billig on the other. This debate graphically exposed important intellectual fault lines between CA and CDA on the question of how to handle context in interaction. In addition, the exchanges between Schegloff and Billig became at times quite heated. The equivalent watershed moment in the applied linguistics literature is the equally contentious series of exchanges between Firth and Wagner (1997) and their critics, which are also centrally about context. However, the Schegloff/Wetherell/Billig controversy is not well known in the applied linguistics literature; this is a lacuna that this chapter aims to fill, at least in a preliminary fashion.

To return to MB's text, the issue of whether purist CA is useful for CDA boils down to a technical argument about whether talk-in-interaction, especially ordinary conversation, constitutes the 'primordial site of sociality' (Schegloff 1987, p. 208). Or (to put it somewhat more plainly), the question is whether: 1) talk is a form of social organization that is *sui generis* (i.e., which should be analyzed in terms of talk-internal notions of context), and is thus (unless certain stringent methodological conditions are met) in principle not to be analyzed in the first instance in terms of talk-external contextual variables such as (in this particular context) gender (which is the CA position); or whether 2) gender and other similar ethnographic variables in the larger sociopolitical and cultural environment (such as age, socioeconomic and other forms of status, including issues of power, and members' biographies, especially identity), are omnirelevant (this is the CDA position). If they *are* omnirelevant, then this position frees analysts from the obligation of having to analyze in detail how such variables are actually achieved in and through talk-in-interaction on a moment-by-moment basis before they can start talking about more general issues of gender in their own terms.

On the other hand, MB *is* interested in feminist CA. Chiefly associated with the work of Celia Kitzinger (MB cites Kitzinger 2000; Kitzinger and Frith 2000), feminist CA differs from purist CA in that it attempts to use the analytic power of CA to explore gender issues independently of whether participants in a conversation observably orient to such issues in their talk. However, it is not altogether clear how serious this departure from purist CA is. While Kitzinger acknowledges that her work does indeed represent a departure from CA

orthodoxy, she also situates it as a contribution to classic concerns in CA regarding membership categorization (specifically, she cites Sacks, 1995, Lecture 6: see Kitzinger 2005 pp. 223–224 to understand how she justifies this claim). So, Kitzinger seems to be loath to wander too far from the CA fold. Now, Schegloff does not buy into feminist CA (see Schegloff 2009). But in comparison with his criticisms of other writers in this commentary, Kitzinger emerges relatively unscathed from this critique. So, to summarize, MB's discussion (updated by more recent references) makes the following insights relevant: 1) CA is not monolithic: there are different sub-varieties of CA, most importantly, institutional talk; 2) feminist CA can be a resource for CDA more broadly, although it also seems that feminist CA is not monolithic either, and that some varieties of feminist CA are closer to the original CA project than others; and 3) whether we agree with the substance of Schegloff (2009) or not, this paper has great value for applied linguistic and educational audiences. More specifically, this publication sets out the analytic standards to which researchers who use CA may/should be held. In the context of this Handbook, I propose that, irrespective of whether Chapter 21 by Talmy (this volume) counts as pure CA (it is located in the Language Socialization Tradition and is an example of what Talmy (2007) pp. 183–186 calls a *motivated looking* approach to membership categorization analysis/CA), the technical quality of its analyses of superdiversity will long serve as a benchmark of analytic excellence for other researchers in applied linguistics and education who use CA in their work.

Under the rubric of *Discourse as Text*, MB discusses text linguistics, which subsumes stylistic and CDAs of (primarily) written texts. She points out that both stylistics and CDA use the word *critical*, but notes that, at least historically, these two approaches have used this term in different senses. In literary criticism, this term 'originally referred to a scholar's evaluative role in assessing the effectiveness of a text as art' (Bucholtz 2003, pp. 54–55). In contrast, CDA's understanding of this term derives 'from the language of Marxism ... In this context, critical signifies a leftist (usually socialist) political stance on the part of the analyst; the goal of such research is to comment on society in order to change it' (Bucholtz 2003, p. 55).

Another crucial source of inspiration in CDA is post-structuralism. In her chapter, MB specifically identifies the work of Foucault (1972), whose work has been seminal in CDAs of discourse as power. Interestingly, however, she comments that this approach's 'view of discourses as historically contingent cultural systems of knowledge, belief, and power does not require close attention to the details of linguistic form' (Bucholtz 2003, p. 45). To my mind, this criticism has a strangely conversation analytic ring to it. More specifically, this is exactly the same kind of critique of CDA that is made by Schegloffian conversation analysts! This is an issue I take up again in the *Understanding context* section.

MB further notes that, in practice, it is often difficult to separate these two traditions in feminist DA work, the main differences between them now being mostly methodological. Generally speaking, feminist stylistics tends to draw on written literary texts that may be supplemented by data from popular culture, while feminist CDA focuses on both written and spoken texts from a range of institutional contexts, including the media, government, medicine and education. Beyond these methodological differences, however, both stylistics and CDA are committed (in the political sense captured in the quotation from Bucholtz 2003, p. 55) to effecting social change by unpacking how ideologies are articulated through language in different sociocultural and political contexts. Within this analytic program, notions of *identity* and the themes of *conflict* and *resistance to hegemonic ideologies and discourses* are key concerns.

Under the last rubric of *Discourse as History*, MB summarizes a body of work that emphasizes the importance of history in feminist DA. The most important point that she makes concerning this tradition is that '[t]his historicizing of discourse and discourses brings a much-needed temporal depth to the study of language and gender' (Bucholtz 2003, p. 58). She also usefully clarifies that this body of work, which may be subdivided into work on

language ideologies and *natural histories of discourse*, tends to treat discourse as metadiscourse, that is, as ‘discourse about discourse’ (Bucholtz 2003, p. 59).

MB situates herself vis-à-vis this body of work as follows. First, in substantive terms, MB notes approvingly that work on language ideologies tends to be more linguistic and anthropological than it is Marxist. Consequently, it tends to focus on ‘socially and politically interested representations of language itself’ and on the ‘cultural and geographic contexts from which language ideologies emerge.’ Second, from a methodological perspective:

[work on language ideologies] is less inclined to assume a privileged analytic perspective with respect to its data: whereas critical discourse analysis centers its discovery procedures on the analyst’s interpretations of discourse (which are in turn thought to be the same as those of a reader, though made more explicit), anthropological research on language ideologies is more likely to appeal to the evidence of how ideologies are taken up, interrupted, or rerouted by those who participate in metadiscourse in various ways. (Bucholtz 2003, p. 59)

I have cited MB’s own words extensively here to avoid unintentionally injecting any of my own biases as a conversation analyst into this discussion. Note, however, that first, she aligns herself more closely with an anthropological rather than a Marxist approach to analyzing language ideologies (see Bucholtz 2003, pp. 60–61). And second, she justifies her position by claiming that the anthropological approach does a better job of accounting for the empirical data (see also Bucholtz 2001). I agree with her. But as I pointed out earlier, these are precisely the same kinds of arguments that separate classic CA from CDA in its various manifestations.

Moving on now to the specifics of work on *natural histories of discourse*, MB points out that this ethnographic approach is interested in ‘how discourse becomes text—how it becomes bounded, defined, and movable from one context into another ...’ (Bucholtz 2003, p. 61). This research program is known either as *recontextualization* (Bauman and Briggs 1990) or as *natural histories of discourse* (Silverstein and Urban 1996), the latter term (so MB claims) being less transparent than the former because ‘there is nothing ‘natural’ about how discourse enters into new text formations’ (Bucholtz 2003, p. 61). Work in this tradition focuses on *intertextuality*, in which issues related to quotation, translation and literacy practices and the performance of scripted texts are all central, as are problems of *entextualization*, that is, how, through transcription, spoken texts are transformed into, and represented (or, following Urban 1996, *re-presented*) as written texts for analytic purposes that are extraneous to the communicative purposes of the original producers of the texts. Commenting on this latter issue (which is especially interesting for the purposes of this Handbook), MB says:

Both conversation analysis and text linguistics take as given the notion of an unproblematically bounded text, whether spoken or written; investigations of natural histories of discourse instead take the formation of a ‘text’ as an autonomous object (entextualization) and its mobility across contexts (recontextualization) as the central questions. (Bucholtz 2003, p. 61)

I largely accept MB’s claim that CA researchers do not worry unduly about what the boundaries of a text might be, although I would claim that CA’s position on these matters is actually more nuanced than MB makes them out to be (an issue to which I return shortly). For the moment, let me say that the same kind of criticism might also be made of the Cognitive Interactionist Tradition and (some versions of) the Sociocultural Theory Tradition. Thus, in *all* of these Traditions, audio or video recordings are made and subsequently transcribed, and these artifacts are then treated as relatively objective samples of the phenomena under study.

As is immediately apparent from even a cursory examination, there is great deal of variation in how detailed the transcripts in the various Traditions represented in this Handbook are. And this is a crucial point for present purposes. At one end of a granularity continuum, talk in the Cognitive–Interactionist Tradition is transcribed to a *words only* standard (see the four chapters that constitute this Tradition in this book). At the other end of this spectrum, talk in the Conversation Analysis Tradition is transcribed to a *transcribe everything that you can hear* (and, increasingly, *see*) standard.³ In addition, some transcription systems are used in conjunction with more or less elaborate coding schemes (see Frederiksen and Donin, this volume).

There is an extensive literature on transcription. A selective bibliography on this topic includes Edwards (2001) and Edwards and Lampert (1993), who provide general discussions of transcription and coding issues. McNeill (2005) includes a lengthy appendix that discuss the transcription system and coding procedures that he has devised to do sociocultural research on gesture. Bull (1988) discusses psychological approaches to transcription. Kelly and Local (1988) are concerned with developing techniques that enable the transcription of phonetic elements in conversation. The transcription conventions developed by Gail Jefferson and Charles Goodwin are foundational to the practice of CA, and indeed in other disciplines such as (applied) linguistics, education, psychology and anthropology that have all been significantly influenced by CA (see Jefferson 1979, 1983, 1984, 1988, 2004 for transcription of verbal behavior, supplemented by Charles Goodwin's evolving work on how to transcribe eye-gaze, gesture and other forms of embodiment in multidimensional CA: see Goodwin 1979, 1997, 2013).

In addition, Ochs (1979) made the point very early on that transcription is a preliminary way of theorizing the issues that researchers wish to investigate and that transcripts reflect transcribers' conscious (and sometimes unconscious) political stances vis-à-vis the materials, events and participants whose talk they are transcribing. These issues are further taken up by Green, Franquiz and Dixon (1997) and Roberts (1997) and by the ethnographer Urban (1996) whose work on an Amazonian ethnic group uses a *natural histories of discourse* methodology to show that transcripts of the 'same' mythological and historical materials transcribed by different individuals are shaped by: 1) different, culturally framed metadiscourses of knowledge and power about the content of the recordings; and 2) by the different roles and social relationships that exist between the person whose talk is being recorded/transcribed and the person who is doing the recording/transcription.

I will not review this literature in any more detail here. Suffice it to say that transcription is a fiendishly difficult thing to do well, not least because *any* research program that uses recorded data of allegedly naturally occurring talk has to wrestle with the observer's paradox (Labov *et al.* 1968), which states that people who are aware of being recorded may (or may not) change how they behave in ways that potentially transform naturally occurring talk into something else. And as Labov himself has suggested, we can never definitively *solve* this paradox, we can only *approximate* solutions to this conundrum, and this is true whatever our ontological perspectives and epistemological preferences might be.

Going beyond the observer's paradox, and returning to MB's comments about the objective status of texts in CA and issues of entextualization, the questions of whether transcripts can ever be self-sufficient records of face-to-face interaction or whether this entextualization process has to be supplemented by other forms of ethnographic data emerge as key objects of inquiry. I thank MB for highlighting these issues, as this keeps conversation analysts honest about matters that we rarely discuss among ourselves (at least, not in these terms). As the paper by Urban (1996) compellingly shows, understanding how researchers entextualize raw data goes to the heart of the CA enterprise: indeed, his work raises fundamental questions about whether transcriptions of the same event by

different people can ever be comparable or trustworthy. I would add that the trend in CA and other disciplines to rely on ever more multimodal transcripts of interaction opens up new dimensions to this debate.

However, in defense of CA, let me point out that, first, transcripts are detailed representations of sequential contexts to which participants observably orient. As Fragment 1 in Markee and Kunitz (this volume) demonstrates, transcripts-as-contextual-representations are not static reifications of oral interaction: they are often retranscribed many times. In this sense, transcripts are never finished. And second, data sessions (informal meetings of established CA researchers and graduate students, in which participants bring recordings and transcripts to the table for group discussion) are centrally concerned with establishing the trustworthiness of different transcriptions. More specifically, the first item of business in data sessions is usually a group critique of the accuracy of original transcripts.

3.2 *Understanding context*

Throughout this chapter, I have issued several promissory notes to the effect that I would explain different ways of understanding context, and now is the time to redeem these notes. I do this by drawing on foundational work by Goodwin and Duranti (1992) (henceforward G and D) and Richard Young (henceforth RY) (see Young 2008, pp. 169–173 and, especially, Young 2009, Chapters 2–6).⁴ In order to round out RY's account of the CA position on context, I will also discuss a set of crucial references on context by Schegloff which were not included in RY's overview in the two books I have cited. My reasons for organizing this section in this way are simple. First, the chapter by G and D is seminal to developing a nuanced understanding of the complexity of context. Second, RY—whose work is arguably the most sustained treatment of context in the sub-areas of applied linguistics in which we both work—also uses G and D as his point of departure. This common theoretical grounding provides a useful basis for comparing and contrasting RY's *critical ethnographic* understanding of context with a *conversation analytic* perspective on this construct. Third, since RY has already summarized G and D very efficiently, my own summary of G and D's chapter need not be as detailed as RY's. Fourth, RY's ethnographic understanding of context reflects the majority view of how context is viewed in applied linguistics.⁵ And fifth, while this majoritarian perspective on context is unlikely to be dethroned by a CA understanding of context any time soon, there is a good reason why readers of a book on classroom discourse and interaction need to *understand*—even if they ultimately end up *fundamentally disagreeing with*—the strangely subversive details of why, and how, conversation analysts insist on constructing context as a local, sequential phenomenon. Specifically, as I have already claimed several times in this chapter, this Handbook *is suffused throughout with issues of context*. So, understanding context in all its richness is crucial to understanding how classroom discourse and interaction work.

In Young (2008), RY suggests that his understanding of the construct of *interactional competence* (IC) expands on Hymesian notions of *communicative competence* (Hymes 1971), in that it is crucially concerned with specifying the interplay among identity-related, linguistic and interactional resources. This last category subsumes the sequential organization of speech acts, the turn-taking and repair organizations to which participants orient, and what RY calls the boundaries of interactional practices such as opening and closing sequences. For me, these latter practices are subsumed under sequence organization, but I agree with RY on the essentials. In Young (2011), RY outlines an agenda for future research on IC, which includes: adopting a multimodal perspective on interaction; investigating how participants' shared mental contexts are constructed through

collaborative interaction; and how the pragmatics of interaction are related to social context. Again, I agree with RY on all of these points, provided that there is a clarification of what is meant by social context.

So, what *is* context, or better, how can we *think about* context? RY states: ‘The context of an interaction includes the social, institutional, political, and historical circumstances that extend beyond the horizon of a single interaction’ (Young 2011, p. 440). RY’s definition of context would seem to include potentially any state of affairs surrounding an interaction. As such, this definition may well be too broad to usefully advance our discussion of the concept. A more nuanced treatment of context is offered by G and D, who argue that ‘... it does not seem possible at the present time to give a single, precise definition of context, and eventually we might have to accept that such a position may not be possible’ (p. 2). In other words, just as DA is difficult if not impossible to define, so is context. G and D go on to list four dimensions of context that may potentially be taken into account in discussions of this construct. These are: 1) *setting* (or the social and spatial boundaries of an environment); 2) *behavioral environment* (the ways in which participants use their bodies as resources for doing talk); 3) *language as context* (the ways in which talk reflexively invokes and provides context for other talk); and 4) *extrasituational context*, which concerns how exogenous, talk-external cultural artifacts in the environment, and/or background ethnographic knowledge, are a) either talked into relevance by participants; or b) are necessary for understanding what participants are saying.

Next, G and D discuss a distinction between the larger context of talk and the focal events with which participants are concerned in talk. According to this distinction, context is understood in terms of *perceptual salience*, in which a focal event and surrounding context are in a *figure-ground* relationship. There are three distinct ways of invoking such a relationship. First, researchers may focus on the figure and ignore the ground. Second, they may extract the focal event from its context. Or third, they may restrict their analysis to the level of the sentence. Note that much of MB’s previously summarized discussion of different forms of DA is essentially an evaluation of the pros and cons of each option.

Next, G and D identify eight research frameworks that have different takes on context. These include: 1) ethnographic and 2) philosophical precursors of the notion of language as action (based on the work of Malinowski, Wittgenstein and their successors); 3) the sociocultural work of Lev Vygotsky and the Bakhtin Circle; 4) the human interaction tradition, represented by (among others) the Goodwins’ contribution to Duranti and Goodwin (1992); 5) the Hymesian ethnography of communication tradition; 6) EM, including Cicourel’s cognitive sociology approach; 7) CA; and 8) Foucault’s work in cultural studies.

Again, I will not go into detail explaining the similarities and differences among these traditions, since MB’s piece has already covered much of this ground (as does RY’s extensive summary of these issues), and the contributors to this Handbook do an excellent job of situating their work within many of these frameworks. The main points I want to reiterate here are these: 1) there is no single tradition identified by G and D that has a theoretical monopoly on context; 2) the rationale for choosing one or related positions on context over others is heavily influenced by our intellectual training, theoretical ontologies and epistemologies; and 3), as pointed out by MB, different programmatic agendas require different forms of analysis.

This being said, it is now time—finally—to outline the details of CA’s critique of ethnography and CDA. I begin with a general critique of self-report data, and then move on to Schegloff’s more specific criticisms of critical ethnographic approaches to interaction, which he has articulated in the following publications: Schegloff (1987, 1991, 1992a, 1992b, 1997, 1998, 1999a, 1999b). The last four papers are part of the Schegloff/Wetherell/Billig controversy that I have already referred to; the relevant responses by Wetherell and Billig are

Wetherell (1998) and Billig (1999a, 1999b). Schegloff (1999c) refers more tangentially to these issues, and Schegloff (2009) is his most recent explicit foray into these matters (see also Markee 2013).

CA is a behavioral discipline that relies on directly observable behavior as the touchstone for analysis. Consequently, any use of *secondary self-report data* to supplement our understanding of these *primary* data is suspect. This type of criticism is perhaps unexpected, coming as it does from a *qualitative*, not *quantitative*, perspective on interaction. But this CA criticism of ethnography actually makes perfect sense. How or why are secondary data (typically gathered through the use of post hoc think-aloud protocols that are often used as important resources for ethnographic triangulation) *in principle* more useful to analysts than primary data? This question is crucially important when we consider that: 1) the micro-phenomena that CA deals with are not easily amenable to subsequent recall by participants, who most likely never noticed them when they produced them in the first place; and 2) there is often an important time lag between a phenomenon's first production and later think-aloud sessions. Under such circumstances, the trustworthiness of secondary data becomes more and more compromised as participants' recollections of events become vaguer and/or more subject to self-serving rationalization. Indeed, in worst case scenarios, such as the one documented by Young (2009, p. 83), participants' recollections of their own behavior are flatly contradicted by observations of their actual behavior. In which case, the obvious question to ask is (and this is the gist of my answer to Urban's 1996 use of metadiscourse to understand transcripts more effectively): why bother using secondary data in the first place if they are so inherently flawed? Now, of course, ethnographers are perfectly aware of these criticisms, and their answer to this question is to develop even more sensitive triangulation procedures than they already use. But the bald CA response to this solution is that it simply does not address the inherent weakness of self-report data.

Moving on now to Schegloff's various publications on context, Schegloff develops a series of interlocking themes that he revisits on multiple occasions, and which he typically illustrates with extended empirical analyses of talk in each iteration of these arguments. These themes may be framed as the following questions: is the relevance of external, ethnographic, sociopolitical context something that can be unproblematically assumed a priori, or is it something that needs to be demonstrated as an empirical project in terms of how internal, sequential notions of context work on a moment-by-moment basis? Relatedly, if we choose the second option, how is the *conditional relevance* of different kinds of context to be determined, how *procedurally consequential* to the interaction is a particular type of contextual information, and what are the *consequences* (in terms of important analytic payoffs) of the choices that we make?

The answer to the first question throughout Schegloff's writings is that the relevance of external, ethnographic, and sociopolitical context must be empirically demonstrated in terms of *participants' observable, real time, there and then orientations to such matters in the talk that they themselves produce*. If such an orientation is observably present in the participants' talk, then analysts have a *prima facie* warrant for treating whatever elements of external context (including speakers' gender, age and identity or identities, among other possibilities) to which the participants orient. But not otherwise.

This is what is meant by the *conditional relevance* requirement mentioned in the second question, and the way in which conditionally relevant analyses of talk are developed in CA is by carrying out detailed sequential analyses of the speech exchange system(s) that participants observably deploy in any given stretch of talk. This requirement is particularly important in analyses of ordinary conversation, which is the benchmark for comparison when doing work on institutional talk. But even in institutional CA, where some relaxation of this requirement *may at times* be useful (see Maynard, 2003), the default position is to

avoid relying on a priori 'bucket theories of context' (Drew and Heritage 1992, p. 19) and to ground analysis in the conditionally relevant details of unfolding talk (see also Kasper 2009, who makes the same point).

Note further that when, for example, a SL speaker in an ESL class orients to biographical details about her L1 identity, the conditional relevance of this information also has to be shown to be *procedurally relevant* to the way in which the *sequential organization* of the interaction in which this piece of information is revealed actually unfolds. So, in Excerpt 2.1 of Markee (1994, 2000, p. 27), I show that L10's orientation to the fact that she is a native speaker of Mandarin Chinese is *procedurally relevant* to the interaction in a number of different ways. First, she translates the word *coral* into Chinese for L11, thus observably categorizing L11 as another speaker of Mandarin. Second, L10's use of this translation method for L11's benefit excludes L9, who, when she asks the two Chinese speakers to translate what they are saying back into English, observably demonstrates that she does not understand Chinese. And third, L10 and L11 observably orient to this problem when they duly oblige L9 by saying *coral* in next turn.

In a longitudinal study of classroom and office hour interactions (Markee 2011), I show how a student's avoidance of the word *prerequisites* can be demonstrated through the use of CA techniques independently of the fact that ethnographic evidence that speaks to this issue is also available (this evidence takes the form of a written self-evaluation measure developed by the teacher on the quality of a classroom presentation this student had done. On this self-evaluation, she identifies *prerequisites* as a problem word). My analysis shows how the participants talk this artifact into relevance, manipulate it, and ultimately *physically change it in and through their talk*. It also shows how they orient to different interactional agendas in their office hour talk. The teacher tries to use the evidence from the self-evaluation and from the learner's talk during the office hour as a pronunciation teaching moment. In contrast, the student resists this pedagogical agenda and attempts to establish her status as a conscientious student. Interestingly, in the course of working through these issues, the student never produces the word *prerequisites*, thus providing further CA-based evidence that she is still engaging in avoidance.

These findings show how local agendas structure talk in procedurally consequent ways that would not *necessarily* become evident from an ethnographic analysis of these data (a point also made by Maynard 2003). But Schegloff ultimately goes much further than this when he claims that using CA provides greater *analytic payoffs* than CDA does. Let us now see how Schegloff makes this and other related arguments. Since I have already alluded to what Schegloff (2009) has to say about feminist CA in this paper, I will not refer to it again. I now provide a chronologically organized account of how Schegloff has developed his position on context, in which the question of gender always figures prominently.

Schegloff (1987) is the first paper that provides an overview of the CA position on context, which is that CA accounts of interaction are simultaneously—and without contradiction—context-free (of macro context) and context-dependent (on the micro, sequential details of talk). To illustrate these points, he reviews empirical CA work on: 1) cross-cultural linguistic variation in Thailand, Tuvalu, and Guatemala (see pp. 209–214); 2) interruptions by males in male-female talk in the US (pp. 214–218); and 3) context in general (pp. 218–228). The first theme demonstrates the cross-cultural, methodological robustness of the category of repair as a resource for explicating variation. The second theme does the same thing for the viability of turn taking as a participant's account of interruption behaviors. The third theme discusses the specifics of how different speech exchange systems—specifically, ordinary conversation, which is locally organized, and institutional speech exchange systems such as classroom talk and presidential conferences, in which opportunities for turn taking are pre-allocated—provide grounded explanations of how unequal power relationships work in real time.

Importantly, none of these analyses rely on broader ethnographic notions of context. Now, a simplistic acceptance of Schegloff's position would have a direct, cataclysmic effect on the viability of important, nuanced research programs in at least three of the Traditions exemplified in this Handbook (see, for example, Collin and Apple; Lee and Bucholtz; Martin-Jones, this volume). This result would be a severe blow to the diversity and richness of classroom research, and would, for this reason alone, be an unacceptable consequence of adopting the Schegloffian position on context uncritically. As we will see shortly, Schegloff (1997) is perfectly aware of this problem, and proposes that a bridge—admittedly a narrow bridge that will still not be to the liking of most critical discourse analysts—does exist, which may provide a means of overcoming the interesting problems posed by the ethnographic project of making connections across different layers of micro and macro context.

The next two papers (Schegloff 1991, 1992a) are slightly different versions of the same text. These papers are the first to be organized around the themes of the conditional relevance and procedural consequentiality of talk. And (most importantly for our purposes), they are also the first to lay out the details of the argument that the premature invocation of larger social context has the effect of absorbing and naturalizing various details of the talk, which results in data loss and compromises the quality of analyses of interactional data (see Schegloff 1991, pp. 58, 59, and 63). Notice that this is a CA version of the kinds of arguments that MB used in her critique of more overtly political forms of CDA. So, a key issue that readers of this Handbook have to resolve for themselves is to decide which version of these arguments they find more persuasive.

The next paper (Schegloff 1992b) returns to the theme that context is fundamentally a *participant's* category. And in the empirical section of the paper (pp. 199–222), he shows that how a participant exits from a conversation is best explained in terms of the technical organization of the storytelling event that is the focus of this analysis. This analysis builds on and expands the original conversation analysis of a data set first examined by Goodwin (1987).

Importantly, Schegloff (1992b) introduces the notion of *multiple layers* of analysis, a theme that Schegloff (1997) develops further in novel ways. More specifically, Schegloff begins with a detailed empirical comparison of competing CA and CDA accounts of how gender may (or may not) be implicated a priori in interruptions that occur in male/female talk (pp. 171–180). CDA does not come out well from this comparison, for the same kinds of reasons discussed in the previous papers. But Schegloff does suggest that one way of bridging the gap between CA and CDA would be for critical discourse analysts to ground their work on, say, gender, in preliminary technical CA analyses of data, which they could then supplement with subsequent layers of ethnographic and/or politically-grounded analyses, thus avoiding the loss of data problem identified in the Schegloff (1991 and 1992a) papers.

In her response to Schegloff's suggestion, Wetherell (1998) acknowledges the power of CA's *technical* analyses of potentially gendered talk. However, she rejects the primacy of such analyses and, invoking some post-structural arguments that need not concern us here, argues that *scholarly* (i.e., critical) analyses must have equal status and are essential to developing a full understanding of gendered interaction. And she further points out that if CDA were to accept Schegloff's recommendation, critical discourse analysts would likely never get to talk about the critical issues that *they* wanted to talk about.

There is a good deal of truth in Wetherell's riposte on this matter (note: this is the same kind of argument developed earlier by MB). Interestingly, however, Wetherell: 1) brings interactional data that are transcribed according to CA conventions to this discussion; 2) skillfully uses CA to analyze these data; and 3) supplements these technical analyses with critical ethnographic analyses as part of a larger research project. So, it seems that Wetherell is conceding to some extent that Schegloff's proposals for a *technical analysis* first, *scholarly analysis* second approach to CDA are not, in principle, impossible to implement.

The debate between Schegloff and Wetherell has another dimension to it, specifically, a flurry of further exchanges between Billig (1999a), Schegloff (1999a), Billig (1999b) and Schegloff (1999b). Most of these exchanges are more philosophical in tone, which need not concern us here. However, a *hypothetically* based assumption by Billig (1999a, pp. 555–556) about how CA researchers would deal with the politically and emotionally charged issue of rape drew an illuminating reply from Schegloff (1999a). And this exchange *is* of interest to readers of this Handbook who may be concerned about CA's ability to engage meaningfully with important moral or political issues.

Summarizing Billig's contention that it would be ludicrous and outrageous to examine rape and other crimes against women in terms of turn taking, adjacency pairs, repair, etc., and that, in any case, no conversation analyst, in common with other right-thinking people, would ever do such a thing, Schegloff counters that this is *exactly* what a conversation analyst would do 'if we were confronting an *instance* of an interaction in which such conduct featured, [and that] it is far from obvious that such an interaction would be irrelevant and distracting' (Schegloff 1999a, p. 561; emphasis in the original).

A key issue in this exchange is that Billig invokes a *hypothetical* instance of rape, while Schegloff insists on dealing with *actual instances* of this phenomenon. This example underlines the crucial importance of using empirical rather than made up data in CA. But more importantly, it also illuminates how technical analyses of CA can contribute in powerful ways to larger societal debates concerning rape by laying out the empirical ground of how rape unfolds in and through talk, and how this basic science may subsequently be used *to develop effective interventions that prevent such behavior* (see Schegloff 1999a, pp. 561–562).

Finally, let me end this section by using the final paragraph of Schegloff (1999c) as a quotation that provides a pithy (though not definitive) alternative to the position articulated by Young (2011, p. 440). More specifically, Schegloff rhetorically asks:

What then, makes us one species? Anything? Just our anatomy and physiology? Is *everything* else the product of the Tower of Babel, for better or for worse? Is there nothing which transcends the heterogeneities of culture, language, ethnicity, race, gender, class, nationality, and so on? Is it not, in the end, the formal organizations of interactional practice—conversation preeminent among them—which provide the armature of sociality which undergirds our common humanity? (Schegloff 1999c, p. 427; emphasis in the original)

4. Conclusion

In this introduction, I have invoked a discourse of comparative, cross-disciplinary dialog to explain the rationale for this Handbook, explain its organization, and reflect on the kinds of insights into classroom discourse and interaction that such an organization yields. More specifically, this book is about how the originally individual cognitive concerns of instructed SLA progressively shade into, and overlap with the social concerns of classroom DA. Speaking to these issues, I have also sought to initiate a larger debate within the educational and applied linguistics communities concerning: 1) what counts as DA and how (in its many manifestations) it is done; and 2) how different kinds of DA conceptualize context. In order to frame this debate, I have discussed the work of Mary Bucholtz and Richard Young extensively to help us understand how and why these two themes are foundational to understanding and evaluating the chapters in this Handbook. This discussion provides a good foundation for situating and understanding the 28 chapters in the body of this Handbook, and for engaging in the ensuing comparative, cross-disciplinary debates on classroom discourse and interaction which will, I hope, be generated by this volume.

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NOTES

- 1 These brief descriptive statistics attest to my *attempt* to broaden the appeal of this book beyond the all too familiar domain of ESL/EFL classrooms. However, I am the first to acknowledge that, from a geographical perspective, the lack of research on what happens in Chinese, Latin American or African classrooms is a glaring omission. Relatedly, feminist perspectives on discourse analysis receive inadequate attention in the body of this volume (but see Appleby; Miller, this volume for passing references to such issues).
- 2 MB (personal communication, August 8, 2014) comments that, from the perspective of a feminist linguist, my account of the CA/CDA debate “feels a bit dated now,” but also accepts that discussions such as the Schegloff/Wetherell/Billig debate have a different theoretical status in different disciplines. I accept that feminist linguistics has moved on since 2003, but the larger discussion concerning the proper boundaries of context in (critical) ethnography and CA, and how such issues are understood in education and applied linguistics, is not, to my mind, affected by such changes.
- 3 See the appendix at the end of this Handbook, which sets out the transcription conventions used in CA. This appendix also contains a slightly different set of conventions used by other contributors to this volume.
- 4 RY (personal communication, August 10, 2014) comments that he is more sympathetic with Schegloff’s position than with those of Wetherell and Billig, and counters that I have under-represented his position in a number of ways, especially regarding: 1) “history-in-person processes” (which, he points out, he grounds in the work of Bourdieu, de Certeau, Foucault, and Goffman rather than Hymes), and 2) Urban’s work on entextualization/re-textualization, which I apparently misunderstand (see Young 2009, 2010 for more details). Entextualization is a theme that has assumed a particular importance in RY’s most recent unpublished writings.
- 5 Communicative language teaching (CLT) was (especially in its early days) essentially a pedagogical application of Hymes’ (1971) ideas about communicative competence. These antecedents are crucial, in that Hymes was one of the founders of the ethnography of communication. Now, task-based language teaching (the latest incarnation of CLT) has been heavily influenced by more cognitive issues: see the four chapters in the Cognitive–Interactionist Tradition; this Tradition is the one that is least inclined to invoke context in its analyses. However, when researchers in this Tradition *do* invoke context, typically as an intervening variable that mediates access to getting comprehensible input (see Mackey 2014; Philp & Mackey 2010), the kind of context they invoke is invariably ethnographic.

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