

CHAPTER TEN

Conversation Analysis and Language/Literacy Teacher Identity Construction in Interviews

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Conversation Analysis (CA) emerged from the focus of ethnomethodology on order in the everyday and the assertion that society's members, through their actions and talk, establish the everyday patterns that make up social order. Garfinkel's (1967) research on the taken-for-granted aspects of day-to-day interactions became the basis of ethnomethodology and introduced a new branch of social inquiry (ten Have, 2004). Previous sociological research had primarily focused on explaining social facts; ethnomethodology worked to examine *how* specific ideas and beliefs were constructed as facts. Additionally, it argued that individuals have agency in how they participate in and help to shape their environments (Maynard and Clayman, 1991). ten Have (1986) highlights the continual engagement of people in establishing what can be *assumed to exist* and in doing so, they connect what they notice with their *stock of knowledge*. To Garfinkel (1986), social order was based on individuals' membership and competency in specific societal contexts through which they help maintain orderly social exchanges by operating in appropriate ways in particular settings.

Ethnomethodology considers how society works; CA "is about how conversation works" (Sacks, 1984, p. 26). CA examines the creation and maintenance of various aspects of social order through the organization of talk (Sidnell, 2010; ten Have, 2004). CA seeks "to explicate the ways in which [conversations] are produced by members in orderly ways that exhibit their orderliness and have their orderliness appreciated and used, and have that appreciation displayed and treated as the basis for subsequent action" (Sacks and Schegloff, 1973, p. 290). Conversation analysts examine how conversations follow consistent rules that participants generally use and may be aware of, and how one individual's use of rules-in-talk reflects and influences others' acknowledgements of the shared sets of rules. The conversation itself thus cannot be viewed as disembodied from speech conventions, but can only be understood as part of a continuum of speech events and social patterns in which it is embedded. The conversation analyst must assume that each individual conversation adheres to the conventions of the speech genres and social languages that serve as the intertextual body of communication from which it emerges. Invoking the wrong set of conventions is thus likely to lead the conversation analyst to infer inappropriate understandings of verbal exchanges.

CA most commonly focuses on spontaneously occurring talk. Many conversation analysts argue that formalized talk (e.g., interviews) does not provide the same series of interactions and patterns, and therefore not the same information. However, other researchers have argued that formalized conversations also have modes of order and meaning that are amenable to analysis, leading conversation analysts to examine talk in institutional settings, such as classrooms, doctor's offices, and courtrooms (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984) and in research interviews (e.g., Baker, 1997a; Rapley, 2012; Roulston, 2006), under the assumption that they fit within broader speech genres that enable the analyst to infer meaning based on inflections, pauses, turn-taking, and other recurring features of conversations that follow features of conversations within these settings.

Common Concerns about CA

CA's procedures have been met with skepticism from researchers who find its isolation of specific conversational excerpts from other speech events to rely on autonomous notions of speech. In this section we review three concerns about CA's tenets and how CA researchers have addressed them. First, one of the most common concerns with CA is that many analysts provide transcription excerpts out of context (ten Have, 1986). CA architect Sacks (1984) asserted that CA should focus only on the information that a transcription provided, insisting that it is not the source of the talk itself that matters as much as what might be learned from the talk. Analysts should approach "conversation in an unmotivated way" (Sacks, 1984, p. 27) that does not rely on context, and in doing so, researchers might note language conventions consistent or in conflict with others' analyses on similar topics or types of talk, even as intertextual factors such as the patterns of speech genres and social languages are central to inference-making.

The belief that conversations' contexts should not pre-formulate findings is not a wholesale rejection of context's relevancy. Sacks, et al. (1978) wrote that terminology in talk is often context-sensitive, and ten Have (1986) claimed that although many aspects of talk are "quite general," talk is always a "fine-tuned adaptation to local circumstances" (n. p.). There are occasions when removing talk from a particular context changes its meaning and researchers' understandings. There are also instances in which analysts require a specific context for their purpose. For example, Stokoe and Speer (2011) identify themselves as feminist conversation analysts, and therefore, select talk during which people discuss gendered issues. Stokoe (2010), for example, contextualized the setting (a police station) and speakers (police officers and men arrested for assaulting women) prior to CA, so that the speakers' roles and purposes for speaking were clear. Thus, while CA researchers at times omit context because they intend to demonstrate talk conventions as consistent across interactions, even the founders of CA acknowledged that context is important, and at times essential to the point that many present day applications of CA, especially EM-based analyses, contextualize transcripts as a necessary part of analysis.

Second, some argue that CA is ideologically neutral (Schegloff, 1997). CA "does not set out to prove this or that theory" (Sidnell, 2010, p. 28), and this atheoretical premise has left many analysts approaching verbal interactions as if they have no societal or epistemological underpinnings. Researchers often limit themselves to decontextualized talk excerpts, without asserting a theoretical perspective as most social science researchers feel obligated to do. Presumably, CA's avoidance of *a priori* interpretations prevents researchers from imposing external theoretical frameworks on an analysis. However, many contemporary CA researchers reject this axiom. Billig (1999) explicitly countered Schegloff's (1997) claims, pointing out that ideology was unquestionably present when researchers selected passages and determined what CA concepts they would examine. Billig and others have carefully examined the ideologies shaping CA and have soundly rejected claims of neutrality (e.g. Sidnell, 2010; Speer and Stokoe, 2011; Roulston, 2006). However, while a number of analysts reject ideological neutrality, it is important to note that even when adopting a specific theoretical perspective, CA must always limit itself to *what is available in the talk*. Present day applications of CA reject historic claims of ideological neutrality, even as they are consistent with CA's historical project of focusing only on transcription analysis.

Third, ten Have (1986) noted that CA researchers' interpretation of participants' utterances seemed to extend beyond what transcriptions provided. In a sense, conversation analysts seem to read their participants' minds at times: to infer what participants meant or

intended through their talk and interactions. Atkinson and Heritage (1984) noted that CA researchers' "understandings, and negotiations about understanding... are not to be seen as an unproblematic window on co-participants' minds" (p. 11). All responsible analysts agree that any examination should be grounded in the transcript and demonstrated conventions of language. However, the latter seems most problematic for CA's critics. Both ten Have (1986) and Atkinson and Heritage (1984) pointed out that one of the reasons that readers may argue that CA is attempting to read speakers' minds is that the conventions of talk that CA focuses on lack materiality and must be documented directly, thus leading to a reliance on inferences about how any instance of talk represents typicality such that conclusions are available regarding the meaning of pauses, emphases, and other features of talk.

CA researchers often rely on previous CA research to understand the ways that talk *typically* works. If, for example, an analyst argued that a speaker's long pause signaled a speaking turn's end (Sidnell, 2010), the researcher is not claiming to know that the speaker intended to end her turn. Rather, the researcher draws on previous CA research, which has demonstrated that *in most cases of this type*, a long pause in a conversation signals an end to a turn, with a new speaker taking up the talk following the pause. CA is not interested in the *why*, such as why a speaker paused, but in the *how*, such as how speakers navigate turn-taking in a conversation. Knowing *why* requires mind-reading; knowing *how* can be documented analytically.

CA in Language and Literacy Education Research

CA researchers have examined talk within settings and talk related to educational practices, such as interviews (e.g. Baker, 1997b; Emanuelsson and Sahlström, 2008; Mehan, 1991; Roulston, 2001). Baker, for example, examined the ways that teacher-student interactions established the taken-for-granted social order and power differential in classrooms, based on ways that teachers and students shared speaking time and turn-taking. Roulston (2001) realized through her application of CA that she, as the interviewer and a former teacher, was influencing her teacher interviewees far more than she had initially appreciated. By sympathetically and readily responding to participants' negative teaching experience descriptions, she had inadvertently encouraged them to provide more detailed descriptions of negative experiences than of positive ones.

Despite CA's contributions to education research, however, there are few studies focusing specifically on language and literacy education. There are a small number of studies focusing on English language learners (ELL) and their teachers (e.g. Crozet and Liddicoat, 1997; Hellerman, 2006; Waring, 2012), which are important in examining how teachers' and students' contributions directly affect students' language acquisition through classroom talk. Waring discussed the potentially negative impacts that ELL teachers' *yes-no* questions had on students' learning, peer interactions, and academic engagement in class. CA research on language learners potentially makes an important contribution to language and literacy education, but few studies specifically focused on talk in language arts classrooms and in teacher education (yet see Anglin and Smagorinsky, 2014; Cristoph and Nystrand, 2001; Juzwik, et al., 2008; Leander and Prior, 2003; Marshall, et al., 1995; Nystrand, 1997; Smagorinsky, Cameron, and O'Donnell-Allen, 2007; Smagorinsky and Fly, 1993; Smagorinsky and O'Donnell-Allen, 1998). Of those that exist, even fewer use CA as an analytic method. Given that talk structures language and literacy

classrooms, often in typical ways, CA could serve as an important method in this field of research.

CA and Language Teacher Identity

CA is occasionally employed to consider the ways that talk influences teacher preparation and teacher mentoring (e.g. Rivers, 1989). We next demonstrate the ways that CA permits an examination of two pre-service English Education teachers' identity constructions during a focus group interview. Sacks (1992) discussed the various ways that speakers formulate identities through their talk and interaction. Our analysis is based on an ongoing longitudinal study drawing from unstructured biweekly focus group interviews with 17 undergraduate secondary English Education teachers. Because of the detailed nature of CA transcripts, we have selected one interview excerpt to illustrate the mechanics of CA. CA relies on detailed transcription conventions developed by Jefferson (1984), provided in the chart below.

Conversation Analysis Transcription Key	
?	Interrogative tone
(2.0)	Pause timed in seconds
(.)	Small untimed pause
We::ll	Prolonged syllable or sound
<u>Why</u>	Emphasis or stressed word or syllable
Yes	Words spoken with noticeable emphasis (stronger than underlined words)
<I have to go>	Words spoken noticeably faster than surrounding talk
>I have to go<	Words spoken noticeably slower than surrounding talk
°yes°	Word(s) spoken noticeably softer than surrounding talk
hhh.	Out-breath
.hhh	Intake of breath
↑	Upward rise in intonation
↓	Downward fall in intonation
=	Latching: There is no pause, or there is overlap, between speakers' talk

We use these conventions in conjunction with Pomerantz and Fehr's (2002) analytic procedures. Just as there is no one way to apply CA, there is no one application of Pomerantz and Fehr's approach. Though we discuss these procedural steps as a linear process for the sake of clarity, the steps are often undertaken recursively. There are times when researchers will find that their transcripts necessitate skipping, combining, and/or repeating steps, for example.

Steps in Conversation Analysis

We next review the sequence of processes involved in conducting a conversation analysis. These steps include selecting a sequence, characterizing the actions in the sequence, considering the speakers' packaging of actions, coding for timing and turn-taking, and making inferences about the participants' identities and relationships.

Step 1: Select a sequence

Pomerantz and Fehr's (2002) first step is to select a sequence, or excerpt, from a transcript. Sacks (1984) argued that CA is "not [about] any particular conversation," and that there "is not any particular conversation, as an object, that we are primarily interested in" (p. 26), maintaining that his data selection was not agenda-driven, instead being an "unmotivated examination of some piece of data" (p. 27). The study from which we took the excerpt focuses on preservice English/Language Arts (ELA) teachers' efforts to determine the best way to approach a literary unit on the *the American Dream*, constructed in these discussions as the belief that diligence and dedication earn people monetary and social rewards. The excerpt's speakers represented the majority of the cohort: self-identified middle class White women. The first author attended and often participated in the group discussions. As she had both taught the participants in their program and had discussed her subjectivities as a White researcher who had grown up in poverty with the participants during recruitment, she was aware that her presence affected interactions. For example, because they perceived her as an authority figure on both socioeconomic class and education issues, participants often oriented their talk to her or worked to incorporate her terminology in their speech. Our belief that context shapes social interaction framed our use of CA as replete with ideological dimensions.

Carmen and Miranda participated in a pre-service teacher focus group discussion on the American Dream and socioeconomic status (All names are pseudonyms chosen by the participants). During the discussion, most participants struggled to reconcile their belief in the concept that hard work would be rewarded and the research that reflected the difficulty of escaping poverty, no matter how serious is one's work ethic or effort. Lillian's contribution in the excerpt below captured the conflict, while Miranda's response reflected the group's adopted stance on the subject. The following exchange serves as the basis for our illustration of procedures for conducting CA, with this selection chosen as representative of a fundamental tension experienced by the focus group participants in shifting to identities as teachers who mindfully approached the American Dream in relation to socioeconomic oppression:

Carmen:

- 1 So::o, I have to do the whole (.) American Dream↓ unit thing↑ soon.
- 2 Part of high school English huh? And my mentor ↑loves this stuff↓
- 3 hhh. Bu::t I look at my kids in my classroom? (1.0)
- 4 It's a **big freaking deal** if they get a new jacket
- 5 and then I'm gonna tell them
- 6 "Read these po↑ems↓ and let's talk about pulling↑ ourselves up↑ by the bootstraps↓ and junk?" (2.0)
- 7 I'd roll my eyes with them↑ (1.0)
- 8 >But (1.0) I mean, working hard **does** matter, right?<?
- 9 <You don't become un-poor by being la↑zy↓> (.)
- 10 But how many people really get ↑un-poor↓ by working hard either?
- 11 And then I look at me and (.) I've never been poor (.)
- 12 I mean (.) I know what it's like to not be ri↑ch or get all you des↓erve↓ bu::ut
- 13 who am **I** to try to deal with **this**, you know? =

Miranda:

- 12 =<I totally understand>
- 13 Like I think about how I went to a private school and everything (.)
- 14 My students don't have **anything**, I mean nothing
- 15 I have to loan them pencils and everything, right?

16 But we do have to teach this stuff to them because it's on the stupid test
 17 And for me I think I'm looking for a way to balance teaching and preaching
 18 Like how do I how them I get that these readings are nonsense
 19 Without needing to identify with them?
 20 I mean my life isn't their life you know?
 21 But I don't have to be like them to teach them to pass the test (.) critique these
 readings (.) and um (.) understand that their lives have value

Step 2: Characterize the actions in the sequence

Given that CA is concerned with what gets done in and through talk, “[a]ctions are central to the ways that participants, themselves, produce and understand conduct; they are a fundamental part of the meaningfulness of conduct” (Pomerantz and Fehr, 2002, p. 72). In working to characterize actions, the researcher must ask, “What is the participant doing in this turn?” with the understanding that sometimes there are “several actions being performed within a turn” (p. 72). Examples of actions might include disagreeing, correcting, or telling a story. Importantly, there is no one way to characterize actions, and “these characterizations are provisional” (p. 72), with an analyst potentially needing to change her characterizations of actions as the analysis progresses.

In this sequence Carmen's actions might be summarized as disaffiliative and affiliative. Her first effort was to disaffiliate herself from both the traditional curriculum and her mentor teacher by affiliating the teaching unit with the mentor teacher: “So::o, I have to do the whole (.) American Dream↓ unit thing↑ soon / Part of high school English huh? And my mentor ↑loves this stuff↓ / hhh. Bu::t I look at my kids in my classroom? (1.0) / It's a **big freaking deal** if they get a new jacket (lines 1–4). She first characterized the curriculum as standard and unremarkable, when she remarked to the group that texts on the American Dream were “Part of high school English, huh?” (line 2). This was not a unit plan that she had created; it was one that was a fixture in secondary American literature classrooms. She further dismissed the unit by referring to it as “this stuff” (line 3). As Carmen described the curriculum in a dismissive way, she also aligned her mentor teacher with the problematic lesson content: “my mentor↑ loves this stuff↓” (line 2). Her emphasis of the word “love” in her statement reinforced Carmen's belief that her mentor has a strong appreciation of this particular unit plan.

After Carmen's talk established her sentiments regarding the American Dream unit that she was to teach, she then worked to disaffiliate herself from the content that she felt her mentor appreciated. Following a sigh in line 3, she transitioned to a different position with the word “but,” as is often the case in writing and conversation. But in dragging out the word (“Bu::t”), she arguably emphasized the shift in her position in relation to her mentor's. Following that transition in her talk, Carmen then focused specifically on her students: “I look at my kids in my classroom? (1.0) / It's a **big freaking deal** if they get a new jacket” (lines 3-4). Her emphasis on the phrase “**big freaking deal**” reflects the degree to which something as simple as a jacket matters to her students, thus emphasizing for Carmen why an American Dream unit – collections of literature that suggest that various forms of success, including socioeconomic status and wealth, link directly to an individual's merit – was problematic for her students. As she had already indicated her dismissal of the curriculum's value and established her mentor's appreciation of the unit, her comments in these lines disaffiliated her from her mentor and the literary content Carmen was required to teach.

She continued this disaffiliation with her mentor and the course content by emphasizing an understanding of and affiliation with her students. She told the group, “I’m gonna tell them / “Read these poems↓ and let’s talk about pulling↑ ourselves up↑ by the bootstraps↓ and junk?” / (2.0) I’d roll my eyes with them↑ (1.0)” (lines 5–7). Here, Carmen continued to describe the American Dream unit in dismissive terms, referring to the reading selections as first a non-specific “these poems↓” and then as “junk” (line 6). Though the teacher who mentored her during student teaching appreciated these texts, Carmen’s talk categorized the texts as pointless. In doing so, Carmen worked simultaneously to connect herself to her students: “I’d roll my eyes with them↑” (line 7). She anticipated that her students’ socioeconomic circumstances would result in them dismissing the unit, and identified directly with their assumed sentiments with Carmen claiming that she would express equal frustration with the poems.

Miranda’s response served to indicate that she understood Carmen’s question, to respond to Carmen’s concerns, and to assert a specific position. Characterizing Miranda’s response as one of *understanding*, is based on 1) Miranda’s not using her turn to seek clarification, but instead to immediately pursue Carmen’s question, and 2) Miranda’s referring to issues that closely aligned with Carmen’s, demonstrating that Carmen’s language was familiar to Miranda. Miranda began her turn immediately after Carmen finished, indicated by the latch marks (=) in the transcription. Her immediate uptake of Carmen’s question and the absence of language seeking explanation from Carmen implied an understanding of the topic that Carmen had presented. Miranda also aligned her language to Carmen’s. Carmen referred to “the whole (.) American Dream↓ unit thing↑” (line 1), which might have been a source of confusion for an uninitiated listener. However, Miranda immediately discussed the curriculum in terms similar to Carmen’s, describing the lesson plan as “this stuff” that would appear on “the stupid test” (line 15). Her doing so demonstrated that she knew the term, felt that she understood what Carmen meant as Carmen discussed the unit, and understood how the topic did or did not apply to her.

Another of Miranda’s actions was to answer and support Carmen. Carmen told the group, “I look at me and (.) I’ve never been poor (.) / I mean (.) I know what it’s like to not be ri↑ch or get all you des↓erve↓ bu::ut / who am I to try to deal with **this**, you know?” (lines 11–13), wondering aloud why she, who had never experienced poverty, had the right to discuss with her students why the concept of meritocracy was problematic. Miranda answered Carmen’s question by applying Carmen’s concerns to herself: “=<I totally understand> / Like I think about how I went to a private school and everything (.) / My students don’t have **anything**, I mean nothing / I have to loan them pencils and everything, right?” (lines 12–15). Miranda began by assuring Carmen of her understanding of the conflict, and then elaborated by explaining that she had attended a private school, so presumably had also never experienced poverty, and by assuring Carmen that she also had students who lived in very different circumstances from those that she had personally experienced.

Miranda asserted an affiliation with Carmen, but her talk also demonstrated a departure from Carmen’s concerns. Miranda assured Carmen that she too had wondered, “how do I how them I get that these readings are nonsense / Without needing to identify with them?” (lines 18–19). She, like Carmen had not lived with economic hardships, but unlike Carmen, Miranda did not see a conflict between her socioeconomic privileges and her students’ positions. Miranda concluded her turn by declaring, “But I don’t have to be like them to teach them to pass the test (.) critique these readings (.) and um (.) understand that their lives have value” (line 21). Carmen’s question invited another to propose a resolution, and Miranda provided one based on her personal experiences and understandings of the issue.

Miranda's actions here might be characterized as both an answer and as a personal belief statement of her position as an educator, in relation to this particular curriculum unit. Her response directly addressed the concerns with which Carmen ended, by taking up the terms similar to those Carmen had used (e.g., "teach this stuff," "readings are nonsense") to align her contribution directly with Carmen's. In answering Carmen's question of how Carmen would resolve her personal experiences with her personal convictions as a teacher, Miranda based her response on her assertion that addressing socioeconomic discrimination and the flawed concept of meritocracy, was an activity essential to all teachers who were committed to helping students "pass the test (.) critique these readings (.) and um (.) understand that their lives have value" (line 21). She declared that doing so was open to all, including those who had enjoyed economic privilege like her and Carmen, not just those like her students, who continued to live in poverty and lacked even basic school supplies (line 15, 21). Her expressed commitment to supporting students' critiques of the American Dream in her classroom worked to address Carmen's preceding conflict.

Step 3: Consider the speakers' packaging of actions

Pomerantz and Fehr (2002) point out that there are numerous ways in which speakers might package, or deliver, their actions. It is not that speakers necessarily consciously select particular ways in which they might deliver their actions; talk rarely indicates the ways that speakers intend to deliver their messages. The point is to be aware that even if speakers do not actively consider how they might utter a particular question or response, they still had multiple options from which to choose. Pomerantz and Fehr provide the example of extending a lunch invitation. The speaker's delivery might influence the way the question's recipient responded. Asking someone, "Wouldn't you like to get some lunch?" encourages an affirmative response, while "You've probably already had lunch, huh?" anticipates the invitee being unavailable. A question like "Have you had lunch yet?" would permit the invitee to answer "No" without actually rejecting the speaker, or "Yes" without necessarily accepting the speaker's implied invitation (p. 73). Though the one extending the invitation may not actively consider the different possibilities of packaging the invitation in different ways, CA's focus is on what the packaging accomplishes, as evidenced by the way in which speakers take up one another's turns. Reading the speakers' minds for intentionality, in contrast, is not possible.

CA transcription conventions are often helpful in examining a speaker's packaging, because the detailed information permits considerations of talk typically excluded from transcripts and often from research. One way to analyze packaging is to consider the ways a speaker "refer[s] to other persons" (Pomerantz and Fehr, 2002, p. 73). In the discussion on designing a unit on the American Dream, Carmen's description of her mentor teacher immediately followed her critique of the American Dream unit that she was to implement: "my mentor ↑loves this stuff↓" (line 2). She opened her turn by referring to the curriculum and her mentor in the negative: focusing on the potential irrelevance of the unit plan's focus, her mentor's appreciation for the unit, and the disconnect between the class materials and the students. She continued by emphasizing words that communicated her negative position in relation to the American Dream unit: "hhh. Bu::t I look at my kids in my classroom? (1.0) / It's a **big freaking deal** if they get a new jacket / and then I'm gonna tell them / "Read these po↑ems↓ and let's talk about pulling↑ ourselves up↑ by the bootstraps↓ and junk?" (2.0) / I'd roll my eyes with them↑ (1.0)" (lines 3–7). While she dismisses the unit as "Part of high school English huh?" (line 2), she strongly emphasizes the importance of the students' positions: "It's a **big freaking**

deal" (line 4). She creates a definite distinction between her appreciation for her students versus her lack of appreciation for the literary unit.

While a standard transcript would include Carmen's phrases in her description, such as "my mentor loves this stuff" and "It's a big freaking deal," CA provides additional evidence of her position: Carmen's intonation in describing her mentor teacher, with the upward inflection on "loves" and downward inflection on "stuff" help to reinforce Carmen's intended meaning and stance, assuming that her intonations follow the typical use of vocal expression in such contexts. Similarly, her strong emphasis of a phrase such as "It's a **big freaking deal** if they get a new jacket" (line 4) served to visually and verbally differentiate her investment in appreciating her students' situations from her understanding of the intentions of the mandated curriculum.

Carmen's turn began by categorizing people in relation to the American Dream unit. She discussed her mentor as one entity, and then referred to her students as a collective group, with whom she both identified and from whom she understood herself to be different. However, when she stated her affiliation with those who have not lived in poverty, which would presumably include her mentor – given the mentor's unproblematic love for the material – Carmen focused on herself as an individual. She said, "And then I look at me and (.) I've never been poor (.) / I mean (.) I know what it's like to not be rich or get all you deserve but / who am **I** to try to deal with **this**, you know?=" (lines 11–13). Her emphasis on the "I," at least once in every line in the excerpt, packaged her statement as one that Carmen applied only to herself; she did not assume that her goals or concerns applied to her mentor or to others with socioeconomic backgrounds similar to hers. Her consistent use of the pro-form "I" maintained her individual identity, including a statement with an emphatic "**I**," thereby maintaining the differences between her and those like her mentor teacher who celebrated concepts like meritocracy without a consideration for socioeconomic realities in the classroom.

CA's transcription conventions provide information generally unavailable from other methods. Carmen's packaging of the question, "who am **I** to try to deal with **this**, you know?=" (line 13) was notable in that she did not pose a closed-response question encouraging specific responses, such as "Yes" or "No." Had she asked, for example, "It's okay that I want to deal with this, right?", she would have formulated a closed-response question that encouraged reassurance of her position, given the emphasis on "right?" Had she asked "It's okay that I want to deal with this?" the new emphasis on the "I" would have encouraged recipients to examine specifically the ways that Carmen was entitled to deal with the situation that she had described. In leaving the question open and asking more rhetorically *who* she was to presume to address economic inequality, Carmen presented her question as a request for examination of difference, rather than a confirmation of sameness or difference. Miranda took up Carmen's request in her talk.

Miranda began by showing her understanding of the complexity of how an economically privileged person might appropriately discuss meritocracy and support low-income students: "12 =<I totally understand> / Like I think about how I went to a private school and everything (.) / My students don't have **anything**, I mean nothing" (lines 12–14). Rather than orienting to Carmen's broad personal concerns over whether or not Carmen should or could address socioeconomic inequalities (line 13), Miranda focused on her own background and classroom setting. She then broadened her response by describing the issue as one that did not require personal identification to be a legitimate concern and focus of teaching: "I don't have to be like them to teach them to pass the test (.) critique these readings (.) and um (.) understand that their lives have value" (line 21). By packaging her actions as a personal response, Miranda narrowed the topic under discussion to one that aligned with Carmen's own approach and affiliated

Miranda with Carmen, both in terms of shared backgrounds and teaching concerns. The end of Miranda's turn worked to resolve the seeming conflicts between both her and Carmen's lives in relation to their students by arguing that critical readings of American Dream literature related to broader social justice questions and therefore issues that both she and Carmen could support.

Step 4: Timing and turn-taking

One of the most commonly analyzed aspects of speech in CA, because it is often the most obvious, is how people take turns talking (Sacks, et al., 1974; Sidnell, 2010). Talk often operates with a one-at-a-time rule, with each person taking a turn without interruption; CA examines how people indicate that their turns have ended and how others assume that they may begin a turn. Examples include long pauses at the end of a sentence, which listeners may interpret as the end of a turn; and speakers ending a turn by posing a question to an individual or a group and thus inviting a new turn from another conversant (Sacks, 1992).

Carmen's turn ended, whether she intended for it to or not, when she posed her rhetorical question to the group. Immediately upon her sentence's conclusion, Miranda began her turn: =<I totally understand>" (line 12). The timing of the turn suggested that Miranda was immediately prepared to follow Carmen, likely before Carmen had finished speaking. Miranda's accelerated talk further established her turn, as she was able to complete an entire sentence that directly connected to Carmen's talk in only about a second. Despite the immediate latching of both participants' talk and the rushed speed of Miranda's beginning, Miranda's response indicated close attention to Carmen's comments. The transcription markings show that there was no overlap, or interruption; despite the closeness of the two turns, Miranda's response not only incorporated elements of Carmen's language but also directly addressed Carmen's concerns and question.

Step 5: Identities and relationships

The final step in Pomerantz and Fehr's (2002) analytic approach is to consider how the work done in the talk – the actions, the actions' packaging, and turn-taking – have "accomplished . . . certain identities" in the selected sequence (p. 74). What relationships, roles, and statuses did the speakers claim? How did the speakers' descriptions of other people, places, or issues "implicate particular identities"? (p. 74)

Carmen, through her descriptions of the curriculum, her mentor, and her students, implied that she was a thoughtful teacher who carefully considered the implications of particular texts in relation to those she taught. She critiqued the mentor teacher who, she determined, was disconnected from the classroom, while claiming a relationship with her students by both remarking on the realities of their socioeconomic situations and the ways that the curriculum failed them. Her teacher identity also relied on reflection of how she was different from those she sought to protect, and she considered how her intentions were different from the mentor she had criticized. She readily explored her socioeconomic class privilege, and wondered how she might resolve the tensions that she saw between her teacher goals and her personal identity.

Miranda's talk implied that she was a social justice-oriented person who was both assertive and reassuring. She, like Carmen, acknowledged that she had never experienced poverty, but she immediately affirmed that she and Carmen could support their students. Her work to resolve Carmen's conflict functioned to reassure Carmen and the group that they did not need to share experiences and identities with their students to serve them well. She assured them that could and should support their students, no matter their own experiences or curricular

mandates. Additionally, Miranda unhesitatingly declared that issues of class were human rights issues that applied to and could be supported by everyone, they were issues that could demonstrate to the students that “their lives have value” (line 21). While Carmen worked to talk through an identity that seemed contradictory, Miranda indicated no uncertainty and established a viewpoint that allowed any who were interested to support students who were unlike the teacher.

Conclusion

Atkinson and Heritage (1984) wrote that conversation is “the most pervasively used mode of interaction. ...[and] the fullest matrix of socially organized communicative practices and procedures,” particularly in settings such as classrooms (p. 13). CA has seen little use in language and literacy education, though CA’s tools provide unlimited potential for examining the many forms of talk associated with this field of education. In this chapter, the conversation focused on two pre-service teachers’ efforts to understand their roles as language/literacy teachers, and a CA-driven analysis of the transcript yielded copious information from a short excerpt. The detail-oriented nature of CA provides a wealth of information that might advance other topics, such as literacy learning, digital literacies, and language acquisition, in language and literacy teaching and learning. Because CA requires only careful examination of audio or video files for detailed transcription, there is no limit to the scenarios in which the method might be applied.

That flexibility presents exciting possibilities and unique challenges. Our application relied on CA’s historical connection with ethnomethodology, in that while our analyses examined how participants made sense through and were accomplishing specific actions in talk, their conversations required contextualization in order to have meaning. Additionally, we considered our motivations for selecting an excerpt from a specific data set and how researcher subjectivities shaped the talk-in-action. Other CA researchers would be uninterested in talk’s context and exclude subjectivity issues. Both are ways of conducting CA and both have support, though a number of contemporary analysts resist previous arguments that CA or any research may be ideologically neutral. Because there is no single way to conduct CA research, analysts must work carefully to avoid interpretations not based directly on detailed transcriptions. CA focuses on how conversation works. It does not seek to examine what a speaker might have meant by a phrase but instead how that phrase mattered within the talk. CA’s focus on how speakers accomplish talk affords researchers a method applicable to any number of education-related situations, and CA could extend conversations on literacy and language education in substantial and new ways.

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