

# 25 Discourse in Educational Settings

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## 0 Introduction

In an early study of language use in schools, Shuy and Griffin (1981) noted that whatever else goes on there, what they do in schools on any day is talk. To a great extent, the fabric of schooling is woven of linguistic interaction. One of the central concerns of discourse analysis in educational settings has been to uncover the ways in which talk at school is unique and thus what children must be able to do linguistically in order to succeed there. Attention focuses on the socialization functions that schools serve, especially but not exclusively those connected to teaching and learning. Another analytic perspective cross-cuts that one: discourse analysis is helping to explicate the actions in which the primary goal of schools – learning – is realized. This chapter offers a selective overview of some of the chief analytic constructs that have been employed in describing classroom interaction and some of the topics of discourse study in educational settings. It closes by considering how insights from discourse analysis in schools can help to make them better.

## 1 Focus on Linguistic Practices in Schools

Since the early 1970s, research on language in schools has moved from a focus on discrete chunks of language to a concern with “communication as a whole, both to understand what is being conveyed and to understand the specific place of language within the process” (Hymes 1972: xxviii). Highly inferential coding of classroom linguistic activity receded (though it persists still) as scholars with disciplinary roots in anthropology, social psychology, sociology, and sociolinguistics began to focus on structural cues by which interactants understand what is going on (e.g. Gumperz and Herasimchuk 1975; McDermott et al. 1978; Mehan 1979). An early sociolinguistic study of instructional interaction in primary classrooms (Griffin and Shuy 1978) combining ethnographic, ethnomethodological, and pragmatic perspectives and research

methods contributed significantly to developing analytic techniques for classroom talk. Analysis of one important structure – sequences in which teachers elicited knowledge from students – found that elicitation turns could not be explained in terms of formal linguistic characteristics alone, as Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) had proposed. Griffin and Shuy adopted the notion of topically relevant sets of talk as outlined in Mehan et al. (1976), linking talk to an element that might lie outside the discourse. A lesson's instructional goals motivate certain tasks and topics that constrain interpretation. Thus a teacher utterance that consists solely of a student's name, one of the phenomena occurring more frequently in instructional discourse than elsewhere, can function as elicitations because they recycle a question previously asked:

- (1) *The teacher has just completed instructions for a math activity to a first grade class:*<sup>1</sup>
- 1 *Teacher:* Who can tell Carter what group one does, when they're done with their number book.
  - 2 *Hai:* I know.
  - 3 *Teacher:* Hai?
  - 4 *Hai:* Um . . . after you finish your workbook, you get something quiet to do. (Adger 1984: 250)

This early work on elicitation sequences providing the apparatus for a functional analysis of classroom talk allowed principled description of talk as social interaction. The elicitation sequence composed of teacher initiation, student response, and teacher evaluation (IRE), proposed as a basic unit of instructional interaction, was tested against empirical evidence. For example, Mehan et al. (1976) had argued that the evaluation turn was optional, but Griffin and Shuy (1978) found it to be obligatory: when it does not occur, some reason for its absence can be located in the discourse by reference to interactional rules:

- (2) *The teacher is checking student understanding of her directions for a math worksheet to first graders:*
- 1 *Teacher:* What will you color in this row?
  - 2 *Students:* Blue
  - 3 *Teacher:* How many blue squares?
  - 4 *Students:* Three
  - 5 *Teacher:* Same on twenty-five, and twenty-six the same thing. (Adger 1984: 249)

L. 1 is an initiation; l. 2, a response. No overt evaluation occurs, but it is inferable: the teacher's initiation of a second sequence in l. 3 in place of evaluation implicitly conveys positive evaluation. (It is also possible to withhold a negative evaluation and initiate a new sequence, but eventually the faulty response may need to be evaluated to advance the lesson and preserve the evaluator's authority.)

Illuminating the IRE and principled means of linking talk and task laid the groundwork for investigating other aspects of context. Shultz et al. (1982) and Green and Wallat (1981), for instance, examined social interaction in classrooms and homes in terms of participation structures. These account for who is participating, what turn-

taking patterns are in effect, who has rights to the conversational floor, proxemics, all aspects of talk (such as directness, register, paralinguistic cues), and gaze. O'Connor and Michaels (1996) use Goffman's (1974, 1981) notion of participant framework in explicating the ways that expert teachers socialize children into academic discussion, particularly through revoicing children's lesson contributions. This participant framework "encompasses (a) the ways that speech event participants are aligned with or against each other and (b) the ways they are positioned relative to topics and even specific utterances" (O'Connor and Michaels 1996: 69). Talk and the participant frameworks it entails compose speech activities (Gumperz 1982).

The IRE continues to be featured in discourse analytic accounts of academic talk. But communication in classrooms frequently proceeds in ways that do not follow the sequential, reciprocal model of interaction between teacher and students that the IRE captures so well. Erickson (1996) shows that classroom interaction frequently demonstrates a complex ecology of social and cognitive relations.<sup>2</sup> The flow of interaction in dyadic (Erickson and Shultz 1982) and multiparty talk alike is governed by timing and contextualization cues: "any aspect of the surface form of utterances which, when mapped onto message content, can be shown to be functional in signaling of interpretive frames" (Gumperz 1977: 199), such as gaze, proxemics, intonational contours, and volume. Cues cluster to establish a cadence that facilitates the social organization of attention and action in conversation. Using evidence from a combination kindergarten–first grade classroom, Erickson shows that successful participation in a whole-group lesson requires responding with a correct answer in the appropriate interactive moment. Weak turns fall prey to the "turn sharks" hovering in the interactional waters to snatch them up.

The following excerpt from a first grade class demonstrates that the ecology of social and cognitive relations obtains in other instructional settings. Here the teacher responds to four students who have been given the same math task but who contextualize it differently. Each is engaged in an individual vector of activity involving the teacher (Merritt 1998), but their joint interaction coheres around social relations and the shared instructional task:

(3) *The students, who are seated in four clusters, are working on math worksheets requiring them to demonstrate number sets. The teacher moves among them, checking students' work and assisting them:*

- 1 *Teacher:* You don't have what?
- 2 *Coong:* I don't have scissors.
- 3 *Teacher:* Scissors. What do you need scissors for.
- 4 *Coong:* Um: cut.=
- 5 *Blair:* =Lots of things.
- 6 *Teacher:* Why do you need scissors.
- 7 \_\_\_\_: //
- 8 *Hai:* I can't make no nother one, Miss.
- 9 *Teacher:* (to Coong) In Mrs. K . . Mrs. K's room?
- 10 \_\_\_\_: //
- 11 *Teacher:* Okay, go and get it.
- 12 /Coong/: //
- 13 *Teacher:* [Okay, get it tomorrow.

- 14 *Katie*: (approaching from another table) [Mrs. D, what happened to  
[my number line.
- 15 *Teacher*: (to Coong) [Oh you mean for tomorrow in your class?
- 16 *Coong*: Um hum.
- 17 *Teacher*: I'll let you borrow one tomorrow.
- 18 *Katie*: Mrs. D, what happened to my. um . [number line?
- 19 *Teacher*: (to Coong, loud) [Tomorrow. I will get you  
one. Now you go and work on your math.
- 20 *Katie*: Mrs. D, what happened to my li. number line.
- 21 *Teacher*: (soft) Well it was coming off your desk.
- 22 *Katie*: Huh uh.
- 23 *Teacher*: //
- 24 *Katie*: Who took mine.
- 25 *Teacher*: I did. // cleaning off the desks. (looking at Blair's math worksheet)  
Why did you erase the other one. The other one was fine. And this  
is=
- 26 *Coong*: [/See/
- 27 *Teacher*: =[the same.
- 28 *Hai*: [Mine's the only one that=
- 29 *Blair*: Oh.
- 30 *Hai*: =stays [down.
- 31 *Teacher*: [You. you can make four sentences with these numbers. //  
a little harder. (Adger 1984: 331–2)

The teacher and students construct three intersecting discourse tasks that are relevant to the math lesson in progress but individually negotiated (Bloome and Theodorou 1988). In the teacher/Coong discourse task (ll. 1–19), the teacher works to challenge Coong's scissors issue as irrelevant to the math task that she has assigned, then to defer it, and then to direct him to the task. In the overlapping teacher/Katie interaction (ll. 14–25), Katie manages to initiate an interaction about her missing number line. Despite the relevance of Katie's topic to the lesson task, the teacher treats Katie's talk as socially inappropriate, both in terms of timing and in terms of politeness. The teacher's nonresponse to Katie's first two turns (ll. 14, 18) suggests that she views them as attempts to interrupt the scissors talk with Coong. She treats Katie's question about the missing number line as an unwarranted complaint in light of the teacher's right to maintain a neat classroom, even when it means removing a lesson-relevant resource. The overlapping teacher/Blair interaction (ll. 25–31), in which the teacher points out an error and urges him on, requires the least negotiation. He shows evidence of having attended to the task and thus there are no task or social structure issues to be aired. The teacher critiques his work, he acknowledges her, and she moves on.

Hai does not succeed in engaging the teacher, apparently because of trouble with timing. He makes an unsuccessful bid for the teacher's attention at what seems to be a transition relevant point in her interaction with Coong, complaining in l. 8 that he cannot draw another of the items required to demonstrate his grasp of math sets. In l. 28, his comment that his number line is still firmly attached to his desk is relevant to the topic of the discourse task at hand, which is itself relevant to the math lesson, but ill-timed in terms of topic development and turn exchange.

This bit of classroom life instantiates Erickson's observation that classroom conversation is often more than a dialog, more than reciprocal or sequential interactive turns. In (3), lesson talk inheres in a discourse ecosystem in which students assemble their individual versions of the math lesson in concert with others, balancing academic and social interactional concerns. The teacher participates in advancing the math lesson with Coong, Katie, and Blair, but as a responder more than an initiator or an evaluator, the roles that the IRE attributes to the teacher. Her goal seems to be to urge them to adopt her interpretation of the math task. She negotiates, directs, explains, and corrects. She also nonresponds, protecting the interaction with Coong against interruptions from Blair in l. 5, from Hai in l. 8, and from Katie in l. 14. In the discourse task that is most directly related to the math lesson, the one involving Blair, she initiates the talk, but as critique rather than as request for information. These interwoven tasks reflect the teacher's responsibility to see that her version of the math lesson gets done and that interactional order is preserved, but they also show students as agents in both of those school agendas.

## 2 Topics of Discourse Analysis in School Settings

The rise in discourse analytic study of educational settings is part of a broader embracing of qualitative study in a domain long dominated by behavioral theory and quantitative research methods. Reasons for this shift are complex, but a prime influence came from the imperative – moral, legal, and economic – to educate a diverse population of students. The entrenched middle-class traditions dominating schooling have not succeeded in producing equitable student achievement, and resulting concern with socioeducational processes has opened the door to descriptive methods. Discourse analysis scrutinizing classroom interaction has found evidence of poorly matched cultural and social norms that contribute to inequity. In addition, a number of studies have focused on the processes of literacy development and second language learning. More recently there has been significant use of discourse analysis to discover the nature of cognitive development in social space. Many studies have combined more than one of these foci.

### 2.1 *Classroom interaction as cultural practice*

Discourse analysis has been instrumental in locating the educational failure of children from certain groups within classroom practices, particularly where the cultural background of the teacher and the pervasive culture of the school is different from that of the students. Microanalysis of classroom interaction shows mismatched frames (Tannen 1993) and participation style in classroom routines, with the result that over time students accumulate individual profiles of failure that mirror the statistics for their groups derived from standardized tests.

Ethnographic studies have illuminated the community basis of some interactive behavior that schools find anomalous. Philips's (1993) study conducted on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation in the early 1970s explained some aspects of Native

American students' classroom participation style. What teachers saw as failure – students' demurring from individual engagement with the teacher in whole-group lesson talk – reflected community values that favor collective talk. The discontinuity between the community and the school norms for interaction also led to schools' disciplining Native American students who had misinterpreted the school norms for physical activity. (For related study of contrasting norms between Native American communities and Anglo schools, see also Erickson and Mohatt 1982; Scollon and Scollon 1981.)

Another strand of ethnographic research on classroom discourse developed microethnographic research methods that contributed new understanding of the role of nonverbal communication and timing, in particular the ways in which cultural differences between home and school may systematically constrain the chances of success for some groups of students (e.g. McDermott 1976; Mehan 1979; Erickson and Shultz 1982). For example, Florio and Shultz (1979) undertook a complex analysis of participation structures during mealtime at home and lessons at school, events that exhibited some structural similarities. Comparison showed differences between home and school in the alignment between a participation structure and the phase of an event. Thus when dinner was being prepared in the Italian American homes that were studied, conversation had a single focus and one person talked at a time. But in the preparation phase of a lesson, several conversations could co-occur and children could chime in. Italian American children had trouble meeting the expectations for classroom participation structure in various lesson phases.

Studies of cross-cultural mismatch illuminate the culturally based discourse practices that schools have taken for granted – patterns based on the middle-class European-American traditions that have predominated in US institutions. A few studies shed light on classroom discourse patterns that are based on other traditions. Foster's (1995) description of interaction in a community college class taught by an African American professor showed strategic use of stylistic features associated with African American culture. The professor's lecture style included the call and response typical of gospel meetings, repetition, vowel elongation, alliteration, marked variation in pitch and tempo, and features of African American Vernacular English – discourse strategies that invited her mostly African American students to chime in. Foster suggests that where cultural norms are shared, this interactive style may serve a special instructional function. Students reported to Foster that the professor repeated information that they needed to know, but the data did not bear that out. Foster surmises that the students' sense that some information had been stressed may have derived from the teacher's discourse style rather than from actual repetition of information.

The following excerpt shows an African American teacher using such an interactional style in an upper elementary school classroom. The effect here is to engage more than one student in a discourse task that is part of preparation for a high-stakes standardized test:

(4) *The teacher is introducing a worksheet on frequently misspelled words:*

- 1 *Teacher:* It's a word called a spelling demon. These letters sometimes are silent letters. What is a word that means to eat little by little. Which letter would . be missing.

- 2 Eric: Ooh.  
 3 Teacher: Now here's the word.  
 4 Robert: Oh, I-I think [I know.  
 5 Teacher: [All right.  
 6 Eric: Gnaw.  
 7 Teacher: What does this say.  
 8 Several: Gnaw. Gnaw.  
 9 Teacher: What is it?  
 10 Several: Gnaw. [Gnaw.  
 11 Teacher: [Gnaw. (softly) All right. Now that's really saying the word=  
 12 Damien: I know.  
 13 Teacher: =To eat little by little is gnaw. But it is a letter missing=  
 14 Damien: k  
 15 Harold: A k.  
 16 Teacher: =And that letter is . a . si: :=  
 17 James: Si=  
 18 Thad: Ooh.  
 19 Teacher: =lent=  
 20 James: =lent=  
 21 Teacher: =letter.  
 22 James: =letter.  
 23 Teacher: Now. How do you spell gnaw.  
 24 Damien: K n=  
 25 David: K n a=  
 26 Damien: =a w  
 27 Several: K n a w.  
 28 David: =w.  
 29 Teacher: Wrong.  
 30 Robert: It's g.  
 31 Teacher: What is it Robert?  
 32 Sonny: Yes, g.  
 33 Robert: G, g.  
 34 Pierre: K.  
 35 Teacher: (loud) It's G::=  
 36 Robert: G.  
 37 Teacher: =n:a:=  
 38 Sam: We all look//  
 39 Teacher: =w. It's G::=  
 40 Quentin: I got it.  
 41 Teacher: =n:a:w. Which is why this paper is called sixty demons. (Adger and Detwyler 1993: 10–12)

Clearly, eliciting the correct answer is not the sole point of this lesson. The teacher's question in the first turn, "What is a word that means to eat little by little," is repeated in ll. 7 and 9, even after the answer, *gnaw*, is supplied in l. 6. Through repetition (e.g. *letter* in ll. 13, 16, and 21), vowel elongation (e.g. the first vowel in *silent*, l. 16), and volume shifting ll. 11 and 35), the teacher establishes a cadence that

engages many more students than those who supply the information needed to advance the lesson. She transforms a technical exercise into a drama by emphasizing the unknown, spotlighting the speaker of the delayed correct answer (Robert, l. 31), and then supplying the coda in l. 41.

Another study of classroom discourse in which the teacher and all of the students are African American showed shared dialect norms that do not match idealized norms for academic talk (Adger 1998). In an upper elementary classroom (not the one from which (4) was taken), the teacher consistently used Standard English for instructional functions, but the students shifted along a dialect continuum as they changed registers within a literacy event. For a literary analysis task in which they spoke with authority about a text, students selected Standard English features, but elsewhere within the literacy event they used African American Vernacular English. Students appeared to be using dialect resources in ways that mirror the linguistic norms of their community.

## *2.2 Classroom discourse and literacy development*

Sociocultural studies have been concerned especially with the ways in which students develop literacy, broadly defined to include the acquisition and increasingly skilled use of written language, the interweaving of talk and text, and the genres or discourses associated with school. Often literacy studies also consider cultural norms, with a focus on explicating contrasts between school and community that constrain literacy success (e.g. Gee 1989; Heath 1983; Scollon and Scollon 1981).

Michaels's work on "sharing time," the class meeting that has typified elementary classrooms, identified two patterns of thematic progression in children's narratives: a topic-centered pattern and a topic-associating pattern (Michaels 1981). In the topic-centered pattern used by European American children, a narrow topic is mentioned and fixed in time to start the story, with subsequent utterances adhering to it. In the topic-associating pattern more usual with African American children, a general topic is put forth and other topics are raised in relation to it. The styles differ both in what can constitute the topic and in how topics are developed. From the perspective of the European American teacher whose classroom Michaels studied, the topic-associating style was illogical and deficient.

Subsequent work on narrative style at a graduate school of education further illuminated the role that teachers' culturally based expectations for literacy-related discourse routines can play in student achievement. To test whether teacher reactions to children's stories were ethnically based, researchers recorded topic-associating (episodic) and topic-centered stories, both told in Standard English. As anticipated, white graduate students (teachers or teacher interns) preferred the topic-centered stories. They attributed the episodic stories to low-achieving students with language problems or even family or emotional problems. Black graduate students, on the other hand, approved of both styles, commenting that the episodic stories showed interesting detail and description. They imagined that the story that had suggested serious language problems to the white graduate students had come from a highly verbal, bright child (Cazden 1988).

Anthropological study of storytelling in Hawaiian communities described a collaborative narrative style that European American teachers had noticed in schools because it conflicts with narrative practices expected there. The speech event referred to in the community as “talk story” is characterized by co-narration among multiple speakers (Watson-Gegeo and Boggs 1977). By contrast, the idealized classroom discourse pattern involves one student speaking at a time, at the teacher’s bidding. Although this pattern is very often superseded, teachers expect students to comply when the one-at-a-time rule is invoked. In the Hawaiian schools, an experimental instructional program was created, based on the community co-narration event. It involved teachers participating in co-narration with the students, rather than leading IRE-based discussion (Au and Jordan 1981).

### *2.3 Discourse study of second language development*

Discourse analysis has become an increasingly attractive analytic method for researchers in second language development because of what it can show about that process and what it can suggest about second language pedagogy. I mention only one example, since other chapters in this volume treat second language discourse at length (see Olshtain and Celce-Murcia, this volume). In a study of the development of biliteracy, Moll and Dworin (1996) examine the written work in two languages of two young bilingual speakers (Spanish and English). They conclude that there are many paths to biliteracy, made up of students’ own histories and the social contexts for their learning, and that the ways in which bilingualism is typically characterized in schools are simplistic. In these two students’ classrooms, the freedom to use both English and Spanish meant that children developed literate skills in both languages – not just the means of writing two languages but the ability for “literate thinking” where writing in English involves reflecting on Spanish language experience.

### *2.4 Classroom discourse as learning*

In recent years, discourse analysis has played an important role in testing and extending the theories of Vygotsky (1978) and other contributors to the sociocognitive tradition (e.g. Wertsch 1991; Rogoff 1991). While Vygotsky’s thinking has been interpreted in very different ways (Cazden 1996), some of his insights have been highly influential in research on teaching and learning: that individuals learn in their own zones of proximal development lying just beyond the domains of their current expertise, and that they learn through interacting in that zone with a more knowledgeable individual and internalizing the resulting socially assembled knowledge. Thus learning is inherently both social and personal (Bakhtin 1981). A central question for scholars working in this tradition concerns the ways in which discourse between learner and expert mediates cognitive development. But research addressing this question has often given short shrift to the social dimension, viewing the discourse as an accomplishment – the product of learning – and leaving underexamined the flow of interactional, interpretive acts through which it is accomplished (Erickson 1996). Hicks (1996) observes that while sociocognitive theories have contributed significantly

to educational theory, methods for testing them are not well developed (but see Wells 1993). Hicks lays out a complex methodology that combines the study of interaction and the study of the group's texts, oral and written. This methodology is welded to sociocognitive theory: it examines the process of social meaning construction in light of the group's history, as well as the process of the individual's internalization or appropriation of social meaning.<sup>3</sup>

## 2.5 *School as a venue for talk*

Most studies of discourse at school concern the language of teaching and learning, examining classroom interaction as social practice or cognitive work – or both. But school is also a site in which children's repertoires for strategic language use expand (Hoyle and Adger 1998). Classrooms and other school settings present social tasks that differ from those of home and neighborhood and thus inspire innovation in register repertoires, framing capacities, and assumptions about appropriateness (Merritt 1998). Instructional settings in which students work without direct teacher participation, such as cooperative learning groups, allow them to construct knowledge and social structures through talk (Rosebery et al. 1992; Schlegel 1998; Tuyay et al. 1995) – though this may happen in ways that do not match teachers' intentions (Gumperz and Field 1995).

School is also a site of social interaction that is not academic. Eder's (1993, 1998) work on lunchtime interaction in a middle school shows that collaborative retelling of familiar stories functions to forge individual and group identities that partition young people from adults. Here school structures and participants – teachers and students – are recast as background for other socialization work that young people do together through discourse.

## 3 Application of Discourse Studies to Education

Most work on classroom discourse can be characterized as applied research: by illuminating educational processes, the research is relevant to critiquing what is going on in classrooms and to answering questions about how and where teaching and learning succeed or fail. Much of it has been conducted by scholars who work in or with schools of education and who address the most troubling questions about schools and schooling, especially in areas of differential educational success. But relating the detailed findings to educational practice is far from straightforward. Teacher education programs often require their interns to read studies of children's language use in context (Heath 1983 has been especially influential), but making explicit recommendations for educational practice based on discourse study is difficult.

One program linking research and educational practice that has grown out of the work on literacy instruction reported by Au and Jordan (1981) is exceptional in terms of longevity, coherence, and influence. Beginning in the late 1960s, teaching methods that approximated the community narrative style, talk story, were developed and tested by a team of teachers, psychologists, anthropologists, and linguists at the Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP), a research and development center

in Honolulu. The approach had positive effects on students' reading achievement there and later on test scores in other Hawaiian schools (Vogt et al. 1987). Findings from that project subsequently informed the development of sociocognitive theory in which the discourse of learning was highlighted (e.g. Rogoff 1991; Tharp and Gallimore 1988). Currently, some of the researchers who began the Kamehameha work, along with others, continue researching and developing educational approaches that promote school success, especially for language-minority students and others placed at risk for school failure. Their work is based on five principles for educational practice derived from their research and review of the literature on the influence of culture and gender on schooling:

1. Facilitate learning through joint productive activity among teachers and students
2. Develop competence in the language and literacy of instruction through all instruction activities
3. Contextualize teaching and curriculum in the experiences and skills of home and community
4. Challenge students toward cognitive complexity
5. Engage students through dialog, especially the instructional conversation. (Tharp 1997: 6–8)

These principles stress interaction that involves teachers as assistants to children rather than as drivers of dialog and deliverers of information (Tharp 1997). Instructional conversations involve a teacher and a group of students in constructing meaning by linking texts and student knowledge as they talk (Goldenberg and Patthey-Chavez 1995). The challenge for the teacher, accustomed to taking every other turn in IRE-dominated classrooms, is to avoid responding to each student's response so that students can talk in each other's zones of proximal development.

## **4 Conclusion**

This chapter touches on some methodological advances and topical interests within the corpus of discourse analysis in education settings. This corpus is by now encyclopedic (Cazden 1988; Corson 1997; Bloome and Greene 1992), and that is both the good and the bad news. The good news is that many of the educational processes that are the very stuff of school are being scrutinized. We now have methods and researchers skilled in their use for asking and answering questions about why we see the educational outcomes that fuel funding and policy decisions. The bad news is that discourse analysis and other qualitative methods are not widely accepted even within the educational establishment. One way of bringing this scholarship into the mainstream of educational research is through research and development programs that make the applications of discourse analysis very concrete. There is a need for more interdisciplinary collaboration in research design, data collection, and analyses requiring close attention to talk. The challenge is to avoid an atheoretical, merely commonsense approach to the study of talk and text and to knit together and build on the rather disparate work so far amassed.

## NOTES

- 1 Transcription conventions are as follows (based on Tannen 1984):
- |           |  |     |   |
|-----------|--|-----|---|
| .         | sentence-final falling intonation  | :   | lengthened sound (extra colons represent extra lengthening)   |
| ?         | sentence-final rising intonation   | ( ) | information in parentheses applies to the talk that follows;  |
| ,         | continuing intonation  |     | continues until punctuation   |
| ..        | noticeable pause, less than half-second  |     |   |
| ...       | half-second pause; each extra dot represents additional half-second pause                                    | 2   | Labov and Fanshel (1977: 29) made a similar claim about dyadic interaction: "Conversation is not a chain of utterances, but rather a matrix of utterances and actions bound together by a web of understandings and reactions."   |
| underline | emphatic stress  | 3   | Although this is not the point that Hicks wants to make, the methodology for which she argues is able to make evident the dimensions of a discursive event that Fairclough identifies: "language use, analyzed as text, discourse practice and social practice" (Fairclough 1993: 138). |
| CAPITALS  | extra emphatic stress  |     |   |
| italics   | graphemes  |     |   |
| //        | slash marks indicate uncertain transcription or speaker overlap  |     |   |
| =         | speaker's talk continues or second speaker's talk is latched onto first speaker's without a noticeable pause |     |   |

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