Studies in Language and Social Interaction

In Honor of Robert Hopper

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An Overview of Language and Social Interaction Research

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This book is an edited collection of empirical studies and theoretical essays about human communication in everyday life. The primary focus is on small or subtle forms of communication that are easily overlooked and too often dismissed as unimportant. Authors examine various features of human interaction (e.g., laughter, vocal repetition, hand gestures) occurring naturally within a variety of settings (e.g., at a dinner table, a doctor's office, an automotive repair shop), whereby interlocutors accomplish aspects of their interpersonal or institutional lives (e.g., resolve a disagreement, report bad medical news, negotiate a raise), all of which may relate to larger social issues (e.g., police brutality, human spirituality, death and optimism). The present collection is bound together by a recognition that social life is largely a communicative accomplishment, that people constitute the social realities experienced everyday through small and subtle ways of communicating, carefully orchestrated but commonly taken for granted.
INTRODUCTION

This volume represents Language and Social Interaction (LSI) perspectives on human communication. LSI is a popular umbrella term for scholarly work carried out within and across a number of academic disciplines. The label covers an array of assumptions, methods, and topics, which draw unity from certain family resemblances (discussed later). LSI research includes studies of speech, language, and gesture in human communication; studies of discourse processes, face-to-face interaction, communication competence, and cognitive processing; conversation analytic, ethnographic, microethnographic, ethnobotanical, and sociolinguistic work; and dialect and attitude studies, speech act theory, and pragmatics. Within the field of communication, scholarship in LSI has flourished in recent years. There are large and active LSI divisions within the National Communication Association (NCA) and the International Communication Association (ICA); the journal Research on Language and Social Interaction (originally called Papers in Linguistics) is now a mainstay within the field; LSI research appears regularly in books (e.g., Ellis, 1999a) and a host of mainstream disciplinary journals (e.g., Leeds-Hurwitz, 1992); and a growing number of communication departments at major universities emphasize LSI in their curricula.

The present volume originated as a Festschrift celebrating the intellectual career of the late Robert Hopper, a leading LSI researcher and an extraordinary teacher. Hopper completed his doctoral studies in 1970 at the University of Wisconsin and joined the faculty in Speech Communication at the University of Texas at Austin, where he remained until the end of his career. As author of eight books and dozens of published essays, he was known for his innovative thinking, lucid writing, and ability to bring together diverse scholars and perspectives. He taught more than 60 graduate courses and supervised more than 30 doctoral dissertations1. He received many awards2 for his research and teaching. Over the course of three decades, Hopper (and his students) pursued a rigorous speech science that led him to the forefront of LSI, as they were new to communication. He worked first with techniques for measuring language attitudes, then with discourse analysis, and finally explored microethnographic techniques for analyzing videotaped data. Each of these research traditions helped to shape the field of LSI, and each continues to make robust contributions to a rigorous science of speech in the communication field. By soliciting papers from Hopper’s former students and close colleagues, therefore, we have collected a cross-section of cutting-edge LSI research. This volume, then, arises out of two interrelated rationales. One, it is designed to showcase the diversity of contemporary LSI research, altogether allowing for reflection on LSI as an established and expanding area of study. Two, it celebrates Robert Hopper and the trajectory of his intellectual career, which in many ways paralleled developments in the field of LSI, for which he provided impetus. To the extent that this volume forwards his ideas and interests, it will make important contributions to the study of human communication and social interaction.

The remainder of this chapter explicates these two interrelated themes. First, we describe the emergence and influence of LSI within the field of communication3. The work of Robert Hopper embodies both the diversity of LSI research and the eclecticism of the communication field. Second, we describe the current state of LSI and discuss seven points of commonality and contention within the area—that is, seven points around which LSI scholars tend to rally in one way or another. Third, we preview the main sections of this book and comment on its organization.

THE EMERGENCE AND INFLUENCE OF LSI WITHIN THE FIELD OF COMMUNICATION

LSI is a relatively recent area within the field of communication, which has been dominated by rhetorical and psychological approaches for almost a century. The field of communication traces its beginnings to 1914, when a group of speech scholars met in Chicago to officially break from their English (and theater) departments at various U.S. universities by organizing the National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking (see O’Neill, 1915). Early publications show a division within the field: Many speech scholars advocated standards of positivistic science, with a psychological rather than a sociological bent (e.g., Winans, 1915; Woolbert, 1916, 1917); many others had a humanistic and rhetorical emphasis, mostly grounded in neo-Aristotelian philosophy (e.g., Hudson, 1923, 1924; Hunt, 1920). Within a few decades, a respectable research literature had been established (see Simon, 1951), but it was mostly concerned with individual performers of speech during situations of public address. After 1950, as the field matured, its domain extended to include a broad array of communicative phenomena within a wide variety of human activities. Several

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1 A chronological list of Robert Hopper’s doctoral students appears in the Appendix to Chapter 34.
2 For example, in 1983 Hopper became the Charles Sapp Centennial Professor of Communication at the University of Texas. In 1990 he was honored as one of three Outstanding Graduate Teachers at the University of Texas. In 1994 he received ICA’s B. Aubrey Fisher Mentoring Award. In 1996 he received the Outstanding Scholarly Publication Award (from the LSI Division of NCA). In 1998 he was first to be honored by NCA’s newly established Mentor Fund. Over the years, Hopper made an impressive collection of audio and video recordings of everyday interaction, known as the University of Texas Conversation Library, which in 1998 was officially named in his memory.

3 By focusing specifically upon the field of communication, we risk de-emphasizing LSI colleagues in other disciplines. As the terms “language” and “social interaction” suggest, LSI represents a convergence of concerns originating in linguistics, sociology, and anthropology. Nevertheless, LSI is especially strong within the field of communication, which is located at the crossroads of these interdisciplinary movements.
scholars have documented the unfolding history and nature of the communication field (see Arnold & Bowers, 1984; Benson, 1985; Bitzer & Black, 1971; Gouran, 1990; Kihler & Barker, 1969).

In the late 1970s, a series of groundbreaking publications set the stage for LSI’s emergence within the field of communication (at that time called “speech communication”). Bringing together interpersonal communication and the detailed study of natural language, Nofzinger (1975, 1976) and Hawes (1976) demonstrated and advocated scientific analyses of naturally occurring speech without the use of statistical methods—an innovative proposition for the field of communication at that time. For instance, by drawing on conversation analytic work on presequences, Nofzinger (1975) identified a commonplace speech device he called “the demand ticket” (e.g., “Yuh know what?”), whereby a person may initiate a topic and at the same time secure the conversational floor. Nofzinger went on to suggest that utterances be understood according to their location within conditionally relevant sequences of talk, “rather than in terms of gross numbers of occurrences per unit of time or whatever” (p. 9).

Philipsen (1975) drew on ethnographic methods pioneered by linguistic anthropologists Dell Hymes and Ethel Albert in his ground-breaking study of gendered patterns of speech in a blue-collar urban neighborhood (this essay won the NCA/LSI division’s Outstanding Publication award in 1998). Two years later, in a special issue of Communication Quarterly (Summer 1977), naturalistic approaches (Pearce, 1977) to communication research were more thoroughly described, including ethnomethodology (Linton-Hawes, 1977), conversation analysis (Nofzinger, 1977), discourse analysis (Jurick, 1977), hermeneutic phenomenology (Hawes, 1977), and ethnography (Philipsen, 1977). Naturalistic methods were later featured in other mainstream communication journals (e.g., Beach, 1982). Jackson and Jacobs (1980) combined detailed study of natural language with interests in rhetoric: They analyzed the structure of naturally occurring arguments and compared these to theoretical models of argument and the problem of “enthememes” (missing or taken-for-granted premises of arguments), thereby illustrating the utility of discourse analysis to the field of communication generally and to rhetorical theory specifically. In an award-winning essay, Hopper (1981b) expanded upon the issue of the “taken for granted” (TFG) in everyday communication and social life. He brought together a wide variety of linguistic approaches, showing how concern with TFGs is a communication issue. After reviewing the difficulties that TFGs have caused scholars across a variety of disciplines (enthememes for rhetoricians, presuppositions for linguists, etc.), Hopper suggested that “there may exist a functional and principled incompleteness in language use” (p. 205) and he provided a schematic model for how people handle TFGs in everyday situations.

In sum, these early publications pushed naturalistic methods into the mainstream of communication research, providing new ways of conceptualizing and analyzing communication, and bringing attention to phenomena previously overlooked.

In the early 1980s, Robert Hopper and several other communication scholars interested in everyday language use participated in a series of conferences whereby the new research area (LSI) took shape. The first communication conference focusing on “conversational interaction and discourse processes” occurred in 1981 at the University of Nebraska (cohosted by Wayne Beach, Sally Jackson, and Scott Jacobs). The following year, two conferences occurred: one on language and discourse processes at Michigan State University (hosted by Don Ellis and William Donohue); the other on discourse analysis and “conversational coherence” at Temple University (cohosted by Karen Tracy and Robert Craig). Participants in the Michigan State conference produced a published volume about contemporary issues in language and discourse processes (Ellis & Donohue, 1986), which represented the wide range of LSI approaches (including speech act theory, discourse analysis, and conversation analysis) that were emerging at that time within the field of communication. For example, Hopper, Koch, and Mandelbaum (1986) described methods of conversational analysis, as the authors were coming to understand them. Participants in the Temple conference produced a published volume of original research (Craig & Tracy, 1983) that evidenced “a scholarly movement [with] radically different methods, databases, and conceptual frameworks for studying human interaction” (Knapp, 1983, p. 7). Each of the authors, including Hopper, examined the same data set: a careful transcription of a lengthy conversation between “B and K,” two female undergraduate students who talked casually about their families, friends, food, holiday plans, horses, weather, and whatever else happened to emerge in the course of their interaction. Authors employed qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the structures and strategies of B and K’s talk, providing detailed descriptions and accounts of the orderly and meaningful ways that competent speakers may show their talk to be coherently connected. For example, Hopper (1983) showed that coherence is an interactive accomplishment (“we can no longer rely upon a model of communication that emphasizes the role of the speaker over that of the listener” p. 84), across turns at talk (“the fundamental unit of interpretation is the pair” p. 80), whereby shared meanings systematically emerge and evolve (“the ordering of events in sequential time frequently seems an important tie to the interpretive process” p. 92).

During the final decades of the 20th century, LSI scholars in communication brought together approaches and concerns from a number of related movements. Hopper’s research exemplifies the eclectic interests which contributed to the emergence of LSI as a distinct area of study. Resonating with the field’s origins in rhetorical theory, LSI research on speech evaluation sought to gauge audience responses to speakers and their messages (e.g., Gunderson &
Hopper, 1984). Early message research employed sociolinguistic methods to
evaluate the effects of speech on the listener by focusing on how listeners
evaluated speakers on the basis of characteristics of the talk or the speaker (e.g.,
de la Zerda & Hopper, 1979; Giles & Powesland, 1975; Zahn & Hopper, 1985).
The influence of ordinary language philosophy (e.g., Austin, 1962; Wittgenstein,
1953) prompted studies of "speech as action" (e.g., Hopper, 1981a). Concurrently, sociological studies reflecting the influence of symbolic
interactionists directed attention to such topics as accounts and formulations
under the umbrella term alignment talk (e.g., Morris & Hopper, 1987; Ragan &
Hopper, 1981). An emphasis on issues of coherence and cohesion drawn from
linguistics (Coulthard, 1977) combined with these other streams under a broader
label of discourse analysis (e.g., Ellis, 1995; Hopper, 1983). At the same time,
etnographic approaches to communication were drawn from fields such as
linguistic anthropology (e.g., Fitch & Hopper, 1983; Philipson, 1975). Conversation analysis in the ethnomet hodological tradition (e.g., Beach, 1982)
provided alternative methods for studying structures and functions of everyday
language use and, through such study, for investigating processes whereby
people communicatively constitute everyday activities (e.g., Hopper & Doany,
1989; Hopper & Drummond, 1990, 1992; Hopper & Glenn, 1994; Hopper,
Thomason, & Ward, 1993). More recently, continued technological developments (e.g., multimedia and digital video) have opened up new
opportunities for conducting detailed studies of embodied interactions, thereby
creating a parallel stream to continued research on the organization and workings
of speech-in-interaction (e.g., LeBaron & Hopper, 1999). This parallel stream
further a tradition of ethnological study and context analysis exemplified in the
work of Kendon (1990). Recent work in LSI also reflects and contributes to
theory and research in performance studies (e.g., Hopper, 1993a, 1993b). For
communication researchers using LSI methods, the essential feature of interest
is human communication itself, which contrasts with scholars in related academic
disciplines who use LSI methods but display ultimate preoccupation with
language, society, or culture.

The relationship between LSI and the field of communication has been
mutually influential and beneficial. On one hand, LSI research has increased
understanding of what communication is and how it is done. Arguably, the field
of communication has been preoccupied with various factors that influence
communication (such as individual dispositions, contexts, goals, gender, etc.),
and with how communication influences a variety of factors (satisfaction,
compliance, persuasion, social support, etc.), at the expense of examining the
actual processes through which communication occurs. The LSI focus on discourse (or alternate terms such as speech, messages, talk, conversation, or
interaction) has helped shape these issues as central to the communication
discipline. On the other hand, traditions within communication studies have

INTRODUCTION

helped to shape LSI research. To illustrate, we identify the following four areas
of mutual influence.

First: Moving Beyond the Sender-Receiver Model

During the telecommunications boom associated with World War II, Shannon
and Weaver (1949) proposed a model of communication based on their
knowledge of how the telephone works. According to their model, communication begins with a source or sender, who encodes thoughts or feelings
into a message that is then transmitted across a channel to a receiver, who in turn
decodes the message and thereby understands the information transmitted. This
model had immediate and widespread appeal as it perpetuated a psychological
view and at the same time resonated with the traditional rhetorical topos of
speaker, message, audience, and context. Although the transmission model was
useful and fruitful in many ways, and although it continues to be taken for
granted by many social scientists and laypersons, much communication research
acknowledges the importance of moving beyond the transmission model (e.g.,
see Goldsmith & Baxter, 1996). Arguably, too much research on communication
has tried to isolate component parts of the transmission model, at the cost of
seeing communication as a constitutive process through which interactants work
together to construct lines of action.

Three decades of LSI research have helped the field of communication
to specify the details of the move beyond the transmission model and toward a
social constructionist or constitutive view of communication. Using an array of
empirical methods, LSI researchers have shown that:

- Messages are not discrete from people—in some ways people are the
  message;
- Notions of “self” and “other” are constituted in and through discourse, and
  the boundaries between sender, message, and receiver are not always clear;
- Meaning is not solely the product of the sender—rather, messages and
  meanings are joint creations, even if only one person appears to be doing
  most of the speaking;
- Meanings may remain incomplete, emergent, and subject to retrospective
  modification;
- Messages and context are mutually elaborative;
- Context is invoked, oriented to, and constituted in interaction;
- And conversely, context influences the organization of interaction; and so
  forth.
INTRODUCTION

Thus, LSI researchers have shown that human interaction is partly or largely constitutive of the component parts that the sender–receiver model takes for granted. That is to say, through communication participants perform and realize their relative roles, interactively negotiating the meanings of so-called messages, orienting toward some symbol systems as relevant and recognizable, in many ways constituting their communicative context (e.g., Hopper, 1992; Ladyman & LeBaron, 1998). (A constitutive view of communication is further discussed later.)

Second: Reexamining Cognitive and/or Theoretical Constructs

Through different sorts of empirical investigation (often involving analysis of audio recordings, video recordings, and/or field notes), LSI researchers have reconsidered and respesified various theoretical constructs associated with the field of communication. Sometimes specific concepts have been the target of LSI investigation from the outset. That is, LSI researchers have occasionally set out to examine details of the empirical world with the express purpose of scrutinizing theoretically derived concepts. For example, researchers with a specific interest in social identity have collected and examined discourse to learn more about the interactive construction of identity in everyday life (e.g., Carbaugh, 1993; ladyman & LeBaron, 1994; Tracy, 1997). Some ethnographers have reexamined the traditional and monolithic concept of culture, respesifying it as practices whereby culture is constructed through conduct (e.g., Fitch, 1998). Through analyses of audiotaped and videotaped communication within classrooms and schools (e.g., McHoul, 1990; see also chap. 6, this volume), LSI researchers have shown that human minds extend beyond the skin as people depend upon social and material worlds to acquire knowledge and display intellectual ability. Therapeutic discourse has also been an object of study (e.g., Bavelas, 1989; Buttny, 1993, 1996; LeBaron & Hopper, 1999; Morris & Chenail, 1995; Peräkylä, 1995) as LSI researchers have sought to emphasize social aspects of patients’ mental or psychological states. In this way, theoretical concepts associated with the field of communication have guided LSI research, which has in turn influenced the field at large.

Other times, theoretical constructs have come under scrutiny in the course of LSI research on a set of data already collected. Conversation analysts regularly advocate unmotivated looking (Pomerantz & Fehr, 1997; Sacks, 1984), such as through “data sessions,” a process whereby data are analyzed in order to see “what is going on and how it is getting done,” which routinely leads to discovering phenomena occurring “in the wild,” perhaps warranting respesification of theoretical constructs in the end. For instance, practices of relationship construction or dismemberment have been respesified after examinations of data have shown an opportunity for doing so (e.g., Hopper &

INTRODUCTION

Drummond, 1992; Mandelbaum 1989). Processes through which gender becomes socially relevant have been similarly reexamined (e.g., Hopper & LeBaron, 1998; Lawrence, Stucky, & Hopper, 1990; see also chaps. 15 and 16, this volume). Philipsen (1975) used ethnographic methods to study Teameterville culture and discovered that (and how) the value of speaking or fighting may vary significantly from one culture to another. In his book, Conversations About Illness, Beach (1996) noted that he did not begin with an interest in studying eating disorders or the social construction of illness—rather, he came across data providing a compelling entry into these issues and allowing for respesification of them. Through close examination of empirical data, then, LSI researchers have come upon opportunities to reconsider and respesify conceptual and/or theoretical constructs within the field of communication.

Third: Bringing Verbal and Nonverbal Communication Together

Within the field of communication (and other social sciences), verbal and nonverbal forms of communication have traditionally been treated as separable, distinct areas of inquiry. Although scholars of various stripes have lamented this artificial separation (e.g., see Streeck & Knap, 1992, who described the separation as misleading and obsolete), the field of communication generally has made little progress toward mending the rift. Recently, however, LSI researchers have employed methods that bring the two modalities together—or rather, have examined vocal and visible forms of communication without separating them in the first place. Through methods that rely on videotaped recordings of naturally occurring interaction, LSI researchers have been able to get at communication as it is holistically enacted by interlocutors in the first place (e.g., C. Goodwin, 1986; C. Goodwin & M.H. Goodwin, 1986; LeBaron & Streeck, 1997; Streeck, 1984, 1993, 1994, 1996). The field of communication and LSI research will undoubtedly continue to be mutually influential in this area.

Fourth: Appreciating the Poetics of Language

After separating from English (and theater) departments in 1914, scholars attempting to establish a science of speech tried to distance themselves from the literary and theatrical traditions. Nevertheless, scholarly interest in performance and other humanistic approaches has flourished within the field of communication. Contemporary uses of the term performance within communication include (a) a research method for studying communication, (b) an important feature of communication, and (c) a useful metaphor for talking about communication. This abiding interest within the field has influenced studies of language and social interaction. Performance methods have proven useful in sociolinguistic studies of speech evaluation (Lawrence et al., 1990).
INTRODUCTION

Methods in LSI, which are notorious for close attention to discourse texts, invite noticing of poetic and performative features of everyday interaction. For example, Hopper (1992b) likened his own transcriptions to stanzas of a poem, and his scientific work was often inspired with a poetic sense of social life (e.g., Hopper, 1991, 1992a, 1993a, 1995). Hopper and other LSI researchers have explored theoretical and theatrical applications of using transcripts plus recordings of naturally occurring interactions as scripts for staged performance (e.g., Crow, 1988; Stucky, 1988; see also chap. 29, this volume). This has led to a substantial body of performed and written scholarship on what has been called everyday life performance (ELP). Repeated applications have shown that ELP makes for lively and insightful theatrical productions (e.g., Hopper, 1996). Furthermore, the ELP processes help practitioners learn about self and others, about patterns of interaction, and about production nuances of everyday talk (Stringer & Hopper, 1997). Thus, LSI research has significantly benefited from and contributed to performance studies within the field of communication (e.g., Gray & Van Oosting, 1996).

To summarize, we have briefly described the historical emergence of LSI research within the field of communication and have discussed a few areas of mutual influence between the division and the field. Robert Hopper, as much or more than any other scholar, has been central to this unfolding. We now turn our attention more specifically to current trends within LSI research. In the following section, we identify and discuss seven points of commonality and contention within the area—that is, contested points around which LSI scholars tend to rally in one way or another, points whereby LSI studies bear a “family resemblance” (Wittgenstein, 1953) to one another.

CURRENT TRENDS IN LSI: SEVEN POINTS OF COMMONALITY AND CONTENTION

The field of communication is like a no-host party at an academic convention. Communication scholars have come together and noisily organized themselves into various divisions or interest groups where they talk, sometimes to be overheard by other groups. Membership within each division fluctuates as scholars come and go, sometimes listening, sometimes talking, arriving after the discussion has already begun and leaving before it is complete. Although the organization of a particular division may be somewhat arbitrary, it is nonetheless consequential for those involved: What may be stated and how, who may state it

and when, depends largely upon the participants who subtly negotiate the trajectory of their conversation and the standards for appropriate participation.

LSI is an eclectic group, boasting various intellectual pedigrees. Not only are a variety of research methods employed—including ethnography, discourse analysis, conversation analysis, sociolinguistics, micro-ethnography, and pragmatics—but some scholars choose to blend methods (e.g., Moerman, 1988; Tracy, 1995). Clearly, such diversity has had synergistic outcomes for the discipline, but it has also led to basic disagreements (e.g., see Beach, 1995a; Sanders & Sigman, 1994; Tracy, 1994) and self-contemplation (e.g., Craig, 1999; Ellis, 1999b; Sanders, 1999; Wieder, 1999) on the nature of the discipline. As we privilege one way of describing here, we recognize that there are countless other ways that the field could be described—chronologically, topically, ideologically, methodologically, demographically, logistically, and so forth. Our choices (perhaps biases) have consequences for the centers and margins of the field we depict, which may include or exclude colleagues in odd or unfortunate ways. Nevertheless, occasional stocktaking may help to promote synergistic outcomes and prevent or reconcile unnecessary fissures within the field. Despite the risks, our description may help newcomers who are preparing to join the lively conversation underway, or it may help active LSI scholars assess their discipline and participation. In recent years, especially with the start of a new millennium, LSI scholars have seen several stocktaking exercises in the form of papers, panels, and publications (e.g., see special issues of Research on Language and Social Interaction, such as the “Talking Culture” issue in 1990, and the “Millennium” issue in 1999). Because our description is only one of several, we hope that it will continue dialogue rather than discourage it, invite and include participants rather than exclude them.

Our description is organized around key points—or contested concepts—we think underlie, unify, and galvanize LSI research. Specifically, we propose that LSI researchers tend to rally around the following interrelated points, agreeing and disagreeing with them in various ways, whereby LSI studies take on a recognizable relationship to one another:

1. LSI research privileges mundane, naturally occurring interaction within casual and institutional settings.
2. LSI research adheres to principles of an empirical social science.
3. LSI research describes and explains.
4. LSI research is inductive and abductive.
5. LSI research treats communication as constitutive and consequential.
6. LSI research emphasizes emic, participant perspectives.
7. LSI research focuses on language in use.

Our analogy is a crude adaptation of Burke’s (1941/1973) parlor metaphor, where the human condition is likened to an “unending conversation” (p. 111).
Why have we approached our description of LSI in this way? Because work in LSI is unusually eclectic and faces the ongoing challenge of holding to common ground while exploring new and different directions for scholarship. We acknowledge that our list of seven points may be incomplete and may at some stage become obsolete. Moreover, we strongly emphasize that adherence to any one of the seven points listed is not required for membership within the LSI "family." Rather, each point is a contested site of commonality within the field, and we present (hence) plenty of counterexamples for each point, showing that each has been contested by the very researchers that these points have generally brought together. As evidenced by the descriptions that follow, these seven points are interrelated—even overlapping, though not redundant.

Research on Language and Social Interaction Privileges Mundane, Naturally Occurring Interaction Within Casual and Institutional Settings

A conversation between two people washing dishes in their kitchen, for example, may warrant examination as much or more than a televised presidential speech. The term *mundane* refers to communication that may be commonplace regardless of setting, is usually uncelebrated, and is too often dismissed as unremarkable or unimportant. The term also incorporates features of communication that are often ignored or regarded as peripheral, such as vocal restarts and hesitations (e.g., C. Goodwin, 1980), laughter (e.g., Glenn, 1989, 1992, 1995; Jefferson, 1994), and seemingly insignificant acknowledgment tokens such as "oh" (e.g., Heritage, 1984) and "okay" (Beach, 1993, 1995b). Communication is considered to be "naturally occurring" if it would have occurred whether or not it was observed or recorded (see Beach, 1990, 1994). Participant observations, field notes, and audio or video recordings of everyday speech events are considered premium data from which to make conclusions about human communication and social life. Sacks (1984) criticized a common concern among social scientists for finding supposed "good data" and "good problems." He observed:

Such a view tends to be heavily controlled by an overriding interest in what are in the first instance known to be "big issues," and not those which are terribly mundane, occasional, local, and the like . . . . It is possible that detailed study of small phenomena may give an enormous understanding of the way humans do things and the kinds of objects they use to construct and order their affairs. (pp. 22-24)

Such emphasis on mundane and naturalistic communication diverges from a variety of other research traditions. LSI research contrasts with methodologies that (a) rely upon hypothetical or imagined exemplars of language use as a basis for linguistic claims, (b) focus exclusively upon mass-mediated events, such as a television drama, as a basis for conclusions about culture, (c) concentrate only upon "big" speech events, such as presidential speeches, which are supposed to be especially important to society, or (d) generate data through experimental methods, perhaps under laboratory conditions where subjects are removed from the social and material environments in which they typically interact.

Although LSI research privileges mundane interaction, considerable attention has been given to popular and publicized speech events. For instance, Atkinson (1984) scrutinized the behavioral patterns (both vocal and visible) of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan during public speeches, and identified "devices" whereby the politicians used audience applause and interactively performed "charisma." In a special issue of *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, several scholars analyzed patterns of turn-taking and interruption during an explosive television interview (or rather argument) between Dan Rather and George Bush, when Bush was campaigning for the U.S. presidency in the 1980s (e.g., Nofzinger, 1988). Bavelas, Black, Chovil, and Mullett (1990) examined equivocal statements that politicians use to cope with "no-win" situations—that is, when all direct messages would lead to negative consequences. Lynch and Bogen (1996) studied congressional procedure and testimony associated with the Iran-Contra hearings, showing how the "history" of illegal activities was contested and interactively produced. Carbaugh (1989) conducted an ethnographic study of the "Donahue" television show, depicting it as a portrait of American society. John Modaff (chap. 28, this volume) microanalyzed the "speech melody" of radio personality Paul Harvey, and identified rhetorical properties of his vocal inflections. These citations (and numerous others) notwithstanding, research on language and social interaction is overwhelmingly concerned with mundane features of mundane interaction. Although researchers occasionally focus on the communicative behaviors and cultural furnishings of politicians and other public performers, it is the behaviors and the furnishings themselves that warrant the LSI study—not the celebrities, nor their histories. Studies of the spectacular may inform us about what is commonplace.

Mundane interaction (as we defined it) occurs in both casual and institutional settings. Beach (1996) argued that "families are the primordial institutional systems" (p. xi) and that interactions between, say, a grandmother and a granddaughter might reveal patterns of "interrogation" like those found in a courtroom. LSI researchers have entered an array of social institutions and organizations to explicate the everyday behaviors whereby institutions are interactively formed and sustained (e.g., Atkinson & Drew, 1979; Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; Drew & Heritage, 1992; Houtkoop-Steenstra & Antaki, 1997; Metzger & Beach, 1996; Morris & Cheneil, 1995; Tracy, 1995, 1997). For
example, recent research on medical interviewing has addressed significant moments between doctors and patients (e.g., Beach & Dixson, 2000). Conversations about health and illness also occur at home, such as when family members discuss a loved one’s diagnosis and treatment for cancer (chap. 10, this volume).

Recently, the notion of naturally occurring has been indirectly and directly called into question. For instance, Pratt and Wieder (1993) conducted an “ethnography of public speaking” among the Osage Nation, a Native American community. Not only were public speeches prepared or scripted in advance, these researchers asked subjects to reperform speeches that they had given before during some prior ceremony or event of the Osage Nation. Pratt and Wieder argued that their data were sufficiently natural because the focus of their study was on the “formal features of the original” speeches and not the in-the-moment contingencies (p. 358). Bavelas (1999) worked to broaden notions of “naturalistic” within the field of LSI. She argued that laboratory data should not be dismissed out of hand, because when people communicate under laboratory conditions, they necessarily employ the sorts of vocal and visible behaviors whereby they communicate everyday—there is no other way to interact. Moreover, Bavelas suggested that a laboratory may need to be recognized as a special site (with its own social and material affordances), but it should not be rejected as “artificial” just because it is built to serve researchers’ ends—after all, every built space serves some social and micropolitical end.

The notion of “naturalistic” has also been stretched by literary inclinations. In his book on gender and gender talk, for example, Hopper (in press) supplemented his tape recordings of naturally occurring talk with exemplars from other sources, including the following:

- **Fiction.** For obvious reasons, there are few candid recordings of moments involving sexuality, sexual harassment, codependent family interaction, and so forth. Films regularly portray such dialogue in a way that resembles everyday social interaction, which may serve as a resource for scientific inquiry.

- **Self-reports.** Ethnographers routinely interview people about their speech practices. Self-report data show few discourse features and they may be replete with social-desirability biases, but participants’ recollections of social interaction have proven to be a useful resource.

- **Hypothetical examples.** In the absence of recorded data or firsthand observation, a writer may fabricate a hypothetical example to illustrate (precisely) a particular argument. Such fabrications often stand up through replication and critical scrutiny, perhaps due to the incredible overdetermined orderliness of language use and social interaction.

Hopper openly acknowledged the risk of mixing evidence types. Of course scientists must be wary of generalizing from film to life, and self-report findings should be confirmed by fuller discourse renderings. Nevertheless, by mixing evidence types Hopper was able to address areas of theory and general concern for which limited data could be found. In another study, Drummond (chap. 32, this volume) participated in the dialogue between “real” and fiction: Using Hopper’s (1981a; 1981b) notion of taken-for-granted, Drummond explicated the idea of “interactional enslavement” within the movie The Truman Show. Points suggested by more literary sorts of evidence may be taken as a stimulus to collect more naturalistic examples of similar phenomena.

**Research on Language and Social Interaction Adheres to Principles of an Empirical Social Science**

Research conclusions about communication, culture, and social life are properly supported by firsthand observations of human interaction. When LSI researchers present their findings in papers or reports, they usually include examples or excerpts of the phenomenon under investigation. Careful descriptions, field notes, transcriptions, photographs, videotapes, and other sorts of recordings are taken to represent the audible and visible behaviors that social interactants made available to each other (in the first place) and to analysts (who acted as overhearers and onlookers). Hence, all arguments are based on evidence that must pass the test of intersubjective agreement among researchers and readers (see Beach, 1990, 1994; Pomerantz & Fehr, 1997). A particular phenomenon is taken to exist, to the extent that data, analyses, and conclusions are reproducible or verifiable by others.

At the same time that most language and social interaction researchers maintain an empirical stance toward their objects of study, we suggest that they necessarily engage in an ongoing interpretive process. Researchers are participants in the social world they analyze, both creating and interpreting human experience, moment to moment and day to day. Researchers do more than document patterns—they appraise the significance of behaviors documented. Geertz (1973) wrote:

> Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning. (p. 5)

To some extent, all research on language and social interaction has kinship with the work of Geertz, who sought to understand human cultures through “thick description”—rather than explain them through theories of causation or natural
INTRODUCTION

speaking us" (p. 190). Thus, even the most rigorous empiricist may orient to, listen to, and be inspired by the humanist within.

Despite these variations within the field of LSI, there is a general commitment to empirical methods. After acknowledging the role of intuition in ethnographic research, Fitch (1994) recommended more systematic bases for ethnographic choices. And Hopper's (1992b) poetic treatment of telephone conversations was constantly based upon "empirical details displayed by participants to one another" (p. 20). Overwhelmingly, LSI researchers treat what they are doing as meriting scientific status, affirming the need for clear and repeatable methods to produce replicable results.

Research on Language and Social Interaction Describes and Explains

By carefully and thoroughly describing human interaction, researchers begin to understand and explain it. Most LSI research provides straightforward (even matter-of-fact) accounts of phenomena, written as if the features of human interaction exist in the social world to be documented and interpreted. Nevertheless, description is not a neutral activity and data are not self-explicating. The item(s) chosen for analysis represent important choices (whether conscious or unconscious) by the researcher. For this reason, LSI researchers tend to be reflexive about word choice, writing style, and presentation of data, recognizing that these are in part constitutive of the social phenomena under investigation. Conversation analysts seem especially particular about terminology. For example, when Pomerantz (1989) suggested that conversation analysts translate CA jargon into more commonsense lay terminology, so as to make it more accessible to more readers, Jefferson (1989) disagreed. Jefferson insisted that CA terminology is not "just a complicated way of saying what otherwise can be said with lay, commonsense, interactants' terminology" (p. 427); rather, she insisted, CA terms are imbued with special ways of looking at and describing the social world.

Data presentation is also an ongoing concern. Ochs (1979) observed that presentation tools such as transcription systems are inherently theoretical and should not be regarded as one-to-one representations of reality. Jacoby and Ochs (1995) emphasized that human interaction is "contingently dynamic and unfolding in interactional time" (p. 179) and that researchers who use recordings and transcriptions should not treat communication as a freestanding text. Jarmon (1996a) became frustrated with the presentational constraints of transcriptions and written descriptions, so she began using multimedia technology and eventually produced a dissertation on CD-ROM. Her dissertation proposed an amendment to the turn-taking model published by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974), who based their model on analysis of audio recordings.
INTRODUCTION

Through analysis of videotaped recordings, Jarmen concluded that “embodied actions” (such as facial expressions) are in some ways similar to grammatical units and may alter the projectability of turn boundaries or even function as a complete turn. Thus, the distinction between good description and good analysis blurs, as description documents and characterizes phenomena, providing both the basis and the impetus for analysis that follows in the wake. Even the term description may prove misleading or unduly limiting, to the extent that it buys into a representative view that there is a reality “out there” that may be described, in contrast to a social constructionist perspective that the act of attempting to write about “something” discursively constitutes that “something.”

Within the field of language and social interaction, description and explanation are regarded as worthwhile research goals or achievements in and of themselves. This contrasts with a hypothetico-deductive approach to communication research, which views description as only a first step that is incomplete unless followed by more substantive steps of developing theory, deriving hypotheses, and testing them experimentally. Descriptive research also contrasts with critical research, for which description may precede and set up a move to evaluation by practical, aesthetic, political, or moral standards. A third contrast is with applied research, for which description provides a starting point allowing a move to prescription, training, or pedagogy. There are plenty of examples of LSI research that do make critical or applied turns. Van Dijk’s critical discourse analyses (1993, e.g.), like Conquergood’s (1991) critical ethnography, seek to apply naturalistic methods to social problems. Likewise, LSI research on discourse within institutional settings (e.g., Drew & Heritage, 1992; Houtkoop-Steenstra & Antaki, 1997; Tracy, 1995, 1997) either explicitly makes or leads closer to deriving prescriptive applications from research findings. Nevertheless, even in these examples of LSI research, description and explanation remain the central tasks.

Research on Language and Social Interaction is Inductive and Abductive

There is a general commitment among LSI scholars to avoid premature theory building. Rather than begin with a research question or hypothesis (from which data collection, analysis, and conclusions would logically follow), LSI researchers regularly begin with data: Naturally occurring communication is observed or recorded and analyzed, and from this process new (sometimes revolutionary) claims and conclusions emerge. Ethnographers have a long tradition of selecting speech communities to study without knowing in advance what sorts of findings might arise. Sacks (1984) recommended the following “bottom-up” approach to research:

When we start out with a piece of data, the question of what we are going to end up with, what kind of findings it will give, should not be a consideration. We sit down with a piece of data, make a bunch of observations, and see where they will go. Treating some actual conversation in an uncommitted way, that is, giving some consideration to whatever can be found in any particular conversation we happen to have our hands on, subjecting it to investigation in any direction that can be produced from it, can have strong payoffs. (p. 27)

Although some readers may think Sacks is being idealistic—that is, to what extent can any examination be truly “unmotivated”? —many LSI studies indeed begin in this way. Soon researchers notice and take interest in some phenomenon, and “unmotivated” looking gives way to directed examination and explanation. As a research project takes shape, inductive methods tend to become more abductive. Analysts go looking for instances within naturally occurring data that may support a particular claim. The field of LSI is notorious for so-called “bottom-up” inquiry and inductive proof, whereby claims are consistently grounded by reference to evidence in data.

Technology not only supports naturalistic research, it facilitates inductive inquiry and insight. A primary challenge for LSI researchers is to recognize what is commonly taken for granted: Because researchers are themselves embedded every day within forms of communication and culture, it may be difficult for them to look “at” the social world that they are accustomed to looking “through.” Field notes, transcripts, photographs, audiotapes, films, videotapes, multimedia, and other forms of technology help to make the social world “strange,” enabling researchers to perceive it, as Garfinkel would say, “for another first time.” Bateson and Mead (1942) reported using photographs in their ethnographic work because photographs could capture and present behavioral events better than verbal descriptions. Sacks founded the field of CA after discovering recordings of telephone conversations, which “provided the proximate source for the focused attention to talk itself—perhaps the most critical step toward the development of conversation analysis” (Schegloff, 1992a, p. xvi). Kendon studied talk until 1963, when he “discovered” film and began to analyze embodied interaction: “It became apparent at once that there were complex patterns and regularities of behavior, and that the interactants were guiding their behavior, each in relation to the other” (Kendon, 1990, p. 4). Using multimedia technology, LeBaron (1998) digitized and then microanalyzed video recordings, and found recurring hand gestures that were identifiable because the computer provided a nonlinear environment within which to work, making it possible to analyze multiple videotaped images simultaneously, juxtaposing them on the computer screen. Moreover, technology allows for detailed and repeated examination of messages. It also affords the opportunity to manipulate
messages so that analysts can see how the interaction changes when they slow it down or zoom in on different features of a visual image.

Induction can serve both as a pattern for the research process and a pattern for the written research report (although these need not parallel each other). Reports tend to take shape as either (a) claims based on a collection of occurrences, each documented and discussed, that altogether warrant some subsuming claim about LSI within a speech community or culture (e.g., Coutu, 2000; C. Goodwin, 1980; ten Have, 1999), or (b) a detailed exposition of some single, perhaps singular, occurrence that reflects upon the language and social interaction of a speech community or culture (e.g., C. Goodwin, 1979; Philipsen, 2000). What occurrence(s) a researcher chooses to report—or is able to report—depends on the LSI method being employed. With roots in a sociological method Znaniecki (1934) called “analytic induction,” conversation analysts may assume the responsibility of identifying a structural pattern in a way that shows recurrence in the routine instances but also shows orientation to the regularity in the deviant cases (e.g., Schegloff, 1986). The aim is to provide an account of the phenomenon that holds beyond the particular instance, such an account thereby being both context sensitive and context free (Sacks et al., 1974). Discourse analysts’ choices may be informed by a wide variety of influences, from linguistic categorizations and structures to whatever themes or beliefs subjects manifest through their situated discourse or through interviews with the researcher (e.g., Tracy & Muller, 1994). Ethnographic choices may be guided by the researcher’s intuition or reflection, the subjects’ disclosures or interpretations of occurrences, the community members’ overall insights and reflections (as gleaned through interviews), or some universal theory (e.g., politeness theory) against which the ethnographer may work (Fitch, 1994). Despite obvious differences in these inductive methods, there is an abiding assumption that a priori theorizing risks diverting attention away from the central tasks of describing and explaining phenomena based on observable details (see Sanders & Sigman, 1994). A combined emphasis on description, explanation, induction, and abduction gives LSI work a basis for its empirical grounding.

Not all LSI research is inductive. In his early programmatic statements about the ethnography of speaking, Hymes (1978) asserted that descriptive accounts of cultural ways of speaking could and should be followed by subsequent research in which hypotheses are developed and tested in the field. Sociolinguistic research on power and speaker style often operates under a deductive framework, drawing on preceding research to generate hypotheses for testing (chap. 2, this volume). Mulac, Bradac, and Gibbons (2001) draw on previous research to generate (and subsequently test) research questions and a hypothesis regarding gender-based differences in language use. Discourse analytic, conversation analytic, and ethnographic reports may make use of previous research to explicate features within a present set of data, and as findings accumulate, opportunities increase for applying generalized claims in making sense of newly encountered particular instances. Periodically a researcher may take stock of some line of research and make a generalized statement about a phenomenon (e.g., Morris, White, & Iliris, 1994). Moreover, some research focuses on a theory question that the data did not in the first place suggest; some analyses rely on data having turned up that happen to relate to a particular question or theory or practice. For example, Hopper and Drummond (1990) joined a theoretical discussion about romance “turning points” only after they found a telephone recording that happened to include a dating break-up. Nevertheless, the primary goal of most LSI research involves careful description and explanation, accomplished through the inductive and abductive process of gradually building generalized claims from analysis of particular cases of a phenomenon.

Research on Language and Social Interaction Treats Communication as Constitutive and Consequential

The transmission model of communication (Shannon & Weaver, 1949), discussed earlier, typifies a representative view of communication, which sees language as reflecting a preexisting and external reality. Although the transmission model was widely accepted and continues to be taken for granted by most social scientists and laypersons, it has been repudiated by three decades of research on LSI, which shows that human interaction is partly or largely constitutive of the component parts that the transmission model presupposes. Even social conditions thought to be “stable” are contingent and constantly shifting as interlocutors co-construct their social worlds (Jacoby & Ochs, 1995) —including gender (Sheklen, 1996), ethnic identity (He, 1995), and individual competence (C. Goodwin, 1995). Setting aside the assumption that context exists a priori and that context unilaterally shapes communication, LSI research has shown how context may be invoked, oriented to, and constituted through social interaction at the same time that context may influence the organization of communication (e.g., see Drew & Heritage, 1992; Tracy, 1998). The LSI perspective that communication and context are mutually elaborative contrasts with more representative, static, or “external to message” (Hopper, 1992b) approaches. According to a constitutive view, then, communication is a primary means whereby social realities, cultural contexts, and the meanings of messages are interactively accomplished and experienced (Stewart, 1995).

Commitments to a representative or constitutive view can operate at two levels. The first level is the extent to which researchers treat interactants as themselves constituting their social realities. Ethnomethodology, with its focus on how people construct social order, has informed conversation analysis and allied methods. Expounding on the work of Garfinkel, Heritage (1984) observed
INTRODUCTION

that messages are not inherently meaningful, because communicative behaviors are subject to inference and open to negotiation among participants: “Utterances accomplish particular actions by virtue of their placement and participation within sequences of action” (p. 245). In an examination of a videotaped business meeting, Streake (1996) found that material objects—not just spoken and written messages—may become (situated) symbols through their appropriation and physical placement during face-to-face interaction. Among the things that interaction may accomplish is the instantiation of social roles (Schegloff, 1992b), everything from sender–receiver to mother–daughter (Hopper, 1992b).

In analyses of storytelling, C. Goodwin (1984) and Mandelbaum (1987) identified patterns of talk whereby the roles of storyteller and hearer were jointly achieved. Button (1992) examined recordings of job interviews and identified question-and-answer structures of speech whereby people may perform the roles of interviewer and interviewee. Even built spaces (i.e., physical structures made of brick and steel) are given shape and significance through social interaction. LeBaron and Streake (1997) examined a videotaped police interrogation in which participants moved their bodies in strategic ways, appropriating and interpreting the physical features of their interrogation room, making possible certain vocal arguments that eventually moved the suspect toward confession.

The second level is the extent to which researchers explicitly acknowledge or problematize how research itself represents or constitutes the social phenomena under investigation. In other words, do researchers discover and represent the objects of their study, or does the research process itself bring “phenomena” into being? It is difficult to find examples of LSI research that take a radically constitutive stance at this second level by explicitly focusing on the researcher’s role in constituting the objects of study. This provides a point of divergence for ethnographers working in the Hymesian ethnography of speaking tradition and those engaging in autoethnography (e.g., Bochner & C. Ellis, 1995). Likewise, some ethnographers have criticized conversation analysts for failing to practice radical reflexivity (Pollner, 1991). Many discourse analytic, conversation analytic, and sociolinguistic studies tend to employ a “reporting” vocabulary and posture that minimizes explicit attention to the researcher as an active creator of meaning (see item 3, earlier).

The ethnographic roots of some methods could nudge researchers toward viewing their work as constitutive. Conversation analysts, for example, avoid invoking labels or categories of contexts unless those are demonstrably relevant for participants. For instance, Button (1992) said that “in the face of multiple categorization possibilities for any person (an interviewee may be a father as well, for instance), the warrantable use of a categorization by a researcher resides in the participants’ orientation to and constitution of their activities” (p. 230). Although such self-awareness among researchers has the blush of a constitutive view, conversation analysts regard their reflexivity as a form of rigor and see themselves as all the more accurate in their reporting. Occasionally LSI researchers turn their cameras and recording devices on themselves. For instance, Jarmon (1996b) examined videotapes of conversation analysts at work. While participating in a “data session,” the analysts performed with their bodies what they saw in their data, tailoring their performances to display specific analyses and arguments. Jarmon discussed “the degree to which performance may play a part in how research is conducted” (p. 16), but her conclusions stopped short of a radically constitutive view of research.

In another study, Modaff and Modaff (1999) talked to each other on the telephone, recorded their conversations at both locations, transcribed both recordings, and then analyzed both transcriptions using conversation analytic methods. After finding substantive differences between the transcriptions, the researchers questioned the accuracy of mainstream recording devices and hence the accuracy of LSI research that depends on such devices. Thus, Modaff and Modaff took a representational stance by arguing for more accuracy in LSI research methods—they did not assume a radically constitutive view of the researcher as one who more or less creates the phenomena under investigation.

In practice, the representative view and the constitutive view are not mutually exclusive, freestanding alternatives; rather, they are ways of conceptualizing communication that have points of convergence. Within the division of LSI, or even within a particular research report, combinations of these views may be evident (e.g., see Tracy, 1998, who edited a special journal issue on “Analyzing Context,” in which LSI researchers aligned with representative or constitutive views in various ways). To illustrate, consider the extent to which culture determines or is determined by everyday communication. Some LSI researchers (e.g., ethnographers) may implicitly or explicitly recognize that communication at any one moment is responsive to the history of interactional moments experienced by participants individually and collectively over time. Others (e.g., conversation analysts) may ignore or downplay the impact of established cultural or linguistic resources on a particular moment of interaction or on a phenomenon under investigation unless interactants show that they take them to be relevant. Moerman, who combined ethnographic and conversation analytic methods (e.g., 1988), observed that “the work of producing ethnicity and identity involves both durable culture and the momentary contingencies of interaction” (1993, p. 85). Sequeira (1993) conducted an ethnographic study of address terms (e.g., “you,” “mom,” “doctor,” etc.), which were used in both conventional and unconventional ways, whereby social participants both reinstituted their culture and constituted it anew. Thus, the interplay between representational and constitutive views within LSI research may be seen to resonate with the interplay among social interactants themselves.
Research on Language and Social Interaction Emphasizes Emic, Participant Perspectives

Social scientists who study communication and culture sometimes make the distinction between "emic" and "etic" forms of research. The first (emic) reports the members' (or subjects') view of their communication and community; the second (etic) reports the outsider's (or researcher's) view. This distinction has been important within the LSI tradition, among scholars who avoid imposing their own theorized views on the social phenomena they examine, who strive instead to ground their descriptions and arguments within the social displays that the participants constitute and at the same time experience. Emic understandings may be uncovered in a number of ways. Through participant observation, ethnographers are able to speak and move within a speech community, pursuing depth and breadth of understanding through extended involvement, literally assuming the perspectives of those that they study. Some ethnographic work is coupled with detailed explications of small moments, whereby the many strands of members' understandings may be both teased apart and brought together within an ethnographic report. For example, Liberman (1995) explained:

When doing studies of intercultural communication it is important to present to the reader the looks of the world for the participants, for that is what the participants are attending to and so are the only sociological "facts" worthy of the name. A faithful recording—faithful not to sociological (including ethnomethodological) principles but to the looks of the world for the participants themselves—necessitates laying out the contingent details of interactional events to a precision that readers may find tiresome. Some readers may be presented with more detail than they care to know. But there are no shortcuts to the lived world of social participants. (p. 119)

Ethnographers and sometimes discourse analysts choose to interview interactants about their experiences and understandings. Tracy and Muller (1994) studied academic discourse (e.g., during departmental meetings or colloquia) by recording and transcribing it, but they also interviewed the participants to more fully ascertain the "beliefs, attitudes, and evaluative expectations" (p. 321) that the participants brought to their social interaction. Moreover, these researchers attended closely to discourse that occurred after a particular speech event, because it might be especially revealing:

We would expect the beliefs to be most directly visible in people's aftertalk, the postmortem analyses of discussion occasions that occur in offices and hallways. That is, beliefs about what is appropriate (or what is not appropriate) would repeatedly be asserted, or implicitly assumed, in the criticisms and complaints people make about actual occasions. In this sense, the language of aftertalk is more similar to the language of interview-talk. (p. 344)

In response to Tracy and Muller, the journal editors (Sanders & Sigman, 1994) questioned whether interviewing was an appropriate way to study social interaction. The editorial comments displayed a preference by many LSI researchers to recover meanings and understandings as they are displayed or oriented to in situ by interactants (e.g., chaps. 14, 21, 22, this volume). Such focus on how communicators' understandings are located in specific characteristics of talk is sometimes called the "message-intrinsic view" of communication (Hopper, 1992b; Mandelbaum, 1991). In short, different notions of meaning and understanding result in different sorts of LSI research, all devoted to emic accounts of social interaction.

Some strands of LSI research do not explicitly focus on participants' perspectives. In some discourse analytic approaches, where the goal is to lay out the usage of a conversational object, recovering participants' meanings may not be a principal objective. Rather, format may be seen as somewhat independent of the local situation in which they are found (e.g., van Dijk, 1993). Other research that does not explicitly focus on participants' perspectives nonetheless addresses issues of how the communication of one participant impacts another. For instance, research on speech evaluation shows how characteristics of a speaker's speech may result in particular evaluations of that speaker (e.g., chap. 2, this volume).

Research on Language and Social Interaction Focuses on Language in Use

Although different approaches to LSI research may have different agendas, virtually all approaches regard language in use as central to communication and hence the study of communication. Ethnographers, discourse analysts, and conversation analysts typically start from the premise that language is used in orderly ways to enact particular activities, roles, and relationships. For example, Katriel's (1993) ethnographic study of Israeli communication and culture
INTRODUCTION

1980, 1987; LeBaron & Streck, 2000; Schegloff, 1984.) In an analysis of girls playing hopscotch, C. Goodwin (2000) went beyond the human body to consider the entire “contextual configuration,” which included “a range of structurally different kinds of sign phenomena in both the stream of speech and the body, graphic and socially sedimented structure in the surround, sequential organization, encompassing activity systems, etc.” (p. 1). In sum, recent LSI research has taken up a more constitutive and holistic view of language in use.

It is clear that LSI has emerged over the past two decades as a lively and substantive area within the study of human communication. There is no one principle that consistently unites or defines LSI research in contrast to other research traditions. The seven points we have outlined here represent recurrent and interrelated issues within LSI work. Altogether, they are more central to LSI “identity” than they are for those working in other traditions, topics, or methods. Nevertheless, plenty of counterexamples exist within LSI for each point that we have discussed. Thus, it is most helpful to think of the seven points presented, not as universally guiding principles within LSI, but as points of ongoing attention or concern. Call these, if you will, prominent themes in the conversation going on within the area of Language and Social Interaction.

OVERVIEW OF THE VOLUME

This volume includes 32 original articles, which are grounded in LSI perspectives, research questions, and methods, plus 6 short pieces in the final section reflecting on Robert Hopper’s teaching and scholarship. A majority of the articles employ conceptual and methodological approaches of ethnemethodological CA. This reflects Robert Hopper’s legacy, for he as much as anyone worked to connect CA with the study of human communication. It also reflects the prominance of CA research within LSI. Other approaches that have kinship with CA and that are represented in the book include ethnography of communication, discourse analysis, sociolinguistic studies of language and power, and performance studies. Most of these report research on naturally occurring interaction. Others make theoretical or conceptual arguments.

Some edited volumes begin with a conceptual scheme then invite individual articles to reflect component parts, resulting in a strong thematic coherence. In the present case, the call for papers invited authors to submit work they thought fitting for a tribute to Robert Hopper. We did not attempt from the outset to select pieces based on their relevance to a prearranged scheme. Rather, the organization of the book arose from an inductive process of sorting the articles by various similarities. We decided on five parts, clustering around distinct interests and approaches that related in particular ways to LSI as a field and to Hopper’s work.
INTRODUCTION

The first part includes articles we selected to represent major research traditions within LSI. The second features studies of talk in everyday life, primarily casual discourse. The third part features studies of institutional discourse, particularly talk concerned with health and medical settings. The fourth part contains a relatively eclectic group of articles under the theme of future trajectories—in various ways, these articles move beyond current research topics and practices to explore and advocate innovative directions. The fifth part is a set of personal tributes to Robert Hopper.

There are other ways to group the articles in this book, and it may be useful to the reader to consider some of these:

- **Empirical studies: reports of new findings.** Beach, Corbin, Craig and Sanusi, Fitch, Glenn, Goodwin, Heritage, Jefferson, Jones, Lawrence, LeBaron and Koschmann, Lerner and Zimmerman, Maynard and Frankel, Mandelbaum, Maxwell, Dan Modaff, John Modaff, Morris, Pomerantz, Sanders, Schegloff, Wrobbel.

- **Review articles: summarizing areas of research, calling for new directions.** Bradac, Brown, Drew, Gonzalez, Houtkoop-Steenstra, Molloy and Giles, Streex, Stucky and Daughton.

- **Theory pieces: working with or developing theoretical or philosophical positions.** Brown, Drummond, Gonzalez, LeBaron and Koschmann, Molloy and Giles, Streex, Stucky and Daughton.

- **Applied research: dealing directly with practical life problems.** Bruder, Maynard and Frankel, Daniel Modaff, Molloy and Giles, Pomerantz, Wrobbel.

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REFERENCES


INTRODUCTION


INTRODUCTION


INTRODUCTION


INTRODUCTION


INTRODUCTION


INTRODUCTION


