

UCLA

Issues in Applied Linguistics

Title

Editorial: Language, Interaction, and Culture

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4mx0z6q4>

Journal

Issues in Applied Linguistics, 7(1)

ISSN

1050-4273

Authors

Roth, Andrew L.
Rymes, Betsy
Schlegel, Jennifer

Publication Date

1996-06-30

DOI

10.5070/L471005228

Peer reviewed

Editorial

Language, Interaction, and Culture

This edition of *Issues in Applied Linguistics* is dedicated to the proceedings of the First UCLA Conference on Language, Interaction, and Culture. As *ial* turns increasingly toward the interdisciplinary study of language, this set of articles brings together representative work from the fields of anthropology, education, psychology, and sociology as well as applied linguistics. Utilizing diverse methodologies to investigate varied social contexts, these articles are united by their focus on the fundamental relationship between language, interaction, and culture. By publishing these proceedings we aim to continue and extend the dialogue—between scholars and across disciplines—that the conference engendered.

As presented here, the articles reflect the conference's organization—around analytic themes rather than disciplinary boundaries. The first session, "Communicating Medical Troubles," is represented here by Lisa Capps' article "Socializing Anxiety through Narrative: A Case Study." Capps looks at the interactional foundations of agoraphobia, which has been conventionally understood as a clinical disorder located in an individual's mind. Her study of narratives within ordinary family settings illustrates the potential for using close analyses of talk and interaction to better understand the social foundations of psychological conditions. Two additional articles comprised this session but do not appear here: Jeffrey D. Robinson's "Talk and Body Deployment in Medical Interaction I: Arriving at Medical Troubles" and Elizabeth Boyd's "'Can you tell me something about this little baby?': Initial Requests for Information and the Construction of Patient Histories during Medical Peer Reviews."

The day's second session "Negotiating Competence and Authority" included articles by Stacy Burns, Wendy Fonarow, Lanita Jacobs-Huey, and Geoffrey Raymond. Burns' article "Lawyers' work in the Menendez brothers' murder trial" shows that in the course of effectively questioning witnesses lawyers often depart from—and even violate—textbook rules for courtroom interaction. Fonarow's article "Spatial Distribution and Participation in British Contemporary Musical Performance" also addresses the normative regulation of interaction. Having conducted fieldwork in England, Fonarow analyzes crowd behavior at independent music performances, examining the interactive achievement of "fanship." Jacobs-Huey's article "Negotiating Price in an African American Beauty Salon" highlights strategies used by a hairdresser and her clients to agree on a hairstyle that will accommodate both the stylist's

professional judgments and the client's personal preferences. A fourth article, Raymond's "The Voice of Authority: Sequence and Turn Design in Live News Broadcasts" does not appear in this volume.

As the title of the third session "From Grammar to Cultural Practice" suggests, the analysis of particles can yield a greater understanding of the cultural organization of interaction. Benjamin Wang's article, "Aspect: A Linguistic Device to Convey Temporal Sequences in Discourse" examines a particle, *-guo*, traditionally analyzed by linguists at the sentence level. Wang shows how participants use this particle in naturally occurring discourse to direct interlocutors' attention to narrative boundaries. Kylie Hsu's "Joint Attention in a Father-Child-Mother Triad: A Chinese-American Case Study" also examines the role of grammatical particles, demonstrating how affective morphology is used in family activities in one Chinese-American home. Jennifer Reynold's article, "Syncretic Practice: Change and Maintenance of the Samoan/Samoan American *`ā / huh*" presents a comparative approach in the analysis of the particles *`ā* and *huh* as used in Western Samoa and a Samoan American community in Los Angeles. Reynolds employs linguistic and ethnographic methods to link micro phenomena with cultural continuity and change.

The fourth session and theme represented in this volume, "Interactions in School Settings," is perhaps the most familiar to applied linguists. However, the three articles in this section diverge from the traditional focus on the learning of language to investigate the language of learning. In the article, "The Social Construction of Mathematical Knowledge: Presented Problems in Mathematics Classrooms," Lynda Stone shows how variations in teaching styles potentially foster opportunities for students' participation in the demonstration of mathematical proofs. Joanne Larson's article, "The Participation Framework as a Mediating Tool in Kindergarten Journal Writing Activity" examines the learning process as a collaborative activity. She illustrates how one kindergartner's written journal entry is accomplished through the complex relationships between contingent talk and formal instruction at a table of novice writers. Betsy Rymes' article, "'Friends aren't friends, homes': A Working Vocabulary for Referring to Rolldogs and *Chuchos*," examines an interaction among students at the margins of a school classroom. Her analysis uncovers how these students use alternative words for 'friend' to identify with one another even as they voice fundamental differences between their world views.

In his introduction to the conference, Alessandro Duranti addressed himself as much to the presenters as to the audience. These opening remarks are included here. In them, Duranti likened the process of preparing and presenting a paper to the way that jazz musicians initially conceive a tune, refine it in the course of practice with their mentors and peers, and, finally, perform it before an audience. In retrospect, the metaphor seems especially apt. While familiar themes motivate and organize these articles, the authors explore new ways of articulating these themes and assessing their continued relevance. It is our hope

that this publication captures some of the dynamism of this first UCLA conference and provides motivation for further variations on the themes of language, interaction, and culture.

Andrew L. Roth, Department of Sociology
Betsy Rymes, Department of TESL & Applied Linguistics
Jennifer Schlegel, Department of Anthropology

June, 1996