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1995

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0388-0001(95)00004-6

THE SEARCH FOR AN INTEGRATIONAL ACCOUNT OF LANGUAGE: ROY HARRIS AND CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

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The linguist Roy Harris has criticized theories of communication in which language is treated independently of the occasions of its use. Such accounts err, Harris argues, by segregating the linguistic and non-linguistic phenomena of social interaction. In his alternative, however, which he calls 'integrational' linguistics, Harris does not specify just how the study of language would be *methodologically* reconstituted. One model for that reconstitution might be conversation analysis (CA), a program of social research based on the ethnomethodological investigation of 'language-in-action'. Conversation analysts share with Harris the belief that language is situated, time-bound activity, the study of which should begin with naturally-occurring social behavior, viewed from the perspective of the interactants themselves. In several respects, however, CA departs from 'integrational' assumptions, most notably in its exclusive concern for informal conversation, its recurring appeal to formal mechanisms underlying communication, and its reduction of the temporal aspects of social life to the sequential unfolding of events. What may be needed, then, is an approach to the study of language which is more firmly committed to the empirical analysis of naturally-occurring discourse than Harris' linguistics but which avoids the formal and structural abstractions of CA. We might call such an approach an integrational *rhetoric*.

The contemporary study of human communication may be notable for, among other things, a growing tendency to treat language as *activity* rather than *thing*. This perspective is discernible, I believe, in at least two trends in recent research on language and discourse: an increased attention to particularity and context and a privileging of procedural over substantive phenomena. The *methodological* implications of such inquiry are somewhat obvious: if language is inextricably situated in place and time, then the *analysis* of language should focus on local practices and particular acts. One example of this kind of research can be found in the emerging field of 'literacy studies'. In Kintgen et al. (1988), Gee (1989), Beach et al. (1992), Cook-Gumperz (1986), and deCastell et al. (1986), literacy has been reconfigured as a constellation of acts and practices, analyzed through simultaneously social, cognitive, historical, cultural, discursive, and material investigation. Traditional disciplinary approaches to language have tended to deal with such multiple and situated events only by abstracting 'language' out of them and hypostasizing it in mental or social structures. In psy-

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chology, for example, literacy is often reduced to an abstract decoding process. The inter-disciplinary research of 'literacy studies', on the other hand, approaches literacy through particular literate *acts* and the historical, cultural, practical, social, and material contexts in which they are situated. Such work has been useful in its re-conceptualization of *one aspect* of human language. Often missing, however, is a coherent *general* theory of how *all aspects* of language might be approached the same way.

The integrational linguistics of Roy Harris may provide just such a theory. In his work, Harris has criticized accounts of communication in which language is treated independently of the occasions of its use; and he has proposed in their place an account in which linguistic and non-linguistic phenomena are integrated in situated communicative acts. Harris' theory has provided language researchers with a powerful critique of orthodox linguistics and a forceful re-conceptualization of the relationship between language and practical action. But it has been less helpful in motivating a productive program of *research* that can move theory beyond critique.

One contemporary school of social science may already offer a model of 'integrational' analysis. In ethnomethodological conversation analysis, researchers explore with some precision the intersections of language and social life. As such, conversation analysis, or 'CA' as it is often called, appears to be a useful tool for the integrationism proposed by Harris. And CA is a flourishing area of research—in the sociology of science, the analysis of institutional communication, and the study of everyday talk, it has claimed notable advances in knowledge. Silverman (1993: 120) refers to it as the leading approach in the analysis of naturally-occurring linguistic interaction. And among rhetoric and composition scholars, ethnomethodological analyses of language behavior, like CA, appear to be on the rise (see, for example, Brandt, 1992).

More to the point of this paper, conversation analysis and Harrisian linguistics share the belief that language is inescapably contextualized, time-bound, communicative activity. But can CA provide, in the end, an 'integrational' account of language in the sense proposed by Harris? In three specific respects, my answer here is *no*. First, conversation analysis unnecessarily restricts the study of language to the analysis of transcripts of informal conversation. Second, it formalizes conversational structure in ways that work against a radical contextualization of language. Third, it equates temporality with sequentiality, thereby reducing the temporal dimensions of discourse. On all three counts, I believe, ethnomethodological conversation analysis fails to meet the challenge of Harris' goals for an integrational account of language.

Different approaches, a shared orientation

Harrisian integrationism

For Roy Harris,¹ the fundamental error of modern linguistic theory is the belief that human communication can be explained, even in part, by appealing to structured systems of contextless signs and the rules of their combination. In such works as *The Language Makers* (Harris, 1980), *The Language Myth* (Harris, 1981), and *The Language Machine* (Harris, 1987), Harris argues that orthodox accounts of communication, in their postulation of linguistic invariants underlying particular linguistic acts, abstract language from the occasions of its use and segregate it from the situated activity of which it is always a part. The philosophical underpinnings of this mistake, he claims, are two widely-held Western assumptions: the 'telementational fallacy', in which communication is viewed as the transference of thoughts from one mind to another, and the 'fixed-code fallacy', in which a shared set of correlations between thoughts and signs is the vehicle of that transference. In subscribing to these assumptions, Harris argues, linguistic science commits itself to the belief that there are, in fact, languages; that different languages are distinct, autonomous structures existing outside the activity of situated human beings; that linguistic signs are intrasystemically-related, fixed dualities of form and meaning; and that languages are capable of being 'contained' in dictionaries and visualized in scripts. Harris (1988: 113) labels this view of language 'segregational',

in the sense that it assumes the possibility of a strict segregation between linguistic and non-linguistic phenomena within the universe of human activity. More prosaically, it assumes that human linguistic behaviour can be separated out from accompanying non-linguistic behavior, and treated independently.

In segregationism, then, languages are self-enclosed, rule-governed, synchronic systems of contextless form/meaning dualities. In Saussure's version, for example, segregationism has five essential features: (1) centrality of the sign as a unit, (2) strict bi-planarity, (3) self-containment, (4) finite, unique itemization, and (5) supra-individuality (Harris, 1980: 155). But segregationism shows up in other places, too, for example, in the role accorded the dictionary in Western culture. For Harris (1980: 133), the dictionary is a key artifact of the segregational belief that words stand determinately for ideas and things external to the language itself:

[B]y exhibiting each word as an established item with its own identity, the dictionary effectively discouraged its users from seeing a language as consisting in a form of continuous activity. It gave visible embodiment to a distinction between the word and its use. Words were units somehow having their own static and separate existence from the ongoing course of human affairs.... A language thus came to be seen as constituting, in principle, a finite system of elements at any given time, and the psychological foundation was laid for all modern forms of structuralism.

Wittgenstein's notion that languages are self-enclosed, autonomous 'games' and Chomsky's belief that linguistic performance presupposes abstract linguistic competence would also be segregational by Harris's standards.

In contrast to these approaches, Harris (1990a: 199) proposes that we think of language as 'manifested in a complex of human abilities and activities that are all integrated in social interaction, often intricately so and in such a manner that it makes little sense to segregate the linguistic from the non-linguistic components'. An *integrational* linguistics, then, recognizes that 'human beings inhabit a communication space which is not neatly compartmentalized into language and non-language' and which takes as its point of departure 'the individual linguistic act in its communication setting' (Harris, 1981: 165). The ontological primacy accorded *the sign* in orthodox linguistics is thus transferred to *communication* in integrational linguistics (Harris, 1993: 1). In other words, the sign is no longer given in advance of the communicative situation 'but is itself constituted in the context of that situation by virtue of the integrational role it fulfills' (Harris, 1990b: 45).

The alternative to segregationism, then, is the attempt to understand, as Austin (1975: 148) urged, 'the total speech act in the total speech situation'. Language is seen to be 'continuously created by the interaction of individuals in specific communication situations' (Harris, 1981: 167). So, rather than explain communication through the postulation of context-free linguistic invariants, Harris (1990a: 206–207) proposes that we try to understand how particular utterances are 'communicationally integrated in a particular continuum of activity'. As Love (1990: 20) claims, all utterances for Harris appear in a context, and that context 'must be assumed to be, not merely potentially relevant to the message, nor even always and necessarily relevant to the message, but quite simply, an integral part of the message'.

Unfortunately, from an integrational perspective, most models of linguistic analysis would seem to suffer from segregationism. Even sociolinguistics involves the implicit admission that the study of linguistic communities is only one subdivision of linguistic theory, whose 'disciplinary heart' is still the study of language structure (Harris, 1990a: 199). If we share, then, Harris' desire (Harris, 1990a: 202) to 'integrate linguistics into the general study of communicative behaviour', on what *methodological* basis would such studies be carried out?

Ethnomethodological conversation analysis

One answer has been offered by ethnomethodology. Originating in the United States in the 1960s as 'alternate sociology', ethnomethodology survives today in, among other things, the theoretical and methodological roots of 'conversation analysis'.² The term 'ethnomethodology' was first used by Harold Garfinkel to index the study of everyday practical reasoning in human activity.

In his earliest investigations, Garfinkel (1967) had been interested in the ways people used instructions, laws, principles, rules, theories, and the like to reason their way through the contingencies of mundane social situations. He studied, for example, the methods that jurors used to make sense of legal cases, the procedures employed by coroners to determine cause in equivocal deaths, and the ways psychiatry students used coding instructions to categorize patients. What Garfinkel found was that, rather than simply applying pre-given abstractions to the particular situations in which they found themselves, participants managed specific cases *locally* and *interactionally*, through what he called 'indexical' and 'reflexive' means. The reason, order, and coherence accomplished on such occasions was 'accountably' (i.e., publicly and verifiably) displayed *within the occasions themselves*, through the *ad hoc*, temporally-constituted, practical actions of the participants. In other words, the social structure that Durkheim and Parsons had posited as a *thing* Garfinkel saw as a *process*, achieved within the socially organized occasions of its use.

Once sociology is thus reconstituted, informal conversation—seen in most structuralist accounts as merely epiphenomenal—becomes a key object of inquiry. As Zimmerman and Boden (1991: 3) argue, 'Talk—more precisely, talk-in-interaction—provides the fundamental framework of social interaction and social institutions'. Talk also conforms to the twin ethnomethodological principles of indexicality and reflexivity; that is, conversation is not merely *about* actions, events, and situations, it is 'a potent and *constitutive part of* those actions, events and situations' (Potter and Wetherell, 1987: 21, emphasis in original). Individuals interpret what their conversation partners say in light of the context in which it is said; at the same time, they formulate through talk the very social order that they use to interpret further interactions. Conversation is thus a locally-managed, joint enterprise which both reflects and produces social structure.

The ethnomethodological conversation analyst, then, shares with the integrationist the belief that language is first and foremost *activity*, inextricably contextualized and time-bound. Drew and Heritage (1992: 17) argue that it is through this 'activity focus' that conversation analysis distinguishes its treatment of interaction and language from other theoretical orientations. 'Conversation analysis', they write

begins from a consideration of the *interactional accomplishment of particular social activities*. These activities are embodied in specific social actions and sequences of social actions. Thus, the initial and overriding conversation analytic focus is on the particular actions that occur in some context, their underlying social organization, and the alternative means by which these actions and the activities they compose can be realized. (emphasis in original)

The 'underlying social organization' that Drew and Heritage refer to is thus no longer seen as pre-existing particular interactions and activities. Instead, as Garfinkel (1991: 11) wrote, order is 'every society's locally, endogenously pro-

duced, naturally organised, reflexively accountable, ongoing, practical achievement'. Such an orientation is at the heart of ethnomethodology's foundational critique of structural sociology. In the work of Durkheim and Parsons, social structure had been something that *caused* social interaction. It was a collective phenomenon which provided a pre-existing social order to human activities. But in conversation analysis, as Zimmerman and Boden (1991: 19) argue,

social structure is not something 'out there' independent of members' activities, nor are the structures of social action located at the unobservable level of Durkheim's collective. Rather, they are the practical accomplishment of members of society. Members can and must make their actions available and reasonable to each other and, in so doing, the everyday organization of experiences *produces* and *reproduces* the patterned and patterning qualities we have come to call social structure. The organization of talk displays the essential reflexivity of action and structure and, in so doing, makes available what we are calling structure-in-action.

The ethnomethodological refusal to posit pre-existing, abstract structures to explain human action also implicates cognitive theories of language because, just as social structures are no longer 'out there', they can no longer be 'in here' either. Ethnomethodological researchers like Coulter (1991) and Lee (1991) see this as a neo-Wittgensteinian attempt to deny underlying mental structures or grammars as the basis of logic and understanding. As Coulter (1991: 30) writes, 'it is in the domain of ordinary, practical, social affairs where rules for using linguistic symbols, signs, and concepts are to be revealed in operation'.

So, just as integrationists refuse to see language as meaningful apart from the occasions of its use, conversation analysts hold that there can be no determination of social behavior independent of local interaction. Lucy Suchman's ethnomethodological claim (Suchman, 1987: 179) that 'the contingency of action on a complex world of objects, artifacts, and other actors, located in space and time, is... the essential resource that makes knowledge possible and gives action its sense' would therefore appear to mirror Harris' Wittgensteinian view (Harris, 1988: 113) that 'language has no segregated existence; words are always embedded in a "form of life",... inextricably integrated into purposeful human activities'. Language, Harris (1990a: 208) writes elsewhere,

involves not just vocal behaviour but many kinds of behaviour, and to engage in face-to-face linguistic communication is, in the simplest type of case, to comonitor with one other person a behavioural continuum along which a succession of integrated events can be expected to occur.

Harris (1980: 46-47) himself has written that ethnomethodology, although a powerful critique of certain conventional views of language, falters by assuming that it can, by attending to the local management of meaning, 'repair' the indeterminacy of language. Ethnomethodology is thus heir to traditional scientific and philosophical prejudices against language itself (Harris, 1981: 22-23). Unfortunately, Harris nowhere else engages the ethnomethodological project; and ethnomethodologists have in turn ignored his 'integrational' challenge. This

lack of mutual attention is particularly odd given the (at least superficial) similarities between the two approaches.

Language from the user's point of view

In addition to this shared orientation to language, conversation analysis and integrational linguistics are also united in certain key methodological assumptions. For example, both claim as their analytical territory language use in naturally-occurring social interaction. Both attempt, in other words, to study the situated behavior of real individuals in their everyday activities, a goal which, for Lee (1991: 217), amounts to a rejection of decontextualized *linguistic* analysis in favour of a *discourse* analysis which attempts systematically 'to integrate "language" and "the social"'. This is closely related, I believe, to Harris' argument (Harris, 1990a: 199) that linguistic intercourse never is and never can be a form of human behaviour which is *sui generis*.

A shared methodological orientation towards language *in social use* may also explain a shared analytical focus on *the interactants themselves* in investigations of social structure, a clear move away from the social institutions of Durkheim and Saussure and the ideal speaker-hearer of Chomsky. Just as Harris (1980: 3) has written about language that 'the language-user already has the only concept of a language worth having', ethnomethodologists claim that, in studying social interaction, the interactants' own understanding—through their sequential reaction to the moves of the conversation—is the only empirical basis for inferring social structure in the events analysed. Ethnomethodology becomes, then, the study of *lay* methodologies, 'the body of common-sense knowledge and the range of procedures and considerations by means of which the ordinary members of society make sense of, find their way about in, and act on the circumstances in which they find themselves' (Heritage, 1984: 4). For Garfinkel (1991: 17), order, meaning, and reason are the accomplishments of 'members' themselves, through their joint, everyday activities.

Interest in such lay rationality can be traced, in part, to Alfred Schutz's *verstehen* sociology and its concern for how people interpret their own social lives (Garfinkel, 1967; Heritage, 1984; Taylor, 1992). In this view, social actors are not 'dupes' of deterministic social structures but are instead knowing and acting agents who co-construct meaningful social structure in an ongoing and practical way. In Lynch's ethnomethodology of laboratory work (Lynch, 1985: 6), this principle manifests itself in studies which attempt 'to situate themselves within the settings of work they describe', taking advantage of what Garfinkel had called the publicly 'accountable' display by the members themselves of their own rational procedures for accomplishing social life. Likewise, Levinson (1983: 295) claims that 'the categories of analysis should be those that participants themselves can be shown to utilize in making sense of interaction'. And, in their classic study of conversational turn-taking, Sacks et al. (1974: 729)

write that the ways that interactants themselves respond to one another's turns reveals the very social structure that they are managing:

Since it is the parties' understandings of prior turns' talk that is relevant to their construction of next turns, it is **THEIR** understandings that are wanted for analysis. The display of those understandings in the talk of subsequent turns affords both a resource for the analysis of prior turns and a proof procedure for professional analyses of prior turns—resources intrinsic to the data themselves. (emphasis in original)

So, just as Harris (1980: preface) proposes that we think of human beings as language *makers* rather than language *users*, ethnomethodologists reject any view of human agency as simply the playing-out of pre-determined abstractions, the agents themselves nothing more than 'servants bearing tureens of linguistic signs into the great dining halls of life' (Billig, 1991: 15).

The commitment to the language user's own perspective on language, meanwhile, also corrects, according to Harris, the scientific denigration of 'ordinary language'. In orthodox Western philosophy, words are misleading, imprecise, and hopelessly 'indexical', that is, inextricably and unfortunately tied to the 'accidental' circumstances of their use. Philosophers and scientists have been concerned, therefore, with finding a 'more soundly based descriptive system' with which to acquire knowledge (Harris, 1981: 20–21). For the integrational linguist, however, the flight from ordinary language is a flight from social reality. Harris (1990b: 51) writes

[T]he strategies and assumptions people bring to bear on the communicational tasks of daily activity, tasks they are obliged to deal with by whatever means they can, are all an integrational linguistics needs to study in order to advance our understanding of what language is and the part it plays in our lives.

Orthodox linguistics joined the philosophical fight against ordinary language, Harris argues, when Saussure abandoned the historian's perspective on language but then failed to adopt the language user's perspective in its place. A 'genuine' language-user's perspective, Harris (1981: 163) argues, leads us to ask (with the conversation analyst as well), '[W]hat do the speaker and hearer have to do in order to integrate speech relevantly into a temporal flow of episodes which they are jointly co-monitoring?'

Data and theory in the analysis of language

Belief in the local, interactional, and temporal constitution of structure is methodologically manifest for both the integrational linguist and the conversation analyst in a commitment to unremittingly *empirical* descriptions of what people *actually say and do* in social interaction. For Harris (1981, 164), the goal of integrational linguistics is the yielding of statements which both 'correspond to the language user's experience and are open to the verification and disproof characteristics of the empirical sciences'. Likewise, ethnomethodologists often refer to their work as a much-needed 'respecification' of social behavior whose

goal is the description of 'detailed, embodied, situated action and interaction' (Button, 1991: xii). On the matter of social data, then, Harris and the ethnomethodologists would appear to be in agreement: proper social scientific investigation begins with actual social behavior, viewed from the point of view of the participants themselves, and treated in an insistently empirical manner by the analyst. On closer inspection, however, the two accounts diverge in fundamental ways.

For the ethnomethodologist, order is found in the recurrent accomplishment of ongoing, practical social life, and this entails study of the smallest and most mundane interactions. In such research, a phenomenon like conversational turn-taking is not an abstract structural order imposed from outside on our actions and interactions; instead, it is the very site—local, sequential, and practical—of social structure. But the insistently empirical stance accompanying this view is not just an attribute of the analyst. According to Garfinkel, the participants of social interaction are *also* empirically motivated—they publicly display *to one another*, in verifiable fashion, their own ongoing interpretations of the interaction. That is, interactants themselves 'prove', by the sequentiality of their contributions, that the interaction is socially ordered. As Sacks et al. (1974: 728–729) put it:

Herein lies a central methodological resource for the investigation of conversation..., a resource provided by the thoroughly interactional character of conversation. It is a systematic consequence of the turn-taking organization of conversation that it obliges its participants to display to each other, in a turn's talk, their understanding of other turns' talk.

What ethnomethodologists believe they are analyzing, then, is a social reality that is 'visible' to participants and analysts alike.

Enter the portable tape-recorder. Audio-recorded mundane conversations, 'neither idealized nor recollected retrospectively' (Heritage, 1984: 235), can be listened to repeatedly, examined in all their detail, and shared with interested others. With the portable tape-recorder, interaction data become available 'in raw form, neither idealized nor theory-constrained' (Heritage, 1984: 238; see also Moerman, 1988: ix). For Drew and Heritage (1992: 5), the emphasis on 'recorded conduct' is a corrective to conventional sociology's indirect access to social action through questionnaires, interviews, self-reports, etc. Indirect accounts, they argue, can never escape the problematic gap between what people say they do and what they actually do. By contrast, conversation analysts use audio and video records to reveal how particular interactions are 'enacted and lived through as accountable patterns of meaning, inference, and action'. The audio- or video-recording and the transcript thereof thus play a central role in CA inquiry. But to be by origin a 'lay' methodology, conversation analysis is curiously beholden to the technological mediations of recording equipment and the cumbersome transcription notations that translate speech events into print. As Edwards (1993), Ochs (1979), and others have reminded us, the

transcription of speech is always a theory-laden enterprise, despite the presumption by conversation analysts that they are looking at 'raw', 'visible' social life. The distance travelled, therefore, between the lay experience of conversation and the analyst's interpretation of it is hardly inconsequential.

An exclusive concern for informal conversation is another point of principle for the ethnomethodological conversation analyst. Heritage (1984: 238) writes that 'the central domain of data with which conversation analysis is concerned is everyday, mundane conversation'. Talk which is highly intellectual in content or 'specifically fateful' for one or another of the participants is purposefully avoided. The primacy of mundane conversation is supported by the pervasiveness of conversation in the social world at large and the role of such conversation in introducing children to that world. Heritage (1984: 239) argues further that 'institutional interactions' (for example, the decidedly *non*-trivial exchanges of the courtroom, doctor's office, or classroom) are simply reductions or concentrations of 'the base environment of ordinary talk'. Levinson (1983: 284) agrees: informal conversation is 'clearly the prototypical kind of language usage'. Sacks et al. (1974: 722) describe conversation as 'a major, if not THE major locus of a language's use' (emphasis in original). And for Drew and Heritage (1992: 19), ordinary conversation or 'mundane talk'—explicitly associated here with casual conversation between peers—is the predominant medium of social interaction, constituting a kind of benchmark against which other more formal or institutional types of interaction are experienced. It might be argued, then, that comparisons between Harris and the conversation analysts are invalid because Harris' theory concerns language in general while CA is concerned with only one *part* of human language—mundane conversation. But, for the conversation analyst, the focus on talk is not simply a researcher's *choice*. In ethnomethodology, talk is *the key fact* of social life and is at the center of any theory of situated action. The assumption of much conversation analysis, in other words, is that the study of mundane conversation *is* the study of social life.

In fact, conversation analysts argue, the more 'mundane' the conversation, the more obvious will be the local and practical accomplishment of everyday social order. One well-known example of CA research, for example, is a 50-page account of telephone conversation openings (Schegloff, 1979). Billig (1991: 16), for one, sees the tendency to concentrate on such seemingly insignificant interactions of social life to be both asset and liability. The ethnomethodological impatience with abstraction, he writes, leads to highly detailed examinations of the ways language is actually used in real social occasions. But the restriction of such study to trivial conversations can also be 'puritanical'. Billig himself does ethnomethodologically-influenced discourse analysis on non-conversational data in which subjects are interviewed about highly significant and controversial issues. He admits that many recent conversation analyses are also breaking

through the earlier restriction on mundane conversation; but, he writes, they are still more interested in the 'forms of talk' than in their content. Lynch's ethnomethodology of science (Lynch, 1985: 8-9), for example, distances itself from the lack of substance in traditional conversation analysis but then embraces the 'general relevance' of abstract conversational architecture (the sequential design of turn-taking, for example). As for Harris, he nowhere restricts analysis of human communication to conversational data. In fact, Harris has shown a sustained concern for the role of *writing* in human communication, a subject largely ignored by the ethnomethodologist.

Having collected the mundane data on which he or she depends, what does the conversation analyst do next? One thing he or she *doesn't* do is turn to theoretical abstractions. Button (1991: 4-5) writes of ethnomethodology that it

never bought into the business of theorising, it was iconoclastic, it would not theorise foundational matters... [I]t wished to make them investigable, available for enquiry. In holding them up for scrutiny, ethnomethodology came to respecify foundational matters.

According to Heritage (1984: 235), the CA respecification of social data can be traced to Sacks' impatience with the averaging and idealization of interaction specifics in conventional sociology; he deliberately sought therefore 'a method of analysis which would keep a grip on the primary data of the social world, the raw material of specific, singular events of human conduct'. For Lee (1991: 224), such 'respecification involves...suspending general questions, such as the question of the relationship between "culture" and "language" until these have been described with respect to the question of how they translate into the witnessable understandings and activities of social interactants'. Conversation analysts thus put aside questions concerning the connection between conversational interaction and the larger contexts of social action as 'premature and unprofitable diversions the central task of discovering and describing the organization of conversational interaction as such' (Zimmerman and Boden, 1991: 3). Heritage (1984: 242) describes this as the conversation analyst's 'retreat from premature theory construction... an avoidance of abstract theoretical constructs'. Similarly, Levinson (1983: 295) praises CA's 'healthy suspicion of premature theorizing and *ad hoc* analytical categories'.

But the ethnomethodological re-invigoration of empirical research against the excesses of twentieth-century theorizing may harbor an over-abundant faith in the social reality captured by CA transcripts. When Sacks et al. (1974: 699) write that their conversational material, 'accessible to rather *unmotivated* inquiry, *exposes* the presence of turn-taking and the major facets of its organization' (emphases mine), the assumption seems to be that the import of their data is self-evident. This assumption may undermine the ethnomethodologist's own goal of contextualizing social behavior. If all the analyst needs is some record of the conversation itself, the transcript of a mundane telephone conver-

sation, for example, then, ironically, the context doesn't matter that much after all. It is as if the decontextualized behavioral record makes accessible to participant and analyst alike the visible, cross-situational organization of human conversation. And when Levinson (1983: 295) writes that 'the emphasis is on the data and the patterns recurrently *displayed* therein' (emphasis mine), he seems to imply that, just as interactants themselves 'display' their 'rationality' to one another through their various public actions and reactions, so the 'rationality' of conversation is unproblematically available to analysts. In other words, the ethnomethodological project might be said to begin with a rejection of independent, abstract, theoretical constructs but end ultimately with their re-affirmation in the form of interactional abstractions like 'the turn-taking system' and the 'adjacency pair'. The actual content of particular conversations, certainly relevant to any account of context, is curiously expendable.

Harris' students Talbot Taylor and Deborah Cameron (Taylor and Cameron, 1987) have demonstrated in their deconstruction of an analysis by Levinson (1983) that the data of conversations may not be as self-evident as ethnomethodologists would like to believe. What Levinson sees as 'visible' in the conversation, as empirically evident in the interactants' own behaviour—in this case, a conversational pause interpreted as a 'dispreferred' response to a request—may require more presuming on his part than he has imagined. Taylor (1992) has written elsewhere of the ways ethnomethodologists avoid the *intellectual* problems of accounting for human communication by positing entirely *practical* solutions. Rigorous theoretical speculation about intersubjectivity—the central plank in the ethnomethodological platform—is by this device effectively side-stepped. Mutual understanding is so obvious to the ethnomethodologist as to require neither abstract theorising nor negative scepticism; it is a voluntary, practical, *moral* accomplishment of the interaction itself, necessitating no 'in-principle' explanation, and so publicly obvious to be discernible as a matter of course. The 'normative turn-by-turn implementation of adjacency-structuring of conversational action' is thus both proof of mutual understanding *and* an explanation of how such understanding occurs (Taylor, 1992: 224). As Taylor and Cameron (1987: 107) write, there is no need to impose an analysis on the data because 'the conversation itself wears its (or the participants') own inherent ('emic') analysis on its sleeve'.

For Harris, highly sensitive to the culturally-conditioned assumptions behind all our theories, data can never speak for themselves. In his writings, historical and theoretical issues often crowd out the particularities of local data. But this is not merely a matter of preference, as if one could *either* theorize *or* specify. From the perspective of Harris, we are always language theorists whether we like it or not. There is no such thing as self-evidence in the analysis of talk, and

it is a delusion to believe that, as analysts, we can 'postpone' larger questions while we work out the particularities of smaller ones:

To have a concept of a language necessarily involves going beyond mere understanding of what the acceptable verbal moves are, even in the case where what is claimed is that to know a language is just to know the acceptable verbal moves. A concept of a language involves, and is most often clearly manifest in, acceptance or rejection of what requires explanation about the ways in which languages work. This means that a concept of a language cannot stand isolated in an intellectual no-man's-land. It is inevitably part of some more intricate complex of views about how certain verbal activities stand in relation to other human activities, and hence, ultimately, about man's place in society and in nature. (Harris, 1980: 54-55)

Integrational linguistics, then, is everywhere concerned with the inescapably 'cultured' nature of our thinking about language. Just as *language* itself cannot be abstracted away from temporally-constituted practical, social activity, neither can *thinking about language* be segregated from the culture in which such thinking is always an inheritance.

Structure and occasion in social action

In both integrational linguistics and ethnomethodological CA, I have argued, language is seen as *contextualized, time-bound activity*. I would now like to look more closely at the conversation analytic notion of 'structure-in-action' and assess whether such an account squares with Harris' integrationism. Zimmerman and Boden (1991: 5) hold that, although the conventional sociological view of structure as social abstraction ('gender', for example) is rejected by conversation analysts, the concept of structure itself is retained. They define structure as 'regular, repetitive, nonrandom events that stand in a systematic relationship to one another'; and, drawing on the methodological principles introduced earlier—that analysis of social interaction take place as much as possible through insistently empirical investigations from the point of view of the participants themselves—they characterize structure as

accomplished in and through the moment-to-moment turn-taking procedures of everyday talk in both mundane and momentous settings of human intercourse. The instantiation of structure is, moreover, a local and contingent matter, one that is endogenous to interaction and shaped by it. The enabling mechanisms of everyday talk thus practically and accountably accomplish structure-in-action. (Zimmerman and Boden, 1991: 17)

The order of social life is thus reproduced in each interaction. In other words, for the ethnomethodologist, structure is a procedural and not a substantive phenomenon, a notion seemingly compatible with Harris' rejection of *hypostasized* linguistic entities.

Several empirical claims follow from the view that *structure* is always *structure-in-action*. For one, individuals would be seen to make their way through social life (that is, to make society rational) in an insistently *ad hoc* fashion. Garfinkel (1967), for example, argued for the necessarily *ad hoc* nature of actualizing any set of abstractions, rules, or theories. Rather than treat codes as

autonomous, deterministic instructions, applied to diverse particulars, he held that consideration of particularity is what gives sense to abstraction. As with Wittgenstein, rules are an insufficient explanation or determinant of human action; to account for usage, we must see, in every instance of use, separate, specific, local, contingent determinants (Heritage, 1984: 120–121). For the ethnomethodologist, then, talk is understood not by reference to a pre-existing semantic or syntactic calculus but through the very social situations which give particular utterances their meaning and which are in turn constructed by those utterances.

In other words, the order we achieve in our social lives is an order constituted *in time, in social interaction, in particular contexts*. Conversational structures are therefore best seen not as invariant abstractions but as patterns of situated activity. According to Levinson (1983), for example, conversations are organized (1) by a **turn-taking** system that results in the orderly transition of speakers in natural social interaction; (2) through **adjacency pairs** in which the first part (a question, for example) sets up certain expectations for the second (an answer); and (3) by an **overall** structure that would include such things as openings, topic slots, and closings. And from more recent work on 'institutional' talk, conversations in doctor's offices and courtrooms are seen to be structured by such mechanisms as the pre-allocation of turns (for example, of questions to institutional participants and answers to lay participants) and a pervasive professional cautiousness (Drew and Heritage, 1992). But note that, for the conversation analyst, these patterns and typifications are meaningful only as *accomplished*; that is, they make sense only as the participants themselves *enact* them in their everyday activities. So, rather than assume that the 'meaning' of a particular utterance can be fixed through correspondence to a pre-existing structure (a dictionary definition, grammatical rule, social convention, etc.), conversation analysts hold that the 'meaning' of an utterance makes sense only as actual speakers and hearers accomplish the utterance in a sequence of interactions unfolding in a particular situation.

One might say, then, that, for the conversation analyst, context is all; that context is a temporal, interactional, and local construct; and that conversational acts and their embedding context are reciprocally related. As Heritage (1984) puts it, any particular communicative act is doubly contextual: it is at once *context-shaped* and *context-renewing*. In other words, an interactional event cannot be understood except by reference to its context, including the immediately preceding events of the interaction. At the same time, every action contributes to the terms by which the next action is understood. Thus, an utterance in a conversation is 'shaped' by the context in which it occurs; simultaneously, it 'renews' the context by which future utterances will be interpreted.

The work on conversational turn-taking by Sacks et al. (1974) might serve as an example here. In that paper, the authors postulate a form of communicational structure that is enacted *through time by the joint effort of situated social interactants*. Their research suggests that informal conversation involves an orderly allocation of turns such that only one person speaks at a time and there is a finely coordinated transition between speakers with little overlap and only barely discernible gaps. Orthodox accounts of communication have tended to treat such interaction, when they treat it at all, as the product of structured systems of units and rules, existing either inside each participant's head, as abstract linguistic competence, or in a shared cultural system. In other words, analysts have tended to treat conversational structure, when they treat it at all, as simply another abstract variable ontologically prior to the communicative event itself. Drew and Heritage (1992) call this the 'bucket theory of context', in which the social framework 'contains' local action. The ethnomethodologist, on the other hand, is interested in what Schegloff (1991) calls the 'procedurally consequential' aspects of context. So, as Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson argue (Sacks et al., 1974), analysts cannot afford to hypostasize communicational structures. As perhaps the single most important feature of informal conversational behaviour, turn-taking only makes sense as accomplished over time through the joint action of coordinated individuals, that is, as a *sequential, interactional*, and thoroughly *local* affair. Conversational structure is thus not substantive but procedural, not synchronic but temporal, not static but ongoing, not an attribute of individuals but the joint activity of interactants. Language here is firmly integrated into social action, and this would seem to be perfectly suited to Harris' proposals for re-defining what it means to study language.

Or is it? Although conversation analysts like Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson claim that structure (the organization of turn-taking in mundane conversation, for example) is always structure-in-action (a sequential, interactional, and local affair), there are still hypostasized entities at work here. The postulated system may be different from the abstractions of Saussure, Durkheim, Parsons, and Chomsky, but the *system* is still there; and every time we want to say that this is a thoroughly *situated* account of human communication, fully sensitive to the necessarily *temporal, interactional*, and *local* nature of language, we come up against systemic abstractions. In the Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson piece, for example, this paradox is particularly noticeable. Early in the article, the authors claim that the turn-taking organization of conversation is both 'context-free and capable of extraordinary context-sensitivity' (699). Because I believe this distinction is an important one in assessing the CA view of the structure/occasion binary, I will quote extensively from the authors' discussion:

[A] problem for research on actual conversation is that it is always 'situated'—always comes out of, and is part of, some real sets of circumstances of its participants. But there are var-

ious reasons why it is undesirable to have to know or characterize such situations for particular conversations in order to investigate them. And the question then becomes: What might be extracted as ordered phenomena from our conversational materials which would not turn out to require reference to one or another aspect of situatedness, identities, particularities of content or context?

One reason for expecting the existence of some such type of organization is as follows. Conversation can accommodate a wide range of situations, interactions in which persons in varieties (or varieties in groups) of identities are operating; it can be sensitive to the various combinations; and it can be capable of dealing with a change of situation within a situation. Hence there must be some formal apparatus which is itself context-free, in such ways that it can, in local instances of its operation, be sensitive to and exhibit its sensitivity to various parameters of social reality in a local context...

...Depiction of an organization for turn-taking should fit the facts of variability by virtue of a design allowing it to be context-sensitive; but it should be cast in a manner that, requiring no reference to any particular context, still captures the most important general properties of conversation. (699–700, emphasis in original)

Thus, although Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson offer impressive evidence for the *local*, *interactional*, and *temporal* features of mundane conversational action, the situated aspects of communication are still 'managed'—to use their word for it—by a 'system'—again, their word—that can be unproblematically abstracted from the particular events it governs. In other words, communication is *situated* only on the surface; abstract structures external to the particular act drive that act in a way surprisingly compatible with the orthodox sociological/linguistic structuralism that ethnomethodologists have claimed to reject. What, for example, is the ontological status of 'the system' (also referred to as 'it') in the passage below?

1. The system deals with single transitions at a time, and thereby with only the two turns which a single transition links; i.e., it allocates but a single turn at a time.
2. The single turn it allocates on each occasion of its operation is 'next turn'.
3. While the system deals with but a single transition at a time, it deals with transitions: (a) comprehensively... (b) exclusively... and (c) serially... (725)

It is this 'system', I would argue, that makes any association of ethnomethodological conversation analysis with 'integrational' accounts of language problematic. Rather than begin, as Harris (1981: 165) proposes, with 'the individual linguistic act in its communication setting', Sacks et al. (1974: 699) impose on that act hypostasized invariants that exist independently of it. Their ultimate concern is not, as they themselves put it, 'particular outcomes in particular settings', but 'the organization of turn-taking *per se*' (emphasis mine). The decontextualized abstractions of structuralism are thus resurrected in full force. To this objection, conversation analysts would likely claim that they make no analytic distinction between structure and the occasions of its manifestation. But how then does one account for their reification of structure, of context-free 'systems' like turn-taking, which, they argue, play such a powerful role in determining the shape of everyday social interaction?

Despite, then, the ethnomethodological predilection for dealing with talk *in action*, there is a contradictory feature of such analyses that, at times, resembles the structuralist search for the rules *behind* social interaction, the normative structures that operate in social interactions to orient and guide interactants in their behavior. Goffman had written of Garfinkel's early work that he had attempted to 'uncover the informing, constitutive rules of everyday life' (as quoted in Taylor and Cameron, 1987: 4) and that this attempt had followed the success of Chomsky's search for the generative rules of language. For later ethnomethodological conversation analysts, the adjacency pair structure seemed to provide just such a 'normative framework' for verbal interaction (Taylor and Cameron, 1987: 109). Cicourel's account of ethnomethodology (Cicourel, 1974) ties it closely to generative linguistics, although for him the relevant rules are manifest not in syntax but in practical action. Taylor and Cameron (1987: 116–117) point out the 'analytical circularity' of this feature of ethnomethodology—the notion that although conversation is an entity that is meaningful only in practical, local, situated, ongoing activity, the machinery that ultimately gives it structure is 'relatively stable and context-independent'. But Zimmerman and Boden (1991: 8) seem untroubled by this apparent paradox:

[Talk] is organized by use of machinery deployed in and adapted to local contingencies of interaction across an immense variety of social setting and participants... The organization of talk provides the formal resources to accomplish these interactional tasks, and deploys these resources in a manner that is sensitive to just what circumstances and participants happen to be at hand—which is to say, *locally*. The shape of talk found in a specific site thus reflects the context-sensitive (and thus particularized) application of a more general, context-free (and thus anonymous) interactional mechanism.

From an integrational perspective, then, ethnomethodology has simply substituted an objective abstraction called 'conversation' for the previous one called 'language'. Though this may be an improvement over structuralist linguistics, it can never be more than a partial response to the call for a fully integrational approach to communication. Talk cannot be separated from the other mental, physical, and social activities in which it is embedded and by which it is constituted, including the activity of analysis itself. Questions about setting, social roles, rhetorical occasion, technology, content, etc., *cannot* be simply suspended. What Zimmerman and Boden (1991: 8) call the ethnomethodological 'treatment of conversation as a virtually autonomous domain' may then actually impede efforts to integrate the linguistic and non-linguistic as proposed by Harris.

Language and temporality

In a crucial sense, everything truly iconoclastic about both integrational linguistics and ethnomethodological conversation analysis comes down to how they account for the role of time in human action. In both, temporality is accorded a central position, in contrast to the predominantly *detemporalized*

structuralism of conventional sociology and linguistics (see Hopper, 1992, for a useful discussion of temporality in post-structuralism).

For Harris, succession in time is the key to understanding the human experience of language. Because language is situated communicative action, Harris (1981: 154–155) argues, language is always imbued with a temporal stamp, and this provides ‘a unique contextualization’ for ‘everything that is said, heard, written, or read’. Progression through time therefore makes of language a continuously creative process. ‘Every linguistic act’, Harris (1981: 155) writes, ‘is integrated into the individual’s experience as a new event, which has never occurred before and cannot occur again’. In other words, once language is seen as temporalized action rather than detemporalized state, there can no longer be an unproblematic abstraction of language from the rest of human activity, and there can no longer be a strict segregation of linguistic from non-linguistic events. The chronological ‘parity’ of linguistic and non-linguistic events Harris (1981: 158) terms the principle of *cotemporality*.

What Harris (1990b: 47) proposes, then, is neither the historically-oriented diachronic analysis that Saussure had rejected nor the synchronic linguistics that was proposed in its place, but instead a ‘panchronic’ analysis which ‘considers as pertinent to linguistic communication both the integration of simultaneously occurring events and also the integration of present events with past events and anticipated future events’. The crucial role played by temporality in Harris’ theory cannot be over-emphasized:

[T]he integrational perspective sees us as making linguistic signs as we go; and as having no alternative but to do this, because language is time-bound. For the integrationist, we are time-bound agents, in language as in all other activities. Whereas segregational semantics tacitly... presupposes an a-temporal linguistic arena, usually disguised as a static present (Saussure’s *synchronique*), the integrationist accepts that there is no way we can step outside the time-track of communication. Once this is conceded, it follows that there is no such thing as a contextless sign. A sign cannot exist except in some temporally circumscribed context. That contextualization is a foundational condition of the very existence of the sign, and whatever falls outside it also falls outside the province of an integrational semiology.... Nothing about language or languages—and, more generally, nothing about communication—is timeless. (Harris, 1993: 9)

In short, it is Harris’ profound appreciation for the temporal dimensions of the human experience of language that allows for his devastating critique of linguistic structuralism.

Ethnomethodological conversation analysis takes a strikingly similar stance towards temporality. For the ethnomethodologist, the ‘architecture of intersubjectivity’ which orders social life is a thoroughly *sequential* phenomenon. That is, human beings structure their rational lives together by publicly displaying, *over time*, their mutual understanding of the situation-under-construction. In ethnomethodology, an action is always seen as a response to the action immediately prior to it, and any future action is necessarily construed in accordance with the context already established. Drew and Heritage (1992: 18), for exam-

ple, write that 'the sense of an utterance as *an action* is an interactive product of what was projected by a previous turn or turns at talk and what the speaker actually does'. It is for this reason that, as Levinson (1983: 321) remarks, interactants display the order of social life both for one another and for the ethnomethodologist: 'As each turn is responded to by a second, we find displayed in that second an analysis of the first by its recipient. Such an analysis is thus provided by participants not only for each other but for analysts, too'. The structure of social life is thus an ongoing, publicly-accountable, joint accomplishment.

Garfinkel's emphasis on the temporal concerting of action, Heritage (1984: 108) claims, was a direct challenge to those theories of social action in which abstract social norms determined local conduct. In such a view, the scene of action is essentially pre-defined, and time is nothing more than a 'fat moment'. In the ethnomethodological alternative, norms become 'reflexively constitutive of the activities and unfolding circumstances to which they are applied'; and social structure is only available through 'temporally extended sequences of action' (Heritage, 1984: 108). Schegloff (1992: 125) describes this as a kind of serialization of context:

There is, to my mind, no escaping the observation that context, which is most proximately and consequentially *temporal* and *sequential*, is not like some penthouse to be added after the structure of action has been built out of constitutive intentional, logical, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic/speech-act-theoretic bricks. The temporal/sequential context rather supplies the ground on which the whole edifice of action is built (by the participants) in the first instance, and to which it is adapted 'from the ground up'.

Zimmerman and Boden (1991: 9) agree:

For conversation analysis, the varieties of sequential organization —the turn-taking system for managing the construction, allocation of turns at talk, sequences for entry into and exit from conversation, and for the repair of trouble or for doing invitations, requests, assessments, and the like —provide the structure for conversational encounters, and talk-in-interaction more generally. As a consequence, the sequential environment of talk provides the primary context for participants' understanding, appreciation, and use of what is being said, meant, and most importantly *done* in and through the talk.

Thus, in Sacks et al. (1974: 722), the turn-taking system is a system for allocating turns *in a series*. Each turn is seen as having a three-part structure, 'one which addresses the relation of a turn to a prior, one involved with what is occupying the turn, and one which addresses the relation of the turn to a succeeding one'. Similarly, for Lynch (1985: 53), ethnomethodology of work is inquiry into 'the serial ordering of tasks in the immediacy of an organizational setting'.

At first glance, then, it would seem that we have a powerful convergence of integrational linguistics and conversation analysis regarding the fundamentally temporal constitution of social life. But there is an important distinction here. In conversation analysis, time has been reduced to a sequencing mechanism. It

orders social interaction the way a clock governs life in a factory: it is dominating and relentless. The ethnomethodological position seems to be that not only are conversational turns inescapably connected to the turns which precede and succeed them, but that this is the *only* way that social action is temporalized. Time therefore becomes another objectified abstraction. In fact, for the ethnomethodologist, time is the one structural element that is denied a reciprocal relationship with occasion. Time constructs local action but is itself unconstructed; it is beyond agency and beyond language.

For Harris, temporality is irreducible to sequentiality. Harris' principle of co-temporality ensures that the integrational position is not that language activity is sequential but that linguistic and non-linguistic time are chronologically integrated. Such parity implies *both* sequentiality and simultaneity. Linguistic acts progress through time, but they are also integrated into the temporal progression of other, simultaneously-occurring, acts. For Harris, then, the focus on temporality becomes a way to stress that language is situated, social action, inextricably contextualized and irreducible to static objectivities. An interesting 'temporal' fact about language, in such a view, is creativity, in the sense that we 'make' language as we go. And as we 'make' language, *non-linguistic* things happen as well; ideology, for example, might be said to progress 'simultaneously' with linguistic time but still be largely hidden if one looks only at the transcription of a few conversational moves. Narrative devices are another temporal 'fact' of communication irreducible to strict sequentiality. Frenzt (1985: 7), for example, distinguishes 'conversations which structure time as an emergent historical unity from conversations in which time is experienced as a linear sequence of temporal units'. In the latter, participants experience time 'on the encounter level', as the sequencing of chronological units. In the former, however, they experience time 'on the form of life level', talk serving to fuse past and future in the present. In such conversations, individuals place themselves self-consciously in narrative contexts, acting out stories in which past and potential conversations emerge. In other words, time here is not so much a *constructor* of social reality as it is itself *constructed* as part of social reality. Schegloff's notion (Schegloff, 1991) that context is only interesting when 'procedurally consequential' might be a way, then, to deny the impingement of such non-sequential temporalizations of human communication.

There is another way that temporality for Harris defies reduction to sequentiality. Language analysts are also time-bound, and their analysis of language is itself another linguistic act. In other words, temporality contributes to the constitution of language, but language is used to constitute temporality as well. We construct, for example, the 'time' of past events; they are not simply given to us in the raw records of human behavior. This reflexivity is lost upon the ethnomethodologist, for whom the sequential unfolding of conversation, as repre-

sented in a written transcript, is a visible fact, unproblematically available to all.

Conclusion: Towards an integrational rhetoric?

My purpose in this paper has been to contribute to the methodological re-configuration of language study. Setting up as a worthy goal Roy Harris' integration of linguistic phenomena into the practical continuum of human activity, I have sought to judge how one approach to the study of language, ethnomethodological conversation analysis, measures up to that goal. I hope to have shown that CA and integrational linguistics share many goals and some methodological tactics. The two accounts seem to converge in their insistence that communication analysts begin with data from naturally-occurring social behavior and that such data be viewed as much as possible from the perspective of the interactants themselves. And they share the belief that language is not a finite, static *thing*; it is instead an *activity*, situated in time, and understandable only as contextualized in the particularities of actual social action. These are important similarities that set the two accounts apart from more orthodox studies of social life.

But there are important differences between the CA and integrational approaches to language. One finds in most ethnomethodological conversation analysis, for example, an exclusive concern for informal, mundane conversation, an often suspicious stance towards theoretical reflection, a recurring appeal to formal mechanisms organizing social action, and a reduction of temporality to sequentiality. These are tendencies, I would argue, that preclude the kind of radical contextualization needed in language studies. The integrational linguistics of Roy Harris, I believe, avoids these problems.

Unfortunately, Harris' work, while devastating in its critique of conventional linguistics, has failed to produce the kind of 'positive' methodology employed by conversation analysts. If a useful goal for the integrational study of language is empirical (albeit *non-* or *post-structuralist*) analyses of situated discourse, and if ethnomethodological conversation analysis is found lacking as an integrational approach, then we are left pretty much where we started. Let me close, then, by briefly outlining what an integrational methodology might look like, what I call here an integrational *rhetoric* to further distance the post-structuralist study of language from modern linguistic science and take advantage of the centuries-old rhetorical tradition, where language has never been meaningful *except* as actually used in practical, situated, social interaction. The turn to rhetoric here cashes in on the more general turn to rhetoric in much late 20th Century philosophy and language theory. From such a perspective, language is approached not as an abstract structured, rational, or formal system. It is neither supra-individual nor primarily mental. Rather, language is approached as situated, social, discursive *action*. Rhetorically speaking, individuals in social

situations construct (through discourse) realities designed to influence the action of others (see, for example, Bender and Wellbery, 1990; Billig, 1987; Mailloux, 1989; Nelson et al., 1987; Perelman, 1982; Roberts and Good, 1993; Shotter, 1993; and White, 1985).

What would such a perspective look like, given both Harris' integrational principles and the desire for close analyses of actual discursive practice? First, any integrational study of human communication must share with both Harris and the conversation analysts a commitment to firmly basing social inquiry on observations of naturally-occurring social behavior. Analysts would concentrate, in other words, on *actual* linguistic performances collected with minimal intrusion by the analysts themselves.

Second, that data must be approached with a thorough-going sensitivity for the context (including the temporal context) in which such action exists. Following Harris' principle of co-temporality, an integrational rhetoric would reference particular linguistic acts *both* to simultaneously-occurring *non*-linguistic acts *and* to the sequential working-out of the discourse itself. That is, contextualized analysis of any particular language act must attend to both its situation *in* time and its distribution *over* time.

Third, the integrationist must be cognizant of the positionality of analysis itself. An integrational rhetoric would attempt close, detailed descriptions of actual communicative events but do so without assuming that such events will be in any sense transparent. Linguistic acts are inescapably polysemous, and any theory about social life using such acts as evidence will bear a heavy argumentative burden.

Fourth, integrational accounts of language can afford to use neither speech nor writing as the basis for understanding language *in toto*; in most studies, it must be assumed that 'events' and 'texts' co-exist in complex ways. Thus, a theoretical or methodological preference for informal conversation, on the one hand, or formal monologues and texts, on the other, would be counter-productive. The integrational analysis of language should consider both to be species of situated communicative action.

Fifth, an integrational rhetoric must be able to connect language to functionality, thus integrating form and content. No inquiry, in other words, can ignore the very real work that language does in and with the world. A radical contextualization can never be content with purely formal phenomena; it must situate linguistic practices in materially constructive actions. A conversation, from such a perspective, is more than a series of *turns*. It is also a site for the advancement of various constructions of reality. The analyst cannot afford to ignore those 'realities' in favour of content-free (and contextless) abstractions.

Sixth, integrational analysis must also be able to connect communicative contexts to human invention, that is, to combine the traditional rhetorical interest

in the planning of purposeful monologues and texts with the give-and-take of situated, dialogic action. An exclusive concern, on the one hand, with informal conversation or, on the other, with planned texts are both to be avoided. A theory of situated action must be able to account for both.

Seventh, and finally, an integrational rhetoric would be oriented to instability and conflict and therefore to argument. The terrain of rhetoric is not only social and situated; it is also contested. In this view, we use language less to coordinate our thoughts with external objects or calibrate them with the thoughts of others than to advance through social discourse various partisan constructions of the world. Such an orientation would deny the presumption of intersubjectivity held by many ethnomethodologists, a presumption that allows the researcher a quietistic attitude towards ideology, power, and conflict. By focusing on the informal interactions of peers, and assuming that such interaction is managed by shared communication norms, the conversation analyst becomes blind to what the rhetorician sees as the inescapably *argumentative* nature of human discourse. And informal conversation, even among peers, need not be excluded from a theory of argument. Farrell (1993), for example, distinguishes between what he calls 'rhetorical' and 'conversational' discourse but sees conversations as *becoming* rhetorical to the extent that they involve premeditation, disturbance, or disputation. Our social lives, in this sense, are characterized less by intersubjective agreement than by what Burke (1969: 23) called 'the state of Babel after the Fall'.

In sum, an integrational rhetoric may be one answer to the methodological problem raised at the start of this paper. In line with Harris' theory, such an approach would eschew the hypostasization of language endemic to orthodox linguistic analysis. But an integrational rhetoric should motivate more than a theoretical critique of structuralism. It should produce close, detailed, empirical analyses of situated discursive action; and it can do so—it is hoped—without resorting to the limitations of ethnomethodological conversation analysis.

NOTES

¹Harris is not the only scholar associated with integrational linguistics. A handout from a panel discussion on integrational linguistics held at the XVth International Congress of Linguists in Quebec in 1992 lists more than 50 articles and 15 books from 18 different scholars, including Naomi Baron, Deborah Cameron, Tony Crowley, Paul Hopper, Nigel Love, Peter Mühlhäusler, and Talbot Taylor. Harris' work is probably, however, the best-developed exposition of the approach.

²Taylor and Cameron (1987: 99) write that the field of ethnomethodology is now often referred to simply as 'CA'. It is important to remember, however, as Moerman (1988) argues, that no field has a monopoly on either the phrase or the activity of 'conversation analysis.' For my understanding of CA, I have relied on the work of Emmanuel Schegloff, John Heritage, Paul Drew, Stephen Levinson, Michael Lynch, and others.

Acknowledgements—I wish to thank Paul Hopper, Roy Harris, and Talbot Taylor for their comments on earlier versions of this paper.

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