1 Introduction

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The field of Conversation Analysis (CA) began with just three people, Emanuel Schegloff, Harvey Sacks and Gail Jefferson. It grew, as many new enterprises do, out of a dissatisfaction with the methodologies and theories of the time, as they pertained to everyday social behavior. Forty years later, CA is the dominant approach to the study of human social interaction across the disciplines of Sociology, Linguistics and Communication. The most recent international conference on Conversation Analysis (ICCA-2010) boasted more than 600 attendees. CA publications are estimated to be over 5,000 in number and growing rapidly. In short, CA in the 21st century represents a rich and vibrant community of international scholars working across a wide range of languages, institutional and ordinary contexts, and disciplinary boundaries.

It is precisely because of this vibrancy that the time is right for a handbook of CA. In perusing the volume, the reader will readily see the solidity of the field, indexed not only by the number of scholars working within this paradigm, but also by the range of topics and interests in the field and the ways in which CA scholars are reaching to connect conversation analytic findings to other fields of inquiry, thereby continuing to increase the breadth and intellectual reach of CA.

Our introduction to this volume is necessarily brief. However, in it we hope to contextualize the rest of the volume by discussing CA relative to other approaches to language use and social interaction, the interdisciplinary nature of CA, and its

institutionalization over the last forty years. Finally, we describe our goals for the volume and its organization.

2   CA in Relation to Other Approaches to Language Use and Social Interaction

As topics of research in the social sciences, language use and social interaction have been approached in quite different ways. Among the many methodological approaches to this domain are discourse analysis, pragmatics, ethnography of speaking, gesture studies, Balesian interaction analysis, corpus linguistics, field linguistics, ethnomethodology, behavioral ecology, ethology, experimental studies and semiotics. This volume will make no effort to compare and contrast CA with these different methodological alternatives. Instead, we propose that CA represents an approach which combines five key stances into a perspective which is distinctive. These concern: (i) its theoretical assumptions, (ii) goals of analysis, (iii) data, (iv) preparation of data for analysis, and (v) analytic methods.

The CA approach is distinctive (i) in assuming that language use, and social interaction more generally, is orderly at a minute level of detail. Additionally, this orderliness is conceived of as the product of shared methods of reasoning and action to which all competent social interactants attend.[1] CA is also distinctive (ii) in that the goals of the analyses are structural—i.e. to describe the intertwined construction of practices, actions, activities, and the overall structure of interactions. With these goals and assumptions in mind, the data required for analyses are also distinctive (iii) in that they must be records of spontaneous, naturally occurring social interaction rather than, for instance, contrived interactions or those that might occur in a laboratory. Given the assumption that social interaction is organized at a fine-grained level of detail and that the goal of CA is to identify structures that underlie social interaction, video or audio data are never coded or analyzed in raw form. Rather, the preparation of data for analysis involves (iv) detailed transcription in order to facilitate the analysis of the details of turns and sequences. Moreover, given the assumption of fine-grained order in interaction, transcripts must be sufficiently detailed to permit its investigation. Finally, CA is distinctive (v) in its analysis. As an inductive qualitative method, it seeks to describe and explain its focal domain—the structures of social interaction—through a reliance on case-by-case analysis leading to generalizations across cases but without allowing them to congeal into an aggregate. CA works from raw data to noticings of patterns using a combination of distributional regularities, commonalities in contexts of use, participant orientations and deviant case analysis.

As a method, CA is not suitable for all research questions pertaining to language use and/or social interaction, but it is well-suited to those concerned with understanding the structural underpinnings of everyday conversation as well as spontaneous naturally occurring social interaction among lay persons and/or professionals.

3   The Interdisciplinary Nature of CA

Although much of the research in CA is concerned with the use of language, Conversation Analysis has its roots not in Linguistics or Communication but in Sociology, the discipline of Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson. For these scholars, language was of sociological significance because it serves as a vehicle for social action and because it can be studied in its particulars. CA's sociological roots are visible in two of its founding ideas: (i) an institutionalized 'interaction order' (Goffman, 1983), comprising shared methods of reasoning and action (Garfinkel, 1967b), forms the foundation of ordinary action in the social world; and (ii) this institutionalized interaction order is the basis not only of social interaction but also of social institutions (Drew & Heritage, 1992b; Goffman, 1983; Schegloff, 2006a). However, in the days when CA was first being established, links were forged to other disciplines. In fact, most of the earliest CA journal publications were outside Sociology in journals of Linguistics and Anthropology (Jefferson, 1973, 1974; Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974; Schegloff, 1968; Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks, 1977; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). This interdisciplinarity underscores the breadth of recognition that these early findings attracted. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson's (1974) piece on turn-taking remains, 38 years after its initial publication, the most-cited paper in the history of *Language* (the official organ of the Linguistic Society of America), despite it being a paper by sociologists not linguists (Joseph, 2003).[2]

Edited collections were the other primary outlet for early CA work. Volumes in which early CA works were published include *Everyday Language: Studies of Ethnomethodology*, edited by sociologist George Psathas (1979b), *Studies in Social Interaction*, edited by sociologist David Sudnow (1972) and *Studies in the Organization of Conversational Interaction*, edited by Jim Schenkein (1978b). Additionally, CA works were published in edited collections that were primarily directed toward sociolinguists such as *Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication*, edited by John Gumperz and Dell Hymes (1972), or linguistic anthropologists such as *Sociocultural Dimensions of Language Use*, edited by Sanches and Blount (1975) (Jefferson, 1972, 1978, 1979; Sacks, 1972a, b, c, 1975, 1978, 1979; Schegloff, 1972a, b, 1979a).

Since those early days, CA has made inroads into mainstream Sociology with publications in the discipline's flagship journals. However, CA work continues to have strong representation in publications in Anthropology, Communication, Linguistics, Psychology and other more interdisciplinary journals as well. As CA has moved into the study of various social institutions, CA scholars have placed publications in journals at the intersection of, for instance, Sociology, Health and Communication; Political Science, Mass Media and Communication; and Education, Linguistics and Anthropology. The interdisciplinarity of the field is important for CA because the knowledge needed to study social interaction draws on all of these disciplines: without an understanding of culture, gesture, grammar, prosody, pragmatics and social structure, it would be difficult to have

a meaningful theory or method for the study of spontaneous, naturally occurring social interaction (see Schegloff, 2005b), Thus, the interdisciplinarity of the field, reflected in the departmental homes of CA practitioners and CA publications, indexes a real complementary of expertise brought to the enterprise.

4   The Institutionalization of CA

As with many interdisciplinary fields of inquiry ranging from media studies to gesture studies to biochemistry or geophysics, institutionalization involves a great many small steps. Some of the indicators of institutionalization include publications in top journals; the translation of published work into multiple languages; a presence across many universities in the form of faculty, course listings and available textbooks; a presence in terms of publicly available presentations at national and international conferences; accessible training centers, workshops and summer schools; dedicated workshops and conferences; dedicated journals; national and/or international societies; and dedicated university departments or centers with secure funding.

Since 1967, the field of CA has achieved many of these indicators of institutionalization. The 1970s involved a series of setbacks for the field beginning with the tragic death of Harvey Sacks in 1975 and followed by a major international economic recession which made it difficult for many in the early cohorts of graduate students to secure tenure-track positions (Wiley, 1985). However, the decade certainly included developments that laid the foundations for the long-term success of CA. These included several classic CA publications and the 1973 Linguistics Summer Institute, which substantially broadened the audience for CA, capturing the attention of scholars who would play important roles in the development and reach of CA not only in the United States but also in Europe, particularly Britain.

The 1980s saw a surge in interest in CA, particularly in Britain where Gail Jefferson and Anita Pomerantz were working and training students. The 1980s began with the publication of Charles Goodwin's (1981) important monograph *Conversational Organization: Interaction Between Speakers and Hearers*. That same period saw several other highly influential volumes being published. Stephen Levinson's (1983) textbook *Pragmatics* attacked Speech Act Theory and presented CA as an effective alternative within Linguistics. John Heritage's *Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology* (1984b) was important not only for its exceptionally clear exegesis of the roots of Garfinkel's thinking, but also for its masterful chapter on CA—a classic introduction to the field from a sociological perspective. Atkinson and Heritage's (1984) *Structures of Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis* presented a collection of what remain some of the most cited papers in CA. Other significant volumes published in the 1980s include Paul Drew and Anthony Wootton's (1987) *Erving Goffman: Exploring the Interaction Order* which included important contributions on Goffman's relation to CA by Schegloff and Heath, Atkinson's (1984) *Our Masters' Voices: The Language and Body Language of Politics*

which used CA to examine public oratory, and Button and Lee's (1987) *Talk and Social Organisation* which contains a series of important studies by Sacks, Schegloff, Jefferson, Goodwin and others. The 1980s was also Jefferson's most prolific period. She published more than 20 articles, chapters and reports during the decade.

While the 1980s saw a substantial output and a surge in interest in CA, the 1990s saw a move toward greater institutionalization to the extent that many more CA scholars secured permanent positions at universities across the United States, Europe and Asia. This, in turn, meant more courses on language and social interaction as well as courses dedicated to CA. The 1990s also saw the development of centers of CA scholarship and training, in particular at UCLA, UCSB, the University of York, and the University of Helsinki. Although informally in place prior to the 1990s, it was not until that period that these universities were serving as true centers of scholarship. Summer schools, both those offered under the umbrella of organizations such as the Linguistics Summer Institute and those offered under rather independent Ethnomethodology-CA or simply CA auspices, provided another form of training, particularly for post-doctoral scholars. CA research became, in this decade, a widely recognized method being discussed in presentations across national conferences in Anthropology, under linguistic anthropology's umbrella, in Communication, under the aegis of language and social interaction, in Linguistics, within pragmatics, in Psychology, under discursive psychology, and in Sociology, under ethnomethodology and CA.

Since 2000, increases in CA scholarship have been steady, but more critical has been the presence of a series of international conferences on CA. In 2002, the first International Conference on Conversation Analysis was held in Copenhagen, Denmark. The second was held in 2006 in Helsinki; the third in Mannheim in 2010. As noted earlier, by 2010 the number of attendees had topped 600. The same year also saw the formation of an international society, the International Society for Conversation Analysis, with a founding group of 300 members. In short, CA has moved from a cottage industry to become a major international presence across a range of disciplines. This volume represents an attempt to capture the field's significance and diversity.

5   Goals and Organization of the Volume

In the course of developing this handbook, our goals were manifold. First, we wanted to showcase the findings and developments within CA across the last 40 years. To this end we worked to identify the primary structures, topics and contexts that had attracted CA interest and attention. Second, we wanted to consolidate CA research across these areas. In this respect the volume was designed to be a comprehensive reference book that would provide a ready resource to established scholars, advanced students and also those new to CA. Third, we wanted this book to serve as a teaching resource. Currently there are a number of CA textbooks available, however none offers the breadth and comprehensiveness of a handbook-style volume.

The most important aspect of the volume is that it includes the voices of 42 of the world's leading conversation analysts. Collectively, these voices provide more depth and breadth than any one or two of us could possibly provide on our own. This volume represents the diversity of the CA discipline and includes scholars who are located in departments of Anthropology, Communication, Education, Linguistics/Languages, Management, Psychology and Sociology, among others. Moreover, the breadth of this group of contributors allowed us to make sure that individuals could contribute chapters in the area of social interaction research s/he knows best.

As a handbook of Conversation Analysis, we wanted to provide a book that gave readers an understanding of the theoretical background of CA, discussed the key analytic tools and strategies of the CA method and provided substantive chapters in the key areas. This volume is therefore organized into five main sections. The first, *Studying Social Interaction from a Conversation Analytic Perspective*, includes chapters on the intellectual backdrop against which CA emerged (Maynard), as well as the CA approach to collecting data (Mondada), transcribing data (Hepburn & Bolden) and analyzing data (Sidnell).

The second section, *Fundamental Structures of Conversation*, takes eight core structures in conversation and discusses what we know about each. Levinson begins with the critical area of social action—what are conversationalists *doing* when they talk in interaction, and how do we recognize these doings as particular actions? Drew then considers the design of turns-at-talk and the consequences of different lexical selections and grammatical formats. Clayman examines the turn-constructional unit—the building block of turns—and its sister concept the transition-relevance place. Hayashi continues the turn-taking topic with a focus on how and when speakers select next speakers and share the turn space. Stivers moves us from the level of the turn to the level of the sequence in a review of how turns are organized into action pairs and other sequential structures. Pomerantz and Heritage discuss differences in how speakers design actions when they are 'preferred' or 'dispreferred', offering both a review and a revisiting of prior work in the area. Kitzinger reviews the domain of repair—how speakers manage problems of speaking, hearing and understanding. Finally, Robinson moves us from actions, turns and sequences up to the level of whole interactions—overall structural organization.

The third section, *Key Topics in CA*, provides reviews of 11 topics of inquiry in the field of CA. Heath and Luff begin the section with a discussion of embodied action, reviewing work on visible behavior in social interaction. Rossano discusses the role of eye gaze in conversation. Ruusuvuori considers how CA has addressed emotion. Lindström and Sorjonen consider how interactants display and manage affiliation in interaction. Heritage's chapter focuses on research in the area of epistemics—domains of knowledge—and how relative knowledgability is managed in social interaction. Hayano's and Lee's chapters address question and answer designs, respectively. Enfield examines reference in conversation with a focus on person reference but discusses a number of other domains as well. Walker reviews the growing subfield of CA concerned with phonetics and prosody in conversation. Mazeland's chapter discusses how CA work has analyzed the role

of grammar in conversation. Finally, Mandelbaum examines the activity of story-telling, a topic of interest from Sacks' (1972c) first discussion of "The baby cried. The mommy picked it up."

Whereas the second and third sections cohere topically, the fourth section, *Key Contexts of Study in CA: Populations and Settings*, covers seven contexts where significant CA scholarship has been done. Here, then, there is significant crossover with work discussed in the prior two sections. These chapters, though, have as their lens what CA has contributed to each population or setting. Since each of the chapters' authors has worked extensively in the setting about which s/he writes, these chapters also provide some sense of how these contexts have been informed by the CA approach. Additionally, these chapters reflect methodological issues that are particular to the population or setting in focus. Kidwell examines CA work on interaction among children, an area of long-standing interest to conversation analysts but beginning to see significantly more growth. Antaki and Wilkinson discuss the study of atypical populations such as those with cognitive impairment. Peräkylä discusses CA research in the psychotherapeutic context. Gill and Roberts review the substantial scholarship in the field of medical interaction. Komter's chapter discusses CA research on courtroom interaction. Finally, Clayman reviews CA contributions to the study of the news interview.

As discussed earlier in this introduction—and as will be clear from even a cursory review of where conversation analysts are located departmentally, where CA research is published, or where CA research is presented—CA is an interdisciplinary field. We did not attempt to discuss every possible disciplinary connection that CA has. However, there are five disciplines which either house substantial numbers of conversation analysts, or are publishing a substantial amount of CA research, or both. It was our view that although CA is a coherent theory and method with common goals and a common agenda across these disciplines, the discipline in which a scholar works and publishes will necessarily shape the work—at the very least, its framing. Not only will CA be shaped slightly differently by these disciplines, but CA will *shape* these disciplines somewhat differently. Thus, the fifth section, *CA across the Disciplines*, has as its goal a review of how CA shapes and is shaped by each of the disciplines. Heritage and Stivers discuss this with respect to Sociology, out of which CA originally developed. Beach discusses CA vis-à-vis Communication, a field which hosts an increasing number of CA scholars. Clemente examines the long and sometimes fraught relationship between CA and Anthropology. Potter and Edwards examine how CA and Psychology are beginning to work together. Finally, Fox, Thompson, Ford and Couper-Kuhlen discuss the long and productive relationship between CA and Linguistics.

6   Conclusion

For many years it was supposed that interaction was a kind of epiphenomenon that would ultimately be explained by a form of reduction—i.e. explained and accounted for by reference to language, mind, society or culture, or some

combination of them. Goffman, Garfinkel, Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson all struggled against such a view and CA can be seen as the intellectual territory gained in that battle. This volume, as a whole, presents CA as a coherent approach to social interaction. Although there are differences *within* CA in terms of the particular ways in which individuals or groups work, their goals, and so on, there is also a great deal of consensus in terms of method and outlook. While attempting to preserve some of this diversity of perspective, we place the emphasis on the common core—the large body of findings which has emerged over the past 40 years, along with the methods which led to their discovery. It is this common core which has been inherited from CA's founders.

NOTES

1   Indeed members frequently assess another's competence by reference to that person's capacity to produce and recognize this orderliness (see Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970).
2   Joseph (2003: 463) writes:

> What emerges from these measures is that the 1974 article 'A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking in conversation' by Harvey Sacks, Emanuel A. Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson (*Language* 50: 696–735) is by far the most-cited article from *Language*, based on the citation indices, and is near the top of both the JSTOR list for 2003 and the LSA reprint-request list.

In November, 2011, Google scholar indicates 7,686 citations to this work.