Communication 665:
Conversation Analytic Methods in Communication Research –
Acknowledgement Tokens & Related Social Activities

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Course Description

This seminar will introduce you to the complex and fascinating world of conversational interaction. Within the broad range of discourse approaches to the study of language and social interaction, this seminar focuses on the methods, techniques, and contributions of "conversation analysis" (CA) to an understanding of everyday communication. Particular attention will be given to:

1) Ongoing analysis of audio/videorecordings, and transcriptions, of diverse conversational activities
      and events;
2) Methodological and theoretical issues arising from situated examinations of verbal, nonverbal, and
      nonvocal activities comprising social structure.

While class activities will involve lectures and discussions of relevant literature, the bulk of our time and efforts will be given to "informal data/listening sessions" – repeated, rigorous, and grounded attempts to identify and substantiate patterns of human conduct-in-interaction. The grist for our mill, then, are a wide variety of naturally occurring interactions submitted to repeated listenings, viewings, and transcribed inspections of ordinary involvements.

We will begin by overviewing basic working assumptions of CA, including assessments of current and ongoing issues requiring attention (e.g., adjacency pairs, turn construction, sequence and topic organization). We will then focus on the organization of a variety of interactional environments within which usages of the following words/utterances are apparent: *mm, um hm, uh huh, yeah, okay, oh, so, no, I don't know, you know, and "God"* – to name a few. Particular attention will given to how these words preface subsequent turns-at-talk, their unique contributions when recruited by speakers to accomplish specific tasks, and the kinds of social actions they are setting-up/projecting. Overall, I want to emphasize how small and seemingly inconsequential acknowledgments, tokens, and phrases are both omnipresent and critically important for the lived-out achievement of everyday social interactions.

Materials will be drawn from readings and ongoing collections of diverse interactional moments. Students will have the option of researching topics related to "words/utterances/actions" referenced above, and/or focusing on interactions of their choosing (see "Final Research Project" in Appendix B).

Text(s)

Two xeroxed packages (readings and syllabus/transcriptions) will be available at Aztec Book Store (second floor); reserve readings on first floor of Love Library. (Readings will also emerge as class progresses, and will be available from me and/or placed on reserve on an ongoing basis.)

Projects and Evaluation

       15% -- Transcription Exercise
       15% -- Preliminary Data Analysis
       15% -- Collection Analysis
       45% -- Final Research Project
       10% -- Seminar Participation

       100%

Fifteen percent of the final grade will be generated from a brief transcription exercise, designed to a)familiarize seminar members with transcribing conventions and formatting(see Appendix A), b)sensitize students to the organizing details of conversation that too frequently pass unnoticed, and c)provide shared data for the Preliminary Data Analysis (see below).

An excerpt, approximately one minute in length, is drawn from SDCL: Gossip. Two female speakers, D and J, are involved in this phone call. Prior to where you will begin transcribing, J begins telling a story about a mutual but apparently not well liked acquaintance (Jeff), who she saw driving on the freeway.

Begin your transcription with D's "Did ya talk to him", and end your transcription with D's "What an idiot".

Audio copies of this excerpt will be provided to you during the first seminar, and will be discussed in more detail at that time.

Fifteen percent of the final grade will emerge from an analysis of selected excerpts from the Transcription Exercise (see Appendix B). We will discuss how these moments might be identified and systematically examined. This exercise will function to enhance your abilities to analytically describe a single case, and set-up a collection of phenomena you are interested in pursuing.

Fifteen percent of the final grade will emerge from a presentation of data analyzed in selected articles – an exercise we will discuss during seminar.

Forty five percent of your grade will be tied to a final research project (see Appendix C). The goal is to produce a grounded and thorough analysis of a single case analysis and/or collection of some interactional "phenomenon". Issues such as what counts as a "phenomenon", how many instances comprise a sufficient collection, and more will be addressed from the beginning of the seminar. You will be given considerable freedom as to what kinds of conversational activities you might study, and considerable assistance in identifying and locating relevant studies (and references in general) that are suited to your particular investigation (i.e., beyond those available in the class readings).

Finally, **ten percent** of the final grade will be based on seminar participation: Regular and <u>prompt</u> attendance; preparation (i.e., critical examination of readings, data analysis); constructive, thoughtful, and detailed involvements in class discussions and activities (including independent research) ; initiative revealed through individual innovativeness and displayed motivation.

<u>Seminars</u>

This seminar will emphasize working as a research team. The overriding goal is to generate manuscripts for dissemination to wider audiences through convention presentations and various publication outlets.

What follows is a general organization of the seminar. We will be flexible in the time given to these readings/issues. Though additional readings will be assigned and are expected, an effort has been made to minimize reading and maximize data analysis, i.e. working directly with recordings and transcripts in each seminar. Data handouts will be provided during many seminars to emphasize the interactional phenomena being examined (e.g., "okays" as displays of incongruity during interaction).

Beach/COMM 665: Conversation Analytic Methods
(Preliminary Topics/Readings)

I. Basic Methodological Issues

A.   Introduction: Definition, Verification, & Procedures

1. John Heritage & J. Maxwell Atkinson (1984). Introduction to <u>Structures of Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis</u> (pp.1-15). London: Cambridge University Press.

2. John Heritage (1984). Conversation analysis. In <u>Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology</u>, (pp. 233-244). Cambridge: Polity Press.

3. Steven E. Clayman & Douglas W. Maynard (1995). Ethnomethodology and conversation analysis. In Paul ten Have & George Psathas (Eds.), <u>Situated Order: Studies in the Organization of Talk and Embodied Activities</u> (pp.1-29). Washington D.C.: University Press of America.

4. Douglas W. Maynard (in press). Ethnography and conversation analysis: What is the context of an utterance? In <u>Bad news, good news, and the benign order of everyday life: Sociological and clinical implications</u> (Chapter 3). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

5. Gail Jefferson, "An Exercise in the Transcription and Analysis of Laughter," in T. van Dijk (Ed.), <u>Handbook of Discourse Analysis</u>: <u>Volume 3/Discourse and Dialogue</u>, 1985, London: Academic Press, pp. 25-34.

B.   Last Things First: Addressing Language and Social Interaction at the Century's Turn -- The Role of Conversation Analysis

6. John Heritage (1999). Conversation analysis at the century's end: Practices of talk-in-interaction, their distributions, and their outcomes. <u>Research on Language and Social Interaction</u>, 32, 69-76.

7. Emmanual A. Schegloff (1999). What next?: Language and social interaction study at the century's turn. <u>Research on Language and Social Interaction</u>, 32, 141-148.

II. Case Studies of Words, Utterances, & Social Activities:
"mm", "mm hmm", "uh huh", "yeah", "okay", "oh", "so", "no", "I don't know", "you know", & "God"

8. Emmanuel A. Schegloff (1982). Discourse as an interactional achievement: Some uses of "uh huh" and other things that come between sentences. In Deborah Tannen (Ed.), <u>Analyzing discourse</u>: <u>Text and talk</u> -- <u>Georgetown University Roundtable on Languages and Linguistics</u> (pp. 71-93). 1982, Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

9. Gail Jefferson (1993). Caveat speaker: Preliminary notes on recipient topic-shift implicature. <u>Research on Language and social interaction</u>, 26, 1-30.

10. Wayne A. Beach (1993). Transitional regularities for 'casual' "Okay" usages. <u>Journal of Pragmatics</u> 19, 325-352.

11. Wayne A. Beach (1995). Preserving and constraining options: "Okays" and `official' priorities in medical interviews. In G.H. Morris & R. Cheneil (Eds.). <u>The talk of the clinic: Explorations in the analysis of medical and therapeutic discourse</u> (pp.259-289). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

12. John Heritage (1984). A change-of-state token and aspects of its sequential placement. In J. Maxwell Atkinson & John Heritage (Eds). <u>Structures of social action: Studies in conversation analysis</u>, 299-345. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

13. John Heritage (2001). Oh-prefaced responses to assessments: A method of modifying agreement/disagreement. Manuscript.

14. John Heritage & D.R. Watson (1980). Aspects of the properties of formulations in natural conversations: Some instances analyzed. <u>Semiotica</u> 30, 245-262.

15. Wayne A. Beach & Christie C. Dixson (2001). Revealing moments: Formulating understandings of adverse experiences in a Health Appraisal interview. <u>Social Science & Medicine</u>, 52, 25-45.

16. Paul Drew (1987). Po-faced receipt of teases. <u>Linguistics</u>, 25, 219-253.

17. Wayne A. Beach & Terri R. Metzger (1997). Claiming insufficient knowledge. <u>Human Communication Research</u>, 23, 562-588.

18. Terri R. Metzger & Wayne A. Beach (1996). Preserving alternative versions: Interactional techniques for organizing courtroom cross-examination. <u>Communication Research</u>, 23, 749-765.

III. Final Research Projects

[Additional readings will be tailored to individual final research projects.]

A Sampling of Additional Readings

Beach, W.A. & Lockwood, A. (in press). Making the case for discounted *compassion fares*: The serial organization of problem narratives during a family crisis. Research on Language and Social Interaction.

Beach, W.A. & Good, J.S. (in press). Uncertain family trajectories: Interactional consequences of cancer diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis. Journal of Social and Personal Relationships.

Easter, D. & Beach, W.A. (in press). Competent patient care is dependent upon attending to empathic oportunities presented during interview sessions. Current Surgery.

Beach, W.A. (in press). Attending and disattending patients' narratives about family members during medical interviews. In Lynn H. Harter, Phyllis M. Japp, & Christina M. Beck (Eds.), Constructing our health: The implications of narrative for enacting illness and wellness. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Beach, W.A. & Andersen, J. (in press). Communication and cancer? Journal of Psychosocial Oncology.

Beach, W.A. & Andersen, J. (in press). The noticeable absence of interactional research in psychosocial oncology. Journal of Psychosocial Oncology.

Beach, W.A. (in press). Understanding how family members talk through cancer. In B. Whaley (Ed.), Advancements in Communication Theory & Research. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Jones, C.M. & Beach, W.A. (in press). Patient's attempts and doctors' responses to premature solicitation of diagnostic information. In Madeline Maxwell (Ed.), Diagnosis as a cultural practice. Mouton de Gruyter.

Beach, W.A. (2002). Managing optimism. In J. Mandelbaum, P. Glenn, & C. LeBaron (Eds.). Unearthing the taken-for-granted: Studies in language and social interaction (175-194). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. A festschrift in honor of Robert Hopper.

Beach, W.A. (2002). Phone openings, 'gendered' talk, and conversations about illness. In J. Mandelbaum, P. Glenn, & C. LeBaron (Eds.). Unearthing the taken-for-granted: Studies in language and social interaction (573-588). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. A festschrift in honor of Robert Hopper.

Beach, W.A. & LeBaron, C. (2002). Body disclosures: Attending to personal problems and reported sexual abuse in a medical encounter. Journal of Communication, 52, 617-639.

Beach, W.A. (2002). Between dad and son: Initiating, delivering, and assimilating bad cancer news.
Health Communication, 14, 271-299.

Beach, W.A. (2001). Introduction: Diagnosing lay diagnosis. Text, 21, 13-18.

Beach, W.A.. (2001). Stability and ambiguity: Managing uncertain moments when updating news about mom's cancer. Text, 21, 221-250.

Beach, W. A. (2000). Inviting collaborations in stories about a woman. Language in Society, 29, 379-407.

Heritage, J. (1999). Oh-prefaced responses to inquiry. Language in Society, 27, 291-334.

Lerner, G. (1991). On the syntax of sentences-in-progress. Language in Society, 20, 441-458.

Pomerantz, Anita (1984). Agreeing and disagreeing with assessments: Some features of preferred/dispreferred turn shapes. In J. Maxwell Atkinson & John Heritage (eds.), Structures of social action: Studies in conversation analysis, 346-369. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pomerantz, Anita (1986). Extreme case formulations: A way of legitimizing claims. Human Studies, 9, 219-229.

Harvey Sacks (1992a,b). Lectures on Conversation: Volumes I & II, Edited by Gail Jefferson. Oxford: Blackwell.

Harvey Sacks, Emmanuel A. Schegloff, & Gail Jefferson (1974). A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation. Language, 50, 696-735.

Schegloff, E. A. (1987). Analyzing single episodes of interaction: An exercise in conversation analysis. Social Psychology Quarterly, 50, 101-114.

Schegloff, E.A. (1996). Turn organization: One intersection of grammar and interaction. In Elinor Ochs, Emmanuel A. Schegloff, & Sandra A. Thompson (Eds.), Interaction and Grammar (pp.52-133). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Turner, R. (1971). Words, utterances and activities. In J. Douglas (Ed.), Understanding everyday life (pp.169-187). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Appendix A: Transcription Symbols

In data headings, for example, "SDCL" stands for "San Diego Conversation Library", a collection of recordings and transcriptions of naturally occurring interactions; "Malignancy #1" represents the title and number of call in the data corpus; page numbers from which data excerpts are drawn are also included, and line numbers represent ordering in the original transcriptions. The transcription notation system employed for data segments is an adaptation of Gail Jefferson's work (see Atkinson & Heritage (Eds.), 1984, pp.ix-xvi; Beach (Ed.), 1989, pp.89-90). The symbols may be described as follows:

:	Colon(s):	Extended or stretched sound, syllable, or word.
_	Underlining:	Vocalic emphasis.
(.)	Micropause:	Brief pause of less than (0.2).
(1.2)	Timed Pause:	Intervals occuring within and between same or different speaker's utterance.
(( ))	Double Parentheses:	Scenic details.
( )	Single Parentheses:	Transcriptionist doubt.
.	Period:	Falling vocal pitch.
?	Question Marks:	Rising vocal pitch.
↑↓	Arrows:	Pitch resets; marked rising and falling shifts in intonation.
° °	Degree Signs:	A passage of talk noticeably softer than surrounding talk.
=	Equal Signs:	Latching of contiguous utterances, with no interval or overlap.
[ ]	Brackets:	Speech overlap.
[[	Double Brackets:	Simultaneous speech orientations to prior turn.
!	Exclamation Points:	Animated speech tone.
-	Hyphens:	Halting, abrupt cut off of sound or word.
> <	Less Than/Greater Than Signs:	Portions of an utterance delivered at a pace noticeably quicker than surrounding talk.

OKAY   CAPS: Extreme loudness compared with surrounding talk.

hhh .hhh H's: Audible outbreaths, possibly laughter. The more h's, the longer the aspiration. Aspirations with periods indicate audible inbreaths (e.g., .hhh). H's within (e.g., ye(hh)s) parentheses mark within-speech aspirations, possible laughter.

pt Lip Smack: Often preceding an inbreath.

hah Laugh Syllable: Relative closed or open position of laughter
heh
hoh

Appendix B:
Analytic Exercise #1: Stories/Gossip
Beach/COM 665: CA Methods

Having transcribed an interactional excerpt, you are in a unique position to analyze <u>how</u> specific moments within these involvements are organized:

1. Read section I of the syllabus. Begin with a brief (1 page or so) overview of CA as a method. Integrate relevant quotes within this introduction and throughout your paper.

2. Provide a brief, descriptive overview of the entire excerpt – a lens for framing your subsequent analysis. In basic and general terms, <u>what</u> are D & J doing together, and <u>how</u> are they co-authoring this interactional work? Stated somewhat differently, what are the predominant social actions in this exchange between two women?

3. Select *any three pairs* of adjacent turns-at-talk. Provide a detailed analysis of each of these interactional environments.

4. Conclude your paper with a brief discussion of the interactional practices you have identified, their relevance to this seminar, and possibilities for future research. Compare and contrast your selections (in 3, above) where relevant.

5. Papers should be no longer than 10 double-spaced pages in length, not including a title page and references. All data excerpts should have headings and be numbered chronologically. Data may be xeroxed/cut and pasted, or retyped.

Appendix C – Final Research Projects:
COM 665 – Conversation Analytic Research Methods
Beach

Seminar projects will analyze selected excerpts of audio/videorecordings and/or transcriptions from a variety of interactional materials. The overriding goal is to produce a "finding" or "set of findings" about how speakers work together to organize routine activities in everyday life events. Selected materials may be drawn from ordinary casual conversations, and/or institutional involvements (e.g., medical interviews, therapy/counseling sessions, courtroom cross-examinations). Analytic papers may provide a detailed case study of a single interactional phenomenon/set of moments, and/or work with larger collections of social actions.

It is expected that all final papers will carefully integrate seminar and additional readings (tailored to the phenomena studied), systematically collect and analyze the patterned nature of naturally occurring interactional phenomena, and report well-articulated findings, conclusions, and implications of your work (including a reflexive examination of the strengths and weaknesses of your preliminary efforts). The approach taken should emphasize the how the data selected are inherently interesting and significant for accomplishing everyday interactions. Claims/observations offered should be defensible, i.e. clearly evidenced and anchored in inspectable data, which readers are invited to closely examine as a resource for agreeing and/or disagreeing with author(s).

The *Introduction* should clearly describe the phenomenon/phenomena selected for analysis, how relevant literature assists the analysis being proposed, and conclude with a forecasting of upcoming sections of the paper. Throughout the paper, key quotes from relevant articles should be integrated.

The *Body* of the paper should focus predominantly on close examination of transcribed excerpts selected for analysis. Begin, however, with a discussion of the 'Data & Method', including data analyzed and a concise overview of 'Conversation Analysis' as an empirical approach to naturally occurring interactional materials.

All data should be numbered, and include headings which indicate the source of materials (e.g., 1)SDCL:Malignancy #1:2 = San Diego Conversation Library, Malignancy corpus, call #1, p.2; or 2)Beach, 2001, p.17 = a reference to author, year, and page number of article/paper). Make sure and provide internal summaries of your observations, utilize transitions from one section to another, and include headings/sub-headings tailored to the social actions you are describing and explaining.

The *Conclusion* should summarize your findings, address strengths and weaknesses of the project, and raise specific implications for future research efforts. Reflexive attention may also be given to the phasic development of this project – from inception to completion of first draft – and the insights you have gained as a communication scholar.