7 Discourse Analysis
The Practice and Practical Value of Taping, Transcribing, and Analyzing Talk

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Sacks (1992) noted that “from close looking at the world you can find things that we couldn’t, by imagination, assert were there” (p. 420). Over the past 30 years, scholars in communication, sociology, linguistics, anthropology, education, and psychology have looked closely at communication between people as they interact. Discourse analysis (DA) is the umbrella term that has emerged for this multidisciplinary set of theoretical–methodological approaches. At its simplest, DA involves recording interaction; transcribing the tape; repeated study of the tape; formulating claims about the conversational moves, structures, and strategies demonstrated in the interaction; and then building an argument with transcript excerpts that are analyzed.

Many strands of DA could be considered applied communication research because they begin with problems of the social world. “Applied communication research,” however, is not a label that discourse analysts use to describe their work. In the last decade, for instance, only a few DA studies (Pittam & Gallois, 2000; Sachweh, 1998; K. Tracy, 2007; K. Tracy & Ashcraft, 2001) have appeared in the Journal of Applied Communication Research (JACR).

In this chapter, we show why looking closely at talk and its surrounding context is a valuable method for communication scholars who want to conduct research that is practically implicative. We first describe DA, with particular attention to features that differentiate it from three methodological neighbors. We then reflect on various meanings of applied communication research to consider why DA research is applied, but why discourse analysts rarely think of their research that way. In the next section, we review DA studies in three applied sites: health contexts, workplace interaction, and community meetings. We conclude the chapter by describing how “focused reflection,” the name we give to a modified DA research practice, could become a broadly useful training and teaching intervention.

The Character of Discourse Analysis

In 1985, the first handbook of discourse analysis appeared (van Dijk). If one looks at that volume, as well as subsequent texts devoted entirely to DA (Schiffrin, Tannen, & Hamilton, 2001; van Dijk, 1997a, 1997b; Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001) or where DA is an important component of a larger enterprise (Fitch & Sanders, 2005), it is not surprising that first-time visitors become confused about DA’s identity, for there is incredible diversity in such work.

DA is a multidisciplinary endeavor that is performed differently across academic fields. In linguistics, for instance (e.g., Stubbs, 1983), the size of language units and the topical
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focus of analysis define the nature of DA work. Studying units of language larger than a single sentence or studying pragmatic uses of language rather than the syntactic, semantic, or phonological structures are key features that distinguish discourse analysts from other linguists. For linguists, the intellectual divide is between those who analyze discourse and those who focus on sentences. Schiffrin (1994), for instance, argued that DA is a topic and not a method. From this perspective, quantitative interaction coding studies, ethnographic observations of conversations, and analyses of textual data all count as DA. This is not the case in other fields.

In psychology, sociology, and communication—other social-scientific disciplines in which DA work is particularly visible—it is the interest in language phenomena generally, as well as the way these phenomena are studied, that distinguish discourse analysts from their disciplinary colleagues. Because few scholars in these disciplines focus on sentence-length or smaller units, the issue that animates linguistics is not relevant in these other fields. In traditional psychology, cognitive phenomena, often treated as internal and individual, are the focus of attention, but in discursive psychology, a strand of DA, the focus is on how cognitive matters are discursively realized. In addition, and quite important, discursive psychologists record small numbers of people talking with each other as they engage in activities in the world, rather than bringing large numbers of people into a laboratory where they are assigned particular tasks to perform (e.g., D. Edwards & Potter, 1992; Wood & Kroger, 2000).

In sociology, where the focus is on studying causes of social problems, questionnaires, quantitative coding, interviews, and participant observation are the traditional methods employed. Although discourse analysts in sociology do share the broad concern of their disciplinary colleagues, their preferred method for studying these same issues is markedly different (Silverman, 2004, 2006). To complicate matters, DA, in many quarters, is used as an umbrella term that subsumes conversation analysis (CA; e.g., Cameron, 2001; K. Tracy, 2001), a method of studying talk-in-interaction that emerged in sociology. In other quarters, however, DA is treated as a methodological option different from CA (see the essays in Fitch & Sanders, 2005). Such complexities surrounding the meaning of DA are an inevitable part of ideas and practices that are useful in diverse scholarly corners.

Given that many of the DA handbooks that have appeared in recent years are multidisciplinary, albeit tilted toward the discipline of the editor(s), it should be apparent why delimiting DA is not a straightforward task. Discussions of the complexities surrounding definition tied to the multidisciplinary footing of discourse studies can be found elsewhere (K. Tracy & Haspel, 2004). In this chapter, we focus on describing DA and contrasting it with three methodological neighbors in the communication field.

In addition to confusion surrounding the term discourse analysis, another complexity deserves mention. Recently, “discourse” also has become a focal interest in organizational communication study (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004; Grant, Hardy, Oswick, & Putnam, 2004; Putnam & Fairhurst, 2001), reflecting the discursive turn that has taken place in many disciplines. In this burgeoning area, DA has become the term used to describe the analyses that organizational scholars do. Sometimes the “discourse analysis” is straightforwardly an instance of DA as we describe it here (e.g., Castor, 2004; Cooren, 2003). At other times, however, it is not. That an analysis of discourse is not always a DA is the case because two meanings of the term discourse circulate among scholarly communities.

Discourse, as we use the term in this chapter, refers to actual instances of talk (or written texts). A second meaning for discourse, informed by Foucault (1972), refers to long-standing systems of ideas—what we think of as reigning ideologies, or complex social practices, as are cued by referring to the “discourses” of medicine or capitalism. This second meaning for discourse directs attention to the “powerful forces that reside beyond the text” (Fairhurst & Cooren, 2004, p. 132). Such analyses of discourse often
are not interested in how language is used in social settings—the focus of the first meaning. Instead, Foucault-linked analyses of institutional discourse expose broad patterns of meaning—ways of thinking about the social world. Moreover, these studies employ a wide variety of interpretive methods, ones we think are more aptly labeled as, for instance, rhetorical criticism (e.g., Cheney, Christensen, Conrad, & Lair, 2004; Condit & Bates, this volume) or narrative analysis (Gabriel, 1998).

Conley and O’Barr (1998) distinguished these two meanings for discourse by labeling the first as “micro-discourse” and the second as “macro-discourse”; Gee (1999) called the two types “little d” and “big D” discourse. Some strands of DA link these two domains of discourse, as can be seen in critical discourse analyses (e.g., Fairclough, 2003; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997) that show how particulars of language use relate to taken-for-granted power structures and patterns. Other organizational studies address big-D discourse issues but give limited attention to language use in social settings (e.g., Ashcraft, 2005). In a handbook of organizational discourse, Alvesson (2004) argued that the term discourse has become a “catch-all,” “covering too much and revealing too little” (p. 327). He suggested limiting the meaning of that term to studies of language use in social settings and excluding those studies that investigate ways of thinking about the social world and characterize broad social practices. We do not dispute the value of analyzing macro- or big-D discourses but unless a study analyzes segments of talk or written texts to explicate language use in social settings, we are not treating it as using the method of DA.

The Basics of Discourse Analysis

DA in the communication discipline involves four main activities. The first activity is to audio- or videotape human interaction, which might occur on the telephone (e.g., Beach, 2001), radio (e.g., Katriel, 2004), or television (e.g., Clayman, 1995); in a business meeting (e.g., Mirivel & Tracy, 2005), classroom (e.g., Craig & Sanusi, 1999), or support group (Hsieh, 2004); or among family and friends at home (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1997). Typically, the interaction that is taped occurs naturally in a social or institutional site. By naturally occurring, we mean that it has not been brought into existence through the efforts of a researcher, as is the case with interviews. Whether discourse analysts should study only naturally occurring interaction is, in fact, controversial (e.g., Speer, 2002; ten Have, 2002). Suffice it to say that discourse analysts who study researcher-generated interviews (e.g., Pittam & Gallois, 2000; Wooffitt, 1992) ask different questions of the interview materials, analyze them differently, and, in the writing-up process, orient to the possibility that their selection of materials might be challenged by other discourse analysts.

The second activity in DA is to make a transcript of selected segments of the taped interaction. Creating a transcript is fundamental to doing DA and, consequently, a large number of transcription systems have been developed (J. A. Edwards & Lampert, 1993). However, by and large, communication researchers draw on the Jeffersonian transcription system that was developed in CA. This transcription notation represents words as they were pronounced (e.g., gonna and yep), includes hearable nonspeech sounds (e.g., uh and mhm), and captures repetition and restarts (I wa- we wanted to say). The system also uses symbols to capture features of vocal quality, such as loud and quiet speech, breathiness, laughed speech, stressing or prolonging of a syllable, and pause placement and length. Finally, CA transcription attends to utterance timing in that the exact places where speakers overlapped or spoke simultaneously are represented. Table 7.1 provides an overview of key transcription symbols (for more detailed explanations of these symbols, see Atkinson & Heritage, 1999; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; ten Have, 1999).
Although DA research is an interpretive rather than a positivistic enterprise, it regards accuracy of representing the communicative world that is to be analyzed as an important first step. In comparing transcripts from four experienced CA transcribers, Roberts and Robinson (2004) found high reliability for many features (e.g., semantics, overlap, and sound stretch) and a reasonably high level for constructed indices, such as is accomplished by treating speech emphasis as a matter of increasing loudness, stressing a sound, or prolonging a syllable. Although most communication scholars use some version of the Jeffersonian system, it is common to see markedly simplified versions of the system in use. K. Tracy (2005), for instance, gave limited attention to prosody and utterance timing, defending her decisions by arguing for (1) the value of focusing on features of talk that people can reflect about and change, and (2) the advantage of looking at larger stretches of interaction less precisely rather than at smaller segments transcribed in more detail. Clearly, choices about what to include in transcribing are theoretical decisions (Ochs, 1979). One cannot capture everything that goes on; hence, what to include in a transcript is a choice guided by a researcher’s aims and assumptions.

Whereas some discourse analysts use a simplified CA transcription system, others use an enhanced version. A strand of DA work, often referred to as microethnography (Streeck & Mehus, 2005), studies social meanings and practices in interactive sites in which talk interfaces with visible activities such as gaze, gestures, and features of the material surround. DA scholars in this tradition have developed innovative ways to transcribe these additional features that affect interaction (e.g., Bavelas, Coats, & Johnson, 2002; Beach, 2002; LeBaron & Jones, 2002).

A third activity in DA research, often referred to as having a “data session,” is for a small group of people to repeatedly listen to or view a tape of an interaction accompanied by a transcript, which is followed by group analysis. The discussion that occurs during a data session is diverse and partly dependent on the intellectual traditions out of which the members come. If most group members are conversation analysts, a commitment to keep-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.</td>
<td>(period) Falling intonation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>(question mark) Rising intonation</td>
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<tr>
<td>,</td>
<td>(comma) Continuing intonation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>(hyphen) Marks an abrupt cutoff</td>
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<tr>
<td>::</td>
<td>(colon[s]) Prolonging of sound</td>
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<tr>
<td>never</td>
<td>(underlining) Stressed syllable or word</td>
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<tr>
<td>WORD</td>
<td>(all caps) Loud speech</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>word</em></td>
<td>(degree symbols) Quiet speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;word&lt;</td>
<td>(more than &amp; less than) Quicker speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;word&gt;</td>
<td>(less than &amp; more than) Slowed speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hh</td>
<td>(series of hs) Aspiration or laughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.hh</td>
<td>(hs preceded by dot) Inhalation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>(brackets) Simultaneous or overlapping speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>(equals sign) Contiguous utterances</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2.4)</td>
<td>(number in parentheses) Length of a silence</td>
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<tr>
<td>(.)</td>
<td>(period in parentheses) Micro-pause, 2/10 second or less</td>
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<tr>
<td>( )</td>
<td>(empty parentheses) Non-transcribable segment of talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(word)</td>
<td>(word or phrase in parentheses) Transcriptionist doubt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(gazing toward the ceiling)</td>
<td>(double parentheses) Description of non-speech activity</td>
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ing analysis focused on what participants themselves are orienting to (Schegloff, 1997) is likely. If, however, a data session includes scholars more steeped in critical, rhetorical, or ethnographically linked discourse traditions, the discussion is likely to be more free-wheeling (i.e., open to reflections, reactions, and interpretive insights). A shared belief across the many strands of DA is that data sessions help participants to become skilled analysts. By repeatedly looking/listening and then trying out arguments on equally observant others, scholars can construct more insightful and persuasive analyses of discourse strategies, conversational structures, or communicative practices.

What types of contextual information should be brought to analyses of talk is a contested issue among discourse analysts. Anchoring one side of the controversy is the position that analyses should not go beyond what participants in their talk are orienting to. Other DA scholars regard it as legitimate to bring contextual information to analyses, including participants’ membership categories (e.g., institutional roles), information gained from institutional documents or interviews with participants who possess relevant experiences or expertise, and historical or ethnographic knowledge of the interactional site. Entire books (Duranti & Goodwin, 1992), special journal issues (K. Tracy, 1998), and extended colloquia (Billig, 1999a, 1999b; Schegloff, 1998, 1999a, 1999b; Wetherell, 1998) have addressed this debate.

The final activity in DA work is to develop a scholarly argument. In this last stage, subtle observations and analytic points, some of which emerged in data sessions, are brought into a larger frame. Reflecting on what has been observed in the discourse, in light of relevant literatures, a claim is developed. Writing also is a crucial part of doing DA. Analysis and writing are soul mates; one does DA through writing up an analysis of excerpts of discourse.

How Discourse Analysis Differs From Methodological Neighbors

DA is best understood by contrasting it with the methods with which it has the most in common. DA’s closest methodological neighbors are (1) ethnographic methods (see Ellingson, this volume); (2) rhetorical criticism (see Condit & Bates, this volume), and (3) quantitative coding of interaction (see Query et al., this volume).

As a term, ethnographic methods, also frequently labeled “qualitative” or “fieldwork methods,” references a range of approaches that draw on participant observation, interviews, and analysis of written documents. Included among ethnographic approaches are traditional ethnographies that study distinct speech communities, as seen, for instance, in Fitch’s (1998, 1999) studies of middle-class Colombians and Carbaugh’s (1996) studies of Blackfeet Indians and middle-class Americans (for a review of ethnography of communication, see Philipsen & Coutu, 2005). Also included are organizational ethnographies that unpack features of communication in workplaces, such as agrarian cooperative councils (Harter, 2004) and automobile manufacturing (Zoller, 2003), or that examine issues important to the conduct of work, such as emotion labor (S. J. Tracy, 2004). Another strand of ethnographic methods is studies using in-depth interviews, in which a purposive sample of a category of people are interviewed, as seen in Baxter, Hirokawa, Lowe, Nathan, and Pearce’s (2004) interviews with women about drinking and pregnancy, or Braithwaite and Eckstein’s (2003) interviews with persons with disabilities about how they manage and respond to offers of help.

Like ethnographic methods, DA begins in the everyday world of participants. However, how the two families of methods differ is a complex question, because the differences between DA and ethnographic methods depend on which theoretical–methodological option is selected as a comparison point. Among ethnographers of communication, for
instance, in addition to participant observation and informant interviews, the analysis of recorded discourse has become an equally important way to study culture. What distinguishes discourse analysts from ethnographers of communication is the research focus. DA seeks to understand problems in discursive practices and to explicate interaction structures and strategies, whereas ethnographers of communication study how communicative practices operate within cultural systems. Just as ethnographers of communication increasingly use discourse methods, so too are some discourse analysts using ethnographic methods. Holmes and Stubbe’s (2003) study of politeness practices in workplaces and K. Tracy’s (1997) analysis of academic colloquia are two examples of DA studies that use participant observation and in-depth interviews as supplemental methods.

Differences between organizational ethnographies and DA studies are nicely displayed in two studies of the same emergency communication center. In the organizational ethnography by S. J. Tracy and Tracy (1998), the research focus was on the types of emotional labor practices that 911 call-takers used; field notes taken during participant observation and interviews were the key data. In the DA study by K. Tracy and Tracy (1998), the focus was on understanding moments of face attack in 911 telephone calls. For this study, two transcribed calls that included raised voices and anger cues were the main focus, and the analysis described how citizens and 911 call-takers were rude and attacked each other’s face. Thus, DA studies of institutional talk and organizational ethnographies differ in terms of the theoretical literatures on which they typically draw, their likely research questions, and whether field notes or transcribed talk are the primary data.

Discourse analysts also study interviews that occur in a range of institutions, such as focus groups run by market researchers (Puchta & Potter, 2004), medical interviews (Robinson, 1998, 2003), or job interviews (Scheuer, 2001). When DA scholars study interviews, though, the objective is to explain what interviewers and interviewees are doing through their talk. As such, discourse analysts differ as to whether they see research interviews as reasonable sources of informant data, and for important reasons, approach interview data with caution.

A first reason to be cautious is skepticism that what interviewees say in response to a direct question actually mirrors what they believe or do. People do not necessarily know how they actually communicate, and, if they do know, there are self-presentational reasons why they might say something different than what observation of their actions reveals. Second, interviews are communicative events whose unfolding is shaped by the conversational procedures that affect all instances of talk, with answers to questions taking their meaning from the larger conversational context. The upshot of these points is that interviews cannot be thought of as straightforward events in which participants simply convey “information” about their experiences and worlds. Third, and related, there is a strong sense that the meaning of an answer is deeply dependent on how an interview question was formulated and what other talk preceded it. The common writing practice of taking respondents’ comments out of their interview question context is seen as insensitive to this connection.

Discourse analysts who use research interviews as a source of data agree with their DA colleagues that these are problems that must be given attention and monitored in any study. They disagree, however, that the problems warrant avoiding interview data entirely. There are communicative issues that occur so rarely or are so sensitive that they can be learned about only from informants. In addition, how people talk about an event to an interviewer can be a topic of interest in its own right. As long as analysts keep in mind that what they have in research interviews is a product of the joint conversation and is “talk about X” rather than “X” itself, they can build persuasive and interesting analyses, as seen in recent DA studies, such as Buttney’s (2004) study of race talk, Condor’s
(2000) analysis of how British speakers display themselves as not being prejudiced when talking about Britain, and Weltman’s (2003) study of politicians’ justifications for getting into their particular political party.

A second methodological neighbor of DA is rhetorical criticism. DA shares with rhetorical criticism a focus on and fascination with language and particulars of texts. Both methods study texts in the complexities of the contexts in which they occur, but they differ on three grounds. First, DA grew within the social-scientific tradition of the field and looks to sociology, linguistics, anthropology, and psychology as its cognate disciplines; in contrast, rhetorical criticism is grounded in the humanistic tradition and takes philosophy, political theory, and literary studies as cognate disciplines (K. Tracy, 2007b). Second, rhetorical criticism typically focuses on culturally significant texts (e.g., speeches by political figures), whereas DA focuses on mundane institutional and intimate talk. Clearly, this difference is not absolute (e.g., Hauser, 1998, 1999). Third, DA scholars in communication largely study interaction that requires taping and transcribing rather than focusing on written texts (e.g., letters to the editor) or oral ones available in public written transcripts, often without their oral base (e.g., the performed speech or a tape of the meeting). The subtle differences between these two neighboring methods are visible in an edited volume that analyzes 14 speeches of a contentious school board meeting as its focus (K. Tracy, McDaniel, & Gronbeck, 2007).

The third methodological neighbor of DA is quantitative coding of interaction (interaction analysis). Although DA and interaction analysis previously were methodological competitors, they now are finding some common ground. Prior to the 1990s, studies using Bales’s (1950) interaction process analysis system or Rogers and Farace’s (1975) relational coding system, for instance, applied the theoretically developed codes to segments of interaction and then reported the distribution of categories. DA does not begin with theoretical categories but, instead, works inductively, studying talk in particular situations to identify what are the socially meaningful units. If one sees DA as the first step, and interaction analysis as a valuable, but not mandatory, second step, the two methods function as friends.

Clayman and Heritage (2002), for instance, studied the question-and-answer exchanges in a small set of press conferences held by U.S. presidents Dwight Eisenhower and Ronald Reagan. Using DA, they identified which discourse features contributed to questions being adversarial or deferential. Then, using their feature analysis, which they developed inductively through close study of the exchanges, they formulated question categories and applied them to a sample of the press conferences. By coding and counting the different forms of questions, after showing the reliability of the categories, Clayman and Heritage evidenced that across time, presidential press conferences in the United States have become markedly less deferential. DA and interaction analysis, then, are easily distinguishable methods, but they can be complementary companions. DA enables researchers to identify interactional differences that make a difference; interaction analysis enables researchers to assess whether a pattern exists in important categories of talk. Studies that pair DA with interaction analysis, either within a single study or across several studies, have become especially prevalent in health-care contexts (e.g., Robinson & Nussbaum, 2004; Stivers, Mangione-Smith, Elliott, McDonald, & Heritage, 2003).

**Why Discourse Analysis Is and Is Not Applied**

A trademark of DA scholarship is researchers’ direct involvement in sites of social interaction. Like ethnographers, discourse analysts move outside the walls of academic institutions, carrying audio- or video-recorders to interactional sites of interest and recording
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“live” pieces of the world that make up participants’ social and institutional lives. In considering practices such as police interrogations (e.g., LeBaron & Streeck, 1997), HIV counseling sessions (e.g., Silverman, 1997), group meetings in organizations (e.g., Boden, 1994; K. Tracy & Naughton, 2000), therapy sessions (e.g., Duff Wrobbel, 2003), medical education (Koschmann & LeBaron, 2002; Pomerantz, 2003), or cosmetic surgery encounters (Mirivel, 2008), discourse analysts display a collective engagement in what, by any definition, are applied communication issues.

Defining applied communication research, and calling for more of it, has been a frequent activity during the last 15 years. The first issue of JACR that appeared under the aegis of the National Communication Association (NCA) articulated an agenda for such research (Eadie, 1991), with additional proposals coming later (Cissna, 1995; Frey, 1998; O’Hair, 2000). Admittedly, applied communication research is an enterprise that stretches well beyond the boundaries of JACR, as this handbook illustrates, but given difficulties in locating exact boundaries, JACR provides a reasonable sample of studies warranting the label “applied communication research.” Using JACR as a touchstone, then, three frames for conceptualizing this type of research are apparent: applied communication research (1) seeks to understand problems of the social world, (2) links to the community of applied communication researchers, or (3) commits to directly solving problems. DA research, as explained below, fits the first frame, but has only a small overlap with the other two frames.

Frame 1: Understanding Problems of the Social World

As a field, communication is a practical discipline, with research connected to the activities and problems of the everyday world (e.g., Craig, 1989; Keyton, 2000; G. R. Miller, 1995; Seibold, 2000). However, even if most communication research has a practical component, there is variation in how developed the practical piece of any communication study actually will be. Craig (1995) suggested that communication research is best conceptualized on a continuum, anchored on one end by studies that begin with the world and its problems (the applied end) and, on the other, by studies that focus on disciplinary puzzles. Most actual studies are hybrids, attending to both theory and practice (Seibold, 1995) and pursuing some degree of rigor and relevance (Conquergood, 1995). As Craig (1995) put it, “Applied and disciplinary research differ, then, not dichotomously, but along a continuum” (p. 152; see also Frey & SunWolf, this volume).

DA research begins in the social world. In taping, transcribing, and analyzing moments of interaction that involve people doing things that matter to them, it is applied in its basic impulse. In seeking to understand how meanings are made and how practical actions and activities are accomplished in actual communicative sites, DA studies may focus on what makes interactions go smoothly or how they go awry. Studies of problematic interactional sites have focused on better understanding the tensions and sensitivities in communicative activities such as advising college students (Erickson & Shultz, 1982), counseling new parents (Heritage & Sefi, 1992), training therapists (Morris & Chenail, 1995), or talking to distressed citizens in 911 calls (K. Tracy & Agne, 2002; Whalen & Zimmerman, 2005). When applied communication research is conceptualized as beginning with problems in the world, DA research is very much “applied.”

Frame 2: Linking to the Applied Communication Research Community

A second way to conceptualize applied communication research is to think of it as a particular community of scholars, asking such questions as, “What topics of research are
the foci of studies published in *JACR*?” and “What theoretical concepts and literatures are most visible?” The range of *JACR* articles is diverse, but there are certain literatures and research traditions that dominate the journal’s pages. Organizational communication research is one of those traditions. Beginning with the articles in the early 1990s that linked applied work to organizational consulting (e.g., March, 1991; Plax, 1991; see also Frey & SunWolf, this volume) to the more recent feminist–critical studies (e.g., Harter, 2004; Martin, 2004; see also Buzzanell, Meisenbach, Remke, Sterk, & Turner, this volume), articles that draw on organizational communication theories to study various sites have been a mainstay (see Eisenberg & Eschenfelder, this volume; Seibold, Lemus, Ballard, & Myers, this volume). Similarly, issues about college-level teaching have been a long-standing concern (e.g., Barge & Loges, 2003; see Darling & Leckie, this volume), as have been questions related to health settings (e.g., Morgan & Miller, 2002; see also Kreps & Bonagura, this volume; K. Miller & Considine, this volume). As we show in the next section, DA researchers have attended to some of the topical areas that are the foci of applied communication research, but they only occasionally orient to the community of applied communication researchers.

By and large, DA research appears in other communication journals (e.g., *Journal of Communication*), multidisciplinary journals committed to DA research (e.g., *Research on Language and Social Interaction*), or journals focused on settings whose scope is broader than communication, such as those that address scholars and practitioners in health-care (e.g., *Social Science & Medicine* and *Family Practice*) or organizational contexts (e.g., *Management Communication Quarterly*). To the degree that applied communication research refers to a community of scholars who orient to each other’s scholarly claims and the journal that bears its name, DA is not a method often used by the applied communication research community.

**Frame 3: Focusing on Practical Applications**

A final way that applied communication research is conceptualized is as research that has practical applications. *JACR*’s editorial policy, for instance, requires all manuscripts to “include a separate section detailing the intended or potential practical applications of findings, critique, or commentary” (Stafford, 2009, n.p.). Although DA research frequently has practical implications (see below), discourse analysts are reluctant to spell out applications directly. In large measure, their reluctance to detail practical applications is grounded in the DA stance toward the world. Discourse analysts see suitable actions as deeply dependent on particulars of prior talk and the interactional context in which discursive action is performed. As a research genre, studies that offer practical applications may gloss scene and talk particulars, treating identification of the occasions in which specific suggestions are to be applied as a small issue. For discourse analysts, making the types of generalizing moves that most application requires, therefore, is problematic.

Although giving advice and detailing practical applications are activities to which there is resistance, much DA research is practically useful. In providing a grounded, detailed understanding of a situation or problematic scene, DA work is helpful. By describing communicative practices and their observed interactional and relational consequences, as well as noticing, naming, and linking actions that go unnoticed in socially important situations, DA research enables professionals and other situation participants to develop strategies for responding to complex problems. In addition, *critical discourse analysis*, a strand of DA to which the journal *Discourse & Society* is devoted, explores how language and discourse processes normalize inequality and perpetuate injustices of many types. In exposing how communicative practices that claim fairness and neutrality actually privi-
lege particular parties, critical discourse analysis lays the groundwork for social change. However, because offering practical application sits uneasily with a view that communication is situated action, DA research rarely makes explicit behavioral suggestions. Yet, in enabling participants to reflect more wisely about situations they face, DA research inherently is useful. Consider three research areas in which this claim is particularly true.

Examples of Practically Useful Discourse-Analytic Research

Health Settings

DA research about physician–patient communication has thrived since the early 1980s (e.g., Atkinson & Heath, 1981; Fisher & Todd, 1983; Heath, 1986; West, 1984; for reviews of this work, see Beck et al., 2004; Maynard, 2003). Here, we highlight two lines of DA research that focus on communicative problems in the health-care context.

A first example is Stiver’s (2002, 2005a, 2005b) analyses of pediatric encounters during acute-care visits. A problem that has been documented in several studies (Mangione-Smith, Stivers, Elliott, McDonald, & Heritage, 2003; Stivers et al., 2003) is that children are prescribed antibiotics that they do not need. This practice is not inconsequential, as across time, overprescribing leads to antibiotic treatments becoming less effective. In conjunction, studies have shown “a strong association between physicians’ perceptions of patient–parent pressure for antibiotic treatment and inappropriate prescribing of antibiotics” (Stivers, 2002, p. 200). By looking closely at how parents present their child’s medical problems to physicians, Stivers discovered two conversational methods that parents use, which she labeled as “symptoms only” and “candidate diagnosis.” In the first approach, parents (usually mothers) present symptoms of the medical problems by describing what their child is experiencing. In the second approach, parents both provide a description of the symptoms and formulate a diagnosis. Excerpts 1 and 2 (which have been simplified) illustrate each of these approaches, respectively.

Excerpt 1: “Symptoms-Only” (Stivers, 2002, p. 305)

1 DOC: And so do- what’s been bothering her
2 (0.4)
3 MOM: uhm she’s had a cough and stuffy nose,
4 and then yesterday in the afternoon she started to get
5 really goopy eyes and every=
6 DOC: [Mm hm,
7 MOM: =few minutes [she was ![having the)
8 DOC: [,hh [Okay so she ha- so then when
9 MOM: she woke [up this morning were her eyes =
10 DOC: =all stuck shut,

Excerpt 2: “Symptoms + Candidate Diagnosis” (Stivers, 2002b, p. 309)

1 DOC: .hh so how long has she been sick
2 (1.2)
3 MOM: just (;) I came down with it last Wednesday, so she
4 probably had it (0.2)
5 DOC: uh huh
The subtle differences in the ways that the mothers initially present and formulate their child’s medical problem in these two excerpts have consequences. The first conversational method forecasts an interational project (Robinson, 2003) that “allows” physicians first to diagnose patients and subsequently to provide a medical recommendation that fits the evidence gathered through a physical examination. The second conversational method, one that occurs more frequently in situations in which physicians report “feeling pressured,” requires physicians to respond to parents’ proposed diagnoses, either confirming or disconfirming them. When parents do not mitigate their candidate diagnosis, physicians feel pressured to prescribe antibiotics. Clearly, physicians do not necessarily succumb to discursive pressure but this way of formulating a child’s problem does increase the likelihood that they will prescribe antibiotics.

Stivers’s (2002) work, which offered a more detailed analysis than is possible here, exemplifies how fine-grained discourse differences contribute to understanding a problem that is important to medical professionals. In fact, her analyses have found interest beyond communication and discourse scholars; she and her colleagues have published in a variety of medical journals (e.g., *Journal of Family Practice* and *Pediatrics*), and her work has been featured and made publicly available to the medical community in the form of Web sites, such as on those for the Rand Child Policy Project and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.2

A second example of DA research that addresses applied objectives is Maynard’s (1991, 1992, 1997, 2003) work on how physicians deliver bad news to their patients. For medical professionals, delivering bad news to patients clearly is a challenge (Platt, 1995); telling parents that their child is “retarded” or revealing to a patient that he or she is HIV positive are emotionally charged moments for recipients and uncomfortable ones for health-care providers. By investigating how bad news is conveyed in naturally occurring interaction, Maynard (2003) exposed how those interactions are structurally and sequentially organized, leading him to propose how medical practitioners might deliver such news to patients more effectively.

In the final chapter of his book, for instance, Maynard (2003) spoke to the issue of how physicians should disclose bad news. In line with a DA position, Maynard asked professionals to “pay attention to the particularities of interaction when engaged in delivering news” (p. 247). Because physicians may see “bad news delivery” as routine institutional work, Maynard asked practitioners to keep in mind that receiving such news is “a crisis for recipients” (p. 247). Maynard (2003, pp. 247–248) noted that “there is no sure-fire method of delivery for the professional that guarantees ‘success’ across the board” but that physicians can prepare for delivering bad news by reflecting about what it means for a moment to be a crisis for the recipient. Reflecting about the meaning of the situation from the recipient’s perspective, he suggested, leads professionals to adequately prepare themselves and the environment in which the news is to be delivered, interactionally forecast the bad news through audible and visible cues (which he detailed in his book), and elicit the patient’s perspective prior to engaging in a bad news delivery sequence.

In addition to these examples, many other health-linked problems have been the focus
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of DA research. To mention a few, DA scholars have examined how: (1) medical professionals give advice to laypersons about mothering (Heritage & Lindström, 1998) or assist clients in initiating safer sex practices with long-term romantic partners (Mattson & Roberts, 2001), (2) risks and uncertainties are addressed in genetic counseling (Candlin & Candlin, 2002), (3) interviewing skills are taught to novice dieticians (Tapsell, 2000), (4) family members manage a mother’s malignant cancer (Beach 2001, 2002), and (5) preceptors both educate medical students and keep their identities intact in front of patients (Pomerantz, 2003; Pomerantz, Fehr, & Ende, 1997).

Workplace Interaction

Discourse analysts also have studied interaction in a variety of institutional settings, including archaeological excavations (Goodwin, 2000), police and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) interrogations (Agne, 2003; Agne & Tracy, 2001; Komter, 2003), phone conversations between citizens and emergency call takers (e.g., Baker, Emmison, & Firth, 2005; K. Tracy & Andersen, 1999), and in airline traffic telecommunication control centers (Hindmarsh & Heath, 2000). Medical, justice, and educational institutions have been the mainstay sites for DA research, but interaction in business and government settings increasingly is garnering attention (e.g., Clark, Drew, & Pinch, 2003; Milburn, Kenefick, & Lambert, 2006; Sarangi & Roberts, 1999). Until very recently, DA studies of institutional interaction operated as a tradition relatively distinct from most research on organizational communication, but in the last few years, this divide is crumbling (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004; Putnam & Fairhurst, 2001). As noted earlier, not all studies of organizational discourse use DA, but some do (for two more examples, see Anderson, 2004; Cooren, 2006).

One especially impressive study of workplace interaction—the term we use for the study of business talk—is the Wellington Language in the Workplace Project. Working from 2,000+ hours of audiotaped interactions of 400+ participants (e.g., managers and workers with disabilities) in different New Zealand workplaces (e.g., factories, large corporations, and small businesses), Holmes and her colleagues (Holmes, 2003; Holmes, Marra, & Burns, 2001; Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; Holmes, Stubbe, & Vine, 1999) have sought to “identify characteristics of effective communication...causes of miscommunication, and to disseminate the results of the analysis to the benefit of workplace practitioners” (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003, p. 12). How professionals manage their working relationships in fleeting conversational moments, they argued, is crucial to workplace effectiveness. “Small-talk” conversations, for instance, are a major way that coworkers negotiate organizational status, enact collegiality, and create solidarity. In such conversations, politeness strategies and the use of humor (Holmes, 2000), often treated as trivial talk, make a difference. Take the following excerpt as an illustration:

Excerpt 3: Small Talk (Holmes, 2003, p. 67)

Context: Small talk between three workers in a plant nursery at the start of the day.

Des is the manager. Tom is a worker with an intellectual disability. Ros is the plant nursery worker who works alongside Tom. (All names are pseudonyms.)

1 Des: Be a nice day when it all warms up a bit though
2 Ros: Yeah (2.4) okay
3 Des: So you haven’t done anything all week (1.7) eh you
4 haven’t done anything exciting (2.6) talk to any girls
5 Tom: No
6 Des: Oh that’s all right then
7 Ros: ((laughs))
8 Des: You don’t want to talk to girls they’re more they’re
9 trouble Tom (1.2) they get you into trouble (1.6) look
10 at me (2.7) I would have been rich and good looking if I
11 hadn’t had girls now I’m just good looking (1.6) see ya
12 Tom
13 Tom: ((no response))

Of note in this excerpt is Tom’s lack of conversational participation in moments that call on him to join in. Des “does” small talk by inviting conversation about the weather (Drew & Chilton, 2000) and inquiring about Tom’s life outside of the workplace in a fashion that implicates a shared laugh. Tom, however, fails to respond to Des’s inquiries; he does not react to Des’s inquiries in lines 3 to 4 and provides a minimal response in line 5. Conversational engagement, we could say, is noticeably absent. By not chit-chatting and joking with his coworkers, Tom contributes to a working environment that lacks relational connections. As Greespan and Shoultz (1981) noted, “It is an inability to interact effectively with other people, rather than an inability to operate machines or perform job tasks that often causes many mentally retarded adults to get fired from competitive jobs” (p. 23).

The analyses of conversations in the workplace by Holmes and colleagues suggest that workers with intellectual disabilities benefit from education to “acquire basic socio-linguistic and pragmatic skills as preparation for genuine workplace interaction” (Holmes, 2003, p. 79). Besides drawing out implications for workers who are disabled, scholars in the Language in the Workplace Project have applied their insights to the professionals they study. For instance, they have held regular feedback sessions in the organizations they studied, playing segments of interaction to employees and managers, and framing for participants what they noticed. In contrast to teaching prepackaged courses, the most common training procedure (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003, p. 173), these DA researchers cultivate communication praxis by developing professionals’ “observational and analytical skills” and offering them a discursive space to reflect about the complexities of communicative action (Jones & Stubbe, 2004).

**Community Governance Meetings**

Our final example of DA research that pursues applied ends are the community-level studies by K. Tracy and colleagues that focus on interaction problems at school board meetings. Using *action-implicative discourse analysis* (K. Tracy, 1995, 2005), a DA method informed by grounded practical theory (see Barge & Craig, this volume; Craig & Tracy, 1995), K. Tracy and colleagues seek to identify the communication problems that different categories of participants face (i.e., elected officials, citizens in the community, teachers, and other staff), conversational moves that reveal those problems, discursive strategies that participants use to manage them, and the situated ideals of good conduct that frame evaluation of communicative action in these settings.

Problems examined in this body of work include: (1) naming of communicative troubles that are experienced in meetings and how different names point blame (and the need for change) toward particular parties (K. Tracy & Muller, 2001), (2) advantages and disadvantages for citizens in framing the concern they bring to public participation.
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in board meetings as “an issue” versus “a problem” (Craig & Tracy, 2005), (3) taking a position about appropriate ways to talk about race and communicative conduct (Haspel & Tracy, 2007), and (4) institutional stances toward gays and lesbians (K. Tracy & Ashcraft, 2001). Other studies have examined the conversational strategies that board members use to influence the group when they are in a minority position (K. Tracy & Standerfer, 2003), partially deflect (and partially accept) criticism when a serious crisis has arisen (K. Tracy, 2007), or to criticize other members’ communicative conduct and minimize the likelihood that they will be countercharged with the same type of communicative impropriety (K. Tracy, 1999). Because the significance of DA studies is found in the particulars, we conclude this section by illustrating one of these analyses.

Participants in school board meetings and other community groups frequently treat “democracy” as a communicative ideal whose meaning is transparent to all. Sometimes explicitly, but often implicitly, democracy is invoked to critique other participants’ actions. In a study of three conflict-rich public meetings, K. Tracy and Craig (2005) showed how democracy and communication terms were linked to criticize others and defend the self. The analysis of the various uses of these terms made visible three sets of contrary beliefs that reveal an ideological complexity that is characteristic of school board meetings.

A first set of contrary beliefs concerned the role of elected officials: Were they responsible for representing their constituency or expected to exercise their judgment? These contrary definitions, recognized in democratic theorizing (Schudson, 1998), regularly surfaced in criticisms directed toward officials. A second set of contrary beliefs concerned unitary and adversary notions of democracy (Mansbridge, 1980), with school board meetings talked about as both a place where a community of people sharing a common interest work together to solve problems and bring about their vision (a unitary view), and, often in the same meeting, as a site of competing interests where people should advocate passionately for what they believe and a vote should determine the outcome (the adversary view). The third set of contrary beliefs revolved around how to think about rules in democratically committed groups. In meeting talk, rules and procedures were treated both as agreed-on social arrangements that facilitated fairness and as instruments that blocked justice. Excerpt 4, a comment from a board member holding a minority position, illustrates the first function; Excerpt 5 illustrates the second function.

Excerpt 4: Board Member (Kingdom) in Minority Position, 8/8/96–Line 725

As of this week, I was really uh extremely discouraged that our hiring processes have once again been compromised, uh instead of processes where we’ve had a committee set up and we’ve had a procedure that we can all count on I feel like we have not followed those. There’s been examples in intimidation, there’s been board interference, we’ve undermined our hiring processes, and we’ve had individuals then consequently who are afraid of losing their job if they don’t comply with the dictates of this board. As a board member it’s my responsibility to share this concern with the public. Our fair and democratic processes, I feel are being compromised by certain individuals. Our 25,000 students in this- in this district will suffer because we haven’t hired the most qualified and best candidates for jobs. If a candidate does not make it as a finalist that person needs to ask was it a fair and respectful process?

Excerpt 5: Board Member Shoemaker Statement, 12/12/96 Minutes

School board members pledge not to reveal any information presented or discussed in executive session, under penalty of censure.... My decision to reveal this information
is a most difficult one, but I believe that my highest duty as an elected official is to tell the citizens of this community the truth to which they are entitled. Believing that the actions taken at the executive session were unethical and in violation of BVSD policy, I cannot in good faith adhere to the confidentiality rules in this particular case.

Whereas the first statement aligns democracy with following rules and its failure with a variety of negatively weighted communicative actions (e.g., “intimidation,” “interference,” “undermining of decisions,” and “lack of fair and respectful process”), the second statement positions rule violation, at least “in this particular case,” as related to the “highest duty” of an elected official to tell the truth at moments of “unethical” action. These contradictory beliefs about democracy, K. Tracy and Craig (2005) argued, evidence the need to reframe the meaning of inconsistency in ideals. Rather than treating competing beliefs about democracy as choice points for theoretical reflection—having to be one or the other—contradictory themes about democracy are conceptualized as resources—argumentative tools for difficult deliberative moments. There are, then, two truths about democracy and rules: Rules matter because they are essential to democratic action, yet, at times, rules get in the way of what democracy seeks to promote. Citizens’ comments recognize these competing truths, seeking to persuade others in their community group which diagnosis is warranted in that particular moment.

To summarize, in community meetings, workplace conversations, and medical encounters, DA research reflects on important social problems. As a method, DA describes interactional sequences, speech acts, and linguistic–argumentative designs, and, in many studies, reveals how these features link to valued and disvalued institutional and relational consequences.

**Discourse Analysis as Intervention: Focused Reflection**

In this chapter, we explained why taping, transcribing, and analyzing talk—that is, DA—deserves to be mastered and used regularly by communication scholars who are committed to doing practically useful research. By examining in detail the discursive practices that constitute people’s social and institutional lives, and attending to those practices that are both problematic and unproblematic, DA is a useful tool for communication scholars with applied commitments.

Sometimes DA research is criticized for being “just,” “merely,” or “only” descriptive. There are multiple reasons why this is an inappropriate criticism; the one we highlight here is the assumption that describing is an activity of limited value (e.g., Frey & SunWolf, this volume). As we argued earlier, description of interactional problems, conversational moves, structures, and strategies makes possible thoughtful reflection and provides the starting point for defensible and effective situated action. To close this chapter, we turn our attention to a different meaning of applied, suggesting how a modification of DA, which we label “focused reflection,” could become a useful tool in a variety of communication training and teaching venues.

**Focused reflection** is a training practice that adapts the logic of data sessions for a category of institutional actors (e.g., mediators, 911 call takers, and physicians) to help them communicate more effectively. More generally, focused reflection is a teaching practice than can be used to help students, whether in classrooms or in job and professional training workshops, to understand how valued interpersonal and professional qualities (e.g., being open-minded, fair, and respectful) are accomplished through the particulars of talk. Similar to data sessions, focused reflection begins with listening/viewing of tapes accompanied by transcripts of selected interactional moments. Focused reflection
can occur in small groups, or it can be done in one-on-one consulting. It may involve listening/viewing taped interaction in which members of the group are the parties whose interaction has been taped, or it could involve unknown others who perform the communication activity that a focused reflection session is seeking to improve.

Watching videotaped interaction is a common practice in teaching and training settings; college students learning how to give a speech, medical students practicing how to interview patients, and beginning teachers improving their teaching are examples. Focused reflection extends this practice in a key way. By providing participants with transcripts of interaction, after teaching them how to look at them, focused reflection enables participants to connect talk with valued and disvalued interactional identities, and with attitudinal stances. As its name suggests, it focuses participants’ reflections by supplying a record of the actual wording choices that speakers used.

Focused reflection requires a teacher/consultant to do three activities. The first task is to select relevant interactional moments and to prepare transcripts for viewing or listening. Segments of interaction should feature tasks that are problematic for practitioners and that prompt discussion about communicative ideals that are espoused, the tensions among them, and good and poor ways to discursively enact them. To set the stage, the teacher/trainer helps participants to articulate their ideals about communication to then identify any constraints they perceive themselves facing in the task/situation that is the object of the focused reflection.

A second activity is to teach participants how to interpret transcripts. Typically, transcripts are presented in a simpler form than what discourse researchers use, but they include the nonfluencies and repairs that are part of everyday talk. When people have little experience with transcripts, they tend to fixate on the “uhs,” “ums,” and frequent repairs that are part of ordinary speaking. Much as discourse analysts come to use repairs and other perturbations to develop claims about interactional difficulty, a focused reflection session teaches participants how to understand the functions of these discourse tokens. In particular, it teaches them to interpret these tokens as a sign of people experiencing situational difficulties rather than as evidence of poor communication.

The final task in a focused reflection session is to lead a discussion about the selected interactional moments. In doing so, the teacher/consultant guides the discussion toward two main issues: (1) assessments (and reasons for them) about how well the taped individual(s) or group accomplished the multiple aims held for the focal activity; and (2) what particular discursive actions, pointed to in the transcripts, enacted or endangered the situation’s ideals and constraints.

In a study of cosmetic plastic surgeons, for instance, Mirivel (2006) analyzed an encounter with a patient that a surgeon described as “difficult” (see also Mirivel, 2007). Prior to viewing the videotape and looking at the transcript, questions were posed about the surgeon’s aims during initial consultations. The surgeon espoused the following: “When I meet with patients for the first time, basically one of my goals is to ascertain their expectations, find out what they want to achieve, and find out if what they want to achieve is realistic” (Mirivel, 2006, p. 136). The surgeon added that patients sought a surgeon “who is going to be honest with them, and is going to be compassionate, that’s going to be empathetic, and who will identify with them” (Mirivel, 2006, p. 238). These comments reflected what this surgeon, and presumably many surgeons, thought ought to happen communicatively during initial encounters with patients. Of note, this surgeon’s beliefs about what was good communication in opening moments existed alongside another belief about the importance of not letting such encounters take too much time. Plastic surgery is a business and a certain number of consultations are needed if it is to remain viable. With the ideals and the time constraints framing the surgeon’s meet-
ing with the patient, the problematic moment and its transcript were examined, with the central goal of unpacking how and why the encounter was difficult.

Prior to examining the interactional data and the accompanying transcript, the surgeon attributed the difficulties to the patient’s poor communicative performance. From the surgeon’s perspective, the patient, Marilyn (a pseudonym), “was really non-descript about what she wanted done” and “was a terrible historian” (Mirivel, 2006, pp. 197, 205). His initial comments, thus, blamed Marilyn for the communication problems the two of them encountered. However, as the focused reflection session progressed, the surgeon’s interactional challenges, rather than the “patient as problem,” became the frame. For instance, rather than labeling the patient as being “non-descript,” the interactional trouble was reframed in terms of the surgeon’s needed tact to avoid speaking for patients in collecting information about what surgical procedures they were seeking. The collaborative analysis also helped the surgeon to identify a series of missed conversational opportunities—discursive actions that lacked empathy or interruptions that took over the patient’s conversational floor—that, if performed differently, could have assisted Marilyn to communicate better, and, thereby, smooth the overall unfolding of interaction. In analyzing the encounter a bit like a discourse analyst, the surgeon developed an appreciation of his communicative actions as contributing to the direction of the encounter.

In essence, then, focused reflection helps participants to connect abstract ideals, such as respect, empathy, and honesty, with specifics of talk. Focused reflection sessions help students and practitioners to understand how desired ideals can be accomplished or endangered in the particulars of expression. It assists them in building concrete understandings of effective and problematic interactional moves, and in reflecting thoughtfully about what tradeoffs among ideals are reasonable. By giving people a chance to observe and talk about the communication challenges they routinely face, and by focusing on specific instances that allow for connecting interaction particulars with communicative ideals, focused reflection offers a way to apply DA to improve communication teaching and enhance workplace and professional training.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that taping, transcribing, and analyzing talk is a scholarly practice that is valuable for conducting applied communication research. Implicit in this claim is that describing the social–communicative world in its discursive details can help laypersons and professionals to make wiser, more reflective choices about how to act or interpret others’ actions. Foucault once wrote that “people know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don’t know is what they do does” (cited in Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 187). Discourse-analytic work, we believe, could change this situation by teaching people that communicative behaviors serve specific functions that carry important relational, institutional, and cultural consequences.

Notes

1. We specify the field of communication because DA studies in linguistics are equally likely to focus on analyses of written texts.
2. Visit the project’s Web site (http://www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/lwp/workplace-culture.aspx) to see how DA work can reach both academic and professional communities.
3. The difference between conversational “moves” and “strategies” is a subtle one. Moves make visible the presence of interactional trouble; the occurrence of moves reflects the existence of a problem. Strategies, in contrast, are discursive actions interpretable as responses to an interactional problem, an in-the-moment solution.
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