

An interactional approach to proper names: working with a corpus of 'natural' data

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1. The study of naturally occurring talk-in-interaction
2. Recording and working with natural data
3. Some examples
4. Values and problems of this approach
5. Conclusions

1. The study of naturally occurring talk-in-interaction

- > Ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1967)
Conversation Analysis (Sacks, Schegloff: 1960s)
 - emic perspective
 - "seeks to describe methods persons use in doing social life"
(Sacks 1984: 21)
 - study of situated interaction (in context)
 - study of the resources interactants use (vocal and bodily)
 - investigation of how social actions are organised and accomplished

- > Interactional Linguistics (a.o. Selting & Couper-Kuhlen 2001)
 - investigates how linguistic structures are used in interaction

2. Recording and working with data

- > Recording what:
 - spontaneous situations captured with camera/sound recorders
 - maximal visibility of interactional resources (faces, gestures, body posture, artefacts)
- > Recording how:
 - in movement: do not direct but follow the interactant's movements
 - while recording you make choices → this is a first analysis
- > Transcription
 - AUDIO (cfr. transcription conventions in the handout)
 - almost no phonetic symbols
 - inbreaths, pauses (e.g. 0.2 seconds), loudness, speech rate, intonation, sound duration
 - '*jeffersonian*' vs. *GAT* (GesprächsAnalytisches Transkriptionssystem)

- > Transcription:
 - VIDEO (cfr. examples in the handout)
gesture, gaze, body posture, artefact manipulation

- > Working with the data
 - data sessions: 'brainstorm' meetings with other researchers
 - analysis on the basis of video data and transcriptions
 - analysis of single cases (on the basis of a single excerpt)
 - or analysis on the basis of collections, but no quantification

storytelling

220_sg2bm4_0155

01 LEA però: boh non è:: (1.0) ea- alle otto va +bene
but (well) it's not at eight is all right

ins +gz stndt-->

02 (0.2)

03 INS (ah) oc[+chei
oh okay

-->+

04 LEA [* (eh) il problema* è quando (0.5) *°sai* si ini*zia* pres*to+°
the problem is when you know one starts early

ins *.....*pp-----*.....*pp-*
ins *mvs mth*
lea +gz right-----+

0.5 sec. gap + lower voice

deictic direction indication

co-construction

05 (0.6)

06 INS andiamo per favore verso (0.2) [destra
let's go please to the right

07 LEA [lugano

08 (1.5)

09 INS occhei
okay

10 (0.9)



- the toponym Lugano is used in the co-construction of the direction indication, in the display of understanding (L. 07)
- the reference to the town is not relevant here but the direction it helps to describe: *lugano* is here used as equivalent to *destra* ('right') (L. 06)



17/11_sg1VP_1_11:46
(2.7)

INS +↑alla+ rotonda+ (0.3) +dir*ezione ve+zia inizia:* ad abituarti^a- a cercare i cartelli
 at the roundabout direction vezia begin to get used to to look for the road signs
 ins +.....+pp-----+.....+pp-----+
 ins *gaze at student-----* road sign
 (3.6)

place formulation

direction indication with toponym

instruction about driving skill



- INS points at a road sign while saying *direzione vezia*
- reference is not made to the town Vezia but to the road sign
- reference to the road sign is used
 - within a direction indication
 - within an instruction about a driving practice (looking for the road signs)

→ Here too, the toponym Vezia is not used for referring to the geographical site but as a resource to: (1) indicate direction and (2) to explicitate a driving skill (orienting in the surrounding space)



rr_cd_071231/21:16-21:40

1 HOS prendiamo un po' di telefonate io direi: e lo chiedo anche a
let's take some calls i would say and i ask it also
2 stefano chiarelli ch'è da^altra parte del vetro sta↑sera di
stefano chiarelli who is at the other side of the glas this evening to
3 prenderne una: ondata d- magari una decina così racco[gliamo] un
take some of them a (fistful) d- maybe about ten so we collect a
4 RB [si\
[yes]
5 HOS po' di domande 'h e poi ɐ rispondiamo\ ce ne sono già ↑due in
few questions 'h and then ɐ we answer there are already two
6 at↑tesa 'h catania e poi roma catania\
waiting 'h catania and then rome catania
7 (1.0)
8 CAL 'h buona sera\
'h good evening
9 HOS buona s[era il suo n]ome\
good evening your name
10 RB [buona sera]
[good evening]
11 (1.0)
12 CAL io- io sono luca: chiamo da catania .. e:^hm:: .. 'h vorrei
i- i am luca i am calling from catania e:^hm 'h i'd like to
13 ... chiedere una cosa ai radicali\ .. 'h che si occ:upino di una::
ask something to the radicali* 'h that they would deal with a
14 .. rinnovo della legge psichiatrica di assistenza psichiatrica io
renewal of the psychiatric law of psychiatric assistance i
15 sono psichiatra\ 'h=
am a psychiatrist
16 RB =si\
*<radio radicali = the radio broadcast

- > place names not used for referring to the cities but for identifying two calls
- > place names used as a resource for the organisation of the interaction

4. Values and problems of this method

Difficulties of this approach:

- > time consuming
- > emic point of view
 - description first, also of 'evident' features
 - as less interpretation as possible, unmotivated looking
 - findings might not always be that impressive

BUT: Values of this approach:

- > a strong methodology allows for a detailed, well founded description of the phenomena
- > 'unmotivated looking' allows to discover unperceived methods for everyday social action

5. Conclusions

- > Working with corpora of naturally occurring talk-in-interaction allows to synchronically examine names and observe how they are used as resources in interaction.
- > How can the interactional approach contribute to the study of names?
 - The analysis showed that the interpretation of toponyms used in talk-in-interaction can go beyond the pre-established and static referential meaning to which they are commonly associated.
- > Toponyms become 'ad hoc' resources mobilised to accomplish relevant actions (giving direction indications, teaching, etc.) within a broader activity (driving).