

SAGE Research Methods Cases Submission for Consideration

Case Title

Longitudinal conversation analysis of parent-child interaction: Small data and interdisciplinary work in linguistics and sociology

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Published Articles

Carlin, A. P. & Kim, Y-h. (2019). Teaching qualitative research: Versions of grounded theory. *Grounded Theory Review*, 18(1), 29-43.

Kim, Y-h. & Carlin, A. P. (2019, May). “Today narrative” in parent-child interaction with a focus on increasing interactional complexity. Paper presented at ICOP-L2, Mälardalen University.

Kim, Y-h. & Crepaldi, Y. T. (under review). “I also cause accidents a little bit”: Co-constructed storytelling as a site for socialization in parent-child interaction. *Journal of Pragmatics*.

Abstract

This case study reports on nested projects within a larger interdisciplinary project, utilizing linguistics and sociology, arising from a corpus of conversational data. Projects were data-generated, i.e. what happened between participants dictated the research questions. The data are recordings of parent-child interaction, and our viewings/hearings of these recordings. In one project, a recording device was given to the father, an English-speaker, who recorded a number of conversations with his bilingual son over an eighteen-month period. Researchers were not present during conversations. Recordings were transcribed according to the orthographic system developed by Gail Jefferson, and analysed using the research approach Conversation Analysis. Certain changes in the “systematics” of talk were observable over time due to the longitudinal aspect of recording the same participants over time, from when the child was 3 years old to when he was nearly 5. One of the lessons from this case is how little data are required from which to generate material for analysis. These ‘small’ data contain a multitude of interactional phenomena for explication.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this case, students should be able to

- distinguish between Conversation Analysis and longitudinal Conversation Analysis
- understand how research questions can be generated by data
- argue why longitudinal Conversation Analysis is appropriate for the study of parent-child interaction

Case Study

Project Overview and Context

In this case study we discuss a variant of Conversation Analysis known as “longitudinal Conversation Analysis”. A longitudinal approach to conversational materials facilitated an interdisciplinary project – between Linguistics and Sociology – documenting changes in members’ competences as expressed in talk between an adult and a young child.

“Parent-child interaction” is a very broad term, and our project looked at a series of discrete phenomena as themes for inquiry. Inquiries included what Karin Aronsson and Asta Cekaite (2011) call “activity contracts”; reading as a collaborative activity; the normative organization of childcare; socialization; storytelling in parent-child interaction; and story structures. Each of these thematic inquiries emerged from the data we had at our disposal. We eschewed the setting of research questions in advance. Instead, using an inductive approach, research questions emerged from the data sets of study. That is, these inquiries were only formulated as problems for investigation once data were collected.

Research Approach

We chose longitudinal conversation analysis as an appropriate form of inquiry with which to study parent-child interaction. In this section we detail this approach and why we adjudged this appropriate for use with our data. Before we do, however, we outline the origins of conversation analysis. This account may assist you to see the distinct dialectics of conversation analysis from traditional research methods.

Conversation Analysis

Conversation Analysis (CA) is a research approach, originally based in sociology, that focuses on the production of social order by members, or parties to interaction. It was founded by Harvey Sacks, who was influenced by the founder of ethnomethodology (EM), Harold Garfinkel. CA shared a number of analytic emphases with EM, such as a concern with

the ongoing production of order and orderliness, and a principled rejection of external or ideological factors as having relevance to the analysis of phenomena that are internal to the setting of study.

Sacks took up Garfinkel's procedural emphasis – how persons accomplished activities – and examined ordinary talk as a basic site for how social order was produced by persons themselves. Sacks' realization, that talk could be a locus for the investigation of order, forms the basis for his PhD thesis (Sacks, 1966) in which he was privy to recordings of telephone conversations from anonymous callers to an emergency psychiatric hospital in Los Angeles. For a short time, Sacks had been on the staff at this hospital. Members of staff recorded and transcribed calls received by the facility, on a routine basis. This provided Sacks with a readily available source of data, and he decided to focus on telephone conversations.

The key to Sacks' decision to focus on recordings of telephone conversations appears in his first lecture (Sacks, 1995, pp. 3-11). In that lecture Sacks highlights a routine, observable feature of telephone calls to the psychiatric hospital: as a matter of course, callers did not provide their name. Looking at the transcripts of the calls, Sacks concluded that this did not happen by accident: it was strategic, recurring, and from transcripts he was able to see that there were structurally available "slots" at which a caller could have provided their name. Yet he also saw how callers actively avoided giving their name. Furthermore, Sacks realized that social order was inherent to calls, and rather than being subject to externalized rules, as suggested by other forms of sociology, order was managed by the parties to the calls themselves.

Summarizing an emerging body of studies in CA, Sacks and his colleague Emanuel Schegloff observed that conversations "exhibited orderliness" (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973, p. 290) for the analyst and for the parties to the conversations. The orderliness of conversation provides the

logic of CA, in that the orderliness of conversational actions is understood and used by parties to the conversation “and treated as the basis for subsequent action” (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973, p. 290).

Sacks’ development of CA was, in part, a reaction against the discipline of linguistics as much as it was radicalizing sociology. The intellectual environment at the time (the 1960s) of Sacks’ forays into the investigation of talk as an analytic enterprise, both in linguistics and in sociology, was hostile to the notion of taking actual occurrences of ordinary talk as data. For sociology, this was too trivial for the discipline’s priorities of consensus models; whilst linguistics was dominated by Chomskyan writings on transformative grammar. Resemblances between the then state of linguistics and sociology are discussed further in Roy Turner’s (2017) classic, programmatic paper. Sacks’ arguments were less than welcome!

Longitudinal Conversation Analysis

Wayne Beach (2001) makes a distinction between “episodic” conversation analysis – the form of CA familiar to most practitioners, based on single instances, or single instances collected together as a corpus – and “longitudinal” conversation analysis, which involves instances over a period of time with the same interlocutors. The data corpus that Beach (2001, 2002, 2009) uses were telephone calls that were self-recorded by one of the parties to the calls, over a period of thirteen months, which had been archived at the San Diego Conversation Library. The conversations are between a father and son, talking about the mother’s lung cancer, from diagnosis, treatment, complications and eventual death.

The suggestion that researchers use “longitudinal” CA is not new. It was advocated by Don Zimmerman (1999) as “vertical” comparative research, to address topics such as language acquisition among young children. Indeed, several substantive fields have found this form of

CA particularly relevant, such as education, law, health research and health communication (Mondada 2017; Nguyen 2012). It has been found to be a productive form of inquiry in L2 (second language) research also: longitudinal studies of language and language learning are well established (Brown, 1983; Ortega & Byrnes, 2008; Ortega & Iberri-Shea, 2005).

Longitudinal CA, particularly its application to language learning, was initially taken up by a research group based at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Research interest in developments in second language pragmatic competence (Kasper & Rose, 2003) was combined with the granular purchase on interaction practices that CA afforded. The Hawai'i group (including Midori Ishida and Eric Hauser) pioneered longitudinal CA under the direction of Gabriele Kasper, who was at the forefront in recognizing how longitudinal CA was ideally suited to the study of development of second language pragmatics. It would be a fair characterization to say that the early attempts of applying longitudinal CA to second language learning were focused on linguistic items as semiotic resources: the use of the interactional particle *ne* by Japanese as an L2 students in a study abroad context (Ishida, 2009), and development of the use of discourse markers in Korean as a second language learners' conversation (Kim, 2009). The unit of analysis progressively expanded to more functional categories such as listener response (Kim, 2016), topic-initiation (Kim, 2017), disagreement (Pekarek Doehler & Pochon-Berger, 2011), and direct reported speech (Hauser, 2013).

Influenced by the Hawai'i group, the authors of this case study brought the logic of longitudinal CA to parent-child interaction. As Wayne Beach (above) points out, episodic CA is not concerned with having the same participants in fragments of talk for collecting case examples, whereas longitudinal CA is concerned with using case examples with the same participants over time. Changes in the nature of interactions between a parent and child are,

naturally, going to be observable over time; of course, we did not dispute that there would be any changes. Given that the data corpus was recorded over a duration of eighteen months, and the age of the child when recording enterprise commenced (3 years old), changes would be apparent. With a growing child, it would have been wholly unreasonable to assume otherwise! Rather, we were curious to see how changes were manifested within talk-in-interaction.

What we found from the data was that yes, as expected and expectable, changes occurred; however, the nature of these changes could not have been identified aprioristically. Our identification of changes was not distorted by personal experience, tacit knowledge of child development, or consultation of child development literatures. The nature of changes (including list-construction; volunteering stories; increasing authority of accounts, or “voice” – telling Daddy “why” something happens) were discernible through detailed inspection of the data, i.e. listening to the recordings, supplemented by our reading the transcripts.

Section Summary

- CA is a sociological approach to the study of social order.
- Longitudinal CA is a variety of CA. Instead of looking at individual cases of talk, longitudinal CA looks at series of cases of talk, with the same participants.
- Both CA and longitudinal CA have been useful in various fields; longitudinal CA is particularly productive for the study of language learning.

Practicalities: Data Collection and Research Ethics

Sample, Recruitment and Recording

Initially, two families were recruited to participate in the project, through convenience sampling. However, one of the data corpora turned out to be of very low audio quality to the extent that it was unusable for analytic purposes. That the conversation was bilingual, containing frequent code-switching, exacerbated the difficulties of transcribing the talk. For this reason, in the end, the initial project relied on data from one family. While this seemed to be a calamity at the time, in retrospect the practicality of losing a corpus of data was a blessing in disguise: there are so many directions for inquiry when dealing with recordings of talk-in-interaction.

In the data corpus of audio-recordings that were clear and adequate for analysis, conversations occurred every two weeks, over a period of eighteen months. The regularity of the conversations afforded the observation of any changes in the talk-in-interaction over time. Recordings took place in their home, after the father had collected his son from a childcare center. No researcher was present for the recording: the recording exercise was wholly self-administered.

Self-administered data collection methods have a rich history, with textual, audio and visual technologies of data collection. Previous uses of self-administered techniques for data collection include the note-book diaries that were given out to homeless, alcoholic men by Edward Rose (1997), to marijuana smokers (Wieder and Zimmerman 1974, 1976; Zimmerman and Wieder 1977a, 1977b), and cameras for families to record their practices of sorting household mail (Harper et al. 2003). Our research adds to the range of researched groups and phenomena where it was agreed that participants had an active role in the research, beyond “informants”.

In our project, the father was in control of the recording process – he was given a recording device, and the timing and content of conversation was up to him. In this sense, the

conversations occupy a ‘liminal’ space between contrived talk and naturally occurring talk. ‘Contrived’ because the father had agreed to participate in a research project. However, listening to the recordings, their talks turn out to be opportunities for the father to catch up on his son’s daily activities, and for his son to report on noteworthy events – conversations that, in all likelihood, would have taken place regardless of the project. The father was not briefed on particular structures of talk to include in the recordings.

Research Ethics

The research project was vetted closely by an institutional review board (IRB). Furthermore, as members of various discipline-based and professional associations, we were able to follow expert guidance on research ethics and data protection from various sources. We found the British Sociological Association’s (updated 2017) *Statement on Research Ethics* to be particularly useful. Ethical considerations do not cease when ethical approval for research has been granted. The BSA *Statement* helped us to treat ethics as an intrinsic and ongoing part of the research project, responsive to dilemmas encountered through engagement with conversational data and very young children.

For example, one corpus of data (from the first project) was solely audio-recorded because of the father’s privacy concerns for potential identification of his son, had video-recording technology been used. Readers of Wendy Mackay’s (1995) considerations of the use of video-clips in presentations will recognize that this father’s concerns about “informed consent” were not only understandable but entirely justified! Accordingly, the use of audio-recordings added an extra layer of identity protection beyond the procedures for pseudonymizing the father and son.

Reactiveness

There are occasions when the presence of the recording device was discussed. For example, in Excerpt 1, Daddy is making a request to the child to close the door (line 4) because of his concern about the noise caused by a hair dryer (square brackets in the transcript denote the onset of overlap of speaker's turns).

Excerpt 1

1 D: Mummy's is like a flashcard, right?
2 H: But him is shi[ny flash
3 [(Hair dryer turn ed on)]
4 D: Ah, ok. (.) Ok. Oh, Harry can you just go close that door?
5 H: Why::?
6 D: Cause mummy's bl- dryin'er hair.
7 H: °Why t-°
8 D: It's a bit noi::sy.
9 H: Why?
10 D: Well, I can't record while mummy's doin' that so just close
11 the doo::r

Apart from this and several other fragments within the data, and from the evidence of recording exercises such as Sara Keel's (2016) detailed study of family interactions, we consider that recording equipment is "non-reactive" for participants, i.e. the presence of a recorder does not seem to have a significant affect upon their interaction.

Section Summary

- Sample size is a marginal methodological consideration for longitudinal CA: recording talk-in-interaction over a period of time generates so much useable data that large samples are unmanageable.

- Research ethics approval is not a hurdle to be jumped, or a tick-box exercise that has to be negotiated.
- Reactiveness to recording exercises is exaggerated: we only found a handful of instances where we can definitively say that participants orient to the recorded status of their conversations.

Understanding Concepts: Interdisciplinary Work

Although the concept of socialization originated in sociology, it is used by other disciplines such as education and psychology. Sociology contends that the development of a baby into a child into an adult is much more than a series of biological changes, that the “life-course” is also social. George Herbert Mead introduced the notion of the “generalized other” to mark a stage in a child’s social development of “self”, when the child begins to see themselves as others see them. This is made possible through the sharing of a “significant symbol”, namely language (Mead 1934). In an early paper, Georg Simmel (1909) suggested socialization was a form of “reciprocal relationship”, which could be found in various contexts. Since Simmel, sociology has identified various “agents of socialization”, including family, peers, and school, which assist with the acquisition of community membership. “Socialization” is not a dirty word in sociology, nor do we suggest that it is such a discredited concept that it should no longer be employed. The problem with socialization, as we see it, is that it has been overused. Like many concepts that are used for the purposes of generalization, “socialization” is a portmanteau, a blanket term concealing what isn’t being described.

The inverse case is found in linguistics with the concept of “interactional competence”. Interactional competence is a refinement of Dell Hymes’ (1972) term “communicative competence”, that was itself proposed in response to Chomsky’s (1965) notion of linguistic

competence, which basically concerned rules of grammar. Hymes (1972) considered Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence inadequate to map the knowledge of a competent language-user and argued that one needs to know how to use language in a contextually appropriate way. While the concept of communicative competence has been taken up with enthusiasm and fleshed out in the discipline of language learning and teaching (Canale and Swain 1980), two decades of attempts at operationalizing it in empirical research, language teaching and testing revealed limitations of the concept; being static, cognitive and not being able to incorporate an interactional dimension. Interactional competence is an outcome of the effort to address these criticisms of communicative competence by highlighting how linguistics and interactional resources are employed mutually and reciprocally.

However, whereas sociology has overused socialization past its breaking point, interactional competence remains under-defined. Richard Young (2011) provided an authoritative statement, which has become a reference point for research on interactional competence. Yet there is a twofold analytic risk with the concept for interdisciplinary work. First, that the lineaments of a discipline-specific concept are not fully preserved in its move to an interdisciplinary environment. Second, that acceptance as a discipline-specific concept allows room for an underdetermination of the concept within the discipline itself, not just potential for interdisciplinary misunderstandings.

At a surface level, interactional competence and socialization share commonalities: both terms are glosses for a variety of phenomena; both terms locate distinct phenomena associated with adults, and children. As technical, disciplinary notions, they draw attention to the requirements of members of society and a process for the acquisition of these requirements. However, these commonalities are dependent upon an adult-oriented view of the socialized child, or the development of interactional competence.

Listening to the recordings and inspecting the transcripts that had been made from these, we noticed that features we could call “interactional competence”, or “socialization”, were available to us as sequences of talk. These abstract concepts were exhibited in, and afforded by, “structures” of talk-in-interaction. These structures were laid out for analysis in a paper by Harvey Sacks and his colleagues (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974). Their paper is a summative statement of CA work that had been done up until its publication, and remains the cornerstone of CA. A set of rules for conversation is set out in what is called a “turn-taking system”, but it is emphasized – though often forgotten – that what they call “rules” (oriented to the co-ordination and allocation of turns at talk between conversationalists, in ways that minimize both the amount of overlapping talk and gaps within conversation) are not binding; but are “preferences”. It is not that conversationalists obey conversational rules. Rather, conversationalists are *rule users* – they monitor and orient to preferences within interactional settings. In this way we can see that CA engages in traditional sociological debate on the normative organization of social life, only CA regards this normative organization or rule-using as worked out by conversationalists during their interactions. When Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974, pp. 700-701) list “constraints” on conversations, such as “Overwhelmingly, one party talks at a time”, these are not rules, but are observable from conversational data.

Furthermore, the EM roots of CA, which enjoin us to distance analysis from distortions produced by “the literature”, ensured that we did not subscribe to the adult-oriented view – what Matthew Speier (1973, p. 148) calls an “ideological” conception of socialization. Instead, we focused upon phenomena of talk itself. In so doing, we (Kim & Carlin, 2020a) were able to look at what we call “socialization talk” – to examine how socialization gets done within interaction itself, rather than assume that socialization happens.

A benefit of interdisciplinary collaboration is that project members are forced to be explicit about what concepts they are using; and communicate with project members from other disciplines how these concepts are being used. This avoids confusions over definitions creeping into the analysis. Ongoing attention to challenging discipline-specific assumptions deepened our appreciation of the commonalities between interactional competence and socialization, mentioned above, and we came to realize that these concepts were reflexively tied. By that we mean, the practices of obtaining interactional competence are crucial parts of socialization, and it is through interactional competence that children become socialized.

Section Summary

- Interdisciplinary work can be problematic if researchers assume that they mean ‘the same kind of thing’ with discipline-specific concepts.
- Problems of definition occur within disciplines, which are accentuated in interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Conceptual distinctions are to be resolved with reference to data, not disciplinary literatures.

Research in Action: Unforeseen Directions and Nested Projects

Within the lifetime of the project on parent-child interaction, we were engaged in a series of overlapping inquiries, which were occasioned by what we were reading in preparation for the project, and by the data themselves. As the famous sociologist Robert K. Merton (1965) tells us, serendipity has always been a feature of doing research projects. Serendipity may not always be acknowledged in final, published articles, which are retrospective accounts of projects.

Research Trajectories: The Iterative Nature of Data and Literature Reviewing

Due to our selection of CA as our preferred research approach, serendipity was going to be a driver for the research. As Robert Hopper says, serendipity “plays a principled role in conversation analysis. This is underscored by conversation analysts’ regular practice of ‘unmotivated’ listening - or listening repeatedly to tape recordings without chasing particular phenomena” (Hopper, 1988, p. 59).

One of the challenges of using longitudinal CA is being courageous and flexible enough to allow the data, rather than the pressures of textbooks or funding agencies, to dictate the topics of your investigation. The directions in which the data took our investigations were unexpected: they could not have been anticipated within a research design because these were prompted by unforeseen and unforeseeable phenomena, as found in naturally occurring interaction. Yet we found that serendipity was not confined to our selection of longitudinal CA and the data that eventuated from the recording enterprise.

Doing research is not a neat, “linear” process following a pre-defined protocol, from identifying a research question, literature review, research design, deployment of data collection methods, analysis of results, writing up the research. Research projects are contingent, iterative, ongoingly refined and subject to external and internal pressures during the project lifetime, which may not be bounded by the precise dates of research funding. For example, all researchers encounter new work (papers they hadn’t seen, or that have just been published) during the course of their studies, which means that a “literature review chapter” is always in progress.

This insight meant that we did not wait to finish a literature review before embarking upon data collection. As we emphasize elsewhere (Carlin, 2009), when writing a literature review

for a thesis it should be remembered that an end point is for “practical purposes”: new references may need to be incorporated into the review during the progress of writing other sections.

As experienced researchers, we were able to pursue these serendipitous side-projects concurrently, while advancing the main inquiry. Nevertheless, juggling concurrent projects is an important skill to develop, particularly as doctoral students face pressure to publish papers prior to the completion of their dissertation. Some of the side-projects we embarked upon are as follows:

Literature Sites

For instance, while doing a literature review on adult-child interaction we found setting-related studies of interest in the deployment and use of ‘qualitative’ research. Although we started this aside with an extremely broad scope, looking at the use of qualitative research methods in Linguistics and Sociology, we immediately saw our scope was too broad, and narrowed our purview to the more discrete fields of information science and dentistry. Our curiosity was piqued by discussions of adult-child interactions in these fields (e.g. McKechnie 2006; Welbury, Duggal and Hosey 2012). This narrowing down, which made a side-project more manageable, was for the prosaic reasons that we were familiar with information science; and the use of qualitative research was more visible in dentistry than other fields by virtue of its rarity. Further reading of these literatures revealed discrepant use of qualitative research methods in studies that were self-avowedly outlining advantages of qualitative methods for future researchers. As teachers of qualitative research, we felt it incumbent upon us to address some of these shortcomings, starting with studies claiming to use a “Grounded Theory” approach (Carlin & Kim 2019). Just one of the discrepancies was reading studies that referenced the original formulation of Grounded Theory, by Barney

Glaser & Anselm Strauss (1967), but the published procedures could only have been accomplished using a later version, developed by Juliet Corbin & Anselm Strauss (2008).

Audio/Visual Data Formats

A further side-project was introduced to us through readings that were relevant to our main project. This concerned what we call a “hierarchy” of data formats (Carlin & Kim 2020) for doing CA. In the literature we found specific expressions upgrading the use of video-recording at the expense of audio-recording. These misgivings orient to video being able to capture non-verbal actions, which are unavailable to audio data-formats. Given our data-based orientation to using CA, we were unable to reconcile these preferences with our data. It is crucial to note that for CA, data are comprised not just by conversational transcripts, but by the recordings. However, these are just part of the data. The analysis of talk-in-interaction is also constituted by the analysts’ hearings or viewings of the recordings (Watson 1995). Addressing this absolutist attitude to CA data as being transcripts and recordings, or worse, transcripts alone, we heard direct references within the talk, that were available from the recordings, that problematized the assumption that audio-recordings were of lesser value than video-recordings.

In part, this relates to what John Heritage and Rod Watson (1979) call “scenic features” of settings, such as spatial arrangements and physical objects that the conversationalists engage with during the conversation. The audio-recordings capture self-reporting features of talk, whereby in talking to each other the participants are describing – for each other; and, serendipitously, for analysts – the activities that are in progress.

Socialization and Sequentiality

One of the initial projects that arose from the data concerned storytelling in parent-child interaction (Kim & Carlin, 2020b). The beginning of the project was incidental in that repeated listening to the data brought to our attention two questions that appear recurrently across longitudinal data: “how was your day?” or “what did you do at school today?” These familiar and mundane forms of inquiries are found routinely in family dinner time conversations (Blum-Kulka, 1997). Having the same form of inquiry across a series of conversations provided us with a good starting point for subsequent analysis.

After we identified the sequences that we wanted to analyse, we compiled sub-corpora both in audio (27 files of one or two minutes each, which amounted to 35 minutes of audio-recording in total) and transcripts, from the main data base (5 hours and 36 minutes of audio recording). Although literature helped us temporarily put a name for the sub-corpora we were identifying, i.e., ‘today narrative’, it did not provide us with any characteristics to look out for in the data. It was through repeated listening to the data and reading of the transcripts, along with familiarity with CA literature, that enabled our noticing of the features that could potentially serve as indices for the development of interactional competence, e.g., programmatic status of three-partedness in list-construction (Jefferson 1990).

These serendipitous aspects of the wider project on parent-child interaction were occasioned by the literature we were reading for the project, and by the corpus of data we were using. Thus, these nested projects, touched off by readings and data, were generated by the practices of doing research – reading, and engaging with the data.

Section Summary

- When embarking upon a research project, it is essential to have a plan. Plans are extremely useful for any research project.

- Research plans should be kept under constant review.
- When working with naturally occurring data, you should allow your plan to follow phenomena exhibited within your data. Never force your data to fit a plan, or preconceived assumptions: your plan should emerge from your data.

Small Data: Practical Lessons Learned

Extract 1 above illustrates what we mean by “small data”. This term was introduced into the CA lexicon by Roy Turner. Small data are not to be confused with “micro” data: internal disciplinary distinctions such as meso/micro/macro, structure/agency, qualitative/quantitative are heuristic rather than relevant. The concern for studies of CA should be with the phenomenon, not how the discipline classifies the topic.

We do not use Roy Turner’s term “small data” to connote “micro” level studies, nor as a contrast with “Big Data”. Rather, “small data” draws attention to the generative property of analyzing talk-in-interaction. In our project on parent-child interaction, we recognized important, different phenomena, within and according to the data themselves, and wrote discrete papers on these. Small data provide analysts with unanticipated research trajectories, which, as Debra Jackson and colleagues (2013) acknowledge, can provide genuinely distinct studies for investigation.

Transcription, particularly when doing CA, is highly labor intensive. As you will need to transcribe the recordings using Jeffersonian orthography, the amount of data you have is an important consideration.

Data preparation: Before collecting data that you will use in your project, familiarize yourself with your recording equipment. Practice using it, and practice transcribing your recording. Be prepared to make several attempts to produce a transcript. Don’t forget that in projects that

ask participants to make recordings themselves, you need to set aside time to instruct them on the features of your recording equipment, too.

By following the phenomena which occur in the data, large amounts of data are not necessary because you'll find phenomena of interest within these to generate materials for study. As such, you need to be more concerned with ethical considerations, such as informed consent and obtaining permissions; and the quality of your recordings (see Goodwin 1993), than with collecting a large corpus of data for analysis.

Section summary

- You will only be able to use a fraction of the data you record.
- Less is more. Unlike traditional data collection, such as doing interviews, you are not concerned with sample size.
- Aim for high-quality recording. Time spent at the outset practicing with your recording equipment will be invaluable.

Conclusion

This case study looked at an interdisciplinary project, using longitudinal CA to document how changes were expressed over time in parent-child interaction. The trajectories of the research project were dictated in entirety by recordings of talk-in-interaction. By following the phenomena that were exhibited within the data, the project became a series of smaller, nested projects. One of the inquiries occasioned by the recordings of talk was a consideration of the abstract concepts of interactional competence, from linguistics; and socialization, from sociology.

A conservative approach to disciplinary work, as suggested by Pamela Shoemaker and her colleagues (2004), is to regard concepts as the “building blocks” of theory. Rather than unspecified abstractions, we approached the concepts “interactional competence” and “socialization” as members’ matters, developments that are occasioned within series of interactions. Longitudinal CA allowed us to look at concepts not as theoretical exercises but how these are actually enacted in situ.

Section summary

- Researchers using CA allow the data to set the research questions for their project
- Longitudinal CA enables the researcher to examine accepted disciplinary concepts in detail: not in the abstract, but in action
- Examining talk as data provides the opportunity to identify commonalities between different disciplinary concepts

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. How is longitudinal CA different from episodic CA?
2. The authors describe their data as occupying a ‘liminal’ space between contrived talk and naturally occurring talk. Consider Excerpt 1 where the father explicitly mentions the activity of recording. One can make use of this excerpt to make an argument about the status of the data either way – contrived vs. naturally occurring. What does the excerpt tell you about the status of data?

3. The authors talk about challenges of working in an interdisciplinary team centered around the potential risks of distortion of a concept when it crosses disciplinary boundaries. Can you think of any examples of this other than those mentioned in this case report?
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Multiple Choice Quiz Questions

1. Serendipity in research
 - a. Means that researchers rely on luck for their findings from the outset?
 - b. Means that researchers making unexpected and beneficial discoveries?
[CORRECT]
 - c. Is always acknowledged in final published articles?
2. In our project, the term “Small Data”
 - a. Refers to “micro” data
 - b. Is the opposite of “Big Data”
 - c. Draws attention to the generative property of analyzing talk-in-interaction
[CORRECT]
3. The authors point out that interdisciplinary work can be difficult if researchers assume that discipline-specific concepts mean ‘the same kind of thing’. What is their recommendation for reducing this problem?
 - a. Giving primacy to the data [CORRECT]
 - b. Giving primacy to disciplinary literatures
 - c. Through rigorous comparison
4. The authors describe the processes whereby the nested projects were generated by the two main practices of doing research – reading and engaging with data. Which of the

following adjectives best describes the relationship between the two practices as described in this case report?

- a. Iterative: these practices mutually inform each other? [CORRECT]
 - b. Linear: one practice follows the other in sequence?
 - c. Bounded: these practices are compartmentalized?
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