TOWARD AN INTERDISCIPLINARY FIELD

Language and Social Interaction Research at the University of California, Santa Barbara

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"Language and Social Interaction (LSI) has now come of age as a research strand within the discipline of Communication," Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz states in the Introduction to this volume, listing several ways that this is so. We wish we could make a similar claim for the discipline of sociology, where LSI is unquestionably maturing but at a markedly slower rate. This chapter is about a graduate program in LSI whose home is in a sociology department. We begin with a few notes about this situation before tracing the evolution of LSI scholarship at the University of California, Santa Barbara, as it expanded generally and specifically in relation to the field of communication.

In the discipline of sociology, there are various signposts of growth for LSI research. In recent years ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts have served on the editorial boards of most of the core journals in sociology, and LSI research now appears periodically, if not frequently, in such journals. And thanks to recent institution-building efforts, there is now a section of the American Sociological Association devoted to ethnomethodology and conversation analysis. On the other hand, there is no sociological journal devoted to interactional studies, no sociological handbook for work in this area, and no sociological festschriften of the kind that Leeds-Hurwitz documents for Communication.
There is a deep irony in this because the phenomena of interest in LSI are—as the acronym indicates—thoroughly and intrinsically social in character. Indeed, interest in language use, practical reasoning, and coordinated action can be traced back to Max Weber and Emile Durkheim, if not Karl Marx, whose works in many ways form the foundation of present-day sociology. Correspondingly, C. Wright Mills (1940), drawing heavily on the work of Kenneth Burke (1936), anticipated and amplified many core LSI themes in his writings on language as a social phenomenon:

The postulate underlying modern study of language is the simple one that we must approach linguistic behavior, not by referring it to private states in individuals, but by observing its social function of coordinating diverse actions. . . . Rather than fixed elements "in" an individual, motives are the terms with which interpretation of conduct by social actors proceeds. (p. 904)

Thus, as Hilbert (1992, p. 6) has observed, it is as if such themes in various sociological classics passed like recessive genes through the functionalist Talcott Parsons to bloom more fully in Parsons' recalcitrant student Harold Garfinkel whose influence, in turn, on Harvey Sacks and conversation analysis was profound.2

The relative marginality of LSI within sociology poses both challenges and opportunities for those affiliated with the field. One challenge is in recruiting sociology graduate students, whose interest in LSI remains an acquired taste. Unlike many students in communication studies, sociology students do not arrive at graduate school with an intrinsic curiosity about the nuances of interaction. Furthermore, LSI positions within departments of sociology remain scarce.

Although all four of the authors of this chapter were trained in sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, only one (Maynard) is fully in a sociology department (Wisconsin—Madison). One (Clayman) was for many years jointly in communication and sociology (UCLA), and the other two (Halkowski, Kidwell) are faculty in communication departments at their respective universities (Albany, New Hampshire). This dispersion of sociologically trained LSI scholars has been a long-standing pattern that can be traced back to investigators such as Gail Jefferson and Anita Pomerantz in the 1970s.3

Communication has been styled (by one communication researcher) as "a discipline of refugees," with scholars joining its ranks to be able to study questions their home disciplines don't yet adequately recognize (Dues & Brown, 2004, p. xviii). Here we briefly sketch the paths that led several of us to homes in communication.

Steven Clayman's path was relatively straightforward. His dissertation research examined a form of interaction—broadcast news interviews—designed for a mass audience and thus with clear relevance for the study of journalism. Both the study of interaction and the study of the media have an established place within sociology, but both are more central to communication, reflecting the "interpersonal/mass" division that has long characterized the latter discipline. Accordingly, after a postdoctoral stint at the University of Wisconsin, Madison—where he joined and would eventually collaborate with Doug Maynard—Clayman landed at UCLA with a joint appointment in sociology and communication studies.

Timothy Halkowski, after receiving his PhD in 1990, took an N.I.M.H. postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Kentucky College of Medicine, so that he could pursue his long-held interest in physician-patient communication. While a post-doctoral fellow, he collected data and also saw first hand some of the ways that a scholar trained in conversation analysis could do useful and interesting research and teaching within the medical academic world. This led to his accepting a faculty position at the University of Wisconsin Medical School, where he taught medical students and did research for 13 years. Although that practical and applied work was deeply satisfying, he also had a desire to work with undergraduate and graduate students. So when an opportunity arose to join a communication department with a strong history of (and deep commitment to) LSI research, the decision was easy.

Mardi Kidwell accepted a job in the communication department at the University of New Hampshire upon completion of her PhD studies in 2003. Although her dissertation took on traditional sociological themes having to do with children's socialization and their emerging orientations to rules and norms, the focus on participants' gazing conduct and other embodied phenomena put clearly within her sights the goal of working in a communication department. Moreover, finding a home early in her graduate studies at the National Communication Association annual and regional meetings meant that she had more experience with addressing her work to communication audiences. She has found that communication scholars at large, more so than sociologists, offer a common appreciation (not surprisingly) of whatever can be deciphered as "communicative" about human behavior.

The dispersion of sociologically trained LSI scholars from UCSB reflects the relative marginality of LSI within sociology. But this very marginality has had significant payoffs that extend far beyond the career trajectories of the current authors. In an effort to secure an intellectual space in which to work, UCSB scholars have had to be extraordinarily enterprising. They have reached out to many other subfields within sociology, and beyond sociology to a variety of other disciplines—including especially communication but also anthropology, linguistics, education, political
science, technology and software design, and even medicine. In so doing, they have produced a remarkably wide-ranging body of work that has substantially broadened the sphere of influence of LSI. Although LSI is not yet a discipline in its own right, UCSB scholarship and institutional structures have played an important role in forging a cross-disciplinary identity for LSI as a social scientific “hub” with strong links to these other fields and disciplines, and most especially communication.

The fruits of such efforts are not difficult to discern. Recent Web of Science data on Garfinkel’s (1967) *Studies in Ethnomethodology* indicates that it has been cited more than 2,700 times since publication. The Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson article on turn-taking has become truly famous, as it is the most-cited article ever published in the 80-year history of the journal *Language* (1974), outpacing even Chomsky’s critique of Skinner. That an article by three sociologists should be the most-cited contribution to a linguistics journal speaks volumes about the interdisciplinary reach of LSI. Increasingly, that reach transcends national boundaries as well. A recent international conference on conversation analysis attracted more than 400 submissions from 42 countries.

In one sense, the cross-disciplinary reach of LSI should not be surprising. The core phenomena of interest—direct interaction between persons, and the use of language and practical reasoning within that domain—comprise the bedrock of sociality and are centrally implicated in much of what transpires in the social world. But scholarly recognition of that fact was by no means automatic; it was, to borrow a well-worn but apt phrase, an achievement. In what follows, we mostly leave behind the story about the discipline of sociology, trace the evolution of LSI scholarship at UCSB, and explicate its role in expanding the sphere of influence of LSI especially for communication studies.

**THE EARLY YEARS: 1965 TO THE EARLY 1980S**

At UCSB, the Language, Interaction, and Social Organization (LISO) program is one of just five emphases that sociology graduate students can choose. It was not always that way.

The story begins in the 1960s, when a social psychologist, David Gold, was chair of the fledgling department. In an era when sociology was expanding across the country, Gold was motivated to bring in progressive if not avant-garde scholars as a way of enhancing the new department’s visibility within the discipline. Indeed, he was responsible for initiating hires in Marxist sociology and ethnomethodology both. In ethnomethodology, the first was Aaron Cicourel who came to Santa Barbara in 1966 from UC Riverside (where he was an associate professor) and Berkeley (where he was lecturing during 1965-1966). Cicourel (1964), inspired by Garfinkel as well as Alfred Schutz, had used the notion of “commonsense rules of interpretation” to suggest what the real phenomena for sociology should be and went on to formulate what he called “cognitive sociology” with somewhat different emphasis. Cicourel’s students at UCSB included Kenneth Jennings, Sybillyn Jennings, Robert MacKay, Hugh Mehan, and David Roth, who collaborated on an important book entitled *Language Use and School Performance* (1974). David Sudnow (1967), who had been a friend and colleague of Harvey Sacks at UC Berkeley, also spent a year or two at Santa Barbara during the late 1960s when his classic about hospital experience—*Passing On: The Social Organization of Dying*—was published.

The most durable scholarly presence established during the David Gold era was the arrival of Don Zimmerman in 1965, and not only because he stayed at UCSB for his entire career, retiring after 40 years in 2005. He also collaborated with other late-1960s or early-1970s arrivals, including Melvin Pollner, D. Lawrence Wieder, and Thomas P. Wilson, and went on to direct a large number of master’s theses and dissertations over the next four decades.

Mel Pollner (1974, 1987) was a graduate student of Aaron Cicourel’s who finished in 1970 and joined the faculty at UCLA, publishing studies of “mundane reasoning” that have been strongly influential for EM teaching and research. Larry Wieder conducted courses in ethnomethodology and ethnography. During his time at Santa Barbara, Wieder (1974) brought to publication what now, like Pollner’s (1987) monograph, can only be called a classic in ethnomethodological research, *Language and Social Reality: The Case of Telling The Convict Code*.

Tom Wilson (who trained at Columbia in survey methodology) turned out to have deep theoretical interests besides his quantitative orientation. Teaching at Dartmouth, he was ready to make a move out of the Ivy League and to a department that had a graduate program when Dave Gold called him in 1967 to see if he would be interested in UCSB. Already dissatisfied with Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton, the two prime theorists who used role theory and internalized consensus to explain the phenomenon of social stability, Wilson had become intrigued by ethnomethodology and jumped at the chance to move to UCSB, where he knew there was a coterie of people working on ethnomethodological problems. Once he made the move, Wilson engaged in many hours of conversation with both Zimmerman and Wieder. In short order, Wilson (1970) published an article in no less than the flagship professional journal *American Sociological Review*. This article provided a pivotal argument for the pursuit of ethnomethodological studies as opposed to either the “normative” or “interpretive” paradigms then prominent in the field.

Doug Maynard arrived on the scene as a new graduate student in 1974, just in time to take his first course in ethnomethodology from Wieder. He
also enrolled that first year in Don Zimmerman's conversation analysis class. It was an exciting time to be at Santa Barbara, because there were a number of departed EM and CA students who had established a culture and legacy for LSI studies and others continuing to matriculate. Judith Handel, Warren Handel, Mark Fishman, Pam Fishman, Kenneth Leiter, Marilyn Lester, William Sanders, and Susan Wedow had just left the scene, and the current crop included Bill Ivey, Richard Hilbert, and Candace West. At this point (1975), however, Larry Wieder went to the University of Oklahoma, where he eventually became an influential chair of a major department of communication. This move created a gap in the ethnomethodology area at UCSB, because Zimmerman was becoming increasingly committed to conversation analysis. Ivey, who was intensely interested in the phenomenological roots of ethnomethodology, left the field of sociology entirely after Wieder departed. Nevertheless, the influence of Cicourel, Sudnow, and Wieder was still in the air, and Zimmerman and Wilson were both familiar with phenomenology, theory, and methodology so that the intellectual atmosphere—the range of reading and discussion being encouraged—was incredibly demanding, rich, and stimulating.

As time went on, Wilson and Zimmerman formed a powerful intellectual partnership and together trained a large number of students who entered the program in the 1970s through the present day, each remaining active after retirement (Wilson in 1994, and Zimmerman in 2005). For the cross-disciplinary LSI area, their several decades of partnership has at least three major contributions. For one, by the time Cicourel and Wieder left UCSB, Zimmerman had begun scrutinizing Harvey Sacks' lectures and publications and was beginning to see that conversation analysis might have more legs with which to pursue studies of ethnomethodological phenomena than the EM tradition itself, in which at least some students seemed to be rediscovering indexical utterances and reflexivity rather than identifying and analyzing other members' phenomena. Wilson, who was growing dissatisfied with Garfinkel's later writings (for example, in chapter 1 of Studies) while still captivated by the earlier studies (chapters 2 through 7), gradually followed Zimmerman's lead and came to embrace CA.

Accordingly, when Maynard arrived in 1974, and a year before that, when Candace West had started the graduate program, there was a sense of this shift already being underway. In 1975-76, Gail Jefferson spent a year of teaching and research at UCSB. It was during this time that Zimmerman, Wilson, and other UCSB faculty from linguistics were discussing with Harvey Sacks and Emanuel Schegloff the possibility of a program at UCSB for an interdisciplinary program in language, discourse, and interaction. Tragically, Sacks died in November of 1975 when his car and a truck collided on his way to meet with Schegloff and form the outlines of such a program, and it never came to be.

With the exception of Rich Hilbert, who joined the UCSB sociology program in the same year as West but who worked primarily with Larry Wieder, subsequent ethnomethodologically interested students of Don Zimmerman and Tom Wilson (including West and Maynard) engaged in master's and dissertation studies that were informed by conversation analysis to a heavy degree. Candace West's and Maynard's experiences at UCSB are telling in this regard. Had they arrived a year or two before they did, it is likely they would have written theses in a more ethnographic and ethnomethodological vein (as Rich Hilbert did), as this vein is what threads through graduate student work before Zimmerman and Wilson began intensive explorations into conversation analysis in the mid-1970s.

Next to their early move into conversation analytic investigations, a second contribution of the Zimmerman-Wilson partnership is not so transparent. The nature of this contribution is to be found in an unpublished paper with the provocative title, "Prospects for Experimental Studies of Meaning Structures" (Zimmerman & Wilson, 1973), which argues that neither logical positivism nor behaviorism provide an adequate approach to the study of meaningful social phenomena (as opposed to the phenomena of the natural sciences). Adhering to an ethnomethodological appreciation for language in use (in terms of its indexical qualities and reflexivity), Zimmerman and Wilson (1973) propose that in addition to studying LSI phenomena through "close and detailed" (ethnographic or tape recorded) and more phenomenological observation, it should be possible examine members' procedures using traditional experimental methods. This possibility exists because, although the product of such procedures is situated and occasioned, the procedures themselves are trans-situational and invariant. This suggestion of invariance is along the lines that, for example, Schegloff (1986) articulates when proposing the generic and universal quality of conversational procedures. In Zimmerman and Wilson's (1973) focus on such procedures, one can see a burgeoning sensibility for quantitative and distributional LSI studies.

This sensibility is embodied in West's (1979) and West and Zimmerman's (1977) investigations regarding the distribution of overlaps and interruptions (as conversational procedures) and Wilson and Zimmerman's (1986) own systematic study of periodicity in the silences of conversation. Unfortunately, the paper on "Prospects" was never published, and its influence was probably largely confined to the working environment at UCSB. Over the years, there have been other distributional studies, and more recently the call for quantitative investigations in CA is becoming louder and has been implemented in a range of studies such as those by Heritage and colleagues on doctor-patient interaction (e.g., 2006), by Clayman and Heritage on presidential press conferences (e.g., 2002b), and by Maynard and Nora Cate Schaeffer in the survey interview (e.g., 2002). In many ways, Zimmerman and Wilson were utterly prescient if not path-
breaking in so early envisioning the possibility for quantitative and distributional studies that take members’ methods and conversational practices as its subject matter.

In some ways, the West and Zimmerman distributional studies of overlap and interruption intersect with a third contribution of the Zimmerman-Wilson partnership and LSI studies at UCSB, which was to make an early foray into the study of the relationship between talk and social structure and what came to be called “institutional talk.” To posit the salience of gender for conversational patterning is a classic case of bringing social structural matters to bear on the conduct of interaction. And insofar as gender is also a kind of social institution—one that, following Garfinkel’s famous study of Agnes the transsexual, is accomplished rather than fixed or reified (West & Zimmerman, 1987)—the concern with gender and conversation prefigures subsequent research on plea bargaining, complex organizations, news interviews, congressional hearings, medical interactions, emergency phone calls to the police, children’s interactions, and other studies that UCSB LSI students have conducted over the years. Certainly by the late 1970s or early 1980s, other such studies included Atkinson and Drew’s (1979) Order in Court, Goodwin’s (1982) investigation of children’s disputing in an urban black community, and McHoul’s (1978) and Mehan’s (1979) probing of classroom teaching and learning. However, UCSB was the earliest and most consistent program whose faculty and students were supplementing the technically focused work on “ordinary conversation” with forays into social organizational aspects of interaction at various kinds of institutional sites. In the early period, Maynard did dissertation work on plea negotiations that eventuated in a monograph (1984) showing the use and deployment of a “bargaining sequence” among actors in the criminal justice process. Also, with a courtroom case study, he collaborated with Wilson to draw some theoretical insights and empirical observations about the Marxian phenomenon of reification (Maynard & Wilson, 1980). Just as Maynard was finishing his PhD (1979), the late Deirdre Boden, who had been a film director in a previous career, came on the scene with a kind of gusto that re-energized the graduate student culture and stimulated a very successful conference on “Talk and Social Structure” at Santa Barbara in 1986. She wrote a master’s thesis on the commonness of turn taking across seven languages, and a dissertation on talk’s structure in organizations that has become an influential monograph (Boden, 1994). Besides publishing a book from the Santa Barbara conference with Don Zimmerman (1991), Boden also collaborated with Harvey Molotch, whose constant support of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis was crucial to its survival at UCSB. With Molotch, Boden published articles on the Watergate hearings documenting how power can be exerted through talk (Molotch & Boden, 1985), and on the “compulsion of proximity,” or the social need for “thick information” that prioritizes copresence over mediated interaction. The latter paper (Boden & Molotch, 1994) appeared in a book that Boden co-edited with Roger Friedland, another LSI-supportive faculty member at UCSB.

Thus, at the same time as CA became prominent for the training of LSI graduate students at UCSB in the early years, faculty strongly promoted the pursuit of intellectual curiosity and breadth. Graduate students could not only make and analyze recordings but also employ ethnographic methods, with which Cicourel, Sudnow, Zimmerman, Wieden, and Wilson were all acquainted and that were prominent in many of the early ethnomethodological studies. Maynard’s study of plea bargaining had an ethnographic component, as did his later work on bad and good news, and as did Boden’s study of complex organizations. Rich Hilbert, although not a student of CA, did a wonderful ethnographic PhD dissertation by becoming a teacher himself and studying a movement known as competency-based teacher education. Reflecting the UCSB concern with sociological theory, Hilbert (1992) later published a monograph (to which we have already referred) on ethnomethodology’s roots in classical theory. Besides traditional sociological theory, faculty encouraged students to read and discuss the entire Goffman corpus, one result being that concepts such as ritual, territories of the self, framing, gender display, and footing crept into UCSB-based conversation analytic studies of topic change, plea bargaining, “doing gender,” and news interviews, for example. The LSI students who emerged from the early years at UCSB have continued to make forays into the analysis of ordinary conversation while continuing the concern with institutional settings—including medicine (Heritage & Maynard, 2006; Hilbert, 1984; Maynard, 2003; West, 1984), survey data centers (Maynard, Houtkoop-Steenstra, Schaeffer, & van der Zouwen, 2002), law, and others.

THE MIDDLE YEARS: EARLY 1980S TO THE EARLY 1990S

The focus of LSI work at UCSB took a new turn when Don Zimmerman began working on calls to an emergency call center in 1981. Although the concern with institutional environments was a conscious and partially strategic choice, this particular project arose fortuitously. A UCSB colleague and applied sociologist, Richard Berk, was conducting a field experiment in an urban police department, and Donileen Loseke—a graduate research assistant on the project who had also studied with Zimmerman—asked if the recordings of incoming phone calls could be made available for research. Zimmerman transcribed and began analyzing the data when he was at the Center for Survey Research in Mannheim, Germany. (Both Zimmerman and
Wilson had been invited to Mannheim to give a summer workshop on integrating qualitative and quantitative methods.) The first publication to emerge from the project (Zimmerman, 1984) set an agenda for subsequent research on 911 emergency calls and inspired the next generation of students at UCSB.

The emergency call project gained momentum when Marilyn Whalen and Jack Whalen began working on the same dataset. Neither came to UCSB intending to study CA—Jack was interested in political sociology and did his dissertation in that area under the guidance of Richard Flacks, and Marilyn was initially enrolled in education. In a pattern that would be repeated often at UCSB, both were drawn to CA after taking Zimmerman’s and Wilson’s classes. Marilyn wound up completing a dissertation on 911 calls she obtained from a southeastern site, and both Marilyn and Jack did extensive fieldwork and data gathering of their own at a 911 call center in the Pacific Northwest. Sometime later, Wayne Mellinger would make further contributions to the 911 project.

The publications that emerged from this project (Mellinger, 1994; Whalen, 1995; Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987, 1990; Whalen, Zimmerman, & Whalen, 1988) addressed a variety of themes that would later become central to subsequent CA work on institutional talk. These include the systematic absence of certain conversational practices in institutional talk, the special patterns of inference characteristic of such talk, the management of the emotions in work settings, and the practical epistemologies implicated in occupational decision making. More generally, in concert with previous research by Maynard on plea bargaining, this line of research helped to establish “talk at work” as a viable area of study within conversation analysis. In retrospect, the emergency call was an ideal laboratory for such research, because it falls on the extreme end of the continuum separating role-based and task-focused modes of institutional talk from the more open-ended and socially interactions characteristic of ordinary conversation.

As the 911 project was taking shape, others at UCSB were venturing into an ever-widening range of occupational settings where talk is centrally implicated. Steve Clayman (1988, 1989) examined broadcast news interviews, which would eventuate in a monograph on the subject co-authored with John Heritage (Clayman & Heritage, 2002a). Clayman would later adapt the CA approach to many aspects of journalism and mass communication, including journalistic gatekeeping (Clayman & Reisner, 1998), the selection of quotations and sound bites (Clayman, 1995), and interactions between public speakers and audiences (Clayman, 1993). And in a continuation of the methodological eclecticism noted earlier, Clayman would also collaborate with John Heritage and Marc Elliott (a RAND statistician) on a large-scale quantitative study of presidential news conferences, using question design as a window into the vigor of the White House press corps and its evolving relationship to the presidency (Clayman & Heritage, 2002b; Clayman, Elliott, Heritage, & McDonald, 2006).

Angela García, although not a UCSB PhD—she was enrolled in the UC Santa Cruz program under the guidance of UCSB alumnus Candace West—spent a year at UCSB studying with Don Zimmerman, and her dissertation and subsequent publications on mediation hearings bears the imprint of the UCSB approach (García, 1991). Robin Lloyd studied police interrogations involving young children (Lloyd, 1992). Tim Halkowski (1990) analyzed congressional hearings for his dissertation, out of which came his paper on “role as an interactional device,” using CA to work on an issue opened up by Rich Hilbert’s dissertation and his paper on role theory (Hilbert, 1981). Halkowski (2006) would later turn to medical encounters and doctor-patient interactions, where he pursued an interest in practical epistemologies (sparked by the work of Whalen & Zimmerman, 1990) as they are related to a “social epistemics of bodily sensation” (Halkowski, 1990, pp. 110-112).

Beyond the various empirical contributions, the body of work emerging from UCSB in the 1980s shed new light on the relationship between talk and the social structural contexts in which it is embedded. The dominant approach within conversation analysis at that time was to screen out the impact of contextual factors—partly by focusing on the data of ordinary conversation, where contextual factors are highly variable both within and across interactions—to elucidate on the most general organizational properties of actions and sequences of action. Research at UCSB was, by contrast, contextually focused. By working with data drawn from particular institutional contexts—emergency services, courtrooms, broadcast journalism, and so forth—scholars investigated how the generic resources of talk get adapted to the performance of particular occupational tasks and how institutional contexts are themselves activated, reproduced, and at times reshaped through such talk. This in turn yielded fresh insight into the import of the social structural context for interactional conduct, something that was not fully appreciated within conversation analysis at that time. It became increasingly clear that social structural formations are essential resources that interactional participants rely on in producing and understanding what is said and done on a particular occasion, and more generally that social interactions cannot be viewed as insulated from “larger” social structural environments. The empirical studies from UCSB added substance to this viewpoint, and Wilson (1991) articulated its conceptual and theoretical ramifications.

The line of work emerging from UCSB—empirically grounded in CA methods, but applied primarily if not exclusively to institutional, social structural, and other social scientific problems—proved to have substantial practical value both within the disciplines of sociology and communication and beyond. This is reflected in the career trajectories of UCSB LSI scholars
during this period. To the extent that UCSB students landed jobs in sociology—and many did secure such jobs—they did so because of their hybrid expertise in both interaction and other sociological fields. West was hired at UC Santa Cruz as a sociologist of gender, Maynard joined the UW Madison faculty as a sociologist of law, and Clayman’s appointment at UCLA—split between sociology and communication studies—hinged on his mass media research.

Other UCSB alumni secured jobs beyond sociology, not only in the allied field of communication but also at university departments and research institutes devoted to applied research. Jack and Marilyn Whalen, following a stint at the University of Oregon Sociology Department, joined the Institute for Research on Learning and later the Palo Alto Research Center (PARC), where they adapted conversation analysis and ethnomethodology to address interaction-based problems that arise in occupational worksites. Tim Halkowski worked for many years as a professor in the Family Medicine department of the University of Wisconsin Medical School, where he headed the doctor-patient communication training program, before later joining the communication department at SUNY Albany. Thus, in a harbinger of developments to come, the influence of UCSB LSI scholars and scholarship from the middle period extended well beyond the discipline of sociology and into a range of fields where interaction is centrally implicated.

THE LATER YEARS: EARLY 1990S TO PRESENT

If the “middle years” at UCSB can be characterized as having further advanced CA methods into the territory of traditional sociological concerns with institutions and social structures, the “later years” can be characterized as a return to, and pursuit of, the earliest concerns of conversation analysis having to do with the fundamental structures of social interaction, albeit with a new interdisciplinary trajectory at UCSB.

In winter of 1991, Gene Lerner arrived at the sociology department. Lerner, who initially wrote his dissertation under the supervision of Sacks and subsequently Schegloff, brought to UCSB his interests in the organization of social action through grammar. Building on early insights from the classic turn-taking paper (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974), Lerner (1996a, 1996b, 2003) pursued a scholarly program directed to matters central to turn-taking, sequence organization, and the deployment of fine-grained grammatical practices in the accomplishment of social action. Lerner’s arrival coincided with other important developments in the department at about the same time. Zimmerman in 1991 became an associate dean and in the following year began a six-year term as the dean of social sciences. Shortly thereafter, in 1994, Wilson retired.

During the 1990-2003 period, five sociology graduate students were drawn to LSI study at UCSB; only two of those went on to do CA dissertations, and the others pursued different LSI-related projects. Clearly, the focus brought by Lerner was not the stuff of the traditional sociological imagination. Zimmerman and Wilson, with their strong ethnomethodological orientations and efforts to direct CA to sociological topics, had become less of a presence in the department, although Zimmerman returned in 1996 to resume full faculty duties and Wilson during his retirement continued to advise students and participate in seminars and LSI data sessions. However, even as early as the latter part of the 1980s, the number of sociology graduate students doing LSI work started to wane. The time was ripe for a new direction in LSI scholarship at UCSB. This direction was one that reached across the boundaries of sociology to make connections with scholars in other disciplines doing similar work with naturally occurring interactional data.

In 1991, Lerner, Zimmerman, and Wilson began laying the groundwork for a path-breaking interdisciplinary PhD emphasis that was to become known as LISO (Language, Interaction, and Social Organization). Concurrently, plans were in the making at UCLA for a counterpart interdisciplinary program that would become known as CLIC (Center for Language Interaction and Culture). Thus, between the two campuses there were efforts to form a more visible, institutional collaboration. In 1993, the first LISO seminar was held, drawing faculty and graduate students from sociology, linguistics, and education. Faculty from education included Jenny Cook-Gumperz, Judith Green, Chuck Bazerman, and Amy Kyratzis, and from linguistics, Sandy Thompson, Pat Clancy, and Jack DuBois. The goals of LISO were three-fold: (a) to give graduate students from the various departments working with recorded data of naturally occurring language and social interaction a “home,” (b) to provide an interdisciplinary student-faculty forum for discussion of work and data, and (c) to promote an institutional identity for LSI work both at UCSB and beyond that would enhance the campuses’ visibility as an active center of LSI research—an further aim of this being to attract new graduate students.

Across the three departments (sociology, education, and linguistics), graduate student participation in LISO was strong, and a number of students pursued dissertations that made use of a descriptive approach to recorded, naturally occurring interaction in the areas of sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, interactional linguistics, and conversation analysis: in education, Debora Romero; in linguistics, Elise Karkkainen, Tomoyo Takagi, Agnes Kang, Joseph Parks, and Robin Shaops; and in sociology, Mardi Kidwell, Dave Pearson, and Lars Linton. Peggy Syzmansky, the first
to complete the LISO emphasis, came from the Spanish and Portuguese Department, and went on to join the Whalens at the Palo Alto Research Center. A number of other graduate students also participated in the LISO seminars and courses to complete their MA thesis or to enhance their skills in using recorded data. Integral to bringing students from different departments together was the course taught by Lerner, the Analysis of Recorded Interaction, that fulfilled the LISO emphasis methods requirement. In addition, a number of visiting international graduate students and faculty were drawn to UCSB to participate in LISO seminars and other activities. The annual Conference on Language, Interaction and Culture at the University of California, held alternately at UCSB and UCLA and organized by LISO and CLIC graduate students, emerged as an important venue for LSI work by hosting internationally recognized speakers from a variety of disciplines: Emanuel Schegloff, Gail Jefferson, Paul Drew, Eve Clark, John Lucy, Michael Silverstein, Catherine Snow, Penelope Brown, and others. In addition to paper presentations, the conference organizes workshops designed to promote dialog and learning between graduate students and faculty, with themes on practical topics such as transcribing and analyzing data.

For those graduate students working within sociology, the interdisciplinary training provided by LISO was manifest in the new crop of MA theses and dissertations. Whereas earlier cohorts of graduate students were attracted to take up LSI studies through classes with Zimmerman and Wilson, almost no new members were drawn from the existing ranks of sociology graduate students (with the exception of Dave Fearon). However, the earlier legacy of Zimmerman and Wilson gained a new kind of expression. Their former students and associates now sent them students. Two, Mardi Kidwell and Lars Linton, had been inspired as sociology undergraduates by Candace West at UC Santa Cruz and by Angela Garcia at the University of Cincinnati, respectively, to pursue CA training at UCSB. Another, Sarah Jones, a Spanish and Italian major at the University of Wisconsin, had been enticed to study LSI at UCSB by the ethnographer Mitch Dunieier, an associate of Harvey Molotch's who had a joint faculty appointment at UW and UCSB. George Psathas at Boston University encouraged his undergraduate student Michelle Wakin to pursue graduate studies with Zimmerman and Wilson. Some of the projects these students pursued clearly resonated with the tradition of UCSB CA scholarship on institutional talk at the MA level: Wakin wrote on 411 calls for directory assistance, Kidwell on front desk service encounters, and Linton on late night talk shows. However, a new project, initiated by Lerner and bringing on board Zimmerman and faculty from linguistics and education, was underway: the Very Young Children Project, or, the VYC.

In 1997, graduate students from sociology and linguistics began videotaping at three different local daycare centers. The goal was to collect 500 hours of the naturally occurring interactions of children aged 12 to 30 months with their peers and adult caregivers. This was an enormous amount of video data, and over a period of four years required the work of a number of graduate student and undergraduate RA's logging hours not just in collecting video data, but also in indexing and archiving the data, and organizing collections of interactional phenomena. The project was unusual in terms of the size of data materials it generated (LSI scholars working with video typically make use of much smaller data sets), and also in the kind of materials it generated: interaction without a lot of talk.

The work that has come out of the VYC project has—like other CA work—been focused on early CA concerns with "achieving a naturalistic observational discipline that could deal with the details of social action (s) rigorously, empirically and formally" (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973, p. 290). Traditionally, conversation analysis has investigated talk by adults as its main concern. The VYC project, however, necessitated an approach for dealing with "the details of social action" as they occur in the earliest years of human development, and, primarily, in the realm of embodied action. Drawing on other LSI scholarship in this realm (Goodwin, 1981, 2000a, 2000b), Lerner and Zimmerman (2003) led the way by studying children's handling and deployment of objects in courses of action, and their movement, positioning, and comportment of the body relative to peers and adult caregivers as well as the material surround. Focusing on related phenomena, Jones wrote her MA thesis on children's pointing behavior and Kidwell did her dissertation on children's gazing behavior in situations of "misconduct." Linton's dissertation on parents' and children's leave-taking practices involves a focus on talk as it is intertwined with a number of embodied practices integral to "doing" departing.

The research spawned by the VYC project has, in many ways, been addressed to themes central to sociology having to do with children's early socialization and the institutional patterns and stratification of conduct within the daycare setting. However, a foray into some new, interdisciplinary territory regarding children's early understandings of others' "intentionality," traditionally the purview of developmental and cognitive psychologists (e.g., Tomasello, 1999), has been made as well. The seeds of the intersection of these different disciplinary concerns can be seen in Jones and Kidwell's earlier projects, but is especially clear in Kidwell and Zimmerman's (2006a) paper on the "observability" of certain forms of conduct in young children's interactions, published in Communication Monographs.

That the Kidwell and Zimmerman (2006a) paper was published in a communication rather than sociology journal shows something of the dispersion of UCSB LSI scholarship we mentioned at the outset. This paper demonstrates that children's orientations to the norms and rules surrounding
how they should treat their peers—for example, that they should not bite, hit, or push them—derive not just from what they “know” about how caregivers will respond to such acts (i.e., by intervening to stop them), but, crucially, from their abilities to assess a range of real-world interactional contingencies having to do with whether or not caregivers see such acts in the first place. In this paper, and others emerging from the VYC project (e.g., Jones & Zimmerman, 2003; Kidwell, 2005; Kidwell & Zimmerman, 2006b), the concept of intentionality, traditionally cast as a minded phenomenon, is recast in distinctly sociological and conversation analytic terms as a socially situated and interactionally contingent matter. Children exhibit understanding not only of what others know about their visible conduct, but also of what others will do in relation to such conduct.

At this writing, changes are still afoot for LSI scholarship in sociology at UCSB. In 2005, Zimmerman retired from his position as a professor of sociology. Not incidentally, during several of his last years as a member of the faculty, he was editor of Research on Language & Social Interaction (2002-2005). With Wilson, Zimmerman continues to supervise graduate students and conducts research and participates in LSI activities. In 2003, Geoff Raymond, a UCLA graduate student who worked with Emanuel Schegloff, John Heritage, and Steve Clayman, joined the department and began new research both alone and in collaboration with other CA faculty. Raymond’s solo research has addressed basic structures of interaction, such as yes/no interrogatives and their sequelae (Raymond, 2003). In a return to the 911 project, Raymond and Zimmerman (2007) collaborated on a study of how multiple calls addressed to a single event (a large brushfire) evolved in systematic ways over time. Raymond and Lerner have been doing research on topics addressed to both ordinary and institutional interaction, and, at this writing, are supervising MA projects on gender references in conversation (Naomi Klein); talk-in-interaction in racial awareness groups (Kevin Whitehead); and the use of “exactly” in agreeing/confirming in conversation (Ingrid Li). With a new, albeit still small, cohort of graduate students, it will be interesting to see how the issues discussed here and new ones come to be played out.

CONCLUSION

We started this account by observing that despite LSI’s provenance within sociology, the larger discipline did not fully embrace language and social interaction as a field of study in its own right. We also noted that communication, as a “discipline of refugees” with a common interest in various modes and processes of communication, has been markedly more receptive to LSI scholarship.

Against this backdrop, UCSB has played a central role in the diffusion of LSI research both within and across disciplines and, correspondingly, the broadening of its visibility and intellectual influence. The faculty there has encouraged engagement with the sociology discipline as a whole, and has built bridges to faculty in communication and other disciplines including education and linguistics. In partnership with UCLA's CLIC program, the Language, Interaction, and Social Organization group at UCSB represents a proverbial critical mass of LSI scholars and scholarship that spans many disciplines. Just as past students have contributed to and influenced the world of LSI scholarship, we can expect future generations to do so as well. If the UCSB developments are a harbinger, then the Department of Sociology there has bequeathed a substantial legacy for LSI as a recognized interdisciplinary field with an expanding sphere of influence. The LSI train has, so to speak, left the disciplinary station. Sociology as a whole may regret missing it.

NOTES

3. An associated challenge is that LSI scholars working within sociology departments like UCSB have labored over the years not just to produce quality scholarship but also to make breathing room for both faculty and students interested in the organization of interaction as a focus of study. This has of necessity entailed a two-pronged effort—to create a space in which LSI research could survive and hopefully flourish, and to do that research itself. Carving out a ratiﬁed intellectual space for LSI within sociology continues to be a work in progress.
4. See Schegloff’s (1992b, pp. xlviii-xliv) account regarding the attempted recruitment.
5. This aspect of LSI research at UCSB may be understood in light of the disciplinary context noted earlier. The impetus to pursue work in institutional environments was motivated in part by a scholarly interest in the relationship between talk and social structure, but also by a thoroughly practical interest in making LSI research appealing to a sociological audience. Although some sociologists may doubt the sociological relevance of research on turn taking and sequence organization, such skepticism might be overcome if these ostensibly “micro” phenomena could be shown to be implicated in the organization of gender, law, medicine, journalism, politics, policing, or complex organizations. And indeed, all of these institutional environments would eventually become the focus of research at UCSB. Furthermore, UCSB scholars would show these environments to be organized at the interactional level.
6. See Maynard and Zimmerman's (1984) collaborative research on topic talk, “ritual” (in the Goffmanian sense), and social relationships.
7. Although Howard Giles, a prominent member of the UCSB communication department, helped in the effort to establish a cross-disciplinary LSI emphasis, communication faculty and students do not usually participate in LSI seminars or events. The UCSB communication department, which is ranked as one of the best in the nation, promotes itself as a theoretically driven, quantitatively oriented program, and its interests do not overlap with LSI interests in studying naturally occurring behavior, as is the case with approaches such as conversation analysis, ethnomet hodology, or ethnography of communication, in any significant way.

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The Social History of Language and Social Interaction Research

People, Places, Ideas

forthcoming

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Victoria Chen

Jumping In, Jumping Out: Chicana Girl Gangs
Liliana Rossman

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**SERIES EDITOR’S PREFACE**

This is the third book in the series *Social Approaches to Interaction*. Social approaches investigate communication as inherently collaborative, as joint constructions of meaning, and as embedded in a particular social or cultural context. Unlike prior, and presumably future, books to be published in this series, the topic here is the history of research in Language and Social Interaction (LSI), rather than reporting on the results of such research. Obviously, the history of LSI research will be of primary interest to those who name it as their major area of study. But LSI scholars can study behavior in virtually any context, so some of the research overlaps substantially with that of other topics within Communication, and it is to be hoped that scholars in these areas will also be interested in the history of LSI research. At the very least, these areas include: Organizational Communication, Health Communication, Intercultural Communication, and Family Communication. As is obvious from looking at publication titles, out of these possibilities, it is Health Communication that has been the most frequent focus of LSI research in several guises: Ethnography of Communication, Conversation Analysis, and Ethnemethodology. However, studies of talk at work or within institutions lead to overlap with Organizational Communication, as reflected by parallel assumptions shared by interpretive research on organization culture.

As Wilder Mott (1981) reminds us, “Ideas have a lifetime. Like the people who mind them, ideas come to be and pass away, suffer the vicissitudes of fate and the determinations of will, and remain forever creatures of context” (p. 5). This book is about the people who had the ideas, and the places where those people and ideas were nurtured. The experience of learning about LSI, and learning how to do it, is quite different across universities, and within universities the experience was different at various points in time, depending on who was where when. It is the goal of this book to describe