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News Interviews

Steven Clayman and John Heritage (2002).
The News Interview: Journalists and Public Figures on the Air.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Christian Greiffenhagen

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Introduction

The news interview is a phenomenon familiar to all of us, not only as a tool through which journalists gather information, but also as a media product in its own right. Many broadcast programmes do not just include reports that summarise what journalists have learned through interviews, but consist of interviews with public figures themselves. This novel use of news interviews has led to changes for both journalists and public figures. While journalists previously gained face and status through their investigative skills (e.g., the *Washington Post* reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein during the 'Watergate' scandal in the 1970s), today journalists are often known for their skills of questioning. For example, Jeremy Paxman is known for his aggressive style of questioning on BBC's *Newsnight*, famously asking in a 1997 interview with former Home Secretary Michael Howard the same question

twelve times[1]. Conversely, public figures do not only have to know how to deliver speeches in an engaging manner, but also how to perform well in interviews.

Clayman and Heritage's *The News Interview* aims to study the methodic practices that are at play in the modern broadcast news interview. Since interviews are predominantly enacted through talk, they do so from the perspective of conversation analysis (CA), a sociological approach to study discourse as a form of interaction. The aim of CA is to uncover the procedural properties of 'talk-in-interaction', where this is understood as the ways in which participants organise their talk so that they can be understood and in turn display this understanding to each other. Consequently, Clayman and Heritage study the news interview as a methodically produced course of interaction, emphasising that the content of the interview (*what* is being talked about) is achieved through the interaction between interviewer and interviewee (*how* it gets talked about).

This chapter begins by placing the book in the context of studies of discourse and media, before summarising some of its main findings. The methodological assessment will focus on (1) the relationship between the perspective of the participant and the researcher and the ways in which Clayman and Heritage ground their analysis in the *endogenous analysis of participants*; (2) the ways in which the *institutional specificity* of the news interview can be established; (3) the similarities and differences between radio and television interviews, in particular, the question of how television interviews can be studied as a *visual phenomenon*.

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[1] Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/newsnight/newsnight25/4182569.stm.

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Studies of Discourse and Media

Clayman and Heritage's book contributes to a number of fields, including sociology, linguistics, and mass communication. However, the book is most usefully seen in the context of two fields.

Discourse

Firstly, the book is a contribution to socio-linguistic studies of discourse (often simply referred to as 'discourse analysis'), an interdisciplinary field originating in a variety of disciplines, including linguistics, anthropology, sociology, psychology, and philosophy. The emergence of these studies is often seen as a result of the 'linguistic turn', which in Britain is associated with philosophers such as Wittgenstein (1953), Austin (1962), or Winch (1958) and on the continent predominantly with French structuralism (e.g., Saussure, 1959 [1916]; Barthes, 1967 [1964]). While philosophers had previously seen language as simply a reflection of reality (prompting questions as to whether language is a true reflection of reality), language was seen as in an important sense defining reality, since our ways of enquiring and approaching reality are conducted in and through language.

Within the human and social sciences the linguistic turn led to a view that saw sociological topics (such as work, gender, or race) as investigable as 'worded entities' (Sharrock and Watson, 1989, p. 431), i.e., as sustained and reproduced through the linguistic practices of members of society. The focus in studies of discourse is thus not so much on the language itself, but upon how language is used, i.e., what is accomplished in and through talking and writing (hence the term 'discourse' rather than 'language').

There are a large variety of approaches to studying discourse (for overviews see Schiffrin, 1994; Cameron, 2001; Wetherell, 2001), working with a diverse range of materials and using a number of different methods. To mention just a few: Originating in linguistics and using predominantly quantitative methods, the *variationist approach* (Labov, 1966) tried to connect the study of linguistic variables (e.g., pronunciation) with the study of social variables (e.g., class). In contrast, the *ethnography of speaking* (e.g., Hymes, 1971) originated in anthropology and consequently used the method of participant observation to detail how people's way of speaking relates to the kind of situations they are in. In recent years, *Foucault's* notion of discourse has led to an increasing number of studies, which predominantly work on written (often historical) materials (e.g., Macdonald, 2003). Also influential have been 'critical' approaches such as *critical linguistics* (Fowler *et al.*, 1979) and *critical discourse analysis* (Fairclough, 1989), which have aimed to exhibit how linguistic features are shaped by ideological frameworks.

The approach adopted by Clayman and Heritage, *conversation analysis* (CA), is perhaps distinctive since it did not originate as a result of a specific interest in language, but rather as an attempt to develop a thoroughly systematic and empirical approach to study social action (for introductions to CA see West and Zimmerman, 1982; Lee, 1987; Heritage, 1995; Drew 2005; ten Have, 2007). The originator of CA, Harvey Sacks (1984, 1992) focused on talk simply as a result of the fact that in the 1960s tape-recorders and become both affordable and portable, which allowed the recording of naturally occurring conversations. Early studies analysed aspects of the most 'ordinary' kinds of conversation, e.g., the way speakers organise and coordinate taking turns at talking (Sacks *et al.*, 1974) or correct their own or others mistakes (Schegloff *et al.*, 1977). Subsequently, CA researchers extended this approach to the

study of institutional discourse (see Heritage, 2005; Arminen, 2005), e.g., courtrooms (Atkinson and Drew, 1979), political speeches (Atkinson, 1984), or medical encounters (Heritage and Maynard, 2006). Clayman and Heritage's book thus adopts a particular approach to study discourse (CA) to a particular social institution (the news interview).

Media

The book is, secondly, a contribution to media studies, the academic study of mass communication. Most media studies have been preoccupied with the concept of *ideology* (cf., Masterman, 1985, p.187), trying to exhibit how ideologies are transmitted and reproduced through the media.

A huge influence has been the critical theory of the Frankfurt School (see, e.g., Horkheimer and Adorno, 2002 [1947]; Marcuse, 1964). Critical theory was a development of Marxism, arguing that capitalist modes of production had penetrated into the sphere of culture, which had led to the liquidation of differences and individuality. People in modern societies were seen as not only economically, but also culturally alienated. Furthermore, while the culture industry promotes a view according to which individuals are free to do what they want (e.g., Nike's slogan "Just do it!"), this freedom is largely illusory, since most 'choices' are limited to a very few (and only marginally different) mass-produced items. According to critical theory, the mass media thus promote a view of liberty and freedom, but in fact contribute to their demise by persuading people to be happy with these very limiting conditions.

In Britain these ideas were re-vitalised in the 1970s, in particular through an analysis of the news. The Glasgow University Media Group (1976, 1980) challenged he view

that news representations of what happened in the world is impartial and neutral. By exhibiting discrepancies between the coverage of industrial disputes and official statistics of them, these studies tried to demonstrate that television reports are not a straightforward representation of reality, but rather a distorted representation of it. The argument was not that journalists are deliberately biased, but rather that despite their best efforts journalists cannot help but to reproduce the dominant assumptions of our society. The problem with the news was not so much that they produced partial accounts, but that they presented these partial accounts *as if* they were 'neutral' and 'objective' (1976, pp. 267-268).

The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham, led by Stuart Hall (1980, 1982), also challenged the notion of a neutral or objective media. Drawing on critical theory as well as semiology, Hall exhibited that the relationship between 'represented' and 'representation' (between what happened and how we talk about what happened) is not straightforward or automatic, but rather influenced by social and cultural norms. There are always different ways of representing the 'same' object and the choice of representation was seen as a result of power. The media, by choosing a particular representation of reality, thus helps to reproduce the current dominant ideology, which becomes accepted as 'natural' or 'obvious'. Again, the argument was not that the media were biased in any straightforward sense (e.g., by favouring the Conservative Party over the Labour Party), but rather that it was, unwittingly, helping to reproduce and stabilize the currently dominant political system (Hall, 1982, p. 87).

In these early studies of the social construction of the news, linguistic factors got "relatively meagre treatment" (Fowler, 1991, p. 8). Subsequent studies thus tried to

focus explicitly on the *linguistic* aspects of media products, predominantly in the tradition of critical linguistics (e.g., Fowler, 1991) and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1988a,b). The focus of these critical studies was to show how the media has the power to "influence knowledge, beliefs, values, social relations, social identities" (Fairclough, 1995, p.2) and how this is accomplished through linguistic representations, for example through the ways that people are categorised as "poor" or "oppressed" (p. 113) or by portraying processes as having an agent or not (e.g. "life gets harder" versus "the profiteers are making life harder", p. 104). These studies are 'critical' in the sense that their explicit aim is to demonstrate that what is supposedly accepted by many people as 'natural' or 'obvious' is, in fact, only one way of portraying reality and most commonly a way that favours those currently in power (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p. 258).

Apart from such 'critical' approaches to media discourse, there have also been a variety of what is often referred to as 'descriptive', but perhaps should better be called 'explicative', studies of media discourse. Put very simply, while critical approaches aim to exhibit what people are *not* aware of, explicative approaches study what people *are* aware of (Hutchby, 2006, p. 33). Examples of such studies include a participant observation study of the journalists working on newspaper reports (Bell, 1991), a CA study of radio talk shows (Hutchby, 1996), a phenomenological study of both radio and television output (Scannell, 1996), and a variety of studies of the interaction on television talk shows (Tolson, 2001). Clayman and Heritage's book is in the tradition of these latter, 'explicative', studies.

The News Interview

Clayman and Heritage's book is based on recordings of approximately 250 American and British news interviews broadcasted on radio and television over the past twenty years. British data were drawn, for example, from *Newsnight* (BBC2) or *The Today Programme* (BBC Radio 4). Clayman and Heritage analyse these data from the perspective of CA with the aim of uncovering the cultural practices that interviewer (IR) and interviewee (IE) draw upon to understand each other and to coordinate their talk. It is these practices that allow us (as listeners and viewers) to identify the talk that we see or hear, often within seconds, *as* someone interviewing someone else.

News interview turn-taking

Because the central framework of CA analyses talk in terms of turn-taking arrangements, Clayman and Heritage pay central attention to the turn-taking structure of news interviews. Many activities that we engage in can be considered as involving a 'turn-taking system', for example, playing games, standing in a queue, or talking to each other. In the paper which defines the nature of CA, Sacks *et al.* (1974) describe in detail how in ordinary conversation there is no specification of who initiates a new topic, who will talk about that topic, and for how long they will talk about it. In contrast, in other ('institutional') activities turns may be pre-allocated and specifically constrained.

Clayman and Heritage demonstrate that turn-taking in news interviews consists largely in the interviewer asking questions and the interviewee producing answers. That is to say, although interviewers' turns may include several statements, the great majority of turns will end in a question of some kind. Furthermore, interviewees are sensitive to this, i.e., they wait until the interviewer has completed a question before

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beginning their own turn. This can be illustrated by looking at excerpt (A), taken from an interview with a left-wing trade union leader, in which the interviewer is trying to get the interviewee to admit that he is a Communist. What is happening in this example is readily recognizable, in the sense that the interviewer saying that the interviewee is a Marxist can be heard as an accusation, while the interviewee's response is a denial. However, the interest lies in the ways in which the two parties organise their talk so that one is asking questions and the other is answering them:

(A) [p.106][2]

```
   UK BBC Radio World at One: 13 Mar 1979: NUM Election
   IR: Robin Day        IE: Arthur Scargill

 1 IR:     .hhh er What's the difference between your
 2          Marxism and Mister McGahey's communism.
 3 IE:     er The difference is that it's the press that
 4          constantly call me a Ma:rxist when I do not, (.)
 5          and never have (.) er er given that description
 6          of myself .[.hh I-
 7 IR: 1→             [But I've heard you-
 8     1→   I've heard you'd be very happy to: to: er .hhhh
 9     1→   er describe yourself as a Marxist.
10     2→   Could it be that with an election in the offing
11     2→   you're anxious to play down that you're a
12     2→   Marx[ist.]
13 IE: 3→      [er ] Not at all Mister Da:y.=And I:'m (.)
14          sorry to say I must disagree with you,=you have
15          never heard me describe myself .hhh er as a
16          Ma:rxist.=I have o:nly ((continues))
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[2] CA has devised a number of transcription conventions to indicate the sequential structure of utterances (they can be found in the book, pp. 347-353). The most important are the following: underlined items (e.g., "not" in 4) are hearably stressed; numbers in parentheses denote a silence in tenth of seconds, while '(.)' denotes a micro pause of less than 0.2 seconds (5); square brackets mark the onset and termination of simultaneous speech (e.g., 6 and 7, 12 and 13).

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The interviewer starts with a question about the interviewee's political position (1-2). The interviewee responds by denying that he is a Marxist (3-6), which prompts the interviewer to ask the question again in a different way (7-12), starting with a statement that counters the interviewee's denial that he is a Marxist (7-9). In ordinary conversation the interviewee would be likely to initiate a disagreement directly after the completion of the first statement (i.e., the exchange would 'jump' from 9 directly to 13). However, in the news interview context, the interviewee *waits* until the interviewer has produced a question (arrow 2), before starting to answer (arrow 3). The interviewee thus orients to the fact that although the interviewer's first utterance (arrow 1) while constituting a complete 'ordinary' turn, does not constitute a complete 'interview' turn (since it does not include a question).

While the way it is relatively easy for interviewees to recognize the end of interviewers' turns (since questions are marked in various ways, e.g., their grammatical form or rising intonation), it is more difficult for interviewers to recognize the end of interviewees' answers. Interviewees thus attempt to make it apparent that they have finished their answer, for example, by repeating words from the original question at the end of their answer. However, this does not always work. In the following interview with a US presidential candidate, the interviewee answers the interviewer's question in such a concise manner that the interviewer does not immediately treat the answer as completed:

(B) [p.116]

```
   US PBS Newshour: 18 Sep 1992: Candidacy
   IR: Judy Woodruff        IE: Ross Perot

1  IR:     So why don't you go ahead and (.) say: I'm (.) a
2          candidate for pr[esident?
3  IE:                     [Because that's not (.) where
4          the organization is now. Our organization (.)
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5          is to:tally focused on try:ing to get both
6          parties to do the job.
7          (0.7)
8     →  That's why.
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The interviewee produces a very succinct answer to the interviewer's question (3-6), beginning the answer with "because" which is the responsive term to "why". The pause (7) indicates that the interviewer does not treat the answer as complete, but seems to expect more talk from the interviewee. The interviewee orients to this lack of response by the interviewer and re-completes his answer through the formulation "That's why" "why" (8).

Clayman and Heritage's achievement is not the 'discovery' that news interviews follow a question-answer format, but that they show how *participants* organise their talk so that it fits this pattern. Thus in (A) the interviewee is demonstrably waiting for the interviewer to produce a question before starting to answer, while in (B) the interviewee is displaying that he treats the pause as a noticeable absence of the interviewer's next question.

Producing talk for an overhearing audience

A lot of activities have pre-allocated turn-taking systems. In fact, even extended question-answer exchanges are not distinctive to *news* interviews, since they are also constitutive of other forms of interviews, e.g., courtroom interrogations (Atkinson and Drew, 1979) or medical consultations (Frankel, 1990). In order to detail what is institutionally distinctive about news interview talk, Clayman and Heritage argue that it is characterised by a special 'footing' (Goffman, 1973; Levinson, 1988) in which participants do not just talk to each other, but do so for an *overhearing audience*.

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They demonstrate this by noting a number of differences to ordinary conservation. Firstly, while in ordinary conversations listeners typically produce a variety of 'acknowledgement tokens' (such as "mm hm", "uh huh", "yes", or "really") to indicate that the speaker may go on talking, these are largely absent in news interview talk. Clayman and Heritage argue that this absence demonstrates that the interviewer is not the primary recipient of the interviewee's response. Although the interviewer is the addressee of the interviewee's talk, it is the overhearing audience who is the intended recipient, which is why it would inappropriate for the interviewer to produce acknowledgement tokens.

The special footing of interviews is, secondly, marked by the fact that speakers often refer to each other in the third person. For example, in situations with more than one interviewee, interviewees will refer to other interviewees in the third person (e.g., "I disagree with Sam Brittan in a most fundamental way about this", p. 122). Again, this is a marked departure for how we talk to copresent others in ordinary conversation and points to the fact that speakers are talking for the benefit of an audience.

Maintaining neutralism

Clayman and Heritage also address a central topic of media studies, the supposed neutrality of the media, which is shown to be of central concern to journalists themselves. In other words, interviewers work at maintaining an impartial or 'neutralistic' stance during interviews. One common practice is to express views not as personal ones, but as those of other people, either of specific individuals (e.g., another public figure) or someone quite unspecific. Thus in the following interview with the South African Ambassador (which was still under apartheid rule and had just declared a state of emergency as a result of increasing civil unrest), the interviewer

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expresses a particular view (that the purpose of the state of emergency is to suppress political dissent) not as his own but as that of 'critics':

(C) [p.164]

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            US PBS Newshour: 22 July 1985: South Africa
            IR: Jim Lehrer          IE: Herbert Beukes

 1  IR:     Finally Mister Ambassador as you know the
 2      →   critics say that the purpose of the state of
 3          emergency the real purpose of the state of
 4          'mergeh- uh state of emergency is to suppress
 5          political dissent.  those who are opposed to the
 6          apartheid government of South Africa. Is that so,
 7          (.)
 8  IE:     I would have to: uh- take issue with
 9      →   that premise. because...
```

The interviewer is here expressing a strong opinion, which could bring his neutralistic stance in jeopardy. By expressing the opinion as one of "critics" (2), the interviewer can be seen as merely reporting that opinion. The interviewer is thus able to express a view directly in opposition to that of the interviewee without positioning *himself* as opposing the interviewee. This stance is furthermore accepted by the interviewee, who only challenges the premise of the question (8-9), but not the interviewer himself (i.e., speaks of "that premise" rather than "your premise").

A particularly aggressive line of questioning may on occasion be treated by interviewees as the interviewer expressing her or his personal opinion. However, in such cases the interviewer will work to re-assert a neutralistic stance. Thus in the following interview with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, the interviewer is asking about the way that the Office has handled the saving of US Savings & Loan. The interviewer is pursuing a relatively aggressive line of

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questioning, but when the interviewee accuses the interviewer of expressing a personal opinion, the interviewer quickly reasserts his neutralistic stance:

(D) [pp. 129-130]

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              US ABC This Week: Oct 1989: Savings & Loan Rescue
              IR: San Donaldson        IE: Richard Darman

 1  IR:       Isn't it a fact, Mister Darman, that the taxpayers
 2            will pay more in interest than if they just paid
 3            it out of general revenues?
 4  IE:       No, not necessarily. That's a technical
 5            argument –
 6  IR:       It's not a – may I, sir? It's not a technical
 7            argument. Isn't it a fact?
 8  IE:       No, it's definitely not a fact. Because first
 9            of all, twenty billion of the fifty billion is
10        →   being handled in just the way you want –
11            through treasury financing. The remaining –
12  IR:   →   I'm just asking you a question. I'm not
13        →   expressing my personal views.
14  IE:       I understand.
```

The interviewer is pressing the interviewee on whether a decision by the interviewee's Office will cost taxpayers (1-3) to which the interview responds by arguing that answering this question is not straightforward and based on 'technicalities' (4-5). The interviewer directly challenges this assertion and states that it is a fact (6-7). In response, the interviewee reaffirms his position (8-11) and insinuates that the interviewer is expressing a *personal* opinion (10). This prompts the interviewer to interrupt the interviewee's turn in order to state that he is only asking questions and not expressing his personal views (12-13).

None of this is to say that interviewers may not have very strong personal views on a particular topic – or that interviewees may not feel that the interviewer is in fact pursuing a rather one-sided line of questioning. What Clayman and Heritage are arguing is that *both* sides commonly maintain a stance in which the interviewer is

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understood not to be asking the questions because he or she is personally interested, but is doing so as a way of soliciting the interviewee's views.

Evasive answers

Clayman and Heritage also discuss the widespread perception that public figures often try to avoid giving a direct answer to questions (which, of course, is partly a result of the fact that journalists spend a lot of time figuring out questions that interviewees cannot easily answer). Again, this is dealt with in terms of the practices that interviewees have to deal with questions that they do not want to answer directly.

One frequent practice is to repeat some words from the question in the answer in order to appear to give a straightforward answer to the question – while actually reinterpreting the question. One example of this is (A) above, where the interviewer asks about "the difference between your Marxism and Mister McGahey's communism" (1-2) and the interviewee starts his answer with a repeat of some of the words of the interviewer's question: "The difference is that …" (3). The repeat of the words "the difference" allows the interviewee to tie his answer to the interviewer's question. However, the interviewee is in fact trying to undercut the question: the interviewer was asking about the difference between two political positions (trying to force the interviewee to admit that he is on the radical left), while the interviewee's response is about the difference in interpretation of what he has said in the past (the press describing the interviewee as a Marxist, the interviewee insisting that he has never described himself in that way). Of course, this is only a mild readjustment of the question's agenda, but it nevertheless allows the interviewee not to answer the question in the way it was framed.

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Some interviewees operate on the interviewer's question in even more subtle ways. A famous example occurred in an interview with then US President Bill Clinton about the suggestion that he had an affair with Monica Lewinsky, an intern at the White House:

(E) [p.295]

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   UK PBS Newshour: 21 Jan 1998: Monica Lewinsky
   IR: Jim Lehrer         IE: Bill Clinton

1  IR:     You had no sexual relationship with this
2          [young wo[man.]
3  IE:     [ml      [Th- ]
4  IE:     There is not a sexual relationship. That
5          is accurate.
```

Here Clinton seems to answer the interviewer's question. However, note that Clinton actually shifts the time frame of the action, from something that has happened in the past to something that is still happening. Clinton only denies that there is *currently* a sexual relationship – which leaves open the possibility that there was one in the past (which has now been terminated).

Alternatively, an interviewee may try to shift the particular action that the interviewer is inquiring about. Thus in the famous Paxman-Howard interview (mentioned in the introduction) the following exchange occurred:

(F) [p.256; abridged]

```
   UK BBC Newsnight: 13 May 1993: Michael Howard
   IR: Jeremy Paxman        IE: Michael Howard

10 IR:     Did you threaten to overrule him.
11 IE:     I did not overrule Der[ek (Lewis).
12 IR:                          [Did you threaten to overrule him.
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Paxman questions whether Howard has threatened to overrule the prison officer (10) to which Howard responds that he did not overrule him (11). This seems to be an answer to Paxman's question. However, as in the previous case, a shift has taken place: Howard is acknowledging that he did not overrule the prison director – but does not specifically deny that he had *threatened* to do so. On this occasion, this is picked up by the interviewer who repeats his question, emphasising the word "threaten" (12).

The overview so far has focussed on some topics of Clayman and Heritage's book that will allow us to discuss their methodology in more detail. In their book, they also investigate the historical development of news interviews (Chapter 2), how news interviews are opened and closed (Chapter 3), interviewers' ways of producing adversarial questions (Chapter 6), and how these practices change in the case of panel interviews (Chapter 8).

Endogenous analysis

There are many advantages of studying media discourse: materials are easily accessible, available in good quality, and not distorted by an observer effect, since being recorded is a natural and essential feature of this activity (and not an external 'research' constraint on it). Rather than spending time collecting data, researchers can therefore focus on *analysing* their materials. However, since materials are not produced for research purposes, they do not speak for themselves and the challenge is to find ways of analysing them. Given a piece of data (for example, from a news interview), how can a researcher decide between the different possible interpretations of it?

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In an important exchange on different ways of approaching discourse materials (Schegloff, 1997, 1999a,b; Billig 1999a,b), Schegloff argues that there two possible sets of standards which can be employed to analyse materials, either those of the researcher or those of the participants. According to Schegloff, most researchers investigate data according to their own (the researcher's) academic, politic, or aesthetic interests, whereas CA aims to uncover the relevances that *participants themselves* orient to.

CA tries to do this by taking advantage of the fact that its materials are 'interactive', in the sense that what the participants do next implements and displays their understanding of the previous action. What participants say or do next depends crucially on their understanding of what another participant has said previously – and furthermore displays how those prior utterances have been taken (i.e., understood). In that sense, 'conversation analysis' is not just a name for something done by researchers, but also for the endogenous analysis produced by participants: we are all 'conversation analysts' in the lay sense.

The fact that participants themselves display their understanding to each other can be used by researchers as a 'proof procedure' (Sacks *et al.*, 1974, p. 729; Schegloff, 2005, p. 476) for their professional analysis. Thus in the interview context, Clayman and Heritage ground their analysis in the fact that both interviewer and interviewee display in each subsequent turn an understanding of the other's prior turn. Clayman and Heritage's claim that the turn-taking structure of interviews follows a question-answer format is demonstrated by showing that participants *orient* to this: in (A) it can be shown that the interviewee is waiting to begin his turn until the interviewer has produced a question; (B) exhibits that the interviewee is analysing the interviewer's

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silence as an indication that the interviewer has not picked up on the fact the interviewer has completed his answer.

Clayman and Heritage's emphasis on the endogenous analysis produced by participants allows them to treat the central topic of media studies, the neutrality of the media, in a new light. Within critical approaches, it is typically the researcher who evaluates what is to be treated as 'not neutral' and that the ideology or bias of news reports may be 'hidden' or 'invisible' for the participants themselves (see. e.g., Fairclough, 1995, p.54; Wodak, 2001, p.10). In contrast, Clayman and Heritage treat the issue of neutrality as one of central importance to participants themselves: interviewers work at demonstrating their neutralism and interviewees may, on occasion, challenge this. Thus (C) shows that when interviewers wish to oppose an interviewer's statement, they do so by speaking on behalf of others (e.g., 'critics'), so that they are not seen as expressing their own opinion. Furthermore, (D) demonstrates that when an interviewee challenges the interviewer's neutralism, the interviewer quickly re-asserts her or his independence.

The requirement to demonstrate that the feature that the researcher is talking about is oriented to by participants is not always easily to fulfil (cf., Schegloff, 1991, on 'procedural consequentiality'). Clayman and Heritage face this as a problem in their efforts to deal with evasive answers. They note that although both interviewer and interviewee might agree that an interviewee is evading a particular question, they might both decide to let it pass (i.e., the interviewer may not address this through a follow-up question). Consequently, Clayman and Heritage "reserve the term 'evade/evasive' for actions that are treated as inadequately responsive by at least one of the participants" (p.242). Thus in (E), although Clayman and Heritage argue that

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the interviewee accomplishes a shift in the time frame that the question is enquiring about, they do not say that he is trying to 'evade' the question (since this would require either interviewer or interviewee to address this manoeuvre). In contrast, in (F), Clayman and Heritage claim that the interviewer is interpreting the interviewee's response as an evasive one, since it prompts the interviewer to repeat the question.

The issue of evasiveness points to a possible limit of Clayman and Heritage's way of approaching news interviews. However, it is perhaps more a 'limitation' of their data than their analytic approach, because the study could be easily extended by considering additional materials to the broadcast itself. It could be argued that the question of whether an interviewee is being evasive is not just decided by the interviewer and interviewee *in* the interview, but also by how audiences evaluate the interview and how other types of media subsequently report it. One could envisage studies that investigate how other media products report on the performance of the interviewee. For example, how were (in F) Howard's reactions to Paxman's repeated questions assessed in the media? Was Clinton's manoeuvre (in E) picked up and reported on directly after the interview – or only at a later stage? By investigating how the 'evasiveness' of interviewees gets treated in subsequent media reports one could extend Clayman and Heritage's study – without relinquishing their aim to ground such analysis in the endogenous analysis of participants.

Clayman and Heritage are also explicit that with their data it is impossible to investigate how *audiences* analyse the news interview: "the impact that all of this may or may not have on audiences and on the course of public opinion also remains to be explored" (p. 345). How could this be done? The classical way of investigating the reception of media products is through quantitative surveys, telephone interviews,

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focus groups, or experimental studies of recall and comprehension (e.g., Morley, 1980; Robinson and Levy, 1986; Gunter, 1987, 2000; Bertrand and Hughes, 2005). Keeping in line with Clayman and Heritage's methodology, what would be more 'naturalistic' ways to study how audiences analyse the media?

In the case of a copresent audience, researchers have used the behaviour of the audience (e.g., clapping or booing) to see how the audience is analysing the action in front of them. This has been exploited by CA researchers in analysing political speeches (e.g., Atkinson, 1984; Heritage and Greatbatch, 1986). However, during most interviews there is no audience that claps or boos in specific response to what interviewers or interviewees are saying. One possibility would be to study people watching the news (perhaps with others), recording their reactions. For example, Wood (2006) recorded the comments made by women during daytime television. Another possibility would be to try to find situations in which people *talk* about what they have seen or heard on the news, e.g., at workplaces, pubs, or cafes. This, however, would not be easy: there is, firstly, the problem of access to such settings, and, secondly, the need to collect a lot of materials, since people talk about the news relatively infrequently.

Although there are some limitations to Clayman and Heritage's study of news interviews, these are acknowledged and are predominantly a result of the data they have been working with. However, critics of CA (e.g., Fairclough 1995; Billig, 1999a,b; Wetherell, 1998) argue that CA's methodological approach is unduly restrictive and uncritical, since it seems simply to reproduce what people do or say and thereby, at least implicitly, accept the status quo and convey "an essentially non-critical view of the social world" (Billig, 1999a, p. 552). In other words, how can we

square the emphasis on endogenous analysis with the existence of social inequality in the world (Billig, 1999b, p. 576)?

For example, Clayman and Heritage are relatively silent on the question as to *who* gets to talk in news interview, i.e., whether the choice of interviewees is in any sense representative. In their study of the guests on ABC's *Nightline* and PBS's *NewsHour*, Croteau and Hoynes (1994) showed that these were predominantly government officials and other established elites, while leaders of labour and racial/ethnic groups appeared only infrequently.   This is clearly not an issue that Clayman and Heritage explicitly address. However, neither is it 'absent' from their analysis. For example, the interviewer's practice of speaking on behalf of others, as in (C), can be seen to invoke non-present parties. Furthermore, the question of 'representativeness' is one that is not only addressed by researchers – but also by participants themselves. Not necessarily in the interview, but in other settings, for example in editorial conferences where editors discuss what topic to address and whom to invite. Clayman himself conducted a study, based on audio recordings of newspaper editorial conferences that analysed how editors decide which story will make it to the front page (Clayman and Reisner, 1998). A similar study could be conducted for news interviews.

Thus although Clayman and Heritage do not explicitly address questions of 'representativeness' or 'inequality', it would be possible to extend their study to address these issues, while holding on to their main methodological principle to ground the professional analysis in the endogenous analysis of participants.

Institutional analysis

The aim of Clayman and Heritage is to uncover the institutional specificity of news interviews, i.e., to determine the practices that make the talk produced by interviewer and interviewee recognizable *as* news interview talk. Doing so is by no means straightforward, since researchers face the problem that not everything that happens in a particular setting is related to the institutional character of that setting. Take a school building as an example. Although some of the interaction that will happen there will be related to institutional roles, there will also be conversations between teachers and pupils where they do not interact as teachers and pupils but as, for example, men and women, adults and children, British and Chinese, or team-mates. The problem, as Schegloff (1991, p.51) points out, is to demonstrate from the specifics of the talk that participants are speaking *on the basis* of their institutional identities.

Clayman and Heritage address this problem by contrasting the characteristics of interview talk with those of ordinary conversation (pp. 20-21), i.e., they compare the ways in which interviewer and interviewee organise their turns at talk in the interview with how participants would do so in ordinary conversation. Firstly, Clayman and Heritage argue that in contrast to ordinary conversation, the turns in news interviews are pre-allocated, i.e., interviewers ask question which interviewees answer. If (A) were taken from an ordinary conversation, a co-participant would initiate a disagreement directly at the point where it occurred and not wait until a question has been introduced as the interviewee does in the interview context. Secondly, Clayman and Heritage distinguish the news interview from other kinds of interviews, such as medical interviews (Frankel, 1990) or research interviews (Button, 1987), by

highlighting the ways in which both interviewer and interviewee produce their talk for an overhearing audience. This is again demonstrated through a comparison with ordinary conversation, e.g., the absence of acknowledgement tokens in the interview context. The news interview departs from natural conversation in ways that differ from other types of interviews.

These two features certainly apply to the news interview. However, are they detailed enough to capture what is distinctive about it? It might be possible to go further in specifying what makes the talk interview talk, i.e., to make more "of the fact that a news interview is not just *any* interview, but one specifically concerned with some topic or issue *defined as news*" (Hester and Francis, 2001, p.213; see also O'Connell and Kowal, 2006).

It is not that the 'newsworthy' character of the news interview is entirely absent from Clayman and Heritage's study, but that their focus is on the forms in which turns at talk are organised in interviews and less so at what makes the identity of the interviewee or the subject matter of the interview 'news'. The *news* character of the talk configures many aspects of the news interview, in particular, who is invited and what the participants will be talking about – as well as whether people will want to listen to what the interviewee has to say. Clayman and Heritage acknowledge this in the subtitle of their book when they characterise the interviewees as "public figures" and in their discussion of "interview genres" (pp. 68-72), where they distinguish between "newsmaker interview", "background interview", and "debate interview" and note the corresponding characterisation of the interviewee as "participant", "expert", or "advocate". The 'newsworthiness' is also present in their analysis of the openings of interviews (Chapter 3), where they detail that these typically consist in

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headlines and background information, which are often "selected so as to highlight the dramatic or newsworthy character of the subject matter" (p. 61). Finally, that the interview is related to events in the news is of course visible in the interview itself. Thus in (C) we can see from the interviewer's question that South Africa has just declared a state of emergency, which is the reason why the interviewer is talking to the South African ambassador.

There is therefore no need to reject Clayman and Heritage's mode of analysis and adopt another (such as critical discourse analysis) in order to answer questions about what makes things 'news'. One can easily extend Clayman and Heritage's analysis to cover the way in which interviews are setup in the context of a news story by being introduced, placed in a series of reporter statements, other interviews and so on. One could also extend Clayman and Heritage's study by considering other types of data, for example (as already suggested in the previous section) to investigate how a particular interview is placed in a variety of media products. For example, Barthélémy (2003) investigates the temporal structure of media reports by showing how a particular newspaper story changes during the course of one year. Nekvapil and Leudar (2002, 2006) use the concept of 'dialogic network' to study the interplay of different kinds of media, e.g., newspaper articles, television debates, and ordinary conversation about news events. Other studies have investigated the question of 'quotability' (Atkinson, 1984; Clayman, 1995), i.e., which bits of political speeches are 'picked up' in subsequent media reports.

In sum, Clayman and Heritage have made a start of getting to grips with the institutional specificity of news interviews. However, it would be possible to extend their study – possibly by considering other types of data.

Greiffenhagen, C. (2009). News interviews: Clayman and Heritage's 'The News Interview'. In F. Devine and S. Heath (Eds.), *Doing Social Science: Evidence and Methods in Empirical Research*, pp. 167-192. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Visual analysis

CA was originally developed using audio-recorded conversations, often of telephone-calls (e.g., Sacks, 1967; Schegloff, 1968). Especially in the case of the latter, participants and researchers can be said to have access to the same resources, since participants can only hear (not see or touch) each other. The CA approach is thus very appropriate for studying *radio* news interviews: the audience only has access to what participants say – and very often interviewer and interviewee may themselves be conducting the interview over the phone and can only hear each other.

However, in the case of *television* news interviews, the participants and audiences do not only pay attention to what participants say, but also to their bodily conduct (whether someone is smiling or frowning, looking confident or stressed – as well as the clothes they wear, their general appearance, etc.). These 'embodied' or 'non-verbal' aspects may, on occasion, have an impact on how participants react to each other or how they are perceived by the audience. A very dramatic example of this is reported by Atkinson (1984, p. 174) who remarks that after the 1960 Kennedy-Nixon presidential debate in the US, radio listeners thought that Nixon won the debate, while television viewers considered Kennedy the winner.

It is not that Clayman and Heritage do not make any reference to 'visual' elements in their analysis of news interviews: they remark that interviewees may on occasion respond through a 'nod' rather than a verbal response (p. 75) or that an interviewer's frown may prompt an interviewee to reshape the answer in progress (p. 291). They also mention the physical setting in which the interview is conducted (p. 223). Finally, they refer to the work of the editor and cameramen who have to analyse the

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talk between interviewer and interviewee in order to anticipate whether they should change their 'shot' or not (p. 76).

However, Clayman and Heritage's focus is clearly the talk and visual features are considered more as an 'add-on' to their analysis. In other words, the analysis of television interviews seems to follow the 'audio logic' of the analysis of radio interviews (cf., Ayass, 2004; O'Connell and Kowal, 2006). How could one extend Clayman and Heritage's analysis to take into account more explicitly the *visuality* of television interviews?

The first possibility would be to extend Clayman and Heritage's focus on the ways that interviewer and interviewee analyse each other, but to pay more explicit attention to their visual behaviour. This line of research would follow other attempts that have extended CA form an analysis of spoken discourse to embodied (e.g., Goodwin, 1981, 2001; Heath, 1986, 1997), for example, by investigating the role of gaze. One could imagine studies that focus on the bodily conduct of interviewer and interviewee (nodding, raised eyebrows, smiles, etc.). Results from such studies are unlikely to 'falsify' any of the findings of Clayman and Heritage, but would show how issues such as 'neutralism', 'evasiveness', or 'aggressiveness' are not just achieved through verbal, but also 'embodied' means. For example, in his study of public speaking Atkinson (1984, pp. 69-72) shows that getting audiences to clap is not just achieved through verbal rhetorics (e.g., contrasts or three-part lists), but also through embodied conduct (e.g., hand movements or moving the head up or down).

A second possibility would be to investigate the role of editing and *mise-en-scène* (the design aspects) of the television broadcast (cf., Ayass, 2004). For example, during live broadcasts with several cameras available, production editors have to

decide which 'shot' to select during each moment of the broadcast. When interviews are recorded for later broadcast, they are often edited. A perspicuous feature of editing was discussed in the British press at the time of writing this chapter: it turned out that production staff regularly insert 'noddy shots' of interviewers nodding during an interviewee's turn of talk to give the impression that the interviewer was reacting to the interviewee's immediate comment. However, these shots of the interviewer had been filmed *after* the interview had taken place (often only one camera is available for the interview) and were therefore seen as giving a false impression of what 'actually' happened.

One could investigate editing or mise-en-scène using the same data as Clayman and Heritage, but investigating explicitly the ways the broadcast is edited. For example, during live broadcasts each switch from one shot to another tells us something about how production editors are analysing the unfolding interview. In his analysis of political speeches, Atkinson (1984, pp. 50-52) remarked that not only does the audience listen for signals of the speaker to anticipate a completion, but so do the television producers in order to make a decision to switch from one camera to another. Two more recent studies of television panel debates and talk shows by Bovet (2007) and Mondada (forthcoming) also investigate the moments at which particular shots are selected. Both studies show that production staff often switch from one participant to another at exactly the same moment that speaker change occurs, i.e., not only are the participants in front of the camera listening to each other in order to anticipate the end of a turn, but so do the people *behind* the camera in order to anticipate when they can – smoothly – change the shot. In an important sense, these studies extend Clayman and Heritage's attempt of uncovering the

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endogenous analysis of participants, but here not of interviewers or interviewees, but rather of editors in control of the broadcasted image.

By focussing upon the overall composition of the television image, one could also investigate how the visual presentation contributes to the production of the current 'footing' of the interaction, e.g., who is talking to whom. There have been no such studies of interviews, but in the context of talk shows Mondada shows that when all the participants may be sitting in a row next to each other, the editor may use a 'split screen' image to pick up two of the participants, which may be sitting at a distance but are now displayed side by side. A 'split screen' image is then not just a 'zoom' into the interaction, but an active reorganisation of it.

An alternative to working with broadcast products would be to study the very process of *production*, i.e., to investigate the 'behind the scenes' of news interviews. The most common way of doing such studies would be through participant observation and ethnographers have, for example, investigated the production of newspapers (Tuchman, 1978), television programmes (Elliott, 1972), or talk shows (Grindstaff, 2002). However, one could also try to get audio- or video-recordings of the way that news interviews are edited. As already mentioned above, Clayman and Reisner (1998) worked on audio-recordings of newspaper editorial conferences. More recently, Broth (2004, 2008) gathered video recordings made of the work in the control room during a live broadcast panel interview. Broth shows that the very placement of the cameras (two at the front facing the guests, two at the back facing the journalists, one portable camera) anticipates the organisation of the talk in terms of the categories 'interviewer' and 'interviewee'. He also exhibits how production staff avoid the danger of switching to a camera while it is moving or zooming:

camera operators usually move their camera directly after a switch to another camera, while directors may talk to a camera operator to announce that a switch is forthcoming.

The attempt to develop methods for visual analysis has gained increasing importance in the last decade (see, e.g., van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2001; Knoblauch *et al.*, 2006; Rose, 2007). There are several ways in which researchers can build on Clayman and Heritage's study to investigate the visual elements of broadcast interviews. However, it should be noted that although moving from 'audio' to 'video' allows new questions to be asked, such a move comes with a price.

One of the central innovations of CA was to produce transcripts of the materials that the researcher had been investigating. The inclusion of these transcripts in research articles means that CA works with "openly available data" (Billig, 1999a, p. 548), which allows readers to check whether the researcher's description of the materials is persuasive or not – and invites readers to launch and document their own alternative analysis (cf., Watson, 1994, p. 178). Furthermore, the transcript system developed by Gail Jefferson was meant to capture not only features that are relevant for the current analysis, but also features that may only subsequently become relevant. In other words, CA transcripts are 'research generative' (Jefferson, cited in West and Zimmerman, 1982, p. 515) in the sense that a transcript produced to investigate question-answers sequences could also be used to study other phenomena, e.g., overlaps.

No such transcription system has emerged for analysing 'visual' elements of interaction and it is unlikely that one will emerge, since embodied conduct is just too complex to capture all that might be relevant (there are too many details). As a result,

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researchers have developed transcription systems for *specific* aspects of embodied conduct, e.g., gaze direction (Goodwin, 1981; Heath, 1986) or typing at the keyboard (Luff and Heath, 1993; Greiffenhagen and Watson, forthcoming). As a result, transcripts are much more closely tied to the particular analysed 'non-verbal' features than in the case of purely verbal transcripts (cf., Mondada, 2007). If one wants to re-analyse a particular fragment one therefore has to get back the original videotape, the transcript alone is not 'rich' enough. A focus on the visual aspects of the interaction therefore means that the data are no longer 'openly available'.

The great achievement of CA was that its ability to describe and analyse certain aspects of talk-in-interaction in a *systematic* manner. Extending this approach to 'visual' aspects has proven rather more difficult, because it is almost impossible to describe these in a similar systematic fashion (except by being very selective in one's analytic focus). Thus although 'visual' studies remain to be done (to see how the basic turn-taking structure of news interview talk interacts with other features of the news interview), these are likely to be less systematic than the analysis provided by Clayman and Heritage.

Conclusion

Clayman and Heritage's book is the first systematic analysis of news interviews as a course of interaction: they demonstrate how interviews are opened and closed, how the turns of talk follow a pre-allocated format according to which the interviewer asks questions and the interviewee answer them, how the interviewer aims to displays a 'neutralistic' stance, while nevertheless producing 'adversarial' questions, and how interviewee may attempt to evade answering. Clayman and Heritage's greatest achievement is that they are able to demonstrate that these are not just features found

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by sociological analysis, but rather are ones that are used by *participants themselves*. As a consequence, the perennial topic of media studies, the questionable neutrality of the news, is given a new twist: it is not the researcher who is investigating whether or not a news report is neutral or not – but rather is shown as a concern for both interviewer and interviewee during the interviewee.

While Clayman and Heritage's data and way of analysing the data have produced some impressive findings, several ways in which their analysis could be extended have been mentioned. These include the possibility of seeing a particular interview in the context of other media products and to investigate how particular aspects of interviews get taken up in subsequent media reports – or are taken up by people listening or watching. Another possible extension is to focus more explictly on the differences between radio and television news interviews, i.e., to analyse the visual aspects of television broadcasts.

Additional Reading

Sacks's (1992) *Lectures on Conversation*, of lectures held between 1964 and 1972, are still the most stimulating starting point for an introduction to CA. ten Have's (2007) *Doing Conversation Analysis* provides a good practical introduction. For other case studies of the media see Scannel's (1991) edited collection *Broadcast Talk*, while Hutchby's (2006) *Media Talk: Conversation Analysis and the Study of Broadcasting* offers a good overview of methodological questions.

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