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GAMES AND TURNS: CONSIDERING CONTEXT IN LANGUAGE USE

Abstract

This paper considers the ways in which Wittgenstein's (1958) later philosophy and his ideas on language games, as well as Sacks' (1992) work on conversational turns, has been applied in relation to the notion of context in language use discourse studies, and in particular discursive psychology. In terms of the application of Wittgenstein, I argue that it is not simply the case that he is referring to different language games as different interactional contexts, but rather that he is making a much more complex point concerning language use by competent users within a given game. In the case of Sacks, I argue that turns within conversation cannot be simply read of as evidence of a particular (inter-)action on the analyst's part but rather must be considered in terms of how interlocutors render to one another the intelligibility of "what is going on" within the ordering of turns.

Keywords

Wittgenstein, discourse, studies, methodology

1 Introduction

Wittgenstein's later philosophy has led to various attempts to apply his ideas to the study of language use in discourse studies. This has arguably led to his philosophical conjectures and arguments being separated from their roots in ordinary language philosophy and instead used to bolster methodological positions that adopt an empirical and social scientific outlook. This can sometimes lead to attempts to establish a means of accomplishing a generalizable approach or orthodoxy that produces particular kinds of interpretation, or as a rhetorical means of countering another position. Perhaps nowhere is this more apparent than in the area of discursive psychology (Edwards and Potter 1992). This approach can be regarded as arguing against the mainstream position in psychology of cognitivism. Selected aspects of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical investigations* (1958) are taken up and used in conjunction with other social scientific approaches, notably conversation

analysis, to produce a methodology that focuses on the action orientation of language and the psychological business that people attend to.

Discursive psychology therefore respecifies psychological phenomena as discursive constructions, orientated to by participants in the course of interactions as part of various social practices. By drawing upon Wittgenstein's notion of language-games, it operates as a viable alternative to mainstream cognitive psychology and adopts an agnostic stance with respect to mental phenomena. Discursive psychology therefore involves the position where it

recognizes that there is some substance to the idea of referring to private mental states, though not as the analyst's favoured theory of language and mind. [...] The status of reference to internal mental states is not something to be refuted, even though it is conceptually refutable, but rather, studied as a practice within a public form of life. People may sometimes talk as if, or on the proposed and oriented-to basis their words are expressing inner thoughts and feelings. (Edwards and Potter 2005: 256)

The context of discursive construction is therefore considered an important aspect of the way in which people construct their discourse. As people construct version of events, so they are seen as producing psychological versions attuned to the context of such constructions. Mental states and processes are presented *in situ* as the basis for various actions that are performed such as justifying a course of action that is predicated upon "perceptions", or remembering something in order to account for a particular decision. The point here is that these discursive constructions are considered as psychological business attended to in particular ways within local contexts. This can be in spoken or textual form, but in either case discursive psychology adopts a stance in which people are engaged in attending to psychological matters. Thus, while mentalism is not the analyst's favoured theory, it is nonetheless projected onto what is said or written and presented as a lay theory attended to in discourse. This is then investigated in terms of the occasioned use of various psychological discourses. Commonplace idiomatic expressions such as "thought" or "feeling" or "mind" are therefore analysed in terms of how people build versions of themselves and the world in order to accomplish a variety of accountable actions such as rationalising, blaming, excusing, praising, etc. Of course, such mentalist words may not be used directly, and therefore discursive psychology also examines how people draw upon mentalist notions in indirect ways in order to perform these contextually dependent actions.

An issue for discursive psychology is that it has to account for how the local context is considered as relevant to the way in which discourse is constructed and what features are attended to. The issue here is that while it recognizes language as a form of action, it nonetheless burdens this with an *a priori* interpretation of people as being engaged with discourse as *discourse* in terms of the classical Cartesian inner/outer dualism. Context is therefore considered through this Cartesian lens of

how people construct versions of mind and world. However, the position argued for here, is that people should not be thought of as attending to what they, or others say through such a discursive psychological lens, but rather that they are engaged in speech acts that are bound up with doing things through a host of linguistically constituted practices. In other words, people do not operate through interpreting the discursive context in terms of attending to psychological business but rather that they engage in practices that are not separable from language use. This paper is in broad agreement with position adopted by Sharrock and Dennis (2008), that Wittgenstein is not someone who can be taken of the shelf, so to speak, and applied as “Wittgenstein” much in the same way as one might attempt to apply the conversation analysis of Sacks (1992) as a “methodology”. A major line of demarcation can be drawn between the focus on language as a social medium based around an orientation to attending to rhetorical aspects in accounting for action in a social context, versus the public nature of language in opposition to the notion of an inner private realm. This viewpoint will be drawn attention to throughout the course of the paper.

2 The private language argument

In the sections of *Philosophical investigations* commonly known as “the private language argument” (Wittgenstein 1958: §§243, p.95), Wittgenstein uses pain as an example to argue against the idea that it is a private inner object that is only accessible to its “owner”. Wittgenstein’s main line of attack is against the claim that sensations such as pain are epistemically private: that “only I can know whether I am really in pain” (1958: §246, pp.95-96); but he also discusses and disagrees with the claim that sensations are essentially owned by a single individual: that “Another person can’t have my pains” (1958: §253, p.97). The inner object model of sensations construes them as particular occurrences in the private realm of the mind – like keeping beetles in a box and not sharing their contents with others (Wittgenstein 1958: §293, pp.106-107). Their privacy is seen as a consequence of their unalterable and unsharable location, experienced by an individual such that only the “owner” of a consciousness has access to its contents. In this view, it is because you cannot have my pain that, strictly speaking, you cannot know of my pain. It might be assumed that because we encounter pains only as particular occurrences then it must follow that our concept of pain must be based upon particularization. The particular occurrence of my feeling of having pain at a given moment is, of course, something I can reflect on as an experience, but not something I can feel in a certain part of my body. In other words, the concept of an owner-individuated pain event as my pain is different from the ordinary concept of pain, which is the concept of something felt in one’s body. It is also the case that if the

concept of pain were construed primarily as that of a particular pain-event, it would be subject to other criteria such as time and duration.

Wittgenstein's point is that the ordinary everyday usage of the concept pain is comparable with that of our concept of thought. Thoughts can occur at particular times and places but they are not usually identified by these particularities. Instead, they are referred to as abstractions from particular events, occurrences and circumstances. This kind of abstraction reflects the usage that we make of thoughts and how they are spoken about as something that is independent of particularities. We assess thoughts in terms of abstract features that do not require any knowledge of such particularities: truth, clarity, relevance, etc. Therefore, Wittgenstein provides a way of thinking about how we talk about pain and thoughts in terms of occurrences and abstractions. Thus, the argument that we refer to and understand pain or thoughts through accessing our own inner private mental theatre is considered as a misconception. Instead, the meaning of the word "pain" or "thought" is fundamentally associated with its usage within what Wittgenstein refers to as language-games.

In discursive psychology the private language argument is taken up as a means of arguing against cognitivism and its focus on thoughts or emotions as residing within individual minds. However, in doing so, its proponents side with the oppositional end of the individual-social dichotomy. Thus, the argument goes that if language is not rooted in a private mental theatre it must be part of the social world. However, following Baker and Hacker (1990) and Sharrock and Dennis (2008), it can be argued that it is possible to avoid simply taking up this polar opposite by focusing on Wittgenstein's view that language is a public rather than a social medium. Arguing that language is a social medium used to perform actions that have various social purposes like justifying, excusing, requesting etc. is a key aspect of discursive psychology and is a way of countering the view of language as a representational medium. However, given that discursive psychology arose out of an earlier attempt to put the social back into social psychology (Potter and Wetherell 1987) then it is understandable that the social nature of language use has been prioritized as an analytic concern. Considering language use in terms of its social context feeds through into considering how people interpret or "read" the social context as involving how psychological business is being attended to. However, in Wittgenstein's "private-language argument" it is clear that the words and expressions we use are related to what can be referred to as public or scenic criteria and not what they stand for in terms of inner state. In this sense, language use does not, for the most part, involve a mastery of a discursive psychology but rather is learnable by virtue of using as part of various speech acts. The idea that discourse involves attending to inner/outer orientations, that interlocutors attend to what it stands for in terms of some inner state is therefore a non-issue.

As noted, the methodological approach undertaken in discursive psychology

focuses on the psychological business being undertaken and attended to by interlocutors. This may include how matters such as memory – who remembered what, who forgot, and how this might be constructed or considered as blameworthy, a character flaw, or simply an oversight. It can also take in how identity or personality is worked up in particular situations to perform actions such as justifying decisions or courses of action. The point here is that discursive psychology, although rejecting any imputation of discourse as representing in-the-head cognitive processes or mental states, nevertheless glosses discourse as singularly involving psychological business at the social level. Context is therefore considered in terms of the social psychological nature of discursive construction and how people attend to this. It is treated as something people orientate to, in the background, as the speak and listen to one another, or in terms of what they write or read in terms of the construction of text. This is arguably something that Wittgenstein never sought to do and that his conjectures in *Philosophical investigations* were with and against ways of doing philosophy. Thus, although he was concerned with showing the error of taking language as arising from within a private mental realm, this does not mean that he was concerned with showing its social (psychological) nature. Rather, his concern was with the way that language operates as a public medium that is part of “language-games” (Wittgenstein 1958: §7, p.8), an aspect of his later philosophy that is considered next.

3 Language games

Wittgenstein’s remarks on language games are fragmentary and the subject of considerable interpretation. In discursive psychology this has been taken to imply that people are engaged in attending to psychological aspects of accounts and interactions. Psychological representations provide the means for varied ways of engaging in social and institutional life and as a means of performing actions and making them accountable. Cognitive references to “thinking”, giving “reasons”, “knowing”, “interpreting” or “understanding” are conceptualized as providing publicly accountable criteria for agency. Take for example references to “thinking things through” or “thinking before acting”. These are presented as providing yardsticks for agency with respect to various activities such as making “decisions” where the person is about to undertake some sort of commitment that involves certain consequences. They provide both the means for ordering people’s lives as the basis for agency and a way for others to consider, judge and assess these actions in the way that they are orientated towards in terms of duality of mind and world.

Cognition is regarded as the element of control and the basis for thinking before acting. The affective or emotional element is taken as being spontaneous and representing feelings but which can, nonetheless, be taken as an accountable basis

for action. The emotional basis for action can be presented as understandable, as a means for literally moving a person to do something, or indeed for inaction. It is often portrayed as an influence on reasoning, either in terms of supporting or distorting it. This duality is presented in discursive psychology in terms of, for example, the ways in which emotion discourse can be a flexible and useful means of characterizing action. Edwards (1997: 170–201) notes emotion discourse can be put to a great variety of uses within a range of social practices due to their flexibility as an accounting resource. For example, they can be contrasted with cognitions in terms of their less deliberative nature; taken as being as understandable and appropriate as regards how any reasonable person would react; characterised as being the outcome of events or in the nature of the person; treated as being kept under the control of a person's reasoning or as reactions that resist control; and presented as the interaction of mental and physiological systems, as natural, or as derived from moral and ethical concerns. As noted, discursive psychology seeks to respecify psychological phenomena as discursive constructions, orientated to by participants in the course of interactions as part of various social practices. It has adapted the philosophical framework of Austin's speech acts (1962) and Wittgenstein's notion of "language-games". However, given that discursive psychology operates as a viable alternative to mainstream cognitive psychology it adopts an agnostic stance with respect to mental phenomena (Edwards and Potter 1992).

In terms of its methodological basis, discursive psychology has borrowed heavily from the techniques used in conversation analysis. It therefore attempts to examine features of language use where interlocutors use various discursive devices in order to accomplish actions. However, unlike conversation analysis, it is less concerned with specifying these with respect to the intelligibility and the organized temporal nature of interaction but instead focuses on how people orientate towards one another on the basis of psychological states and processes as the basis for action. Thus, various psychological topics such as memory, attitudes, emotions, decisions, among others, are respecified as discursive phenomena of interest. These features are therefore considered as performative with respect to the accomplishment of various actions within the context of matters at hand.

In this way discursive psychology examines how versions of reality are produced as part of what people do, and in particular, as related to the production of what counts as the inner psychological basis of agency. It is claimed that the significance of such an analytical move allows the focus of study to become one of how the relationship between "mind" and "reality" is not, in everyday discourse, a philosophical issue but a rather a practical sociological construction (Edwards and Potter 1992; Edwards 1997; Potter 2003; Potter 1996; te Molder and Potter 2005). In methodological terms, this means that the practice of discursive psychology involves reading into the turn taking between interlocutors the psychological

business going on; what participants are orientating towards in their discursive actions and the rhetorical features deployed.

However, it is not that people learn to deploy various linguistic “devices” within context but rather that they engage in practices that are not separable from speaking. It is an interpretivist conception of language use that rests on the view that people are engaged in constructing what they say as well as analyzing what others say in terms of knowing how to proceed in the temporal nature of the interaction. However, by following Wittgenstein’s line of argument, then language use and comprehension do not normally require design, thought or interpretation. Comprehension and understanding can be considered as interactional achievements of proceedings, whilst interpreting what is said is an activity that one engages in. In other words, there is a tendency in discursive psychology to treat people as if they were engaged in constructing their discourse through various “linguistic devices” or in “analyzing” what was said. However, it can be argued that this is not the case and that for the most part people are engaged doing speech acts rather than treating words as standing in for psychological constructs. The issue here for discursive psychology is in treating the methodological competence of the analyst as tuning into the psychological orientations of discourse through the turn-taking sequences in conversation. They must see through the discourse, past the words or utterances, to what is taken to be the psychological business being performed and orientated towards. However, there is nothing in the words that justifies such a position and as a result Wittgenstein’s use of language games as way for referring to the multifarious actions and conventions through which people engage with one another is lost under a singular concern with psychological orientations, albeit at a social level. Moreover, Wittgenstein’s philosophical approach is treated as if he were approving of employing empirical investigation to investigate language use:

Wittgenstein's arguments were with philosophy as it was done in his lifetime. And he was famous for developing a form of conceptual analysis that involved imaginary scenarios, thought experiments, and exploring word usage to see what seemed to make sense and what seemed odd. Yet we can find intriguing hints to something that might go a bit beyond the office-bound rigour of conceptual analysis (Potter 2001: 42–42):

One cannot guess how a word functions. One has to look at its use and learn from that. But the difficulty is to remove the prejudice which stands in the way of doing this. It is not a stupid prejudice. (Wittgenstein 1958: §340, p.116)

Potter’s point here is intriguing in that he is implying that looking at how words function involves an empirical endeavour of the sort that is adopted in discursive psychology. This misses the point about Wittgenstein’s approach which is not in need of verification through the gather of empirical evidence. Rather his approach

involves examining instances of what makes sense or is intelligible in logico-grammatical terms.

A proponent of this view is Coulter (2005) who brings to ethnomethodology a Wittgensteinian attention to the logical grammar of concepts, convincingly arguing that conceptual analysis is invaluable in appreciating language use in logico-grammatical terms. Following Harris (1981), Coulter argues that language and the ability to converse with one another is best thought of in instinctual terms. While such a view seems to skirt with behaviourism, this is far from being the case. Indeed, it is possible, to think as George Herbert Mead did of language as “a differentiation of gesture, the conduct of no other form can compare with that of man in the abundance of gesture” (Mead 1910: 178). As he says, in evolutionary terms we have to consider the communicative function of language as arising from prior gestural conduct (Mead 1934: 17). In logico-grammatical usage the words themselves are self-sufficient. There is no need for an analytical interpretation that seeks to examine the psychological business projected through the words.

Wittgenstein’s concept of language games where there are “family resemblances” in the various games that are played, is useful in reminding us that the concept of “game” is a vivid illustration of the point that there are intersecting ways in games become known as games and how they are played. The term “family resemblance” is introduced in *Philosophical investigations* in §67. In the preceding paragraph, Wittgenstein asks us to consider the features that are common to the activities we call “games”. He suggests that any feature we can discern — amusingness, competitiveness, having winners and losers, etc.— will fit only some of those activities and not others. In other words, there is no set of universally shared features, but rather “a complicated network of similarities overlapping and crisscrossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail” (Wittgenstein 1958: §66, p.36). He goes on to say that he can “think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than “family resemblances”” (Wittgenstein 1958: §67, pp.36-37). The phrase “family resemblance”, then, is used to formulate the following observation: if we try to find features in common to all the items we group under a general term like “game”, we will find instead family resemblances. The point here is that in terms of context language games, some games may share some features with other games while also having aspects that differ. Take, for example, interview talk. Some features of this kind of talk may also be present across a number of games where in such features as question-and-answer turns, the requirement for accountability or justificatory responses are present. It is possible to see elements of such talk in research degree viva voce examinations, job interviews, chat show interviews, police interviews, testimony given to committee meetings, and so on. However, while some elements may be shared across these contexts, there are other elements where the nature of the language games being played require particular nuanced understandings. These understanding are very

much dependent upon having the right sensibility to the discourse of the game. In this sense, people need to be within the circle of competent users of words, explanations, and concepts within these games and contexts. It is not simply the case that the discourse in the games can be read off as attending to psychological business. The discourse used, explanations deployed, and concepts drawn upon are not simply imparted by the words themselves but instead require an understanding of the language game being played. For words and concepts to be used there must be something that people must have or acquire that cannot simply be imparted by the words and explanations themselves. For this to be possible, the target of the explanation must have, or acquire, something that cannot itself be imparted by an explanation. This does not guarantee that users will always “get it right”, so to speak, and there is always the possibility of misunderstanding. A further important point here is that the same concept need not correspond to same uses across different language games. In other words, if language games share certain features this need not mean that concepts and explanations themselves can be transposed across these games. We are back again to the issue of having the right sensibility to take up and make use of concepts and explanation in ways that are in line with will bring her in line the ways in which these games are played out. The concepts and explanations themselves cannot guarantee that they will “fit” any particular language game.

These arguments bring into relief the objection of Kripke (1982) to Wittgenstein’s point that in playing language games we follow rules blindly. In essence, Kripke’s point is that in order to follow the rules of language games there must be some sort of intermediary steps that permit those involved to “know” that they are following the rules correctly. Kripke therefore takes Wittgenstein’s position to be that the next step in a rule-governed sequence in a given language game must be made by an individual through some process of interpretation. His focus is on the following passage:

All the steps are really already taken ‘means: I no longer have any choice. The rule, once stamped with a particular meaning, traces the lines along which it is to be followed through the whole of space. – But if something of this sort really were the case, how would it help?

No; my description only made sense if it was to be understood symbolically. – I should have said: *This is how it strikes me.*

When I obey a rule, I do not choose.

I obey the rule *blindly*. (Wittgenstein 1958: §219, pp. 91-92)

For those involved in a given language game to make a determination of their next move Kripke argues that to do so by way of an interpretation is problematic given that there is no means of checking the correct interpretation between alternatives. In other words, he takes Wittgenstein’s argument against intermediary steps as being against the idea of interpretation generally as an intermediary. In order

to “solve” this problem he goes on to argue that some form of intermediary step is required, and if it is not interpretation then it must lie in the social domain of “community agreement”. He therefore cannot rid himself of the view that there must be some form of intermediary basis for following the rules of language games. However, neither individual interpretation nor community agreement are required for such rule following to take place. Instead of being wedded to the notion of an intermediary process, Wittgenstein’s position following Sharrock and Dennis (2008) can be said to be this: learning the rules involved in games is sufficient and nothing else is required; the permit us to go on within games. In other words, there is no need to interpretation or social norms at all; all that is required is in knowing how to go on in a given game, the next steps. Thus, in following the rule-governed nature of language games we do so unhesitatingly, without any intermediary process whatsoever. We have learned the rules of these various games, rules that inherent in the games themselves thereby enabling us to engage in sequences of interaction.

4 Turns

In turning to discursive psychology’s use of conversation analysis, I have already noted that it does so in terms of a focus on turn-taking. The basis of this focus is as a methodological means of checking the ways in which interlocutors attend to the psychological business in hand, through discourse. By paying close attention to how people put up versions of psychological states and processes through their discourse, and how hearers attend and respond to those versions, it is assumed that the manner of that psychological business will be revealed through the sequences of conversational turn and the actions performed through those turns. Potter and Edwards (2013: 711) point to the way in which “CA’s turn-based treatment of understanding provides a way of characterizing the nature of intersubjectivity. The coordination of turns shows that speakers are coordinating understanding, in the practical sense we are using the term”. As they clearly state:

CA may be considered to be already Psychology in a similar, though even more controversial, sense to how it is already Sociology. That is, it provides a basis for examining how psychological relevancies figure as members’ concerns within, and for, the practices of situated talk. This is the approach taken by Discursive Psychology. (Potter and Edwards 2013: 702)

What is clearly evident in these remarks is that discursive psychology’s use of the conversation analytic focus on turn-taking is predicated on the view that it offers an analytic insight into “psychological relevancies” as noted in the above quotation. This provides discursive psychology with an empirical means of presenting its analytical interpretations of the ways in which these psychological matters are

attended to in discourse. However, we are back to the issue of the gloss put on talk within the unitary focus of psychological concerns.

Recent work in discursive psychology has involved a focus on epistemics (see Potter 2020, Potter and Hepburn, 2020; Potter and Robles, 2022). A detailed discussion of this work is beyond this chapter but there are some features that are picked out in relation to the focus on turn-taking. Potter (2020: 74) draws explicit parallels with conversation analysis with regards to the focus on epistemic matters:

Like much of conversation analytic work, discursive psychology addresses ‘knowledge’ and other epistemic matters and other epistemic matters in terms of the way they figure for participants in interactions where truth, knowledge, accuracy, factuality and so on are to be managed in relation to ongoing projects of a more or less mundane or institutional nature.

A major theme in discursive psychology is how versions are built in ways that enhance or soften their epistemic status as solid, accurate, literal and separate from the speaker. Moreover, speakers can use the apparatus of footing (quoting, voicing, reporting) to mark their own accountability, or not, for the version being offered.

What is notable about the above extracts is the explicit linkage of discursive psychology with conversation analysis and the figuration of interaction with epistemic psychological business such as the management of knowledge. The term “projects” could potentially be related to language games but what is clear is that discursive psychology is concerned with the simultaneous construction of mind and of reality as well as the “practical use of psychological terms such as ‘know’ in ascriptions and avowals” (Potter 2020: 75). Furthermore, there is a strand of work that is concerned with the ways in which psychological “states” are discursively constructed and responded to. This places discursive psychology within the orbit of conversation analysis and Potter explicitly draws upon Schegloff’s (2005) work in pointing to the analytic work being concerned with explicating the “situated organization of interaction in the participants’ own terms” which for discursive psychology is “the collection of epistemic practices that are woven into interaction” (Potter 2020: 75).

An argument against such an approach is that conversation analysis grew out of Garfinkel’s (1967) ethnomethodological project of focusing on members’ orderly methods of practical sociological reasoning. Turn taking in conversation is one means by which that orderliness is apparent for interlocutors as they engage with one another. Moreover, the focus withing conversation analysis is on how conversational matters are rendered intelligible as people engage in the turn taking process. In terms of analysis, Button and Sharrock (2016) point out that the “proof procedure” adopted in conversation analysis is not about proving how the next utterance proves what the prior turn was about in terms of the local context of turns,

but rather as a means of confirming what the analyst's determination of an utterance might be. The analyst is therefore engaging their own reasoning and checking to see if this is apparent in the turns under examination. If the identification is borne out in how participants themselves treat each other's turn at talk, then the analyst has been able to make visible the practices that interlocutors in the conversation engage in as part of their organizing of that conversation. This is why conversation analysis emphasizes next turns in demonstrating that something was heard in the course of the conversation as how it could be heard as that thing. It is not a method for definitively showing turns as attuned to psychological matters as one reading imposed on the turns by the analyst.

To be fair Potter acknowledges that discursive psychology has a "rich but, sometimes complicated, relationship with conversation analysis" and that there are "still unresolved questions on how cognition should be conceptualized in conversation analysis" (2020a: 83). While the status of cognition as a discursive matter is contested insofar as it is considered as a central concern for participants, it is worth returning to Sacks' (1992) *Lectures on conversation* in seeking to understand the purpose and nature of conversation analytic programme. As he points out his scope was not to limit conversation analysis to a particular phenomenon but rather to show how social action works in and through turns at talk:

One sort of thing that I engage in doing is to take a particular fragment apart in terms of a collection of different types of organization that may operate, in detail, in it, where the question is, in part, how to bring that kind of consideration off in a possibly integrated way, i.e., to also show the relationships between the types of organization in the particular object. I want, then, to inhibit a consideration of actual objects in terms of single types of organization, i.e., saying of something that it's a 'question', and then saying that it's adjacency-pair orderly in a variety of ways, and that's that as though one is finished with it. The question of what sorts of things, even for the sequential organization of conversation, can be pulled out of a piece of talk needs to be open, and having found it orderly in one way doesn't mean that you've done all there is to make it operate in the ways that we can, perhaps, make it operate. (Sacks 1992: 561–569)

In returning to the data and methodology of Sacks, Fitzgerald reminds us that his concern was with the discipline of sociology and "study of people doing sociology as routine social action" (2019: 208). This broad focus on the "doing" of social life as both a disciplinary matter that focuses on the ordered nature of social life and (inter) action, and as something that is a participants' concern that is not simply about the issue of cognition. Again, as Fitzgerald points out:

Sacks' interest then was in observing and describing and documenting the many forms of members methods of doing social life, of examining the 'scope of humans activities as methodical'. This is again something to be reminded of in light of how

approaches have emerged and been shaped through disciplinary boundaries and how contemporary lines and fractures have become apparent. However, it is also an important reminder that these approaches and foci did not begin as separate domains but rather under the single umbrella of the ‘ethnomethodological domain’. (2019: 212).

Thus, the focus and orientation of the work is the methodical nature of the “many forms of members methods” rather than a much narrower concern with cognition, albeit still a part of what participants may orientate towards in an occasioned manner. It also is worth pointing to Goodwin’s work on co-operative action that makes reference to both Wittgenstein and Sacks in pointing to the ways in which the “orderly unfolding of sequences of action” are a participants’ concern (2017: 40). It is the means and methods by which the social interaction is rendered visible in the doings themselves that is of concern rather than the examining that interaction as revealing they ways in which participants orientate towards psychological business.

Finally, in their study of players’ practices for correcting rule violations of the rules concerning the alternation of players in the game *pétanque*, Svensson and Tekin (2021) draw upon ethnomethodology and conversation analysis in pointing to turn-taking as reflexive resource for rendering conduct in the game as intelligible. Citing Sharrock and Dennis (2016), they point to retrospective and prospective nature of turn taking in games as a matters of attending to the procedural or operational aspects of what to do next. In considering vernacular corrective practices within the game players sometimes “provide reflections on and explicit references to rules as *rules*” (Svensson and Tekin 2021: 812). Formulating rules in this way is a situated practice for correcting emerging patterns of violations about whose turn it is next. They draw upon Garfinkel’s (1963: 379) point here that such rule usage involves complying with the “constitutive order of events” as the basis for engaging in actions and maintaining social order. As Svensson and Tekin conclude:

The participants engage in game play and they treat their respective undertakings as inspectable for their game relevance. Natural language is the fundament for recognizably doing just that, including coming to terms with emerging problems in the game as they are treated as problems of intersubjectivity. The very intelligibility of these procedures is constituted by the sequentially organized, situated accomplishment of social practices. Rules are not prescriptions of game conduct, but resources that reflexively render the players’ respective actions intelligible as playing that game into being. (2021: 817)

5 Conclusion

Wittgenstein’s later philosophy has made a significant impact on discourse studies and in particular discursive psychology. However, this paper has sought to argue

that his work has been appropriated in such a way that imports his philosophical focus as a means of exporting it as discourse analysis; an empirical enterprise. In the case of discursive psychology *Philosophical Investigations* can be read as a powerful means of undermining a Cartesian focus on the mind as residing in the individual and of language as springing from this inner world. Nevertheless, there is a danger in substituting the “inner” for the “outer” world of social relations and of trying to force his ideas to conform to social scientific concerns with a singular form of explanation: discourse as revealing psychological orientations, albeit at the level of social action. Wittgenstein offers a way of focusing upon the public nature of language use rather than assuming a social use. In other words, he gives us a way of understanding how language games involve different ways of making sense and using words rather than trying to view these through a singular lens.

The importation of conversation analysis as a method in discursive psychology also seeks to apply a singular lens. Sack’s work was all about showing the intricate ways in which the local context of talk is managed within interaction through the orderliness of the turns taking practices that participants themselves make apparent to one another. For Sacks the focus was on how such practices are bound up with intelligibility across a range of actions rather than being tied to psychological matters that are attended to. Context in this sense is local and attuned to the particularities of the conversational turns. Work in conversation analysis therefore attends to organizing practices and methods of action within the turns at talk. To extract the focus on turn taking as the contextual processes involved in attending to psychological matters removes a key concern of conversation analysis with orderliness as something that parties to the conversation attend to and make visible to one another. These organizing practices are the context to the turns and that context is rendered visible by those involved.

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