

2 Theories of Discourse as Theories of Gender: Discourse Analysis in Language and Gender Studies

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1 Introduction

The study of language and gender has increasingly become the study of discourse and gender. While phonological, lexical, and other kinds of linguistic analysis continue to be influential, the interdisciplinary investigation of discourse-level phenomena, always a robust area of language and gender scholarship, has become the central approach of the field. It is some indication of the impact of discourse analysis that no fewer than four books treating the topic of language and gender share the title *Gender and Discourse* (Cheshire and Trudgill 1998; Tannen 1994a; Todd and Fisher 1988; Wodak 1997a). In addition, hundreds of books, articles, and dissertations in numerous disciplines examine the intersection between discourse and gender from a variety of analytic perspectives. This proliferation of research presents problems for any attempt at a comprehensive overview, for although many of these studies are explicitly framed as drawing on the insights of discourse analysis, their approaches are so different that it is impossible to offer a unified treatment of discourse analysis as a tool for the study of language and gender. Hence there is no well-defined approach to discourse that can be labeled “feminist discourse analysis”; indeed, not all approaches to gender and discourse are feminist in their orientation, nor is there a single form of feminism to which all feminist scholars subscribe.

The goal of this chapter is instead to provide a sketch of some of the various forms that discourse analysis can take and how they have been put to use in the investigation of gender. I focus in particular on qualitative approaches to discourse analysis, although there have been many studies of gender in

discourse that use quantitative methods, some of which draw upon the frameworks outlined here. The approaches to discourse analysis considered in this chapter stem from four different but often interconnected research traditions: an anthropological tradition that focuses on cultural practices; a sociological tradition that emphasizes social action; a critical tradition that concentrates on texts; and a more recent anthropological tradition that considers the historical trajectories of discourse. After first examining the linguistic and non-linguistic definitions of discourse that inform scholarship on gender, the chapter traces the history and development of each approach and highlights debates and faultlines between competing frameworks. And because the application of any discourse-analytic framework to questions of gender brings along a set of theoretical assumptions about the interrelationship of discourse, identity, and power, this chapter also considers the ways in which particular theories of discourse imply particular theories of gender. Finally, it is important to note before proceeding that in many instances it is difficult to pinpoint the precise framework within which a given study was carried out, for most studies of language and gender do not rely on a single approach to discourse. The studies described here were selected not for their adherence to a particular framework, but for their ability to illustrate details of specific kinds of discourse analysis as applied to gender.

2 Defining Discourse

The term *discourse* is itself subject to dispute, with different scholarly traditions offering different definitions of the term, some of which venture far beyond language-centered approaches. Within linguistics, the predominant definition of *discourse* is a formal one, deriving from the organization of the discipline into levels of linguistic units, such as phonology, morphology, and syntax. According to the formal definition, just as morphology is the level of language in which sounds are combined into words, and syntax is the level in which words are combined into sentences, so discourse is the linguistic level in which sentences are combined into larger units. An alternative definition focuses not on linguistic form but on function. Discourse, in this view, is language in context: that is, language as it is put to use in social situations, not the more idealized and abstracted linguistic forms that are the central concern of much linguistic theory. Given its attention to the broader context of language use, the study of language and gender has overwhelmingly relied on the second definition of discourse. In practice, however, both definitions are often compatible, for much of the situated language that discourse analysts study is larger than a single sentence, and even the formal analysis of discourse may require an appeal to the context in which it occurs.

If formal linguistic definitions of discourse are too narrow for the needs of language and gender research, then some non-linguistic definitions emerging

from post-structuralist theory have been too diffuse. Michel Foucault's (1972) view of discourses as historically contingent cultural systems of knowledge, belief, and power does not require close attention to the details of linguistic form. Discourse analysis within a Foucauldian framework tends to consider instead how language invokes the knowledge systems of particular institutions, such as medical or penal discourse. This post-structuralist definition of discourse is inadequate for many discourse analysts, although some believe that Foucauldian "discourses" (culturally and historically specific ways of organizing knowledge) can and should be incorporated into the analysis of linguistic "discourse" (contextually specific ways of using language). Such an integrated approach may increase the relevance of linguistic discourse analysis for the study of gender in other disciplines. Indeed, the main influence of discourse analysis on non-linguistic feminist scholarship has come from Foucault and related perspectives rather than from the linguistic side of discourse analysis, which often involves a degree of technical detail that can be daunting to those untrained in the field.

Despite the range of scholarly practices that fall under the rubric of discourse analysis, it is possible to identify areas of convergence. Neither a single theory nor a single method, discourse analysis is a collection of perspectives on situated language use that involve a general shared theoretical orientation and a broadly similar methodological approach. Although the forms that discourse analysis takes vary widely, those that emphasize discourse as a social, cultural, or political phenomenon have in common a theory of discourse not merely as the reflection of society, culture, and power but as their constantly replenished source. In other words, for most discourse analysts the social world is produced and reproduced in great part through discourse. The method that emerges from this theoretical stance is one of close analysis of discursive detail in relation to its context. Where discourse analysts often differ is in such questions as the limits of context (how much background knowledge is necessary and admissible in order to understand a particular discursive form?), the place of agency (are speakers entirely in control of discourse? Are they merely a discursive effect?), and the role of the analyst (is the researcher's role to discover the participants' own perspectives, or to offer an interpretation that may shed new light on the discourse?). In answering such questions, discourse analysts working within different frameworks are influenced by their own disciplinary traditions as well as the distinctive theoretical developments of their chosen discursive paradigm. Consequently, in addition to broad areas of agreement, practitioners of different kinds of discourse analysis have found ample room for mutual critique and debate. The differences between approaches are especially evident when examining how various strands of discourse analysis interact with the field of language and gender studies, which has its own tradition of controversy and scholarly disagreement (see e.g. Bucholtz 1999a, forthcoming). In every case, however, the use of discourse-analytic tools has helped to clarify and expand our knowledge of how gender and language mutually shape and inform each other.

3 Discourse as Culture

Within linguistic anthropology, gender has been a frequent site of discursive investigation, and gender-based research helped to establish the utility of discourse-centered approaches to anthropology. These approaches have provided an alternative to much previous linguistic work within anthropology, which emphasized the description of linguistic systems through elicitation of decontextualized words and sentences from native speakers. By contrast with this tradition of data elicitation, the anthropologically oriented forms of discourse analysis that developed in the 1960s and 1970s emphasized the value of “naturally occurring” (that is, unelicited) data, often involving multiple participants and varied kinds of language use. These new methods of data collection also opened up new directions for the anthropological study of gender.

The two frameworks considered here, the ethnography of communication and interactional sociolinguistics, offer compatible and complementary perspectives on the relationship between language and culture. Both take from their roots in anthropology a concerted focus on cultural specificity and variability. And both view culture and discourse as intimately interconnected. Within language and gender scholarship, these approaches have therefore provided the impetus for research that expands the field’s early focus on the European American middle class to include a broad range of languages and cultures. Yet each approach has made very different kinds of contributions to language and gender research, based on the different ways in which it has used the concept of culture to frame the study of gender.

3.1 *Ethnography of communication*

The ethnography of communication (earlier termed the ethnography of speaking) was established by Dell Hymes (1962, 1974) as a way of bringing language use more centrally into the anthropological enterprise. The framework seeks to apply ethnographic methods to the study of language use: that is, it aims to understand discourse from the perspective of members of the culture being studied, and not primarily or pre-emptively from the perspective of the anthropologist. To this end, ethnographers of communication often focus on “ways of speaking” – discourse genres through which competent cultural members display their cultural knowledge – by considering speakers’ own systems of discursive classification rather than importing their own academically based analytic categories. They also examine, from native speakers’ point of view, how specific kinds of language use (speech events) are put to use in particular contexts (speech situations). In keeping with its anthropological origins, research in the ethnography of communication framework has concentrated primarily on language use beyond that of White middle-class speakers in industrialized societies. Perhaps for the same reason, the emphasis is on spoken language, as indicated by much of the terminology of the approach.

One of the most influential examples of this paradigm is Elinor (Ochs) Keenan's ([1974] 1989) account of gender differences in a Malagasy-speaking community in Madagascar. Keenan observes that among the Malagasy villagers she studied, women were associated with a direct speech style and men with an indirect style. Keenan does not explicitly contrast this pattern with the scholarly and popular view, common at the time she did her research, of Western women's speech as indirect and men's as direct (e.g. Lakoff 1975), but many other scholars called attention to the implications of these findings for language and gender research. However, Keenan's analysis does not stop with the identification of gender differences. She goes on to point out that each mode of discourse provides a distinct form of power. Malagasy women's direct style of discourse allows them to engage in politically and economically powerful activities, such as confrontation, bargaining, and gossip, that men participate in less often or not at all. But this is not a simple distribution of discursive labor; as Keenan shows, Malagasy language ideologies privilege indirect language as skilled and artful, the style most suited for public oratory, while devaluing direct language as unsophisticated and as indicative of Malagasy cultural decline.

The finding that women's ways of speaking are less valued than men's is echoed in other studies in the ethnography of communication paradigm. In addition, many studies support Keenan's observation that men's discourse genres tend to be more public and women's tend to be more domestic. Both these general patterns, however, are challenged by the work of Joel Sherzer (1987), who notes that among the Kuna, an indigenous group in Panama, women's discursive forms are sometimes different from men's, sometimes the same; sometimes superior or equal, sometimes inferior; sometimes public, sometimes private.

Where many ethnographies of communication address gender primarily from the standpoint of differences between women and men, another approach focuses on discourse genres used by women and girls without extensive comparison to men's and boys' discursive practices. Much of this work focuses on African American women's discourse, redressing the overwhelming scholarly emphasis on male discourse forms among African Americans. Claudia Mitchell-Kernan (1971), for example, elaborates the concept of signifying, which was initially described as a publicly performed game of ritual insults between boys (e.g. Abrahams 1962). Mitchell-Kernan reports on the practice of conversational signifying, a discourse genre involving indirect critique at which adult female speakers are especially adept. More recently, language and gender scholars have extended Mitchell-Kernan's research by documenting other discourse genres through which African American women and girls accomplish social, cultural, and political work, such as he-said-she-said, or accusing another party of gossiping (Goodwin 1980); instigating, or initiating a conflict between two other parties through storytelling (Goodwin 1990); reading dialect, or juxtaposing African American Vernacular English and Standard English to critique an addressee (Morgan 1999); and others. Although this work may discuss similarities and differences between female and male speakers, comparison is

not the main point. Rather, the purpose is to examine women's and girls' discursive competence on its own terms.

In both its comparative and non-comparative modes, the ethnography of communication as an approach to gender highlights speaker competence, local understandings of cultural practice, and cross-cultural variation. It therefore contributes to the feminist project of calling attention to women's abilities and agency, while reminding scholars that gendered language use is not everywhere the same. But because within this framework speakers are pre-eminently viewed as cultural actors, especially in earlier research individual language practices are often taken as representative of cultural patterns of gendered discourse. Generalizations may be made not about how "women" speak, but about how women of a particular culture speak; variation between women within a given cultural context is rarely discussed. In addition, the ethnography of communication has historically had a tendency to focus on more public, ritualized, and performance-oriented speech events – precisely those types of discourse that in most cultures have fewer female participants. Women's ways of speaking may therefore be considered, by native speakers and the analyst alike, as less culturally significant than those available to men. Hence the shift in emphasis from public and ritual speech events to conversational and everyday interaction, as evidenced particularly in the non-comparative study of discourse genres, also enables a more complete assessment of women's uses of discourse.

The ethnography of communication has been largely devoted to the description and analysis of relatively discrete and culturally salient discourse forms: speech acts, events, and genres that are recognized and often labeled by members of the culture. Yet much of social life takes place in ordinary conversation, and many cultures do not necessarily name or consciously recognize discourse practices that take place in the sphere of the everyday. The ethnography of communication also focuses mainly on discourse internal to a single culture rather than on how the same discursive form may be understood by members of different cultural backgrounds. A complementary approach to discourse within anthropology, interactional sociolinguistics, takes interaction and cultural contact as central to the cultural investigation of language use. This approach results in a very different view of gender and discourse.

3.2 *Interactional sociolinguistics*

Growing out of John Gumperz's work on language contact and code-switching in India and Norway, interactional sociolinguistics has been since its beginning a model of language in use that emphasizes the effects of cultural and linguistic contact. Ethnographies of communication are frequently carried out in small, non-Western, non-industrialized societies, or in culturally distinctive smaller groupings within Western societies. By contrast, interactional sociolinguistics primarily examines language use in heterogeneous, multicultural societies that

are often highly industrialized, concentrating especially on how language is used across linguistic and cultural groups within a single society. As developed in the work of John Gumperz and his associates (e.g. Gumperz 1982a, 1982b), the approach emphasizes how implied meanings can be derived from details of interaction that signal the appropriate cultural frame of reference for interpretation. These contextualization cues are culturally specific, and hence may give rise to miscommunication when used between speakers with different cultural systems of conversational inference. The main arena for the investigation of such communicative breakdowns is in inter-ethnic interaction of various kinds, usually between members of the dominant social group who often occupy more powerful roles in the interaction (such as employer, lawyer, teacher, or interviewer) and members of subordinated ethnic groups who often have less powerful positions (such as employee, witness, student, or interviewee).

Gender-based research within interactional sociolinguistics developed from this concern with cross-cultural differences in communicative norms. In fact, the scholar who is most closely associated with this approach, Deborah Tannen, has explicitly linked her study of gender to her work on ethnic differences in communication. Tannen's research on inter-ethnic communication – which contrasts the conversational styles of Greeks, Greek Americans, Jewish Americans, and Americans of other backgrounds – demonstrates that interlocutors with different cultural backgrounds can misinterpret one another's conversational styles as personality traits such as pushiness or inconsistency (e.g. Tannen 1981, 1982). In developing her approach to gender and discourse, Tannen combined insights from this ethnically based research with the work of Daniel Maltz and Ruth Borker (1982), who argue that even within a single culture gender is best understood in cultural terms, with distinctive female and male discursive practices emerging from gender-segregated play patterns in childhood. Tannen elaborates this line of reasoning in both popular and scholarly works on cross-gender interaction in intimate relationships and in the workplace (e.g. Tannen 1990, 1994a, 1994b, 1999), in which she analyzes how the conversational style associated with each gender can lead to miscommunication and difficulties in accomplishing one's goals.

Although this approach to gender and discourse has been widely criticized by other language and gender scholars (e.g. Davis 1996; Freed 1992; Troemel-Ploetz 1991), both for emphasizing gender difference over male dominance as the crucial factor in female–male communication and for downplaying the heterogeneity of women's (and men's) discursive practices, the contributions of the perspective should also be acknowledged. Like the ethnography of communication, interactional sociolinguistics highlights women's competence as users of discourse who have mastered the interactional rules appropriate to their gender. In fact, unlike the ethnography of communication, which may include native speakers' or the analyst's evaluations of female versus male discourse forms, interactional sociolinguists resolutely resist favoring one style over another. And, in contrast to some other feminist perspectives, interactional-sociolinguistic work on gender may challenge the view of women as victims.

Radical feminists, for example, analyze marriage as a patriarchal institution in which women have little agency or autonomy, a perspective that has the unfortunate effect of representing heterosexual women as colluding in their own oppression by entering willingly into a relationship of unequal power. Interactional sociolinguists complicate the radical-feminist position by pointing out that male communicative strategies in intimate relationships may not always be intended to dominate or silence women. Yet there are limits to the power that interactional sociolinguistics cedes to women (and men): in this framework, speakers are understood as largely constrained by the gender-based cultural system they learned as children, which they may transcend only through conscious awareness and effort.

Finally, although both interactional sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication would certainly view culture and discourse as mutually constitutive, the two approaches focus on different aspects of this relationship. Within the ethnography of communication, the analytic emphasis is on discourse as the substance of culture, the means by which shared cultural practice and identity are forged and displayed. Within interactional sociolinguistics, on the other hand, researchers highlight the ways in which culture underlies discourse, shaping how language is used and what it can mean. For scholars of language and gender, this difference in emphasis has led to markedly different theories of gender. Ethnographers of communication concentrate on how women, as discourse producers, are makers of culture. The focus on women as cultural agents also calls attention to the diversity of women's discursive practices in different cultures. Interactional sociolinguists, by contrast, emphasize not how women's discourse produces culture but how it is produced by culture. And in equating gender with culture, interactional sociolinguists view the primary point of comparison as between women and men. While the interactional sociolinguistic framework allows for differences in discourse style between women of different cultures, there is a tendency in much of the research in the field to downplay intragender variation and to highlight intergender variation in discourse patterns. Despite such significant differences in their views of gender and of discourse, these anthropological approaches have in common an analytic focus on cultural variability that sets them apart from many other forms of discourse analysis.

4 Discourse as Society

In these anthropological versions of discourse analysis, discourse is understood in terms of culture, especially in terms of cultural variation and specificity. In sociological and social-psychological paradigms, discourse is instead linked to society, especially in terms of how discourse structures society. The central principles that inform this perspective derive from ethnomethodology, a theory developed by sociologist Harold Garfinkel (1967) which views the social world

as organized through everyday interaction. Garfinkel consequently advocated applying close analytic attention to the ordinary activities from which social order emerges. Gender played an important role in the development of ethnomethodological ideas, in part due to Garfinkel's study of Agnes, a biological male who identified as female. Agnes's successful display of herself as a woman was accomplished through the management of routine activities related to gender. The insight that social identities such as gender are achievements or accomplishments, that gender is something that people "do" rather than simply have (Kessler and McKenna 1978; West and Zimmerman 1987), is one that has had a powerful impact on language and gender research, as well as on gender studies more generally.

As an outgrowth of ethnomethodology, conversation analysis has applied these ideas to the organization of talk. Recently, conversation analysis has in turn been put to use in the fields of social psychology and discursive psychology. Gender has figured centrally as an issue in all of these frameworks, but despite shared techniques of discourse analysis, feminist and non-feminist approaches to conversation analysis have often been in conflict concerning the appropriate method of studying gender in interaction.

5 Conversation Analysis

Conversation analysis has in common with interactional sociolinguistics a commitment to analyzing the details of interaction. But where interactional sociolinguistics takes as its main task the description of how culturally based interactional systems are signaled and put to use, the primary undertaking of conversation analysis is to examine the sequential unfolding of conversation moment by moment, turn by turn, to show how interactional structure constructs social organization. Some of the earliest and most influential studies of language and gender come from a conversation-analytic/ethnomethodological framework (Fishman 1983; Zimmerman and West 1975; West 1979; West and Zimmerman 1983). Such research demonstrated that gender-based power differences are an emergent property of interaction: men's one-up discursive position *vis-à-vis* women, as indicated through their greater propensity for interruption and their lesser engagement in interactional maintenance work, does not merely reflect but actually produces male power as an effect of discourse.

These explicitly feminist studies contrast with the approach to conversation analysis articulated by Emanuel Schegloff, a co-founder and in many ways the standard-bearer of the framework, who in a series of programmatic statements, critiques, debates, and challenges has sought to preserve conversation analysis against the encroachment of "self-indulgent" (that is, politically motivated) modes of analysis (Schegloff 1999). Gender is pivotal to this controversy, for Schegloff (1997), in an article that launched a flurry of rebuttals

and counter-rebuttals, uses gender to illustrate his position that social categories cannot be assumed to be analytically relevant without demonstrable evidence from within the interaction. Arguing against the theories and methods of critical discourse analysis, an explicitly political approach (see below), Schegloff twice analyzes the same data transcript, a telephone conversation between a divorced couple about their son: first according to a feminist model, and second according to a strict version of conversation analysis. By looking closely at the sequential organization of the conversation, Schegloff builds his argument that what some feminist analysts might interpret as male power enacted through interruptions of the female speaker is instead an outcome of interactional issues, such as the negotiation of turn-taking, responses, agreements, and assessments. Schegloff does not rule out the possibility of a gender-based analysis of these or other interactional data that meet his standards for conversation analysis – indeed, he provides a second example in which he performs such an analysis – but he insists that feminist analyses of conversation must be based on the clearly evident interactional salience of gender rather than on analysts' own theoretical and political concerns.

Schegloff's critique of linguistic research on social identities is a useful addition to a discussion that is by no means new; a number of language and gender scholars have raised similar issues regarding the dangers of assuming a priori that gender is always operative in discourse, and in predictable ways (see e.g. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992). But Schegloff's proposed solution, as a number of critics have noted, limits admissible context so severely that only the most blatant aspects of gendered discursive practice, such as the overt topicalizing of gender in conversation, are likely candidates for Schegloffian analysis. And while political critique is possible in principle, in practice the analyst rarely moves to the critical level. Finally, Schegloff's article has also come in for some textual critique of its own, due to the covert gender politics that his rhetoric reveals (Billig 1999a, 1999b; Lakoff, this volume).

Some researchers of gender have succeeded in expanding the range of issues that are authorized by Schegloff's version of conversation analysis by using the fine-grained analytic methods associated with this framework in conjunction with the rich contextual grounding of ethnography. This multiple-method approach was pioneered by Marjorie Harness Goodwin (e.g. 1980, 1990, 1999; see also Mendoza-Denton, 1999).

5.1 Discursive psychology and feminist conversation analysis

In England, a new research tradition has developed using the combined tools of conversation analysis, feminism, and social psychology. This approach to discourse includes several strands, which differ theoretically and methodologically in spite of their broadly similar feminist project. (See Weatherall and Gallois, this volume, for a fuller discussion of the distinctions between these

subfields in their approach to gender and discourse.) Many of these scholars have been influenced by and have contributed to the development of discursive psychology, a branch of psychology that uses discourse analysis rather than controlled experimentation as its primary method (Edwards and Potter 1992).

Elizabeth Stokoe (2000) follows Schegloff's line of argument to make a case for a feminist conversation analysis founded on participants' own interactional orientations to gender; in her examples such an orientation is indicated through the discursive use of gendered nouns and pronouns. Stokoe leaves open the question that she raises in her conclusion: must analysis be restricted to such explicit signaling of gender? Other feminist scholars within psychology find the two perspectives largely incompatible for precisely this reason. Ann Weatherall (2000) rejects the conversation-analytic premise that analysis of gender is admissible only when speakers overtly demonstrate an orientation to it, maintaining *contra* Schegloff that gender is omni-relevant in interaction. Margaret Wetherell (1998) aims to balance these two views of what counts as appropriate context. Responding to Schegloff's (1997) critique of critical discourse analysis, Wetherell argues that a complete analysis of discourse data requires both the technical analysis that conversation analysis provides and a critical (in her example, post-structuralist) analysis of the ideologies that make discourse socially interpretable. She demonstrates this approach in an analysis of a discussion of sexual exploits among a group of young men, noting that a strictly sequential account would miss the ways that cultural ideologies of heterosexual masculinity lend meaning to the speakers' interactional moves.

While such debates have centered on the applicability of conversation-analytic theory to language and gender research, other scholars within feminist psychology have focused instead on how the findings of conversation analysis can be applied to issues of gender. Celia Kitzinger and Hannah Frith (2000), for example, utilize the conversation-analytic concept of dispreferred response to point out the problems with campaigns to stop date rape. (Susan Ehrlich's chapter in this volume offers a complementary approach to the issue of date rape.) The authors note that when such campaigns instruct young women to "just say no" to unwanted sex forcefully and without explanation, they ask women to violate the interactional norm that a negative response to a request or suggestion (or demand) is dispreferred and thus must be mitigated through additional interactional work such as hedging or justifying. In addition, several scholars have offered recommendations for improving the compatibility of feminism and conversation analysis (e.g. Kitzinger 2000; Speer 1999). The range of feminist uses and critiques of conversation analysis makes clear that the question of the proper bounds of a conversation-analytic approach to gender is still far from settled. Nevertheless, practitioners of conversation analysis in all its forms share a view of gender as a phenomenon whose meaning and relevance must be analytically grounded in (though not, for some feminist scholars, necessarily restricted to) participants' own understandings of the interaction and not smuggled into the analysis via the researcher's assumptions and commitments.

This approach is consistent with both the ethnography of communication and interactional sociolinguistics in its insight that participants in conversation are highly skilled users of a complex set of flexible rules for conducting interaction, a point which for language and gender researchers underscores women's discursive agency and ability. Another commonality is the conversation-analytic principle of privileging the viewpoint of cultural members over that of the analyst. But the restriction of context to the immediate interaction, as advocated by Schegloff, contrasts with the broader cultural questions asked by these anthropological forms of discourse analysis. Where interactional sociolinguistics frequently uses playback interviews as a way of ascertaining participants' views of their interaction, and the ethnography of communication may examine the same speaker or speech event over time, the strictest form of conversation analysis does not admit any historical dimension to its analysis. Nor does it often stray far from the study of unelicited conversation, which, as its name suggests, is the foundation of conversation analysis.

Feminist conversation-analytic research takes a broader view, including research interviews among its data and incorporating historical patterns of gender and sexism into its analysis. But while historical context supplies crucial background for feminist conversation analysis, it does not take center stage. The fine-grained view of gender in interaction that conversation analysis yields therefore contrasts with approaches where the relationship of discourse to larger historical forces often drives the analysis. A clear connection between discourse and history may of course be difficult to locate when the discourse under investigation is casual conversation; it is often much easier to identify the broader context of language use in more formal, institutional, and codified forms of discourse, especially writing. Hence for a fuller picture of the discourse genres that may provide insights into the study of gender, it is necessary to consider those strands of discourse analysis that attend primarily to the discursive structures and functions of written texts.

6 Discourse as Text

Just as contemporary linguistics has tended to focus on spoken rather than written language, all of the preceding approaches to discourse analysis limit their investigations almost exclusively to oral discourse, and especially to dialogic interaction. Under the general rubric of text linguistics, other discourse-analytic frameworks – stylistics and critical discourse analysis – instead make written texts central to scholarly inquiry. The shift in emphasis from spoken to written language has important consequences for the theorizing and analysis of gender in discourse.

While both stylistics and critical discourse analysis are critical approaches to discourse, what is meant by *critical* in each case is quite different. Stylistics began as a linguistic approach to literary criticism, where *critical* originally

referred to a scholar's evaluative role in assessing the effectiveness of a text as art. The use of *critical* within critical discourse analysis is instead borrowed from the language of Marxism, especially critical theory, which emerged from the Frankfurt school of literary and cultural criticism. In this context, *critical* signifies a leftist (usually socialist) political stance on the part of the analyst; the goal of such research is to comment on society in order to change it. These two kinds of inquiry can be integrated, but in practice either the aesthetic or the political perspective tends to predominate.

Because stylistics has historically been concerned with the analysis of an author's style (the distinctive ways that she or he uses language to achieve aesthetic effects), traditional stylistics has often been criticized for restricting its analytic gaze to the text alone, a methodological principle it shares with conversation analysis. More recently, however, some stylisticians have taken up the frameworks of critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis as productive approaches for the analysis of written discourse. This move has broadened the contextual field of stylistic inquiry by making connections between texts and the ideologies that produce and are produced by them. At the same time, the expansion of literary criticism into cultural criticism has enlarged the range of texts that are available for literary (and hence stylistic) analysis, especially texts from popular or mass culture such as genre fiction, films and television shows, music lyrics, advertisements, and newspaper and magazine articles.

With respect to gender, stylistics and critical discourse analysis have considerable overlap, and it is not always easy to separate the two approaches. Their differences are largely a matter of data selection: feminist stylistics continues to examine literary discourse alongside popular texts, while feminist critical discourse analysis studies both spoken and written data in a number of institutional contexts such as the media, government, medicine, and education. Both investigate the way that ideologies (or discourses, in the Foucauldian sense) of gender are circulated and reworked in a range of cultural texts, and both seek to call attention to the linguistic strategies whereby texts locate readers within these discourses.

6.1 Stylistics

Within language and gender research, stylistics has been informed by feminist literary criticism as well as by feminist linguistics (see Livia, this volume). But although some approaches have an explicitly liberatory aim, not all linguistic studies of gender in literature have as a primary goal the active fostering of critical awareness in readers. As a result of their political purpose, liberatory forms of stylistics tend to focus primarily on texts that promote dominant cultural ideologies, which are revealed and challenged in the course of the analysis. By contrast, recent research by Anna Livia (2000, this volume) on linguistic gender in literature demonstrates how authors may subvert or flout

prevailing ideologies of social gender through their strategic use of gender-marked linguistic resources such as pronouns, nouns, and modifiers. Livia considers how linguistic gender in English and in French, in which gender marking is much more prevalent, is used in texts ranging from feminist science fiction to transsexual autobiography to undermine the notion of an absolute and binary division between genders on social or biological grounds. This research complements liberatory stylistics in documenting the possibilities as well as the constraints of gender positionings in written texts.

The most fully articulated theory of stylistics as a critical and liberatory feminist project has been carried out by Sara Mills (1992, 1995, 1998). Under the label of feminist stylistics or (post-) feminist text analysis, Mills's form of stylistics greatly expands the contextual parameters of traditional stylistic analysis to include, in addition to the text and its author, its history, its relationship to other texts, and its relationship to readers. Her central concern is with the ways in which a text signals through its language how it is to be read. This "dominant reading" draws on ideologies of gender, often in ways that assign a gender position to the reader as well. Feminist text analysis therefore involves an explication not only of how gender is represented within the text but also of how the text draws the reader into its ideological framework, and of how, through raised awareness, the reader can resist these representations and positionings. Mills (1992, 1995) exposes the underlying assumptions about gender in advertising discourse directed at women, such as "Removes all unsightly, embarrassing facial and body hair" or "Styled to make you look slimmer," as well as in literature from popular romance to poetry and literary prose. A recurring theme in these earlier analyses is that in mainstream texts women are positioned – both as textual figures and as readers – as objects of heterosexual desire and violence whose agency is limited to a replication of this arrangement of power. Mills offers alternative, resistant readings of such texts as a way of destabilizing normative discourses of gender. In her more recent work, Mills (1998) draws on contemporary feminist theory and language and gender scholarship to argue for the possibility of multiple and contradictory interpretations of texts. Continuing her earlier focus on advertisements, she suggests that the widespread influence of feminism has made sexism less overt but no less present in mainstream discourses of gender and heterosexuality.

The emancipatory orientation of stylistic research like Mills's has moved the field much closer to critical discourse analysis, and in fact the work of many authors contributes to both frameworks (e.g. Talbot 1995a; Thornborrow 1997). Yet the analysis of literary discourse remains a distinct tradition, which with respect to gender engages with specifically literary questions such as the possibility of a gendered writing style. The concept of authorial style is of less interest to critical discourse analysts, who often deal with texts for mass distribution that are not the product of a single identifiable author. Texts are therefore examined for what they reveal not about the author's gender but about the author's assumptions about gender – or, more accurately, about the representation of gender that the text offers up.

6.2 *Critical discourse analysis*

In its current form, critical discourse analysis has been shaped by several different scholars, most prominently Norman Fairclough (1989; Fairclough and Chouliaraki 1999), Teun van Dijk (1993a, 1993b), and Ruth Wodak (1989, 1999, this volume). Blending Marxist and post-structuralist theories of language, critical discourse analysis is an approach to language as a primary force for the production and reproduction of ideology – of belief systems that come to be accepted as “common sense.” The beliefs that are put forth in the texts of greatest interest to critical discourse analysts are those that encourage the acceptance of unequal arrangements of power as natural and inevitable, perhaps even as right and good. In this way discourse has not merely a symbolic but also a material effect on the lives of human beings (cf. Cameron, this volume).

Institutions are of special concern to critical discourse analysts both because of their disproportionate power to produce and circulate discourse and because they promote dominant interests over those of politically marginalized groups such as racial and ethnic minorities, the lower classes, children, and women. Some of the clearest examples of this discursive control can be found in the media, which have been a primary target of critical discourse-analytic research.

Whereas stylistics, almost by definition, restricts itself to written – or at least to scripted – discourse, critical discourse analysis may be carried out on either written or oral data. But while some feminist research aligned with critical discourse analysis features data from spoken interaction (e.g. Coates 1997; Wodak 1997b), the dominant strain of critical discourse-analytic work on gender concentrates on written discourse. One of the most productive scholars working within this tradition is Mary Talbot, who takes her data primarily from the popular print media and fiction. A central argument in much of Talbot’s work is that such texts seem to promise readers one thing but instead provide something else: a lipstick article in a magazine for teenage girls is a call to consumption under the guise of a friendly chat (Talbot 1995b); a report on sexual harassment in a British tabloid reinforces normative gender positions even as it seems to align itself with the female victim (Talbot 1997); an advice column uses a liberal discourse of sexual tolerance to cast homosexuality as a phase on the way to heterosexuality (Gough and Talbot 1996); a British Telecom advertisement appears to assume a pro-feminist stance while representing women and women’s language negatively (Talbot 2000; see Cameron, this volume, for a fuller discussion of this advertisement). Identifying such reversals between what a text does and what it purports to do is at the heart of critical discourse analysis.

The use of mainly written data in feminist forms of text linguistics, and especially the concerted attention given to written discourse genres in which issues of gender and power are prominent features, encourages a different kind of analysis than is seen in other discourse-analytic studies. Both feminist stylistics and feminist critical discourse analysis put gender ideologies at the

forefront of analysis. Where conversation analysis insists that power must be discovered in interaction and cannot be the point from which analysis proceeds, critical text analysis maintains that power permeates every aspect of society and hence is operative in all discourse. These scholars' refusal to shy away from politicized analysis provides a valuable model of engaged scholarship for researchers working within other approaches to discourse and gender.

In calling attention to the ideologies of gender embedded in the most pervasive forms of discourse in contemporary society, however, critical text linguistics presents women primarily as the consumers and the subjects of discourse rather than its producers. Agency in this approach is based primarily in the capacity of the consumer of the text to identify and reject these dominant discourses as a result of critical discourse analysis. And because critical discourse analysis does not usually investigate readers' relationships to such texts, it is not clear whether the potential effects of the discourse that the analyst identifies are in fact the effects experienced by the text's consumers.

Critical text linguistics is an important contributor to language and gender studies in its close attention to the discursive reproduction of power via the "top-down" processes whereby ideologies become established through discourse. But it does not give equal attention to the "bottom-up" strategies of those who may contest or subvert these ideologies through creative appropriation or production of new discourses (see e.g. Bucholtz 1996, 1999b). Thus neither discourse nor ideology is ever finished, in the sense that both can repeatedly enter new configurations that may constitute gender in ways unanticipated by analysts. Stylistics and critical discourse analysis, as primarily textual approaches to discourse, rarely indicate how texts circulate or how audiences interpret and use them; however, two new strains of discursive inquiry within linguistic anthropology examine the relationship between discourse and ideology from a more dynamic perspective. These approaches focus on specific discursive processes: ideologies and histories of discourse.

7 Discourse as History

Critical discourse analysis, with its foundations in Marxist thought, takes a special interest in history, at least in its theoretical outlines (Fairclough 1992). Other approaches to discourse analysis which have recently developed within linguistic anthropology also emphasize historical context, but in a more focused way. In one body of work, scholars follow the paths of ideology – the historically permeable systems of knowledge and power that Foucault termed *discourses*. The other scholarly trend considers instead discourse in the linguistic sense of the word, tracking its movement through time and space. This historicizing of discourse and discourses brings a much-needed temporal depth to the study of language and gender.

7.1 Language ideologies

The historical embeddedness of discourse is found in recent analyses within anthropology which focus not on discourse itself but on metadiscourse: discourse about discourse. Several recent essays and collections have laid out, from an anthropological viewpoint, a variety of issues involving language ideologies (Kroskrity 2000; Schieffelin et al. 1998; Woolard and Schieffelin 1994), developing issues first raised by Michael Silverstein's (1979) formulation of the concept. The study of language ideologies is both like and unlike critical discourse analysis. The similarity lies in the primacy given to ideology in both approaches, but the frameworks differ in their theoretical influences, their methods, and their scope. Critical discourse analysis uses language as a means of understanding ideology, and hence social and political relations, while the study of language ideologies turns this relationship in on itself by asking how ideologies that are *about* language, and not merely expressed in language, may themselves carry ideas about the social distribution of power (Cameron, this volume). Theoretically, research on language ideologies is less bound to the influence of Marxist perspectives; methodologically, it is both more linguistic (in focusing on socially and politically interested representations of language itself) and more anthropological (in concentrating on a broad range of specific cultural and geographic contexts from which language ideologies emerge). Relatedly and perhaps most importantly, it is less inclined to assume a privileged analytic perspective with respect to its data: whereas critical discourse analysis centers its discovery procedures on the analyst's interpretations of discourse (which are in turn thought to be the same as those of a reader, though made more explicit), anthropological research on language ideologies is more likely to appeal to the evidence of how ideologies are taken up, interrupted, or rerouted by those who participate in metadiscourse in various ways.

Among the work that informs and expands this young tradition of scholarship is Michael Silverstein's (1985) discussion of the language ideologies that feminist linguists challenge as well as those they hold; and Deborah Cameron's (1995) work on linguistic prescriptivism, or "verbal hygiene," as a language ideology with profoundly gendered effects. Much of the work on language ideologies and gender, however, centers on issues of emotion as indexed in discourse. Don Kulick's (1998) account of ideologies of language, gender, and emotion in a Papua New Guinean village recalls Elinor Ochs's (Keenan [1974] 1989) work in Madagascar in its delineation of an ideology that associates angry discourse with women and conciliatory discourse with men (see also Kulick, this volume). But where in Madagascar women's discursive practices came to be ideologically associated with modernity and cultural decline, in Papua New Guinea it is the men's discursive forms that are tied to modernity and "civilization" and usher in a shift away from the local language. Similarly, Charles Briggs (1998) contrasts two gendered discourses among the Warao, an indigenous group in Venezuela: the ritual wailing of women and the curing

songs of men. But where Kulick focuses primarily on such points of gendered contrast, Briggs uses the language ideologies he outlines to make sense of gossip as a site of political struggle in which ideologies of gender are cross-cut by faultlines based on age, tradition, and political power. He shows how gendered ideologies of language allow powerful Warao men to counteract women's gossip against them by representing it as a marginal discourse form. By demonstrating that the associations between specific language ideologies and particular discursive practices are emergent and negotiated outcomes of interaction, Briggs opens the door to a far greater degree of social and political agency than critical discourse analysis – or, indeed, than much comparative language and gender research – allows. In contrast to the assumptions of critical discourse analysis, Briggs challenges any approach to language ideologies that places the researcher in a position of analytic authority *vis-à-vis* the community under study.

A historical approach to language ideology is also taken by Miyako Inoue (forthcoming) in her study of the emergence of “Japanese women’s language” in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Here again modernity is a crucial element of ideologies of language and gender: Inoue demonstrates that a distinct system of gender-marking in Japanese arose in the first instance through the representation of women’s speech in the modern Japanese novel, using schoolgirls’ speech as a model. She argues that in thus constituting “Japanese women’s language” modern novelists also created “the Japanese woman.” Such appeals to historical as well as linguistic detail point the way to a more historically nuanced analysis of ideology than is available in other frameworks.

Research on language ideology attests to the inextricability of gender from other historically situated social and political processes. Although critical discourse analysis shares with language-ideology scholarship a commitment to recognizing ideologies and demonstrating their historical contingency, its preference for close textual analysis over historical and cultural depth has limited the extent to which it has been able to unsettle rather than reify existing relations of power. By bringing discursive practices and language ideologies together and by locating both within the mesh of culture and history, anthropological researchers of language ideologies are able to provide a more nuanced picture of female agency in the face of potent cultural ideologies of gender. In this body of scholarship, ideologies interact in complex ways: beliefs about gender are also beliefs about language, and conversely. Moreover, ideology is never total or foreclosed to other, countervailing ideologies.

The language-ideology framework therefore provides a richer theorizing of ideology than critical discourse analysis provides, one in which the analysis of discourse foregrounds the fact that discursive practices are not determined by ideology and hence are always available for negotiation and change. Linguistic anthropology has also recently been the source of another historical perspective on discourse, one closely allied with the language-ideology research; indeed, a number of the same scholars have made use of both perspectives in their

work. Although it has not yet been fully tapped for its potential as a model for language and gender research, this form of discourse analysis may prove extremely useful in opening up new lines of inquiry through its investigation of the trajectory not of discourses, or ideologies, as in critical discourse analysis and research on language ideologies, but of discourse itself.

7.2 *Natural histories of discourse*

The study of how discourse becomes text – how it becomes bounded, defined, and movable from one context into another – has been termed recontextualization (Bauman and Briggs 1990) or natural histories of discourse (Silverstein and Urban 1996), the latter something of a misnomer insofar as there is nothing “natural” about how discourse enters into new text formations. If some approaches to discourse analysis emphasize oral discourse, and others focus on written texts, then natural histories of discourse call attention instead to the interplay between the oral and the written and between earlier and later versions of the “same” oral or written discourse: in short, to intertextuality. (Some work within critical discourse analysis also takes an interest in intertextuality, but this is an outcome of analysis, not its starting point.) Both conversation analysis and text linguistics take as given the notion of an unproblematically bounded text, whether spoken or written; investigations of natural histories of discourse instead take the formation of a “text” as an autonomous object (entextualization) and its mobility across contexts (recontextualization) as the central questions. The natural history of discourse is the path that discourse takes on its way to becoming text, the transformations it undergoes, as well as the changes wrought when a text is transplanted into a new discursive situation. This approach encompasses a wide range of phenomena in which intertextual relations are highlighted, including quotation, translation, literacy practices, and the performance of scripted texts, as well as the transcription practices of discourse analysts themselves. This research is closely related to work on language ideologies in that the possibilities for entextualization are often ideologically constrained, and ideologies can often be tracked through ensuing processes of discursive recontextualization. In both bodies of work gender emerges from the interaction of ideologies and discursive practices. Yet natural histories of discourse offer a different vantage point on this process from that taken by language-ideology scholarship by emphasizing the circulation not of ideologies but of discourse across contexts.

In Charles Briggs’s research (1992) on women’s discourse genres among the Warao, for example, he argues that ritual weeping, as a discourse form reserved for women, provides the opportunity for women to transgress social norms in order to critique the behavior of powerful men. Warao women extract (and invent) textual material from men’s discourse and recontextualize it. As Briggs points out, such critiques may have consequences beyond the discourse itself, including limiting the authority of male community leaders.

Another approach to natural histories of discourse can be seen in Vincent Crapanzano's (1996) study of the nineteenth-century autobiographical narrative of Herculine Barbin, whom French medical and legal authorities reclassified from female to male. Crapanzano considers how the narrative conventions of autobiography limit the ability of Barbin to produce a continuous identity throughout the text: both Barbin's narrative and her/his identity are fragmented; it is only their conjunction in a single text that gives them both unity. While Crapanzano does not frame his work in relation to its implications for the investigation of gender, it may recall the work of Livia (2000, this volume) described above in showing the limits on the exploitation of textual conventions by an author writing outside the traditional binary gender system.

Theories of gender within natural histories of discourse favor a perspective in which gender, like the discourse through which it is produced as a socially meaningful category, is inherently unstable and manipulable. Gender identities and power relations cannot be determined from a reading of social structures alone, or from an ahistorical investigation of a given bit of discourse, for every text has a history of previous contexts in which those identities and relations may have operated very differently, and may continue to carry a trace of their prior effects. Yet given the name under which some research on such matters is carried out, it may be necessary to expand the scope for agency within this approach. If the history of discourse is construed as natural, then discourses may be understood as circulating independently of purposeful human action, a post-structuralist notion that many feminists and gender critics have faulted (e.g. Livia and Hall 1997). Fortunately, most work within this paradigm has not succumbed to the temptation of literalizing the idea of naturalness in the analysis of discourse.

Although natural histories of discourse and language-ideology research offer new ways of looking at discourse, they do not diverge dramatically from the ethnography of communication and interactional sociolinguistics, whose theoretical and methodological foundations they generally share. As already noted, the earlier approaches accommodate ideologies of language use, and both use the concept of context or even, as in the case of interactional sociolinguistics, of contextualization. And like these frameworks, newer historicized anthropological perspectives on discourse understand gender as an inherently cultural notion.

Language and gender research on discourse trajectories has barely begun, and if researchers take up the approach they will no doubt continue to develop it in fruitful new directions. Future work on language and gender from this perspective might document how processes of entextualization yield gendered results (a task begun with Inoue's work on Japanese women's language) or how gendered structures may be challenged by mobilizing texts into new contexts (as in Briggs's research). Because histories of discourse and of discourses are also potentially histories of gender, even scholars drawing on other traditions of discourse analysis would be well advised to make greater use of historical and contextual processes in analyzing how gender is produced in discourse.

8 Conclusion

The importance of discourse analysis in language and gender scholarship shows no signs of abating, and the forms of discourse analysis surveyed in this chapter do not exhaust the frameworks available for the analysis of discourse as a social phenomenon. All the research discussed in these pages can be connected to additional approaches to discourse analysis, including some that have not been sketched here, or that have yet to be formulated as distinctive frameworks. Moreover, some of the work discussed in this chapter does not address itself to an audience of language and gender scholars, yet all of it is useful for the linguistic study of social gender. The classification of discourse-analytic models offered here is therefore not intended as an absolute categorization, but rather a tentative and suggestive taxonomy that allows similarities and differences among approaches to come into relief, in particular with regard to the theories of gender that they employ and imply.

For language and gender research, the most prominent issues in discourse analysis are the nature of context, the role of agency versus dominant forms of power, and the analytic stance of the researcher. The problem of context is one that has become central to theoretical discussions of discourse analysis. Some approaches, such as conversation analysis, seek to limit context to what can be recovered from the discourse itself, while others, such as the ethnography of communication, consider a much wider range of contextual factors to be potentially relevant to analysis; others still, especially the natural histories of discourse, problematize the very notion of context by focusing on how contexts bring texts into being and give them (provisional) meaning. For language and gender scholars, this question is vital to an understanding of the nature of gender itself: is gender, as many feminist conversation analysts would have it, an achievement of discourse, or is it an ideological system with broad contextual parameters, as suggested in different ways by critical textual analysts and by those who study language ideologies? Likewise, the question of agency remains a point of divergence across approaches. In interactional sociolinguistics, individual agency is limited by cultural constraints, and it is almost invisible in some textual analysis; but agency is more fully realized in other anthropological models. With respect to analytic perspective, both conversation analysts and linguistic anthropologists advocate that researchers analyze discourse from the viewpoint of its participants, although more socially engaged approaches such as interactional sociolinguistics also endorse the analyst's role in revealing to participants other possible interpretations. The liberatory goal of critical textual analysis, meanwhile, considers it the researcher's political responsibility to make explicit how power relations may have been missed or mistaken by a text's audience. Natural histories of discourse instead invite greater reflexive awareness on the part of the analyst, suggesting that she attend to her own practices of text-making and how they circumscribe available interpretations. Such tensions are not easily resolved (cf. Bucholtz 2001). For the study of

gender, these differences have meant that discourse analysis offers multiple and conflicting theories of the relationship of gender, discourse, and the researcher herself.

Few scholars, however, take a rigid or absolutist position on the appropriate methods for the analysis of gender in discourse. Researchers tend to draw on multiple approaches as needed to answer the questions that arise in the course of research. But there is a general tendency for certain types of discourse analysis to converge on certain types of data, a tendency that is both reasonable and limiting. Certainly, each form of discourse analysis has been developed to address specific issues, and hence in some ways it is best suited for those tasks and ill adapted for others. Yet there is always room for scholars to adapt and even appropriate what they need from diverse perspectives. Innovation requires that scholars of language and gender push their theories both of discourse and of gender as hard as they can; it is always worth bringing new models to bear on one's data, as well as interrogating familiar frameworks with novel research questions. By using the insights of other modes of discourse analysis, advocates of particular approaches can improve upon them and apply them to new situations. Drawing on various approaches allows the researcher to highlight issues of agency, power, interaction, and history at different moments in the analysis. The approaches to discourse analysis surveyed in this chapter are separated by real and sizeable differences in their understanding of the nature of language, the nature of gender, and their intersection. But a great deal of room remains for intellectual cross-fertilization. Such an undertaking requires discussion, and perhaps collaboration, across the dividing lines of different analytic traditions. An ongoing dialogue among discourse analysts of all stripes will ensure the continuing viability of discourse analysis as a flexible and incisive tool for the study of gender.

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