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TALK IN INTERACTION AS A LOCUS FOR MEDIA STUDIES

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Discourse is a key but neglected aspect of the contemporary news media. In its various forms – the written story, the spoken comment, the exchange of interaction – discourse is the primary vehicle through which public affairs information is conveyed to the audience. Such discursive forms are so familiar that they tend to be taken for granted both by consumers and scholars of media culture. Researchers often use the “content” of media discourse as a resource for exploring other matters, such as the organizational pressures bearing on journalists and the social psychological effects on audiences. It is much less common to examine media discourse itself – its elementary forms and practices – as a topic in its own right.

This emphasis is consistent with the dominant metaphor that has guided news media studies. Researchers from otherwise diverse perspectives tend to treat the news as analogous to a “mirror,” to be investigated for the degree to which it accurately reflects – or alternatively distorts – the world at large. Like any metaphor, the news-as-mirror analogy both illuminates and obscures its target. A focus on the *representational adequacy* of news comes at the expense of inquiry into the *social practices* that constitute news and make it an intrinsic part of the world in which it is embedded. As Hallin and Mancini (1984 : 829) have observed, drawing inspiration from the later writings of Ludwig Wittgenstein :

... just as language is not really separate from the “world” it “pictures,” the media do not stand apart from the social processes reflected in the content of the news. Just as language is embedded in the “forms of life” in which we use it, constituted by and helping to constitute those forms, the media are an integral part of political and social life.

In a break from scholarly trends of the past, there is now an emerging interest in the "forms of life" comprising news discourse. This development is tantamount to a linguistic turn in media studies that sheds new light not only on the news itself but also its embeddedness within and embodiment of sociopolitical life. There are a variety of distinct discourse analytic approaches (Bell and Garrett 1998) addressed to phenomena ranging from the overall form of newspapers and newscasts (e.g., Barnhurst and Nerone 2001, Montgomery 2007, Scannell and Cardiff 1991 : Chapter 8) to the formal properties of news narratives and stories (e.g., Bell 1991, Hallin and Mancini 1984, Schudson 1982, Van Dijk 1988 ; Weaver 1975) to linguistic phenomena at the sentential level, such as the grammar of agency, person/group references, and so on (e.g., Fowler 1991 ; Fowler, et. al. 1979 ; Lee 1984). The present paper focuses on the phenomenon of dialogue or *talk in interaction* as a locus for media studies.

The case for interaction as a focus of study hinges in part on its prominence in the contemporary news media. For many years, most news and public affairs information was presented to audiences in the form of a narrative or story, and most academic studies of the news media – including studies of production processes, thematic content, and audience effects – used the traditional story form of news as data. However, at least within broadcasting, the story form has steadily declined in prominence since the 1980s with the proliferation of program formats and media events organized around interaction rather than narration – news interviews and news conferences, panel discussions, formal and informal debates, talk shows involving audience participation, town meetings between politicians and ordinary citizens, and so on. The reasons for this development are complex (Clayman 2004), but it is abundantly clear that interaction in various forms, and involving various combinations of media professionals, public figures, and ordinary people, has become a central means by which information and commentary is now packaged for public consumption.

Beyond its prominence, broadcast interaction now plays a major role in the *in situ* determination of news content. Unlike the scripted news story, which is determined through backstage processes of research, writing, and editing, forms of interaction are essentially unscripted and to some extent unpredictable. Of course, each interactional participant may have a preconceived agenda in mind at the outset, a more or less settled idea of what they would like to say and do. However, there are multiple participants with divergent and often incompatible agendas. And since every contribution to interaction is an important contingency affecting what happens next – every

"move" forms the context for and to some degree conditions the next "move" – anyone's capacity to realize an agenda is necessarily contingent on the actions of others. The actual course of a broadcast interaction is thus by no means predetermined ; it is an emergent product of how the participants choose to deal with each other then and there, moment by moment, move by move. Given this, explanations of contemporary news content will be incomplete unless the interactional dimension is taken into account.

If broadcast interactions are not scripted in any strong sense of the word, neither are they a disorganized free-for-all in which "anything goes." Indeed, the parties to any form of talk observe an elaborate set of social conventions, some generic to interaction per se, and others specialized for that particular form of talk in that environment of broadcasting. These conventions are largely tacit and taken for granted, and yet they are very real and very powerful. They define the boundaries of permissible conduct and shape the actions of the participants in consequential ways. Adherence to the specialized conventions is what makes any given genre of broadcast talk recognizably distinct from other genres, and distinct also from the form of talk that is most pervasive and fundamental to social life : ordinary conversation. Moreover, these conventions are meaningful in their own right, and can illuminate both the "content" of the news itself and the social world of which it is an integral part.

This final point bears elaboration. Broadcast interactions are, in the first instance, arenas where journalists and other media professionals, government officials and other elites, and ordinary people from diverse backgrounds engage one another in various permutations on the public stage. The manner in which these encounters unfold is shaped by, and in turn contributes to, a multiplicity of social institutions and their interrelations. Correspondingly, their study provides a unique window into these societal arrangements. Just as the conventions that organize news interviews and news conferences can shed light on the profession of journalism and its evolving relationship to the state, the conventions that organize audience-participation talk shows and town meetings can shed light on constructions of the public in relation to politicians, experts, and other elites. Here we return, somewhat more concretely, to the point with which we began. Broadcast talk does not merely offer stories *about* an independent social world ; its interactive "forms of life" are an intrinsic and constitutive part of that world, and their study illuminates both the media and the social world to which it contributes.

This paper provides a brief introduction to research on broadcast talk, much of which comes from the tradition of conversation

analysis.¹ The primary objective, drawing on research conducted in England and the U.S., is to illustrate the empirical and theoretical payoffs of such an approach. After an initial discussion of how conversation analysis conceives of interaction and its relationship to social contexts, the remainder of the paper focuses on various levels of analysis at which talk-in-interaction may be examined, including:

1. turn taking systems
2. turn design and action formation
3. sequence organization
4. quantitative extensions

These levels of analysis – which vary from relatively “micro” to “macro” – are often intertwined in actual research, but they will be distinguished here for illustrative purposes.

CONCEPTUAL PRELIMINARIES

Conversation analysis (CA), arguably the dominant approach to the study of talk in interaction, embodies a distinctive conception of the relationship between talk and its context. It is a conception that rejects what Drew and Heritage (1992: 19) have termed the “bucket theory of context,” wherein some preestablished social framework is viewed as independent of the participants’ actions much as a container is independent of what it contains. Instead, “the context” of

1. For general introductions to the methodology of conversation analysis, see Heritage (1984: Chapter 8), ten Have (1999), and Clayman and Gill (2004). For introductions to the study of institutional talk in particular, see Boden and Zimmerman (1991), Drew and Heritage (1992), and Heritage (1997). Empirical studies of broadcast talk have thus far focused mainly on a few key genres, namely audience-participation talk shows (e.g., Bhimji 2001; Hutchby 1996, 1999; Thornborrow 2001a, 2001b; Tolson 2001), news interviews (e.g., Burger and Fillietz 2002, Clayman and Heritage 2002a; Greatbatch 1988, 1992; Harris 1986, 1991; Myers 2000; Roth 1998, 2002, 2005; see also Ekstrom, Kroon, Nylund 2006), and presidential news conferences (Clayman and Heritage 2002b, Clayman, Elliott, Heritage, and McDonald 2006; Clayman, Heritage, Elliott, and McDonald 2007). However, research is also emerging on anchor-reporter interactions (Montgomery 2006, Raymond 2000), campaign debates (Bilmes 1999, 2001), and cross-genre surveys and comparisons (Hutchby 2006; Martinez 2003; Scannell 1991, Tolson 2006). A related stream of research investigates speaker-audience interactions in a variety of contexts, focusing on the relationship between political rhetoric and collective audience responses such as applause, booing, and laughter (Atkinson 1984; Heritage and Greatbatch 1986, Clayman 1993).

interaction is viewed as instantiated through the participants’ actions, incrementally achieved and transformable at any moment. This reflexive and dynamic view of the talk/context relationship, which can be traced to the ethnomethodological origins of CA (Clayman and Maynard 1995, Heritage 1984), distinguishes CA from other approaches to the study of talk in interaction deriving from speech act theory.

The reflexive talk/context relationship is built into the basic mechanics of interaction. From a CA perspective, interaction is sequentially organized, with contributions to interaction both context-shaped and context-renewing (Drew and Heritage 1992: 18). Each contribution to interaction – each action or “move” – is conditioned by and hence responsive to prior actions. The pervasive responsiveness of action operates on prior actions both in terms of their generic categorical properties (i.e., as “answers” are responsive to “questions”), as well as their context-specific properties as actions in a particular environment (i.e., “an adversarial question asked by a professional journalist on behalf of the audience”). At the same time, each action also expresses an understanding of what came before, even as it forms the context for what happens next. Each action thus embodies a local “definition of the situation” that can extend, modify, or transform whatever definition was previously in play, and in turn forms the definitional context to which subsequent actions will be oriented. In this way, moves in interaction do not passively unfold within extant circumstances; they are actively consequential for what the circumstances come to be.

This process plays itself out somewhat differently in “casual” conversation between acquaintances as opposed to task-oriented interactions in bureaucratic and occupational environments. Compartmentalizing *conversational* and what has come to be known as *institutional* talk, the practices comprising these forms of talk share both commonalities and divergences (Drew and Heritage 1992: 21–25). Ordinary conversation encompasses the widest range and diversity of practices, while institutional talk involves a systematic reduction in the range of available practices and a more specialized deployment of those practices that are used. This basic difference arises from the fact that parties in institutional environments tend to be oriented to a focused project or task associated with their roles, which in turn restricts the contributions that may relevantly be made, and results also in special ways of making sense of those contributions. These distinctive patterns of action and inference are not invariant regularities; they obtain only so long as the parties remain oriented to institutional tasks and roles. Correspondingly, they amount to a

“fingerprint” distinguishing each institutional form of talk from other forms, including ordinary conversation (Heritage 1997 : 164).

Broadcast talk is, of course, an order of institutional talk, with various sub-species – interviews, discussions, debates, etc. – recognizably distinct from each other and from ordinary conversation. Within each form of talk, interaction is oriented to an overarching set of tasks as the participants act under the auspices of their local institutional roles as host and guest, interviewer and interviewee, moderator and panelist, etc. The resulting patterns of action and inference bear the imprint of professional norms, legal codes, organizational arrangements, conceptions of the audience, and other features of the social environment.

Linking specific speaking practices to specific features of the context is by no means straightforward, in part because of the multiplicity of contextual features that could in principle be relevant at any moment, and because many speaking practices can be found beyond the domain of broadcast talk *per se* (Schegloff 1987). Accordingly, such linkages must be demonstrated rather than assumed, and this principle distinguishes CA from other approaches to media discourse such as critical discourse analysis (Hutchby 2006 : Chapter 2). One resource for this purpose is comparative analysis, and in particular the use of ordinary conversation as an analytic benchmark for specifying what is distinctive about a given form of broadcast talk. The theoretical cautiousness embodied in this approach has proven to be a fruitful and productive analytic stance. Many of the institutional conditions and pressures that have long preoccupied media scholars – journalistic objectivity and bias, the watchdog role of the press, deference to authority, catering to the audience, the pursuit of controversy and sensationalism, and so on – all of these can be seen *in action* in the details of broadcast talk.

TURN TAKING SYSTEMS

Before anything can happen in interaction, before any projects or agendas can be pursued, there must be some orderly way of managing the traffic of interaction. How are opportunities to speak distributed and managed? How, in other words, is turn taking organized?

Some forms of broadcast talk – e.g., late-night celebrity talk shows, and radio call-in shows – have turn taking arrangements that are not significantly different from ordinary conversation (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974 ; Greatbatch 1988). In these cases, there is no predetermined plan or format for taking turns, so who gets to speak at any given point, and for how long, and what they can do

within their turn at talk, is determined by the participants themselves within the interaction as it unfolds. Thus, the order of speakership, as well as the length and content of turns at talk, is not prespecified and varies from interaction to interaction. Such interactions tend to be experienced and understood as relatively “casual” or “non-formal” in character (Atkinson 1982).

Other forms of broadcast talk are organized by specialized systems of turn taking which are distinct from ordinary conversation and hence involve a more or less predetermined and enforceable format for the exchange of turns. Campaign debates provide a useful illustration. Although there has been considerable experimentation with different turn taking arrangements in this environment, most campaign debates have a prespecified order of speakership and prespecified limits on how long candidates may speak within each turn at talk. In a similar vein, in news interviews (Greatbatch 1988 ; Clayman and Heritage 2002 : Chapter 4) and news conferences (Clayman 2004) journalists and public figures are restricted to asking and answering questions, respectively, which partially predetermines the order of speakership whenever more than two participants are present. These special turn taking arrangements do not arise by happenstance ; they are solutions to practical problems and specialized goals that arise in each environment. Whatever form they may take, interactions organized by specialized turn taking systems tend to be experienced as distinctively confining and are understood as “formal” in character (Atkinson 1982).

Although many turn taking systems may be summarized in terms of a simple rule – i.e., “questions and answers” – such rules are, by themselves, common sensical and not particularly enlightening. Analysis moves beyond the obvious by explicating how the rule is oriented to by the participants and implemented in practice. This entails at least two sets of issues. First, how is talk produced so as to be recognizably in compliance with whatever turn taking rules are in force? For the case of news interviews, what are the practices that enable a stretch of talk to “come off” as a series of questions and answers (Greatbatch 1988 ; Clayman and Heritage 2002a : Chapter 4)? The following excerpt, which typifies news interview talk, illustrates some of the many complex and subtle practices implicated in this process. It is the opening exchange in Dan Rather’s infamous 1988 interview with Vice President George Bush, and concerns Bush’s involvement in the Iran-Contra scandal.

(1) [CBS Evening News : 25 Jan. 1988]

- 1 DR Mister Vice President, thank you for being with us tonight,
 2 .hh Donald Gregg still serves as your trusted advisor, he
 3 was deeply involved in running arms to the contras, 'n 'e
 4 didn't inform you.
 5 .hhh Now when President Reagan's (0.3) trusted advisor:
 6 Admiral Poindexter: (0.5) failed to inform him:., (0.7)
 7 thuh President (0.4) fired 'im.
 8 (0.5) Why is Mister Gregg still: (0.2) inside thuh
 9 White House 'n still a trusted advisor.
 10 GB : Because I have confidence in him, .hh 'n because this matter
 11 Dan:., as you well know., 'n your editors know., has been looked
 12 at by .hh the ten million dollar study by the: (.) Senate 'n
 13 thuh House, .hh it's been looked at by thuh Tower
 commission...

Here Rather "asks a question" and then Bush "answers it," but what underlies this seemingly simple exchange? To say "the interviewer asks a question" glosses over what he has actually done to produce talk that is recognizable as "doing questioning," just as it glosses over the more general issue of what is regarded as acceptable "questioning" in the news interview context. Rather's turn at talk is not a simple question – it begins with various assertions (lines 1-7) before the question proper (lines 8-9) is delivered. Complex *statement-prefaced questions* are absolutely routine in this context, and it's one of the features that distinguishes the news interview from other forms of talk with superficially similar turn-taking arrangements. Courtroom trial examinations, for example, are also organized around questions and answers, but prefaced questions tend to be relatively infrequent and brief.

To say that "the interviewer asks a question" also obscures the interviewee's role in this process. Rather would not have been able to deliver his complex prefaced question without cooperation from Bush, who withholds speaking until the question is completed. There are at least two points (at lines 5 and 8) where Rather not only completes a sentence but provides a bit of space before launching into the next unit of talk. These are places where – in ordinary conversation – it would have been appropriate for a recipient to begin speaking, but Bush declines to produce either a substantive response or even a brief acknowledgement (e.g., "uh huh"). This is particularly remarkable given the damaging nature of what Rather has said in his prefatory statements. He has drawn a contrast between Bush and Reagan in terms of how they've handled advisors implicated in the scandal, a contrast that portrays Bush's conduct as ethically suspect.

That Bush nonetheless declines to respond to this accusatory contrast or its components reveals an enormous amount of self-control on his part, but Bush is by no means unusual in this respect. Interviewees generally withhold speaking in this way, and this is also part of the work involved in following the question-answer rule. Interviewees must withhold speech not only to enable the question to be completed, but also to have a sequential environment where their own talk can come off as an "answer."

A second set of issues concern how departures from the turn taking system are managed and dealt with. In the following panel interview, such a departure occurs when one interviewee takes the floor (first arrow) not in response to a question from the interviewer, but after and in response to another interviewee's remarks (lines 1-3). By speaking out of turn, and by not producing a recognizable "answer," this interviewee has plainly departed from the usual question-answer framework.

(2) [US NewsHour 4 Dec. 1989 : Summit Meeting]

- 1 EB : ...As long as the two systems exist and we need them for
 2 stability, h we will have no.: h uh unification.
 3 This is absolutely clear.
 4 HK : -> May I say something,
 5 IR : Yes sir.=
 6 HK : -> =on the subject ?
 7 IR: Yes sir.
 8 HK: Uh (.) ahem I think it is a big mistake. to equate the
 9 NATO alliance and the Warsaw pact....

Notice that the interviewee, before launching into the substance of his remarks, first asks the interviewer for permission to speak (lines 4, 7). In so doing, he treats himself as having diminished rights to the floor at that juncture, while acknowledging the interviewer's role in selecting interviewees to speak through their questions. Such practices, which demonstrate continued orientation to the turn taking system even while departing from it, are also part of the work of following the question-answer rule.

It should now be clear that turn taking arrangements, which may at first seem exceedingly simple and even common sensical when boiled down to a simple rule, are implemented through a matrix of practices that are complex and far from obvious. Investigating these practices directs attention to, and reveals the organized character of, an enormous amount of interactional conduct.

It may nonetheless be tempting to dismiss turn taking as an arcane technical matter that has no bearing on the substance of what

gets said and done. Nothing could be further from the truth. Turn taking arrangements structure opportunities for participation, and in so doing they can materially affect interactional trajectories and outcomes.

Consider the case of U.S. presidential news conferences. Because numerous journalists participate, the question-answer rule by itself is inadequate to determine which journalist is to ask each successive question. At every juncture where a question is relevant, some additional method is needed to select among the journalists. By far the most common method has been to allow this to be determined by the participants themselves as the interaction unfolds. Specifically, as a given response by the president is winding down, journalists "bid" for the next question by raising their hands, calling out "Mr. President!", etc., and the president then selects among the bidders. This method places considerable discretion in the hands of the president, and as a consequence facilitates the avoidance of journalists regarded as unfriendly or unduly aggressive.

Moreover, presidents have experimented with different methods for selecting journalists as next speakers, and each modification has been materially consequential. Early in the 20th century, Warren Harding instituted a rule that written questions be submitted in advance (Cornwell 1965). This arrangement, which persisted into the Coolidge and Hoover administrations, enabled the president to freely pick and choose not only the questioners but also the questions themselves. Of course, presidents can always decline to answer a given question, but under the usual turn taking arrangement such declinations are visibly on record and can generate negative inferences among observers (i.e., "he must have something to hide"). Even the momentary hesitation that can occur when the president is considering whether and how to respond can be inferentially elaborative, because as Cornwell (1965 : 67) has observed, "silence can be at times as pregnant with meaning as a specific answer, or at least can be so interpreted." Written questions eliminate this problem, allowing presidents to pick and choose their questions without being accountable for refusing or hesitating to answer, and hence with no danger of being seen as "evasive."

In a different vein, the Reagan administration experimented briefly with a prearranged order for the questioners. This change was supposedly implemented in an effort to bring greater decorum to encounters that were then being broadcast live, and indeed it eliminated much of the gesticulating and shouting previously employed to bid for each question. However, as Schegloff (1987 : 223-225) has demonstrated, this arrangement had an unintended consequence —

without the din of journalists clamoring for the president's attention after each response, follow-up questions became easier for journalists to request and harder for presidents to avoid. Given this, the arrangement was subsequently abandoned and has been resurrected only sporadically.

TURN DESIGN AND ACTION FORMATION

Whatever turn taking arrangement may be in force, how are turns at talk actually designed and mobilized in pursuit of specific actions? The issue of turn design encompasses both the selection of actions to be pursued within turns at talk, and the specific practices (lexical choices, grammatical forms, nonvocal behaviors, etc.) through which they are implemented. To illustrate the analysis of turn design, the following discussion will focus on how various participants on diverse program formats *ask questions* of public figures.

Consider, first, the questions asked by *journalists in news interviews*. Journalists' talk displays a concern with the norm of professional neutrality. While absolute neutrality is of course an unattainable ideal, journalists strive to maintain a formally neutral or "neutralistic" stance through various aspects of turn design. At a very basic level, this stance is maintained through questions themselves, which are conventionally understood as "requests for information" rather than expressions of opinion. Questions are in this respect at least formally neutralistic (even when they are substantively adversarial in other respects — see Clayman and Heritage 2002a : 188-237), such that the claim to have been "only asking a question" is a recurrent defense against charges of bias (Clayman and Heritage 2002a : 143-144). Thus, by restricting themselves to the activity of questioning — by using their turns to implement this action-type to the exclusion of others — journalists go some way toward sustaining a neutralistic posture. By contrast, on political and celebrity talk shows hosted by partisan advocates and celebrity entertainers rather than journalists, the hosts freely engage in a wider range of overtly opinionated and hence nonquestioning actions when interacting with their guests (Greatbatch 1988 : 423-425).

Journalists maintain a neutralistic stance not only at the level of action selection, but also through more detailed aspects of turn design. When journalists move away from the safety of interrogative syntax (which is the conventional way of "asking a question") they often take steps to distance themselves from the views they are stating by attributing them to a third party — a practice that Goffman (1981) terms a shift in the speaker's interactional "footing." To illustrate,

when this journalist asserts (in lines 9-12) that nuclear waste can be readily managed, he ascribes the viewpoint to "Doctor Yalow," a scientist who appeared earlier on the program (lines 6-8, arrowed).

(3) US ABC Nightline : 6 Jun 1985 : Nuclear Waste

- 1 JS : ... And if you look et- simply the record in
 2 the low level waste field over the last
 3 fifteen to twenty years... the record is not
 4 very good (0.3) an' it doesn't give one a cause
 5 for optimism.=
- 6 JRN : -> =You heard what Doctor Yalow said earlier in
 7 this broadcast she'll have an opportunity to
 8 express her own opinions again but she seems to
 9 feel that it is an EMinently soluble problem,
 10 and that ultimately that radioactive material
 11 can be reduced, to manageable quantities, 'n put
 12 in the bottom of a salt mine.
- 13 JS : The p- the point that she was making earlier
 14 about (.) reprocessing of: the fuel rods goes
 15 right to the heart (.) of the way a lotta
 16 people look at this particular issue...

Not only does he make a special point of indicating that this view belongs to Dr. Yalow ("her own opinions," "she seems to feel"), but he also refrains from either endorsing or rejecting this viewpoint, or offering any commentary of his own on the matter. In this way, he casts himself as disinterestedly invoking the opinions of a third party. Since he never actually comes to an interrogative in this case, the third party attribution is essential to maintaining neutralism. This posture may, of course, be a façade, but it is subsequently validated and reinforced by the public figure's response ("The point she was making earlier..." in line 13).

Footing shifts appear not only in free-standing statements, but also in statements comprising question prefaces. Consider this excerpt from an interview with Senator Robert Dole, then the Senate majority leader for the Republican Party. The question is preceded by three declarative assertions, the last two of which (arrows 2 and 3) are produced on a different footing.

(4) US NBC Meet the Press : 8 Dec 1985 : Troubled Programs

- JRN : 1-> Senator, (0.5) uh: President Reagan's elected
 thirteen months ago: an enormous landslide.
 (0.8)
 2-> It is s::aid that his programs are in trouble,
 though he seems to be terribly popular with the

American people.

(0.6)

3-> It is said by some people at the White House
 we could get those programs through if only we
 ha:d perhaps more: .hh effective leadership
 on on the Hill and I [suppose] indirectly=

[hhhhheh]

=that might (0.5) relate t'you as well.: (0.6)

Uh what do you think the problem is really.

Is=it (0.2) the leadership as it might be

claimed up on the Hill, or is it the

programs themselves.

RD :

JRN :

Notice that the footing shift practice is deployed selectively for only the more contentious and opinionated assertions. The initial statement beginning at arrow 1 – that Reagan was elected "thirteen months ago" in "an enormous landslide" – reports an established historical fact and a matter of public record, and this fact is asserted straightforwardly. In contrast, the subsequent claim that Reagan's programs are "in trouble" (beginning at arrow 2) and the suggestion that Dole is to blame for this (beginning at arrow 3) are by comparison matters of judgment and interpretation. Correspondingly, the journalist distances himself from these latter assertions, first by means of the passive voice with agent deletion ("it is said..."), and second by attribution to "some people at the White House" (arrow 3).

Journalists may also shift footings selectively over the course of a single sentence, singling out a contentious word or two for attribution to a third party. In the next example, although the journalist begins (at lines 1-2 below) by attributing an upcoming viewpoint in its entirety (regarding the apartheid regime in South Africa) to a third party ("the Ambassador"), this footing is later renewed in subsequent talk (line 6, arrowed) just prior to a specific term ("collaborator") which is re-attributed to that party.

(5) US ABC Nightline : 22 Jul 1985 : South Africa

- 1 JRN : Reverend Boesak lemme a- pick up a point uh the
 2 Ambassador made. What- what assurances can you
 3 give u:s .hh that (.) talks between moderates
 4 in that see:ms that any black leader who is
 5 willing to talk to the government is branded
 6 as the Ambassador said a collaborator and is
 7 then punished.=
 8 AB : =Eh theh- the- the Ambassador has it wrong.
 9 It's not the people who want to talk with
 10 the government that are branded collaborators...

As a way of characterizing black leaders who negotiate with the South African government, "collaborator" has strong morally judgmental overtones. The journalist goes to extra lengths to disavow any personal attachment to this contentious term, and this stance is subsequently validated by the public figure ("The Ambassador has it wrong..." in line 8).

Finally, at a more encompassing level, journalists may deflect responsibility for the overall agenda embodied in the question itself. That is, they will indicate that the question is motivated not out of self-interest but on behalf of the interests of others, often "the audience" or "the public." Consider the following excerpt from an interview with a prominent nuclear engineer who had resigned in protest from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The very first question of the interview (lines 5-7) asks the interviewee to elaborate on his decision.

(6) [ABC Nightline 6 June 1985 : Nuclear Waste]

- 1 IR : Mister Pollard uh:: that's- (.) kind of a
2 fascinating.hhh background because I'm sure
3 people are particularly concerned what would
4 cause someone to resign.
5 What do you mean: hh when you say you felt
6 the agency was not adequately protecting
7 the public's health 'n safety.

Before launching into this question, the journalist presents the issue not as a technical political matter or his own personal concern, but as something that "people are particularly concerned" about (arrowed).

Turning now from news interviews to various *audience participation formats* (radio and TV talk shows, and town meetings between politicians and citizens), how do *audience members* ask questions of public figures? Audience questions are designed very differently in ways that bear the imprint of the speaker's identity as a "member of the public" or "ordinary citizen" rather than a journalistic professional. One prominent difference is that audience questions tend to be framed as personally motivated rather than neutral or detached. For instance, before asking a question of President Clinton about measures to create jobs for recent college graduates (lines 8-10), this audience member first characterizes the magnitude of the under-employment problem among recent college graduates (arrowed), indicating that *she herself* is among the under-employed.

(7) [Clinton Town Meeting 15 March 1995 : 4]

- 1 AUD : Kathy Maureen fr- from Nashua New Hampshire
2 .hh Thuh jo:b training pr- concept propo:sed fer
3 thee unemployed (0.5) an' welfare participants_ (.)
4 in principle=is an excellent idea .hh However currently
5 (0.5) .hh tlk there're a large majority of college
6 gradua- <recen' college graduates=.hh myself among
7 them=who are under employed. (.)
8 .hhh What does your administration (0.5) tlk pla:n
9 to do: .hh about broadening thuh middle tier of thuh
10 jo:b market .hh so that there- will be jo:bs fer tho:se
11 who (0.5) complete your jo:b training programs=
12 =.hhh in- as well as at uh- hmh hh as well as:
13 (0.2) jo:b opportunities fer college graduates(h) hh=
14 =I think there're t- khmhm ((throat clearing)) there're
15 two things that we have tuh do...

This illustrates one common way the speaker's own engagement in the issue can become manifest, namely when speakers detail an occupational or experiential connection to the issue in question (Thornborrow 2001a). By implication, connections of this sort propose that the issue is a matter of personal interest or concern.

Such concern may also be asserted explicitly, as in this question to President Clinton about the appointment of federal court judges opposed to abortion. Before the question proper (at lines 8-9), the speaker's own interest in the matter is elaborately asserted (arrowed). Correspondingly, as Clinton avows his continued commitment to abortion rights in response, he concludes by registering the questioner's personal stake in the issue (line 12).

(8) [Clinton Town Meeting 3 Oct 1993]

- 1 AUD : -> Mister president, my concern is that I've heard that
2 you're considering the appointment of federal court
3 judges who are anti-choice.
4 -> That concerns me very much, because I'm one of those
5 people who elected you, and one of the issues that
6 I elected you was on being a pro-choice president.
7 -> I'm concerned about that. I'm concerned about your position.
8 Is it changing? And if it is, why sir, and how would
9 you explain it to us?
10 BC : Well the answer to your question is no, it hasn't changed....
11 ((several lines omitted))
12 So you don't have to worry about that....

This way of framing a question – as personally motivated – is a recurrent if not universal feature of audience questions, and its wholesale absence in journalists' questions is striking point of contrast. Audience members, plainly, do not present themselves as detached in the design their questions.

This lack of detachment is, of course, part and parcel of the speaker's local identity as an "ordinary citizen," here engaged in raising issues before the sitting president. But as Thornborrow (2001a) has demonstrated, even when the recipient is *not* an elected official – when he or she is an expert or some other public figure – audience participants often design their questions so as to portray their own occupational or experiential connection to the issue, thereby establishing a relevant vantage point from which they will be speaking. Often (as in example 7) this carries with it an element of technical or experiential authority on the issue being raised. Insofar as establishing a relevant and in some instances an authoritative vantage point is a prerequisite for raising issues, audience participants treat themselves as having diminished entitlements to question (see also Moberg 2006, Myers 2000). This, too, distinguishes audience questions from their journalistic counterparts.

Other aspects of turn design are also intertwined with the speaker's identity as an "ordinary citizen" or "member of the public." Consider the epistemics of knowledge-claims. Claims to knowledge of public affairs may be evidentially marked so as to indicate how the questioner came to acquire the knowledge being claimed. In example 8 above, the possibility that Clinton might appoint anti-choice judges is framed as something that the questioner has "heard" about (line 1). Similar language is used in the following observation about administration predictions regarding deficit reduction (arrowed below).

(9) [Clinton Town Meeting 15 March 1995 : 9]

AUD : =uh : I'm Carolyn Discofer Merimack New Hampshire
 → .hh an=I've(h) heard you speak about :t thee decli :ne
 in tuh deficit (.) .hh over tuh la :st three years.
 My conce :m is that .hhhh as we go further into tuh
 nineties tuh projections are for it tuh start
 tuh increase again...

By evoking the process of knowledge acquisition, such evidential language treats the questioner's knowledge as requiring justification, and hence as something that may not be assumed or taken for granted. Language of this sort – which does not normally appear in journalists' questions – both reflects and reinforces the questioner's identity as a nonprofessional outsider to the world of politics.

SEQUENCE ORGANIZATION

Questions are, of course, components of larger sequences of action. A brief tour of the organization of question-answer sequences across forms of broadcast talk will illustrate sequence organization as a level of analysis. To highlight what is distinctive about these sequences in broadcast talk, it will be useful to begin with some basic observations about their counterparts in ordinary conversation.

In conversation, question-answer sequences typically occasion a third turn in which the questioner receipts the answer and, depending on the form of the receipt, displays some type of alignment toward it (Heritage 1985 : 96-98). One form of receipt, an assessment, treats the answer as embodying news that is valenced – typically either good or bad – and requiring no further elaboration (Maynard 2003).

(10) [Heritage 1985 : 96]

C : How's your foot.
 A : Oh it's healing beautifully:
 C : → Good.

Receipt tokens such as "oh" or in the following case "oh really" treats the prior response as "news" only, without commenting on its valence (Heritage 1984 ; Jefferson 1981).

(11) [Heritage 1985 : 96]

M : How many cigarettes yih had.
 (0.8)
 E : NO:NE.
 M : → Oh really ?

And continuers such as "mm" or "mhm" (arrowed below) treat the prior talk merely as incomplete and in need of further elaboration before a more substantive response would be appropriate.

(12) [Heritage 1985 : 97]

M : .hhhh (.) Um:: 'ow is yo:inr mother by: th'w:ay.
 (.)
 J : We:ll she's a bit better,
 M : → Mm[:,:
 J : [eh- She came: do:wn on Satidee:
 eveni[ng
 M : [Oh: did [she:,:
 J : [for the first ti:me.

In *news interviews*, by contrast, question-answer sequences are distinguished by the systematic absence of third-turn receipt items. Journalists refrain from producing such items in response to components of the answer as it is unfolding, and when the answer is complete they normally proceed straightaway to the next question. For instance:

(13) [US NBC Nightly News 15 November 1996]

- IR: .hhhh Thuh ma:~n in thuh cross hairs f'r Texaco; j:oins
us no:w. He:'s chairman and C E O; Peter Bijur;.h Mister
Bijur what's pro:- what prompted this settlement. hh
Thuh fact that you concluded your company was in fact
discrimina:ting, or thuh prospects of: (.) more economic
losses.
IE: T:o:m it was that we wanted to be f:air: to ah all of
the employees involved, we're a: wonderful: gr:oup of
people and family in this company, en we wanta be
equitable with everybody.
IR: .tchhh Bu:t in f:a:ct if those ta:pes had not surfaced,
(.) This ah: (.) c:ase after all >has been going on< f'r
two years, .hhh is there any doubt in your mi:nd that it
would still be going on ?
IE: .pthh Ah it mi:ght very well have been going on. Those
tapes were hor:ren:dous.and we needed to get this behind
us as quickly as possible.
IR: .hh But as thuh chairman and thuh C E O as you got
deeply into thuh matter did you in f:act f:i:nd that there
was a great deal more discrimination <in your company,>
.hhh than you had realized.
IE: T:o:m I don't think there's any more discrimination in our
company that there i:s in s:ociety in general.=But we have
s:ome and it's in:tol:erable, .h and we're gonna eradicate it.
IR: B:ut in f:a:ct outside observers inclu::ding: Andrew Young,
looking at this program whi-on this program last night
said a lot of other companies are doing a lo:t better,
.hhh we just need to get Texaco up to spec:d h:ere:.
IE: We've been doing really well.=But we haven't been
doing well enough, O:bviously. And we're gonna do
better in thuh future.

As Heritage (1985 : 99-101) has demonstrated, the wholesale absence of third-turn alignment in news interviews is intertwined with a variety of contextual features, most obviously the norm of journalistic neutralism. Each of the receipt items outlined above propose some commitment to the truth of what was just said by the interviewee, and

one mode of receipt – assessment – also passes judgment on the valence of the prior talk. By declining to produce any such alignment, journalists avoid actions that might compromise their self-presentation as impartial. Thus, just as neutralism conditions the design of questions in news interviews, it also conditions the organization of larger question-answer sequences in that environment.

The absence of third-turn receipt items here is also connected to the presence of the broadcast audience. More specifically, it embodies an orientation to the audience as the primary recipient of the talk in progress (Heritage 1985 : 99-100). Consider that by receipting an item of talk, questioners present themselves as the recipients of the talk and, by implication, they also treat the talk as having been produced for them. Conversely, by refraining from such reactive moves – as journalists do in news interviews – questioners avoid interposing themselves into the interaction at that juncture, thereby allowing the answers to be understood as produced for others listening in. Thus, through the reduced structure of question-answer sequences, and in particular the absence of reactive moves by journalists, audience members are able view themselves as the primary – albeit unaddressed – recipients of the talk as it unfolds, and the talk itself takes on the character of “talk for overhearers.”

Turning now to *daytime TV talk shows* involving a participatory audience, question-answer sequences occupy a middle ground between the elaborated conversational form and the reduced news interview form. Here they regularly encompass third-turn receipt items, but only a select subset of them. Moreover, these modes of receipt are geared to a rather different set of tasks where neutralism is subordinated to the goal of generating conflict and confrontation for the audience.

In a study of daytime TV talk shows, Hutchby (2006 : 67-70) has demonstrated that talk show hosts often elicit stories from their guests through a quasi-interview framework, but hosts (unlike news interviewers) recurrently receipt the guests' talk by repeating components of it (arrowed below):

- (14) [Ricki Lake : Friends in Conflict, from Hutchby 2006 : 68]
- 1 Guest: It's been goin' on fer a year now
2 and I j'jus' want-
3 RL: -> [A YEA:R ?
4 Guest: Just a- [just about.
5 AUD: [wwwuhuhuhuh

Such partial repeats are widespread in the daytime TV talk show environment. The above excerpt comes from a talk show (*Ricki Lake*)

with a "trashy" reputation; the next comes from a "classy" show (*Oprah*) but one that contains a similar responsive practice (arrowed).

(15) [Oprah 15 April 1991 : Smokers vs. Nonsmokers]

- 1 Guest : A::n' uh they say wasn't anything wrong wit' her.
 2 OW : -> Nothin' wrong with her.
 3 .
 4 .
 5 .
 6 Guest : So then: they had to stop us from smokin' in the office.
 7 OW : Uh h_{uh}.
 8 ? .hhh
 9 Guest : So she sti:l wasn't satisfied.
 10 OW : -> Wasn't satisfied.

This mode of receipt also occurs in ordinary conversation but relatively infrequently, most often as a way of initiating repair on prior talk (Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977). Partial repeats are much more commonplace in the talk show environment, where they are deployed selectively in response to the more contentious and argumentative components of guests' talk. Example 14 – analyzed by Hutchby (2006 : 68-69) – is from an episode involving friends in conflict, and comes in response to an item of talk (in line 1) in which the guest notes the duration ("a year") of certain complainable behavior by a friend (who is also a guest and will subsequently be brought onstage to confront her friend). The guest mentions this length of time without emphasis and in passing. The host, by interjecting and repeating just this item loudly and with the sharply rising intonation associated with "surprise" or "disbelief," exposes and accentuates it as an element of the unfolding complaint. The audience in turn registers the magnitude of the problem contained in this now-exposed bit of information (line 5). Example 15 is from a discussion of the problem of passive cigarette smoke at the workplace. The guest, a smoker, is recounting a non-smoking co-worker's exaggerated efforts to make an issue out of smoking, efforts that are said to include invented or imagined medical problems (exposed as nonexistent by medical professionals; see line 1). Once again, the more objectionable and complaint-worthy elements of the story are singled out and highlighted via partial repeats.

These cases illustrate the interplay between sequence organization and environments of broadcast talk. In news interviews, question-answer sequences are systematically reduced in a way that maintains the journalist's identity as an impartial elicitor of talk for an

"overhearing" audience. In daytime TV talk shows, question-answer sequences are selectively elaborated in a way that facilitates the production of dramatic conflict.

QUANTITATIVE EXTENSIONS

The research examined thus far has been essentially qualitative in nature, involving the case by case analysis of singular instances of broadcast talk, with an additional comparative dimension aimed at contrasting different genres of broadcast talk with each other and with the baseline of ordinary conversation. This type of comparative analysis – conducted in a qualitative mode – is useful for charting systematic differences in the repertoire of available speaking practices, and thereby shed light on the intertwining of talk and its social environment. However, conversation analytic research can also be extended in a formally quantitative direction, which facilitates the analysis of more subtle variations in the relative frequency of practices across social contexts. Indeed, CA research can provide a solid foundation from which to develop quantitative measures of phenomena that link to core theoretical concepts and issues in media studies.

This path has been pursued via research on questioning practices in broadcast journalism. Although news interview research has been predominantly qualitative and concerned with basic practices of question design, the findings have been used to generate validated measures of aspects of questioning that bear on the phenomenon of journalistic independence or aggressiveness. A question analysis system developed along these lines (Clayman and Heritage 2002b) encompasses 10 features of question design which serve as indicators of 4 dimensions of aggressiveness :

- 1 *initiative* – the extent to which questions are enterprising rather than passive in their aims
- 2 *directness* – the extent to which questions are blunt rather than cautious in how they raise issues
- 3 *assertiveness* – the extent to which questions favor a particular answer, and are in that sense opinionated rather than neutral
- 4 *adversarialness* – the extent to which questions pursue an agenda in opposition to the president

This system was subsequently applied to a large sample of U.S. presidential news conferences, resulting in two primary contributions. One contribution is to historical description of the evolving relationship between the White House press corps and the presidency across

five decades (Clayman et. al. 2006). By charting this relationship over time, this work brings a new level of precision to a field – press relations – previously dominated by qualitative/historical modes of research. The other contribution is to multivariate analysis aimed at understanding the social factors associated with more aggressive journalism (Clayman et. al. 2007). These studies have also yielded novel findings, such as the first evidence linking journalistic practice to the business cycle. It turns out that both unemployment and interest rates are directly associated with aggressive questioning. This finding suggests a new way of understanding the watchdog role of journalism, and a new explanatory framework for previously-documented historical trends in news coverage. The cumulative import of research of this kind is to shed new light on precisely when the journalistic watchdog “barks,” and conversely when it sits down and wags its tail.

CONCLUSIONS

Over the past two decades, various technological and economic developments have significantly reshaped the landscape of the mass media. The new landscape is much more spacious and encompasses more diversity, not only in the range of available information outlets but also in the discursive forms through which news and public affairs information is presented. The growth of forms organized around talk in interaction are an important part of this development.

The rise of broadcast interaction poses both theoretical and methodological challenges for the next generation of media scholarship. At the theoretical level, broadcast interaction transcends many fundamental dichotomies that have long been taken for granted in social science and media studies : the split between interpersonal and mass communication, between public and private spheres, and between media and society. Broadcast talk is a vehicle for communicating to a mass audience, but it is at the same time comprised of interpersonal communication processes. It is an important component of the public sphere, but it is constituted through mundane practices of talk-in-interaction that have been adapted from ordinary conversation rooted in the private sphere. And its primary significance lies not so much in the stories it tells *about* an independent social world, but in the fact that its interactive “forms of life” are an intrinsic and constitutive part *of* that world. Accordingly, research of this sort has the potential to expand the reach of media studies in new ways. Realizing this potential will, of course require new methodologies and modes of analysis. Most obviously, traditional content analytic methods must be supplemented with new research methods appro-

prate to the interactional form in which news and information is increasingly presented. This paper has been an attempt to illustrate both the potential and the methods through which it may be realized.