



NGUYEN, HANH THI, & GABRIELE KASPER. (Eds.). *Talk-in-Interaction: Multilingual Perspectives*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009. Pp. xiv, 393. \$40.00, paper. ISBN 978-0-9800459-1-8.

A reader approaching a title that promises multilingual perspectives on talk-in-interaction has every right to feel both excited and suspicious—excited because this reflects an important extension of interest beyond traditional linguistic boundaries and suspicious because range and variety can all too easily override considerations of focus and penetration. In fact, the title of this collection is, if anything, unduly modest.

Co-editor Kasper, who is also the editor of the *Pragmatics and Interaction* series in which the volume appears, sets out her stall in the first sentence of the opening paper: "This volume examines language-mediated interaction across a range of social settings, activities, languages and cultural contexts" (p. 1). The focus of the series is on the Asia-Pacific region, and the authors of this volume are all connected in some way to the University of Hawai'i, but the reader does not lack for variety. The collection covers eight languages, from Vietnamese to Swahili, in five different countries and embraces a range of settings from family discussions (Nguyen) to political interviews (Ikeda) and topics from religious affiliation (Higgins) to argument (Saft).

Its appearance is timely, coming at a point where the global relevance of conversation analysis (CA) is becoming clear and its extension to a range of languages and cultural contexts is gathering pace. Although explicit comparison is not the purpose of this volume, a number of contributions open up interesting links. Kim's paper on the use of *-nuntey* and *kuntey* in Korean, for example, not only highlights L2 acquisition issues (which are also featured in Ishida's paper on the Japanese particle *ne*) but also makes interesting connections with work on discourse markers in other languages.

There are a number of reasons why someone might be drawn to this collection, and some of the papers are so entertaining that they would attract any intelligent reader. Bilmes's discussion of kinship categories in a Thai narrative, for example, unfolds around an entertaining, amusing, and even touching story, explicating its otherwise enigmatic conclusion: "A 'child,' when all is said and done, is not a 'child'" (p. 40). However, the two main strengths of the book are the quality of the opening paper and the extent to which the collection engages with important issues in talk-in-interaction, not the least of those relating to its theoretical and analytical context.

Those who teach talk-in-interaction should ensure that their students have access to this collection, if only for Kasper's paper entitled "Categories, Context and Comparison in Conversation Analysis." It provides as succinct a summary of CA and its ethnomethodological roots as it is possible to find, and the discussion of membership categorization analysis (MCA) makes a persuasive case for its analytical credentials. Papers by Bilmes, Suzuki, Higgins, and Talmy support this position by illustrating how category work contributes to the construction of social and institutional relationships and affiliations, and participants in the last two papers also draw on codeswitching as an interactional resource.

Kasper's paper also engages with the knotty issue of context, a topic taken up by Rylander in his analysis of repair in a Chinese-as-a-foreign-language classroom. Framed as a challenge to Seedhouse's model of classroom interaction, he touches on broader questions about the legitimacy of using frameworks in applied CA. This topic and institutional talk are also addressed by Kasper, who concludes the opening chapter with a stimulating discussion of the potential for comparison using CA. Her contribution as a whole could serve as an agenda for the next generation of CA studies, arguing persuasively for CA's analytical range and robustness, characteristics that make it ideal for exploring the interactional complexities of a global research environment.

In this context, CA's relationship with other research traditions and new interactional environments will be important, and one of the strengths of the collection lies in the quality of its engagement here. Talmy's elaboration of the relationship between CA and critical ethnography is particularly impressive, and his case for motivated CA analysis is provocatively enticing. Also relevant are Nguyen's use of CA "informed by ethnographic data" (p. 57), which situates an encounter in the context of a history of two key

participants in what might be described as longitudinal embedding, as well as Bilmes's linking of MCA to taxonomic analysis. González-Lloret's paper on synchronous computer-mediated communication argues the case for using CA in online environments.

The editors have ensured that all contributions are based on solid methodological and theoretical foundations, which makes this an excellent resource for students or novice researchers. It is also encouraging to see that the nonverbal dimension is included in a number of analyses, the paper by Hauser being a good example. Suzuki's contribution also demonstrates that in this respect a little can go a long way: There is only one reference to visual evidence in the paper, but it is a telling one.

Inevitably, the diversity of a collection with this range must raise questions of focus, but the level of engagement with fundamental issues in research on talk-in-interaction in this book renders such criticism churlish, especially given that the opening chapter highlights these issues and frames the collection as a whole. Nevertheless, I should have liked a brief introduction along traditional lines, providing an easily accessible orientation and overview. This minor reservation, however, should not detract from the virtues of an outstanding publication that is both penetrating and richly varied. It will be valued by anyone with an interest in conversation analysis, spoken discourse, cross-cultural interaction, language acquisition, or language teaching.

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