

COGS 102A LAB 6: Conversational Analysis

Goal: Analyze the use of laminated semiotics in conversation

Instructions: As per your Pre-Instructions, you should have collected an audio-video recording of two people engaged in a “natural” (i.e. unscripted) conversation. The two interlocutors in this recording should have signed Consent Forms before recording began; You will turn in those Consent Forms in this class. You were to meet as a Team, previous to this class, to review this recording, select interesting segments, and begin to consider your research questions. You were to bring a copy of the recording you made, to work on with your Team during the Lab, and to turn in with your Lab Report.

As in previous labs, you will work as a team to analyze this recording. You will submit one **Lab Report** per Team by the end of the lab period. We suggest that the best use of the **NOTES** page for this Lab will be to keep track of as many semiotic resources as you can find while you work your way through the analyses. (see Question D, below)

THE QUESTIONS YOU WILL ANSWER ON YOUR TEAM’S LAB REPORT ARE:

A) Select an excerpt (at least 15 seconds long) from your recording in which the interlocutors engage in the transformation of laminar semiotics. That is, in conversation, interlocutors use a shared set of semiotic resources (e.g. morphemes, prosody, gestures, facial expressions etc. etc.) which they layer together in complex displays, creating public structures that they generally take turns transforming as the conversation proceeds. In this lab, we are interested in documenting how, over the course of a conversation, the interlocutors systematically transform this laminated structure. And remember - *nothing never happens!* That is, while turn-taking is customary in speech, even while one person is speaking, the other is in some relevant state, which affects the meaning they are jointly constructing.

To document this configural change, you will create a chronological transcription of the interlocutors’ speech and determine ways to represent their use of other semiotic resources, such as by creating illustrations or other codes for prosody contours, relative body positioning & orientation, line of sight, gestural trajectories, etc. (See Goodwin 2000, 2013 on class website for examples.) This should be a fairly micro-level description in that you will record all changes in the resources that you chart, but not quite at the level that you did in the TWILIGHT Lab. Your goal here is to record enough of what each interlocutor does, to be able show how each transforms the set of resources used by the other as the conversation proceeds.

B) Contrast two different gestures used by your interlocutors anywhere in your video, and answer the following questions about them. Is each indexical, emphatic, iconic, metaphoric or emblematic? Explain why you think this category is appropriate; if you feel that more than one category may apply, discuss why. Are the gestures environmentally-coupled, and if so, how? Do they augment (convey same information), complement (convey different but supportive information) or contradict the speech they accompany? What affect does this juxtaposition have on the conversation?

C) Find a segment from your recording in which one of your interlocutors takes an “evaluative stance” to something said or done by the other. Describe how this is accomplished in terms of the transformations of laminated semiotic resources involved. You do NOT have to provide a moment-to-moment description, as you did in the micro-level inscription, above. Instead, explain, in sentences, why the particular transformation you have selected should stand as evidence that an “evaluative stance” has been taken.

D) List as many semiotic resources as you can, that are made use of by your interlocutors. Note that these will include not only actions by the participants, but spatial relationships, material aspects of the environment, and relations within and between all such parameters.