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9780-521-19454-9 - The Morality of Knowledge in Conversation

Edited by Tanya Stivers, Lorenza Mondada and Jakob Steensig

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## The Morality of Knowledge in Conversation

Each time we take a turn in conversation we indicate what we know and what we think others know. However, knowledge is neither static nor absolute. It is shaped by those we interact with and governed by social norms – we monitor one another for whether we are satisfying our rights and fulfilling our responsibilities with respect to knowledge, and for who has relatively more rights to assert knowledge over some state of affairs. This book brings together an international team of leading linguists, sociologists and anthropologists working across a range of European and Asian languages to document some of the ways in which speakers manage the moral domain of knowledge in conversation. The volume demonstrates that if we are to understand how speakers manage issues of agreement, affiliation and alignment – something clearly at the heart of human sociality – we must understand the social norms surrounding epistemic access, primacy and responsibilities.

TANYA STIVERS is an associate professor of sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles.

LORENZA MONDADA is a professor in the Department of Linguistics at the University of Lyon II, and Director of the ICAR Research Laboratory (CNRS, University of Lyon).

JAKOB STEENSIG is an associate professor in the Department of Linguistics, Institute of Anthropology, Archaeology and Linguistics, Aarhus University, Denmark.

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*Edited by*

**Tanya Stivers**

*University of California, Los Angeles*

**Lorenza Mondada**

*University of Lyon II*

**Jakob Steensig**

*Aarhus University, Denmark*



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We dedicate this book to Gail Jefferson and her legacy  
(1938–2008)

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## Contributors

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BIRTE ASMUS, Centre for Corporate Communication, Aarhus School of Business, Aarhus University, Denmark

N. J. ENFIELD, Language & Cognition Group, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, and Centre for Language Studies, Radboud University, The Netherlands

AULI HAKULINEN, Department of Finnish, Finno-Ugrian and Scandinavian Studies, University of Helsinki, Finland

KAORU HAYANO, Language & Cognition Group, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, The Netherlands

TRINE HEINEMANN, SPIRE, MCI, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark

JOHN HERITAGE, Department of Sociology, University of California at Los Angeles, USA

LEELO KEEVALLIK, Department of Modern Languages, Uppsala University, Sweden

MARDI KIDWELL, Department of Communication, University of New Hampshire, USA

ANNA LINDSTRÖM, School of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences, Örebro University, Sweden

LORENZA MONDADA, ICAR Research Laboratory, CNRS, University of Lyon, France

JACK SIDNELL, Department of Anthropology, University of Toronto, Canada

MARJA-LEENA SORJONEN, Department of Finnish, Finno-Ugrian and Scandinavian Studies, University of Helsinki, Finland

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x List of contributors

JAKOB STEENSIG, Department of Linguistics, Institute of Anthropology,  
Archaeology and Linguistics, Aarhus University, Denmark

TANYA STIVERS, Department of Sociology, University of California at  
Los Angeles, USA

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## Preface

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This book arises from a series of collaborative efforts that began in 2003 as an international project on affiliation in social interaction led by Anna Lindström: “Language and social action: a comparative study of affiliation and disaffiliation across national communities and institutional contexts.” That project resulted in, among other things, the creation of a research network of conversation analysts focusing on what has been emerging as a new and particularly significant dimension of talk-in-interaction – namely the displays of and negotiations concerning participants’ epistemic status relative to one another. The turn to epistemics was a natural extension of the prior interest in affiliation. We will argue in this book that to understand affiliation – and indeed cooperation more generally – we must understand how interactants manage the domain of knowledge. The process leading to this volume included four workshops: two in Aarhus, Denmark; one in Lyon, France; and one in Nijmegen, the Netherlands – each of which substantively shaped not only the individual contributions but also our collective thinking about the domain as a whole. For this reason we express gratitude to our fellow contributors who inspired and intensively discussed each chapter of this book over the course of its development. It is for this reason too that, although the introduction was formally written by the editors, it represents a thought process that all contributors were part of.

We dedicate this book to Gail Jefferson and her legacy. Gail was an inspiration to all of us, and this publication represents our chance to acknowledge our individual and collective debt to her. Although Gail did not hold an academic appointment for much of her career, her intense interest in how conversation worked never flagged. Her first contribution to the field is represented in every conversation analysis (CA) paper that has been published – her transcription system revolutionized what and how people study conversation. With it, a revised understanding of how people take turns in interaction was made possible in the Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974 paper. Her early intuitive recognition of, for instance, the relevance of the precise onsets and offsets of overlapping speech and of who laughs and when will continue to bear fruit in years to come.

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Gail was well known for her vivacity but also for her uncompromising character as a scholar and an individual. Both of these qualities were apparent in her approach to data. On the one hand she was uninhibited in the creativity she brought to working with data, actively encouraging others to use intuitions and explore unexpected analyses. She was intolerant of those who retreated to received wisdom (especially “the literature”) for support – even her own – or who relied on established analytic constructs in their approach to data. On the other, Gail was equally uncompromising in her subsequent requirement that intuitions and the like be grounded in the data. Agreement among the group was never sufficient: “Analysis is not a matter of consensus” she would say, challenging us all to demonstrate the correctness of our analysis.

Gail relished argument. For those who would tussle with her, there were rewards to be had, for in these arguments we learned not only about the data over which we argued but often about the interaction in which we were involved.

Whether we learned from Gail in data sessions, on workshops, or only from the extraordinary incivency of her intellect that she showed in her papers, all of us share her unbridled enthusiasm for working collaboratively to understand the underpinnings of social interaction. Gail’s writing and her approach to data more generally also reflect the fact that her finger never left the pulse of the interactants themselves – who they were to each other, what they were trying to accomplish and what they were trying “to get away with,” as she used to put it. From her earliest papers, how and when interactants affiliate with one another and how and when they push the boundaries of normativity were at the heart of her analyses. We see this across much of her work, but particularly that on overlap, story telling and laughter. This interest in normativity and cooperation is fundamental to the endeavor of this project with its interest in how epistemic practices influence, and are influenced by, affiliation and alignment. The CA community has lost not only one of its founders but also one of its most ardent scholars and teachers. However, her legacy is strong and we hope to strengthen it further here.

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## Acknowledgements

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We would like to thank Paul Drew and Helen Barton for their support of this project. Paul was one of the original members of the Affiliation Project out of which this project emerged, and as series editor encouraged this volume's preparation. Helen, as the Cambridge University Press linguistics editor, was equally supportive and encouraging and helped shape the book in its early stages. For assistance in preparing the book, we thank Annelies van Wijngaarden and Menno Jonker for diligent and careful work. This project was carried out on a shoestring budget. For making our larger group meetings possible, we are grateful to the Department of Language and Business Communication and the Aarhus School of Business at arhus University; the ICAR Research Laboratory in Lyon, the CNRS and the University of Lyon; and the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen. Thanks are especially due to Stephen Levinson. Both smaller and larger collaborative meetings were possible due to his support.

The cover art represents Elaine Badgley Arnoux's *See Saw Margery Daw*, 2004, oil on canvas. The painting's focus on imbalance in an interactive setting is a nice way of capturing one of the primary preoccupations of this volume. This piece comes from a collection of eight large canvases known as *Once Upon a Time* in which Badgley Arnoux depicts allegorical nursery rhymes. They are political and societal statements concerning the eight epochs of her life. This oeuvre also includes sculpture, giving more emphasis and strength to the stories within the paintings. Badgley Arnoux lives and works in San Francisco, California, and continues to embrace the complexities of life, taking the human element of light and shadow into figurative landscapes, sculpture and conceptual art. She strives to integrate her technical skills, soaring fantasy and spiritual underpinnings to plumb the depth of creativity. We are grateful for Elaine's generosity in allowing us to use this piece for the book cover.

# Transcription and glossing symbols

---

## Transcription

### 1 *Temporal and sequential relationships*

- A
- Overlapping or simultaneous talk is indicated in a variety of ways:
- [ Separate left square brackets, one above the other on two successive lines with utterances by different speakers, indicate a point of overlap onset, whether at the start of an utterance or later.
- ] Separate right square brackets, one above the other on two successive lines with utterances by different speakers, indicate a point at which two overlapping utterances both end, where one ends while the other continues, or simultaneous moments in overlaps which continue.
- B
- = Equal signs ordinarily come in pairs – one at the end of a line and another at the start of the next line or one shortly thereafter. They are used to indicate three things:
- 1) If the two lines connected by the equal signs are by the same speaker, then there was a single, continuous utterance with no break or pause, which was broken up in order to accommodate the placement of overlapping talk.
  - 2) If the lines connected by two equal signs are by different speakers, then the second followed the first with no discernable silence between them, or was “latched” to it.
  - 3) If two words are connected by equal signs then the two words sound “latched” or run together.
- C
- // A double slash marks the onset of an embodied action in the talk.
- / A single slash indicates embodied action that coincides with talk.

D  
(0.5) Numbers in parentheses indicate silence, represented in seconds; what is given here in the left margin indicates second of silence. Silences may be marked either within an utterance or between utterances.

E  
(.) A dot in parentheses indicates a “micropause,” usually less than 200 milliseconds.

**2 Aspects of speech delivery, including aspects of intonation**

A  
. The punctuation marks are not used grammatically, but to indicate intonation.  
? The period indicates a falling, or final, intonation contour, not necessarily the end of a sentence. Similarly, a question mark indicates rising intonation, not necessarily a question,  
, and a comma indicates slightly rising intonation, not necessarily a clause boundary.  
?, A combined question mark and comma indicates a rise stronger than a comma but weaker than a question mark.  
— An underscore following a unit of talk indicates level intonation.  
; The semicolon indicates that the intonation is equivocal between final and slightly rising  
\ The backslash indicates that intonation is mid-falling.

B  
:: Colons are used to indicate the prolongation or stretching of the sound just preceding them. The more colons, the longer the stretching.

C  
- A hyphen after a word or part of a word indicates a cut-off or self-interruption.

D  
word Underlining is used to indicate some form of stress or emphasis, either by increased loudness or higher pitch. The more underlining, the greater the emphasis.

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E	
°	The degree sign indicates that the talk following it was markedly quiet or soft.
°°	When there are two degree signs, the talk between them is markedly softer than the talk around it.
F	
^	The circumflex symbol indicates a rise in pitch.
G	
	The pipe symbol indicates a fall in pitch.
H	
> <	The combination of “more than” and “less than” symbols indicates that the talk between them is compressed or rushed.
< >	Used in the reverse order, they indicate that a stretch of talk is markedly slowed or drawn out.
<	The “less than” symbol by itself indicates that the immediately following talk is “jump-started,” i.e., sounds like it starts with a rush.
I	
hhh	Hearable aspiration is shown where it occurs in the talk by the letter “h” – the more h’s, the more aspiration. The aspiration may represent breathing, laughter, etc.
(hh)	If it occurs inside the boundaries of a word, it may be enclosed in parentheses in order to set it apart from the sounds of the word.
.hh	If the aspiration is an inhalation, it is shown with a period before it.
J	
#	A number sign, or hash sign, indicates gravelly voice quality on the sound(s) that follow or that are between two number/hash signs.
K	
£	The British pound sign indicates “smile voice.”
L	
%	The percent sign indicates crying voice.



M  
“ ”      Quotation marks indicate that the talk within is produced as reported speech.

3 Other markings

A  
(( ))      Double parentheses are used to mark transcriber’s descriptions of events, rather than representations of them. Thus ((cough)), ((sniff)), ((telephone rings)), ((footsteps)), ((whispered)), ((pause)) and the like.

B  
(word)      When all or part of an utterance is in parentheses, or the speaker identification is, this indicates uncertainty on the transcriber’s part, but represents a likely possibility.

C  
( )      Empty parentheses indicate that something is being said, but no hearing (or, in some cases, speaker identification) can be achieved.

D  
*Italics*      Italics, boldface and caps are used for different sorts of emphasis in different chapters. They may indicate an embodied action or the focal phenomenon, and in chapters relying on languages other than English, they may indicate the original language.  
**BOLD**

Glossing

–	The parts to each side of the underscore are one word in the original language
-	A hyphen indicates that a morpheme is separable in the original language
(parentheses)	In the translation line this indicates that the item was not present in the original language
0/1/2/3	Zero/First/Second/Third Person
ADE/ADS	Adessive
ADV	Adverb
ALL	Allative
ASP	Neutral aspect
ATP	Antipassive

xviii	Transcription and glossing symbols
AUX	Auxiliary
CAUS	Causative derivation
CL	Classifier
CLI	Word-final clitic
CMP	Completive
COM	Comitative
COMP	Complementizer
CON	Connective
COND	Conditional
CP	Copula <i>be</i>
DAT	Dative
DEICT	Deictic
DET	Definite determiner
DIM	Diminutive
DIR	Directional
DIST	Distributive
ELT	Elative
EMP	Emphasis marker
ESS	Essive
EXIST	Existential predicate
FP	Final particle
GEN	Genitive
GI	Emphasis clitic
ILL	Illative
IMF	Imperfective
IMP	Imperative
IMS	Impersonal
INE	Inessive
INF	Infinitive
INS	Inessive case
INST	Instrumentalis
ITJ	Interjection
L	Nominal linking particle
N	Nominalizer particle
NAME	Proper name
NEG	Negative auxiliary or particle
NP	Noun phrase
PAR	Partitive
PAS	Passive
PERF	Perfective
PL	Plural
POS	Possessive suffix

PPT	Past participle
PREP	Generic preposition
PRO	Pronoun
PRT	Particle
PST	Past tense
Q	Question clitic/particle
QT	Quotative particle
RED	Reduplication
REFL	Reflexive pronoun
REL	Relational noun suffix
RES	Resultative derivation
SG	Singular
SP	Subject particle
SPN	Supinum
SUBJ	Subjunctive
TAG	Tag question marker
TP	Topic particle
TRA	Translative
VOL	Volitionality marker
OTHER CAPITALS	Untranslated particle

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