Identity in (Inter)action

Trends in Applied Linguistics
4

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Identity in (Inter)action

Introducing Multimodal (Inter)action Analysis

by
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ISBN 978-1-934078-27-3
e-ISBN 978-1-934078-28-0
ISSN 1868-6362

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Norris, Sigrid
Identity in interaction : introducing multimodal interaction analysis / Sigrid Norris.
p. cm. — (Trends in applied linguistics; v. 4)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-1-934078-27-3 (alk. paper)
1. Interpersonal communication. 2. Oral communication. 3. Social interaction. 4. Discourse analysis—Germany. I. Title.
P94.7.N675 2011
401'.41—dc22 2011015472

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at http://dnb.d-nb.de.

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Cover image: Roswitha Schacht/morguefile.com

Typesetting: IBT Global, Troy, NY
Printing: Hubert & Co. GmbH & Co. KG, Göttingen

∞ Printed on acid-free paper

Printed in Germany

www.degruyter.com

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To the memory of my father

Franz Peter Leise

Preface

Identity: I have been interested in identity for a long time, and have read much about identity from many different angles. I have thought about identity, investigated identity, and discussed identity. In most of the literature, the notion of identity appears to be fleeting, ephemeral, and transitory. Identity appears to be something that we can talk about, but cannot grasp. Identity appears to be something that only some researchers can ever come close to understanding—and always and only from a particular angle—as identity is located in the invisible social construction, embedded in the historical body, and is hidden in media, politics, and everyday language alike. Students are often taught just enough to wake their curiosity at the same time as to inspire them with some awe.

Identity: embedded in the group and the society but also in the psychology of the individual, identity appears to be impossible to bring together to truly make sense of and explain. Yet, when investigating real people in their everyday lives identity emerges; it becomes visible, explainable, and graspable. In the everyday actions that people perform, in the objects that people own, or the houses that people live in, identity becomes cogent when investigating people's families, friends, networks, and social groups that they belong to. When investigating identity in everyday life, identity suddenly appears loud and clear.

People do things, and everything that people do is taking action. People eat, shop, work, bring up children, talk to friends, call relatives, build and furnish houses, listen to music, read magazines and newspapers, and do much more. When taking all of the communicative modes into consideration that people use in their everyday lives to *perform the actions* that they perform, suddenly the connections between actions and belongings, between individual and society, and between the hidden and the overt begin to make sense.

It is this kind of sense-making of identity that I hope to accomplish by writing this book. Of course, such sense-making and the methodology originally developed for a better understanding of identity did not happen in a vacuum. It has taken many years for me to be able to write this book, many years in which I have worked with many people: from my mentor Ron Scollon to the many participants in my studies, and the friends and colleagues, who were all involved, helping me in ways that they sometimes did not even know, helping me to gain a deeper understanding of identity production and to formulate my thoughts.

This book introduces a theoretical framework, which allows the analysis of what has been termed *context* in traditional discourse analysis, shedding new light on everyday identity production. I do this by illustrating the development of a framework that is now called multimodal (inter)action analysis (MIA) (Norris, 2004). With MIA, I explicate the multiplicity of (inter) actions that social actors are simultaneously engaged in. Here I present the efficacy of the framework for identity production based on an extended ethnographic study. I thus use identity production to elucidate the theoretical/methodological framework at the same time as I use the theoretical/methodological framework to illuminate everyday identity production.

Social actors orchestrate a range of multiple modes of communication in their everyday life in order to accomplish various higher-level actions simultaneously, whereby they produce their identities. At the same time, objects and the environment with and in which the actions take place give off messages about the social actors' identities and structure the interactions in some ways. The notion of modal density combined with a foreground-background continuum codifies the idea that a social actor is aware of and/or attends to simultaneous actions together with other social actors, objects, and the environment, constructing several identity elements simultaneously.

The framework was developed based on the two longitudinal case studies presented here. I conducted these case studies at the verge of the Millennium in Germany. During that year, I stayed and lived with the participants four times. Each time spanned between four and eight weeks so that my complete time spent in the field comprised about six months. The rest of the time I stayed in close contact with the participants as they continued to collect audio data, magazines, newspapers, and books that they read. During my fieldwork I lived with the participants and I became socialized into their everyday lives and their networks.

While my original interest had been identity production, it nevertheless has taken almost ten years, several other ethnographic studies, my writing of *Analyzing Multimodal Interaction*, and the publication of my first poetry book, for me to be able write this book.[1]

In order to be socialized into the participants' worlds and to be able to understand their identities better, I did everything the participants did. I met their extended families, their close friends, the neighbors, the school and preschool teachers of their children, Andrea's lawyer (as she was going through a divorce at the time), and many other people that they interacted with on a regular basis including the baker, the butcher, the newspaper lady, and the real estate agent who eventually sold Andrea's house.

Identities are always co-produced, and I was convinced that I could only understand the participants' moment-by-moment identity construction by understanding the positionings among the participants and the many social actors that they interacted with on a regular basis. While the study focuses on two particular social actors, the analysis is possible only through the understanding of these social networks.

When studying social actors through long-term ethnography, the ethnographer becomes enmeshed in their everyday life to some extent. The ethnographer, although a researcher in the field, is nevertheless a person. It is this personal involvement that is often not discussed in later accounts of the findings. However, I believe it is a worthwhile undertaking to try to illustrate some of the issues one may find and the changes that a researcher may go through due to an ethnographic study. Chapter 3 illuminates some of this personal researcher involvement.

What Is Identity?

The term *identity* itself is used in different ways in psychology, linguistics, or cultural studies. I use the term *identity* or *multiple identity element production* rather than the *presentation of self* or *role* particularly because the term *identity* has these various connotations. Harris (1989), for example, distinguishes between several terms in the following way: she says that the individual is the biological term for the social actor, the person is the sociological term, and the self is the psychological term.

Identity may refer to either the psychological or the sociological make-up of a social actor. In my view, identity is constructed socially as well as psychologically through what Nishida (1958) calls the internalized historical self. I use the term *identity production* much in the same sense as Scollon (1997) uses it, focusing on the performance of social actions in real time. These social actions, while certainly co-constructed at the moment of occurrence, are nevertheless part of the social actor's habitus.[2]

Some of the identity elements that I refer to in this study are generally accepted as identities. These are the national and international identities. However, I also refer to some other identity elements as the mother identity, the friend identity, or the divorcee identity, which are not usually termed identities, but rather are termed roles. However, the participants in this study co-produce these identity elements within their networks. These identity elements are very similar to the survivor identity of bone-marrow transplant patients that Hamilton (1998) found in one of her studies.

While I was in the field, I videotaped everyday recurring interactions, for example, when the participants would frequently sit together, drinking coffee and sharing magazines, or when they would regularly make shopping lists together. I also videotaped them shopping, alone or together, interacting with their children and other family members, or with myself. I focused my data collection on the everyday un-marked interactions.

The analysis was fieldwork and data driven. The participants, both mothers of young children, were often involved in several higher-level actions simultaneously. For example, they would write a shopping list for a catering event at the very same time as they would watch the older children and play with the younger ones. By performing these higher-level actions simultaneously, they would construct various identity elements concurrently.

My audio-visual data clearly displayed the multiple simultaneously ongoing actions producing the participants' identity elements, yet I found that I first had to develop a theoretical/methodological framework (Norris, 2004) that would allow me to analyze the data correctly. Additionally, while audiotapes focus the analyst's attention on the spoken language, videotapes diffuse such a focused attention to language use, displaying that spoken language is but one mode of communication that social actors employ when communicating.

The realization that analyzing one mode without the others leaves out much of what is being communicated, guided me to incorporate the modes of communication that were most commonly used by my participants in the study. These were the modes of spoken language, gaze, gesture, posture, and proxemics, and the modes of layout, print, recorded music, and color. By incorporating multiple modes into a discourse study, I incorporated the context[3] as an intricate part of the ongoing interactions.

Modes of communication are not easily separable; they are interlinked and often interdependent. For example, gaze is necessarily linked to posture; layout is linked to the ongoing interaction. While my data clearly displayed that I could not interpret the participants' spoken utterances to their fullest extent without analyzing the other modes that they employed, my data dictated that I first develop a theoretical/methodological framework in order to be able to analyze this data correctly. Thus, while I entered the study and conducted my fieldwork with a main focus on identity construction, this main focus shifted away from identity and towards developing multimodal (inter) action analysis during the analysis in the years 2000/2001. The framework called multimodal (inter)action analysis (Norris, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2009a, 2009b) now allows the incorporation of concurrent actions and multiple modes in everyday interaction; and with this book, I am going back to my original data and my original topic of identity production.

Acknowledgments

Many people have contributed to this book in various ways. I would like to express my gratitude especially to the late Ron Scollon, for the many hours of conversation and discussion of the framework that is introduced here. It was Ron who had suggested an ethnography to study identity; it was also he who taught me the importance of action. I can truly say that without him, this book would have never come about. Further, I would like to thank Ruth Wodak and Heidi Hamilton, who gave me helpful advice during my study particularly in regard to identity production; and Theo van Leeuwen, with whom I had many conversations about the multimodal framework presented here. I am also thankful for comments and conversations about identity that I had with Michael Bamberg, Allan Bell, Rodney Jones, Paul McIlvenny, David Middleton, Pirkko Raudaskosky, and Suzie Scollon. I have spoken with many people at conferences, via email, and during my workshops and lectures on identity production at universities across the world and always received valuable feedback. I am also thankful to Scott Creighton for re-digitizing all my videos when I first came to New Zealand.

I would like to particularly thank the participants of this study, Andrea and Anna. I am grateful that they allowed me into their lives to the extent they did. Not only have I learned a great deal about how individuals in their everyday life produce identity, but I have gained two new friends. I would also like to thank the members of their networks, who embraced me at the time, and allowed me to take part in their lives together with Andrea and Anna.

My family has been involved in this book in many ways, and I would like to thank them for their loving support throughout the study and the writing phases. Alan especially has taken the time to read the manuscript and has given me detailed comments on wordings and Luke has taken the time to help with the last finishing touches.

All of these people had an impact on the development of my thoughts. However, the statements made, the views expressed, and the shortcomings in this book are the sole responsibility of the author.

Notes

1. The German poems included in this book are reprinted from my poetry book that was published in 2008 by the Deutscher Lyrik Verlag, Aachen, while the translations are published for the first time in this volume.

2. The terms *identity* and *habitus* intersect to some extent.
3. There are, of course, various notions of context. The view that I am taking here grows out of interactional sociolinguistics. However, I would like to mention also Cicourel and Van Dijk, who have worked extensively on the notion of context.

Chapter 1

Multimodal (Inter)action Analysis

> A satisfactory understanding of the nature and unity of men must encompass and organize, not abstract from, the diversity. In this tradition, a theory, whatever its logic and insight, is inadequate if divorced from, if unilluminating as to, the ways of life of mankind as a whole.
>
> —Hymes (1972:41)

Identity is a widely discussed topic,[1] and while much research gives insight into particular aspects of identity, I propose a new way of looking at identity by taking a different theoretical and methodological perspective. This perspective, called *multimodal (inter)action analysis* (Norris, 2004), allows the researcher to investigate identity in a more holistic way. While many discourse studies analyze the spoken language, this book moves on from discourse to multimodal discourse analysis, introducing a theoretical/methodological framework, which allows the analysis of what has been termed *context*[2] in traditional discourse analysis, arriving at a theory and methodology that illuminates everyday identity production in new ways.

In terminology, I deviate from the term *identity construction*,[3] which is more often used in literature, calling it *identity production.* With this term, I would like to emphasize an ever present creative aspect within the actual performance of actions by individuals without, however, losing an also ever present but less variable aspect within the habitus of particular individuals. I would like to emphasize an ever present creative aspect within the (inter) activity between an individual and others as well as between an individual and their environment, without, however, losing an ever present but less variable aspect within the social group(s) and the environment.

Further, I deviate from the commonly used term *interaction*, calling it here *(inter)action*, instead. With the term *(inter)action*, I broaden the commonly used notion of *interaction*: (inter)action potentially encompasses each and every action that an individual produces with tools, the environment, and other individuals. Thus, and as will become clearer in later chapters, even when one individual acts with objects, acting within the environment, these actions are viewed as (inter)actions that produce identity.

I illustrate the framework called *multimodal (inter)action analysis* (Norris, 2004), which affords the analysis of a multiplicity of (inter)actions that social actors are simultaneously engaged in. Here, I present the framework based on an extended ethnographic study of two women living in Germany. I use examples of their everyday identity (co)production as the vehicle to elucidate how multimodal (inter)action analysis can be used to examine identity production in everyday situations.

Social actors orchestrate a range of multiple *modes of communication* in everyday (inter)actions in order to accomplish various *higher-level actions* simultaneously, whereby they (co)produce their identities. Such (co)production of identity is not limited to a (co)production with other social actors, but is also and always created with objects that an individual uses and with the environment in which the individual acts. Objects present in the setting and the environment give off messages about the social actors' identities and structure the (inter)actions in some ways. The notion of *modal density* combined with a *foreground-background continuum* captures that a social actor is aware of and/or attends to simultaneous actions (including frozen actions), constructing several *identity elements* simultaneously. The term *identity element* deviates slightly from the more commonly used term *identity fragment*. The term *element* connotes a part of a whole which builds a whole in itself; while the term *fragment* connotes a shattering of a whole that does not build a whole in itself. With the term *elements* I would like to emphasize the notion that they can be arranged and re-arranged in various ways, that some can be discarded and others can be taken on to make a different larger whole. While the term *fragment* is more like a piece in a puzzle, where the larger whole always stays the same and the pieces have to fit in a particular way to make that whole. Multimodal (inter)action analysis, growing out of discourse analysis, allows us to investigate these *multiple identity elements* that social actors produce, re-produce, and change in (inter)action. An identity element, a whole in itself much like the larger identity that it is a part of, is malleable in and through (inter)action; and every change within an element produces a change in the lager identity of the social actor.

1.1 Multimodal (Inter)action Analysis: Some Background

Multimodal (inter)action analysis (Norris, 2004) was motivated by the application of theoretical notions of *mediated discourse analysis* (Scollon, 1998, 2001b) and the employment of visual research methods to discourse analysis.

With its focus on human *action*, the theoretical framework of mediated discourse analysis encourages an integration of non-verbal modes of communication into a discourse study. At the same time, visual methods promote the analysis of many communicative modes and aid the researcher in examining the intricate interplay among the modes within communicative events. Sapir throughout his writing, and even more notably Pike (1967), had observed that the focus on fieldwork had naturally led to an appreciation that spoken language as social activity was embedded within complex configurations of actions. Fieldwork combined with visual recording methods led me to examine naturally occurring (inter)action in a more holistic sense, investigating the complex configurations of concurrent actions and the setting. A more holistic analysis of communicative events, however, brings about many challenges.

A major challenge becomes the focus of study. For example, when analyzing an audiotape of a naturally occurring (inter)action the analyst focuses on the verbal mode, or the mode of spoken language. When analyzing a videotape of a naturally occurring (inter)action, the analyst's focus becomes diffused; the mode of spoken language no longer has primacy. Also, what would be considered context in an analysis of an audiotape, has to be re-defined when working with video recordings. It immediately becomes apparent that the context is intricately intertwined with the (inter)action and that the context, which includes concurrent actions and visual elements, is merely composed of an abundance of communicative modes.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) define a communicative mode as a semiotic resource with known meanings and regularities attached to it. This definition permits an organization of modes that suits the analytical questions of the researcher. While communicative modes such as spoken language, gaze, gesture, posture, proxemics, color, and music are generally established as modes, other modes can be classified in various ways. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) for example, speak of the mode of furniture. Similarly, we could speak of the mode of eating utensils. While there are many different ways to classify communicative modes in great detail, I use the communicative mode of layout as a broader overarching mode that refers to relevant objects in the world such as furniture, pictures on the walls, or in short, the layout of an apartment, a store, or a city street. Although, this mode is divisible into many other communicative modes, for the focus of this multimodal (inter)action analysis on identity production, such a sub-division is not always necessary, but is used when it is of value.

As Holland et. al (1998:27) reiterate 'our communications with one another not only convey messages but also always make claims about who we are relative to one another.' Identity is produced through naturally occurring (inter)

actions, and a multimodal (inter)action analysis of naturally occurring (inter) action attempts to study (inter)action and with it identity production holistically; however, this endeavor is not always easy to achieve. Every (inter)action has a history (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990), which is often different for each participant and cannot easily be traced. Social actors and the objects used do not arise at the moment of (inter)action, but rather are extensions of the histories of the individuals under study. As Bourdieu argues, '"interpersonal" relations are never except in appearance, *individual-to-individual* relationships and . . . the truth of interaction is never entirely contained in the interaction' (Bourdieu, 1977:81). I argue that the same is true for the resulting identity production.

The analyses used to introduce multimodal (inter)action analysis and its applicability for the study of identity throughout this book are driven by ethnographic fieldwork and a close tie with the participants in the study described. Each (inter)action is influenced by social forces including, but not limited to, normative social behavior and the language(s) spoken, which are not easily disentangled from the communicative event itself. Every interaction is composed of different events that started at different times and do not necessarily end concurrently for all participants (Goffman, 1981). While an analysis of these larger social forces and a larger account of naturally occurring (inter)action is valuable, such an analysis can be achieved only by first examining how the various communicative modes play together in smaller segments of (inter)action.

This book attempts to explicate the interplay of several communicative modes in brief segments of naturally occurring (inter)action to shed light upon identity production. Instead of viewing the modes of communication as the focus, this book focuses on the multimodal identity production of two women in Germany. On the one hand, the interplay of communicative modes is thus discovered and multimodal identity production becomes the vehicle to explicate the theoretical and methodological notions that underlie a multimodal (inter)action analysis within a multimodal (inter)action framework. On the other hand, the need for a multimodal framework for the analysis of identity production becomes apparent.

1.2 From Discourse Analysis to Multimodal (Inter)action Analysis

Before outlining this multimodal framework, I show the development from discourse analysis to multimodal (inter)action analysis through two examples. In these examples, I compare the mostly mono-modal[4] analysis of the

audio recordings with the multimodal analyses of the video recordings of the same (inter)action. These two examples demonstrate that the multimodal analyses give greater insight into identity production than the audio recordings. While discourse analysis can give detailed insight about the verbal identity production, many non-verbal actions and the surrounding layout cannot be incorporated, and some of the complexity is lost.

These examples also demonstrate that multimodal analysis is greatly driven by the technology, in this case the digital video recorder, which is used to record the naturally occurring (inter)actions. Just like multimodal (inter)action analysis is driven by technology, discourse analysis was driven by technology for 30 years. Discourse analysis has relied on the tape recorder as the technology to record naturally occurring language. The tape recorder focuses the analyst on the auditory interactions and specifically on the spoken discourse. Multimodal (inter)action analysis, therefore, naturally evolved from discourse analysis.

Discourse analysis, as heterogeneous as the field is, is ostensibly the study of language beyond the sentence, with a focus on naturally occurring language. I concentrate on interactional perspectives, and as Schiffrin (1994) asserts, interactional sociolinguists view 'discourse as a social interaction in which the emergent construction and negotiation of meaning is facilitated by the use of language' (Schiffrin, 1994:134). The focus of discourse analysis is on language use, and discourse analysis takes the utterance or the text as its unit of analysis.

The following example focuses on the multiple identity productions of one participant, which are discussed as context and thus separated from the actual interaction in a discourse study. Many actions that a multimodal (inter)action analysis includes are left out in traditional discourse analysis. In order to show the evolution of discourse analysis to multimodal (inter)action analysis, I start out by analyzing the transcript of an audio recording of a brief interaction, focusing on the discursive actions. Then I analyze the multimodal transcript of the video recording of the same (inter)action, this time taking the non-discursive actions into account. With the first example I would like to elucidate the concept of context. As Goffman asserts, 'many crucial facts lie beyond the time and place of interactions or lie concealed within it' (Goffman, 1959:2). Therefore, the context of any given interaction is of great importance to discourse analysis. Schiffrin (1987:5) emphasizes that all language is context-specific, and 'that language reflects those contexts because it helps to constitute them.'

Goffman (1959) differentiates between expressions that a participant *gives*, which include 'verbal symbols or their substitutes which he uses . . .

solely to convey the information', and expressions that a participant *gives off*, which includes a 'wide range of actions, that others can treat as symptomatic of the actor . . . for reasons other than the information conveyed in this way' (Goffman, 1959:2). With its concentration on the auditory, discourse analysis focuses on the expressions that a participant gives, and for a large part disregards the expressions a participant gives off. In Goffman's sense, then, discourse analysis with its concentration on the verbal signals and their substitutes, views 'communication in the traditional and narrow sense' (Goffman, 1959:2). When incorporating the visual, including a broader view of context and non-verbal expressions into discourse analysis, we initiate multimodal (inter)action analysis.

1.2.1 Discourse Analysis: Example 1

In discourse analysis, we give the context or background, before discussing a transcript of an interaction or segment thereof, and I follow this convention, here.

In the following excerpt, the participant, Andrea, is talking to the researcher. Only Andrea is speaking at this moment in time. Her son is playing on the floor not far from her. Andrea is German and in her mid thirties. She is a mother of two boys and is currently moving because of a divorce. Her new apartment is scattered with objects. By profession, she is an architect, an artist, and a part-time caterer with her friend Anna. She considers herself a stay-at-home mother, however, and schedules her work around her children. Before separation, she and her husband had assumed stereotypical gender roles.

At the moment of this interaction, loud music is playing in the background. Andrea is sitting on the floor and setting up a telephone and computer. The researcher is sitting across from her in a chair. This book assumes that all communication is co-produced, however not only (co)produced with other individuals, but also (co)produced with objects and the environment. Thus, it is important to sometimes focus on one individual at a time. Illustrating this point, the first excerpt focuses on Andrea. In the following audio transcript I utilize the transcription conventions designed by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) combined with transcription conventions described in Tannen (1984). For this brief excerpt of talk, it is important to mention only that punctuation reflects intonation, not grammar, and numbers in parentheses ( ) indicate length of pauses in seconds. Here, as in all audio transcripts, I first give the original German utterance, then a direct word-by-word English translation, and after that a free English translation.

Audio transcript 1.1: Andrea and 'the USB'

(1) Andrea: *un das? (1)*
an this? (1)
'and this? (1)'

(2) *müsst ich ja eigentlich damit anschliessen (2)*
should I emphasis really withthat attach (2)
'I should actually attach it to that (2)'

(3) *das kann ja wohl nicht sein. (3)*
this can emphasis emphasis not be. (3)
'this really can't be true. (3)'

(4) *lass ich für später (2)*
leave I for later (2)
'I'll leave it for later (2)'

(5) *jetzt hab ich die US B. (2)*
now have I the USB. (2)
'now I have the USB. (2)'

(6) *was stehtn da jetzt*
what says emphasis it there now
'what does it say there'

(7) *was is denn das jetzt?*
what is emphasis that now?
'what's that supposed to mean?'

Reading this short excerpt, within the given context, we know that Andrea is trying to attach the computer and the telephone. Andrea is speaking, while the researcher takes up the listener position. The content of Andrea's utterances, the pauses, and the intonation all show that she is unsure of exactly how to do what she is doing. She even seems to be unsure of what it is she is looking at. We know that she is going through a divorce, and although the words in this brief excerpt do not explicitly demonstrate it, we can surmise that Andrea is not used to dealing with tasks like the one she is working on. This may lead us to infer that she is performing an action that her ex-husband used to perform, taking on a role that he used to have. During playback as well as during ethnographic fieldwork, we do learn that before the divorce

they had adopted stereotypical gender roles. The identity element that we can glean from this example then is the divorcee identity element.[5]

1.2.2 Discourse Analysis: The Problem

When taking part in this interaction however, one finds that there is much more being communicated than can be discovered through audio recordings and discourse analysis. One observes that more identity elements are present in this interaction, identity elements that are not displayed verbally. Goffman (1959) discusses identity, and emphasizes that there are two very important facets that display identity: (1) the setting, including furniture and the physical layout; and (2) the personal front, including age, sex, spoken language patterns, facial expressions, gestures, and the like. In discourse analysis, the setting is only hinted at in the description of the background or context, and almost all parts of the personal front are ignored. Setting and personal front can also be theorized as modes of communication. Furniture, physical layout, verbal and non-verbal communication all can be defined in this way. Ruesch and Kees (1956) assert 'that any form of action, whether verbal or nonverbal, has communicative function. As soon as another person interprets a signal with some degree of accuracy, it must be codified in terms that qualify as language' (Ruesch and Kees, 1956:48). What they call language, I call a communicative mode, and certainly a similar statement can be made about the layout of a living room, a house, or a neighborhood.

1.2.3 Multimodal (Inter)action Analysis: Example 1 Revisited

When viewing the video clip of the prior audio excerpt, we discover a complexity of the (inter)action that was lost through the audio recording and the theoretical focus on spoken discourse. This complexity is shown in the multimodal transcript of the (inter)action. Here I adopt one of the multimodal transcription methods discussed in Norris (2002, 2004). In this new transcript, the visual image is most salient:

> The reading path of this transcript is linear and strictly coded, following Western ideology . . . the trajectories of the reading path in this multimodal transcript are most salient to next most salient, and also top to bottom and left to right. Instead of organizing the transcript by lines, this multimodal transcript is organized by images . . . Instead of employing punctuation marks to indicate intonation, the multimodal transcript visualizes the rising and lowering of intonation . . . Overlap is indicated by utterances touching in the transcript . . . Short pauses are indicated by spaces between the written words relative to the

> pace of spoken language, and longer pauses are indicated by the lack of spoken language in or around one or more images. (Norris, 2002:113)

In Figure 1.1 we see Andrea gazing at an object, which she is holding in her right hand, while she is saying *un das?* 'and this?' with rising intonation:

Here, gaze, gesture, and talk are all focused on the object that Andrea is concentrating on. In the (inter)action as well as in the representation, it is apparent that her utterance 'and this?' is more a question to herself, than a first part of an adjacency pair, which would require an answer from the other participant in the (inter)action.

Figure 1.2 again consists of two video captures. Here, we see Andrea pointing the object that she is holding in her right hand towards the telephone, looking in the same direction, and starting her next utterance *müsst ich ja eigentlich* 'I should actually'. In the middle of this utterance, Andrea shifts her gaze from the telephone to the researcher, finishing her utterance by saying *damit anschliessen* 'attach it to that'.

Figure 1.1 Overlap of gesture, gaze, and talk.

Figure 1.2 Shifting attention.

In the first part of her utterance illustrated in image 1 of Figure 1.2 Andrea is still solely focused on her work, which is apparent in her gaze and gesture. Then, as illustrated in image 2 of Figure 1.2, she shifts her attention briefly towards the researcher by shifting her gaze away from the telephone in her direction. After that, as illustrated in Figure 1.3, Andrea shifts her gaze back to the object in her hand, indicating that she does not expect verbal (inter) action. Andrea scrutinizes the object in her right hand again, reads the label that is attached to the object, turns it in the rhythm of the music, and comments *das kann ja wohl nicht sein* 'this really can't be true.'

In Figure 1.3 it becomes evident that Andrea is either performing for the camera and/or researcher or talking herself through the task, and that she is not addressing her utterances directly towards the researcher, as it was interpreted in the audio excerpt before. Not only is Andrea reading the label, but she is also moving the computer attachment in circular motion in the rhythm of the background music as can be seen in the last two images of Figure 1.3.

Here, the question of performativity as well as the notion of talking oneself through a task is opened up, and a correct analysis of the excerpt can be gained only through long-term ethnographic study. Ample evidence in this particular study concerning this particular individual shows that Andrea is talking herself through the task. Interestingly, however, even though Andrea often talks herself through tasks when she is trying to focus her attention, and friends and acquaintances have quite regularly commented on this habit, she claims that she is performing either for the camera or for others when no camera is running. Thus, here, the participant, when made aware of her self-talking, claims to perform, while others sharing these kinds of moments invariably claim that she is talking herself through a task. In (inter)actional terms, we can say that, no matter what Andrea is intending to do, she is communicating to others that she is talking herself through a task. Thus, this is an example of how what a social actor intends to communicate and what the social actor communicates may be quite different.

Figure 1.3 Reading the label.

Figure 1.4 Back in the box.

In Figure 1.4, we see how Andrea puts the object back in a box, saying *lass ich für später* 'I'll leave it for later'.

With a swift hand motion, Andrea tosses the object back in the box. At the same time, she shifts her gaze to the object she had been holding in her left hand. As soon as she lets go of the attachment, she brings her right hand up as can be seen in the second image of Figure 1.4 and holds the attachment in both hands, apparently reading the label, which is attached to its side.

While she is holding the object in both hands, reading the label, she comments *jetzt hab ich die USB* 'now I have the USB' as can be seen in Figure 1.5, images 1–3. She is reading the small print when she says *was steht denn da* 'what does it say there' (images 4 and 5). Then (image 6) she begins her next utterance and right after, as shown in image 7, Andrea is looking up, her facial expression giving off the same confusion that her utterance *was ist denn das jetzt* 'what's that supposed to mean' gives.

The images in these multimodal transcripts show the immediate surroundings of the speaker as well as her façade, her dress, her approximate age, and her sex, and some of her facial expressions and gestures, which all give off interpretable signs.

Andrea is talking more to herself than she is actually talking to the researcher who sits close to the camera. Except for one direct gaze in the researcher's direction or the direction of the camera in Figure 1.2 (in the second image) Andrea focuses either on the objects themselves and/or their labels, or she gazes in space away from the researcher. Thus, through visual methods, we can determine that the speaker/listener positions, that seemed to be apparent in the talk, are actually not what we had perceived from the audio recording at all. Although the researcher does play the role of listener in this excerpt, the speaker does not direct all of her utterances towards the

Figure 1.5 Head-movement and facial expression.

researcher, which can be seen in Andrea's gaze and head-movements as well as in her gestures. Here we see how she communicates to the other through non-verbal behavior that she is talking herself through a task (even if she herself may not intend to convey this).

Visual methods of recording and transcribing illustrate how the flow of talk may be continuous, while gaze and/or gesture are changing. This is especially visible in Figures 1.2 and 1.5. Clearly, modes of communication build an integrated whole in interpersonal (inter)action, yet many modes are lost through audio recording and become perceptible only in video recordings.

1.2.4 Is Identity Visible?

Visual research allows us to perceive Andrea's identities through other modes than language as well.[6] The divorcee identity, for example, which Andrea gives (to use Goffman's terms) through the mode of talk as discussed earlier, she simultaneously gives off through her actions. Figure 1.6 illustrates how Andrea is handling objects, looking at one item, putting it back in a box, and so on.

The hesitations in her actions give off the same expression that the content of her utterances, her intonation, and pausing give. Additionally, her facial expression gives off her uncertainty.

At the same time, the divorcee identity is also displayed in the setting as can be seen in Figure 1.7.

In the surroundings, we can detect many piles of objects, as well as moving boxes and an empty bookcase, which all are a result of the divorce.

Figure 1.6 Divorcee identity given off through lower-level actions.

Figure 1.7 Divorcee identity visible in the setting.

The divorcee identity is very prevalent at this moment. However, there are also other identities that can be viewed in the images that could not be gleaned by analyzing the spoken discourse alone. These identities are not at all apparent in the mode of talk, but are very visible. For example, there is the artist identity, which is evident in the setting, as shown in Figure 1.8.

Paintings and an easel display Andrea's identity as an artist.

Also visible in this brief (inter)action is Andrea's identity as a mother, as demonstrated in Figure 1.9.

Andrea's son is playing next to her on the floor, while she is working on the computer and the telephone. Thus, identity in many respects is visible. To illustrate the importance of the visual in (inter)action a little more, I give one other example.

Figure 1.8 Artist identity visible in the setting.