To sum up, this book is a very practical introduction to CDA/MCDA; it will be useful not only for students and scholars of media and cultural studies (the groups targeted by the authors), but also for those who are interested in textual linguistics. It has certainly achieved the goals which were set out in its introduction.

References

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The Handbook of Conversation Analysis

Jack Sidnell and Tanya Stivers (eds)
Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013, xvii + 825 pp.
Reviewed by Yijin Wu, Shandong University and Wen Ma, Shandong University

The Handbook of Conversation Analysis offers a coherent and wide-ranging introduction to the past, present and future of Conversation Analysis (CA), whose history (from the groundbreaking work of Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson) spans 40 years. The volume comprises an introduction and 35 chapters, which can be divided into five sections, each consisting of chapters focusing on different aspects of CA. In the introduction (Chapter 1), the editors provide a brief historical account of CA, and set out a general introduction for the whole book.

Part 1, consisting of four chapters, is entitled ‘Studying Social Interaction from a CA Perspective’. Chapter 2, by Douglas W. Maynard, traces the intellectual background against which CA has come to be and investigates a few traditions that have had an impact on CA. In Chapter 3 Lorenza Mondada deals with some specific ways in which conversation analysts gather their data. The next chapter, by Alexa Hepburn and Galina B. Bolden, discusses ‘the key conventions used in transcribing’ (p. 58). In Chapter 5 Jack Sidnell gives readers a clear picture of ‘Basic conversation analytic methods’.

Part 2, ‘Fundamental Structures of Conversation’, consists of eight chapters elaborating on ‘eight core structures in conversation’ (p. 6): ‘Action formation and ascription’ by Stephen C. Levinson, ‘Turn design’ by Paul Drew, ‘Turn-constructional units and the transition-relevance place’ by Steven E. Clayman, ‘Turn allocation and turn sharing’ by Makoto Hayashi, ‘Sequence organization’ by Tanya Stivers, ‘Preference’ by Anita Pomerantz and John Heritage, ‘Repair’ by Celia Kitziner and ‘Overall structural organization’ by Jeffrey D. Robinson. The contributions in this part
provide a brief discussion of the important concepts in the field, which helps pave the way for the following two parts.

The 11 chapters in Part 3 cover a range of ‘Key Topics in CA’. The first five chapters in this part examine paralinguistic features of talk-in-interaction: ‘Embodied action and organizational activity’ by Christian Heath and Paul Luff, ‘Gaze in conversation’ by Federico Rossano, ‘Emotion, affect and conversation’ by Johanna Ruusuvuori, ‘Affiliation in conversation’ by Anna Linström and Marja-Leena Sorjonen and ‘Epistememics in conversation’ by John Heritage. Chapters 19–24 focus on linguistic features of conversation: question design (Chapter 19, by Kaoru Hayano), response design (Chapter 20, by Seung-Hee Lee), reference (Chapter 21, by N. J. Enfield), phonetics and prosody (Chapter 22, by Gareth Walker), grammar (Chapter 23, by Harrie Maazel) and storytelling (Chapter 24, by Jenny Mandelbaum).

Part 4, consisting of seven chapters, is devoted to ‘Key Contexts of Study in CA: Populations and Settings’. Chapters 25 and 26 deal with interactional encounters involving typical children and atypical populations, while the five later chapters discuss human interaction in various professional settings. An examination of conversational ‘Interaction among children’ is presented in Chapter 25, by Mardi Kidwell. Chapter 26, by Charles Antaki and Ray Wilkinson, details the ways in which talk-in-interaction is achieved by three types of atypical populations: people with brain damage, people with hearing difficulties and people with abnormal perceptions of reality. CA research on psychotherapy is discussed by Anssi Peräkylä in Chapter 27. In Chapter 28 Virginia Teas Gill and Felicia Roberts review CA research on medical interactions and introduce some possibilities for the future involvement of CA work in clinical contexts. The following chapter is ‘Conversation analysis in the classroom’ by Rod Gardner. Chapter 30, by Martha Komter, deals with ‘how participants in courtroom interaction orient to aspects of context’ (p. 612). Chapter 31, by Steven E. Clayman, is devoted to CA work on news interviews.

Part 5 of the book contains chapters on ‘CA across the Disciplines’, and nicely illustrates connections between CA and sociology, communication studies, anthropology, psychology and linguistics. In Chapter 32 John Heritage and Tanya Stivers discuss not only the historical roots of CA in sociology, but also what CA contributes to this field. Chapter 33, by Wayne A. Beach, treats communication studies and the influence of CA on this field; it also ‘identifies important areas of emerging scholarship’ (p. 674): ‘ordinary conversational actions and activities, multimodality, and communication during medical encounters’ (p. 684). In Chapter 34 Ignasi Clemente deals with the effects which CA and anthropology have had upon each other. Chapter 35, by Jonathan Potter and Derek Edwards, examines some ‘ways in which Conversation Analysis … can be relevant to Psychology, and vice versa’ (p. 701). In Chapter 36 Barbara A. Fox, Sandra A. Thompson, Cecilia E. Ford and Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen discuss the ‘interaction between CA and Linguistics’ (p. 726), which ‘began in the 1970s’ (p. 726).

From this book one can see ‘the interdisciplinary nature of CA’ (p. 1); its contributors come from a variety of fields. The chapters in Parts 1–3 present a comprehensive and well-integrated survey of concepts and methods of CA. Researchers new to CA
will find all of the contributions in these parts to be of great significance, because they present an overview of the theoretical and conceptual bases of the field. Rich in detail and practical in orientation, Part 4 offers fine exemplars of how CA can be used to serve an interventionist agenda across a good number of interactional encounters. Hence, it will appeal to readers whose research interests lie in CA, communication studies or the intersection between CA and professional communication, and will stimulate readers to think about how CA can be applied to everyday and professional situations. The contributions in Part 5 make a strong argument for cross-disciplinary studies in CA. Readers who are unfamiliar with early interconnections between CA and other disciplines will find this part to be highly informative.

However, there are several points which I would like to raise. The contributors to this book did not take multiculturalism into consideration when studying conversational interaction. Shi-xu (2009) believes that we should go beyond traditional discourses and communication studies and should engage in a culturally conscious and critical approach to human interaction. Thus I suggest that CA researchers approach interactional events from a multicultural standpoint and be critical of the established conversational rules, which are mostly generalized from data in English or other European languages.

Also, practitioners of CA are not much given to philosophical reflection on their field or comparative and contrastive analyses across languages. Furthermore, as a growing interdisciplinary field exploring language and social interaction, CA increasingly is attracting attention from scholars in other disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, linguistics and psychology; one might ask what can be done to make CA recognized within the social sciences as a whole.

In sum, this volume is a valuable addition to the current literature on CA. It is a comprehensive reference book that will provide a ready resource to established scholars, advanced students and also those new to CA.

Reference

Shi-xu 2009 ‘Reconstructing Eastern paradigms of discourse studies’ Journal of Multicultural Discourses 4(1): 29–48. doi:10.1080/17447140802651637

Pragmatics (2nd Edition)

Yan Huang

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014
Reviewed by Alessandro Capone, University of Messina

I am very pleased to review this revised edition of Pragmatics by Yan Huang, Professor of Linguistics at the University of Auckland. Yan Huang is a Cambridge scholar, who had the pleasure of listening to and arguing with Sir John Lyons and Stephen Levinson. He has written several monographs on pragmatics and anaphora and, in this textbook,