Interactionist ideology from an ethnopoetic perspective

Kuniyoshi Kataoka
Aichi University, Japan

Following a programmatic tenet of Emancipatory Pragmatics, I will argue in this presentation for a broader-range integration of "micro" and "macro" levels of social interaction. Talk is emergent and replete with contingencies that arise in situ among participants. While I totally agree with this assumption, recent studies of talk are often devoted to revealing the mechanisms of sequence organization and institutional constraints (based on the somewhat universalist thesis of Conversation Analysis) while failing to take account of communal and cultural practices shared by the participants. What should be borne in mind now are indigenously customized preferences in structuring discourse.

My point specifically concerns renewed interest in an ethnopoetic kata 'form/shape/style/model' embraced as performative "habitus" among Japanese speakers. Kata, in its broader sense, is stable as well as versatile, often serving as an organizational "template" for interaction, which at opportune moments may change its shape and trajectory according to discursive developments. In order to corroborate this claim, I will look into different types of interactional style, ranging from a dominantly monologic to a highly dialogic scene. In a monologue style, for example, a CPR instructor was observed to construct his instruction based on a layered tripartite structure of multimodal elements. A kata-driven construction of an interview is also observed in a highly involved, interactional account of the Great East Japan Earthquake, in which both interviewer and interviewee were recursively oriented and attuned to the same rhythmic pattern consisting of odd-number elements, or a stable kata.

Based on these observations, I propose that indigenous principles of organizing discourse are as crucial as the mechanism of conversational organization, with the higher order of macro cultural preferences inevitably infiltrating into the micro management of talk.

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