

Roles, relationships and identity in qualitative interviews

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Aims of talk

- Share views from related disciplines concerning analysis and representation of roles and identity in qualitative interviews concerning teacher talk
- Outline four 'discourse dilemmas' (Mann 2011)
- Show how prior relationships are invoked and made relevant by both interviewer and interviewee during educational research interviews and how these prior relationships contribute to the 'generation' (Baker, 2004: 163) of data.

Growing presence but undertheorised

- The qualitative interview has a growing presence in applied linguistics.
- Despite this increase, the qualitative interview has, for the most part, been undertheorized in relation to roles, relationships and identity.

Worrying tendencies:

- Selected voices arranged in journalistic tableau
- Bereft of context and methodological detail
- Critical reflective dimension often missing.

The 'active' interview

- Holstein and Gubrium's (1995) contribution to this theorization of the 'inter-view' (interviews as unavoidably 'active')
- 'no matter how formalized, restricted, or standardized' the nature of the interview, there is 'interaction between the interview participants'. (Holstein and Gubrium 1995: 18)

Discursive psychology

- Antaki et al. (2003) present the concerns of discursive psychology in reference to the interview.
- Concern with the linguistic features of positioning, footing, stake management, and identity work.

Contingent problems

Potter and Hepburn (2005) draw attention to avoidable 'contingent problems with interviewing:

- ↻ the deletion of the interviewer
- ↻ problems with the representation of interaction
- ↻ the unavailability of the interview set-up
- ↻ the failure to consider interviews as interaction.

A greater focus on the interviewer

Research studies need to be more open in their accounting of how membership, roles and relationship can affect the way talk develops (e.g. Roulston, 2001; Rapley, 2001, 2004; Garton and Copland 2010).

Extract 1

Fiona yes if you could change oh sorry *((phone starts ringing))* anything about your feedback style what would you change

May well I think you know the answer to that *((laughs))*

Fiona okay *((laughs))*

May I'm sorry I think that's my phone and nobody ever rings me I do apologise

Fiona no no that's fine that's fine I'll have another cake I like this interview I get cakes cakes and cats.

((May answers phone))

May sorry *((May sits down))* what was the () oh yes what would I change about my erm feedback style erm () well as I said I'd like to be able to be a little bit more circumspect about some issues I think erm

Reference List

Garton, S. and Copland, F. 2010. 'I like this interview: I get cakes and cats!'; the effect of prior relationships on interview talk. *Qualitative Research* Vol. 10 (5), 533-551