Communicative Interaction and
Discursive Practice

Overview

- Theories of spoken communication
- The role of context
- Discursive practice and the framework of interactional competence
- How do people learn a new discursive practice?

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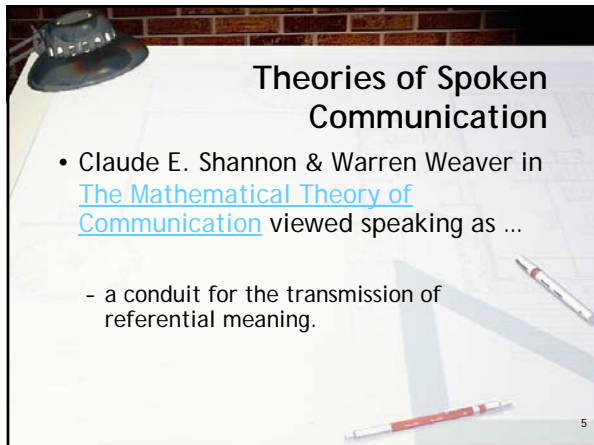
CONVERSATION—
WHAT A CONCEPT!

ZIEGLER

Theories of Spoken Communication

- Robert Lado in Linguistics Across Cultures included …

  - Knowledge of linguistic levels
  - Knowledge of the four (five?) skills

Theories of Spoken Communication

- Claude E. Shannon & Warren Weaver in The Mathematical Theory of Communication viewed speaking as …

  - a conduit for the transmission of referential meaning.

Theories of Spoken Communication

- In an individual's communicative competence, Michael Canale and Merrill Swain included …

  - Discourse competence
  - Pragmatic competence
  - Strategic competence

- In addition to Lado's
  - Linguistic competence

Theories of Spoken Communication

- Larry Selinker and Dan Douglas's discourse domain theory predicted that …

  - An individual will speak more coherently on a topic on which she has extensive or current knowledge and in which she is emotionally invested.

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The Role of Context

- We distinguish between an experiencer/agent that we recognize as ourselves and a world that the experiencer/agent inhabits.

- We distinguish between a central figure and a peripheral ground.

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The Role of Context

- Where is language?
- Language is figure and ground.
- It is both part of our lived experience and part of the world that we inhabit.
- Although language is its own context, when we consider language acquisition our focus is on language as figure — not ground.
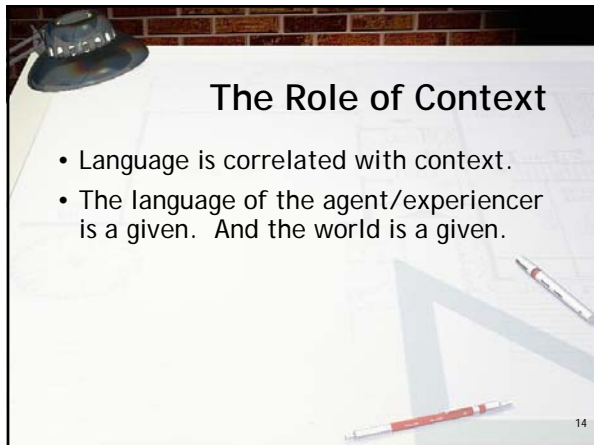
The Role of Context

- Three attempts to relate language to context:

  - Language is correlated with context.

  - Language shapes context.
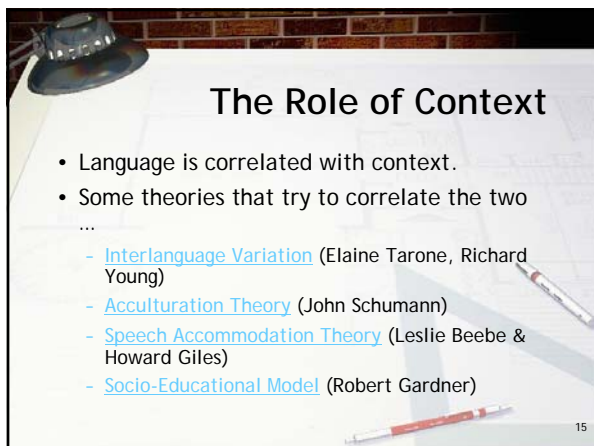
  - Language and context are mutually constitutive.

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The Role of Context

- Language is correlated with context.
- The language of the agent/experiencer is a given. And the world is a given.

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The Role of Context

- Language is correlated with context.
- Some theories that try to correlate the two ...
  - Interlanguage Variation (Elaine Tarone, Richard Young)
  - Acculturation Theory (John Schumann)
  - Speech Accommodation Theory (Leslie Beebe & Howard Giles)
  - Socio-Educational Model (Robert Gardner)

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The Role of Context

- Language and context are mutually constitutive.
- The language of the agent/experiencer and the world are both shape shifters. The self and the world are mutually constitutive.

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The Role of Context

- Language shapes context.
- Some theories that try to show how the language of an agent/experiencer shapes the world:
  - Conversational inference (John Gumperz)
  - Frames (Erving Goffman)
  - Crossing (Ben Rampton)
  - Heteroglossia (Mikhail Bakhtin)
  - Linguistic relativity (Benjamin Lee Whorf, then John Gumperz & Stephen Levinson)

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The Role of Context

- Language and context are mutually constitutive.
- The language of the agent/experiencer and the world are both shape shifters. The self and the world are mutually constitutive.

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The Role of Context

- Language and context are mutually constitutive.
- Some theories that try to close the gap:
  - Co-Construction (Sally Jacoby and Elinor Ochs)
  - Communicative Practice (William Hanks)
  - Interactional Competence (Claire Kramsch, Joan Kelly Hall, Richard Young)
  - Situated Learning (Jean Lave & Etienne Wenger)
  - Language Socialization (Karen Watson-Gegeo)
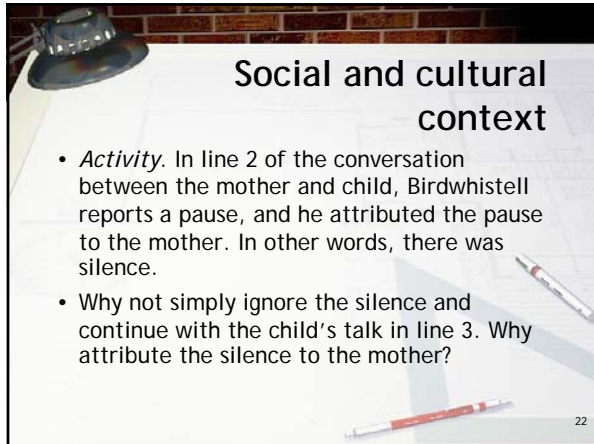
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The Role of Context

- Language and context are mutually constitutive.
- "Context cannot be treated as the scenery to which language and interactive structures are related once they have been objectively defined on other grounds ... Participant roles cannot be treated as merely contextual; they are inherently contextual." – William Hanks.

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Social and cultural context

1. Child: Mama ((pause)) I gotta go to the bathroom
2. Mother: ((pause))
3. Child: Mama ((pause)) Donnie's gotta go
4. Mother: Sh-sh
5. Child: But ((pause)) mama
6. Mother: ((softly)) Later
7. Child: ((whining)) Ma ma
8. Mother: ((rasping voice)) Wait
9. Child: Oh mama mama mama
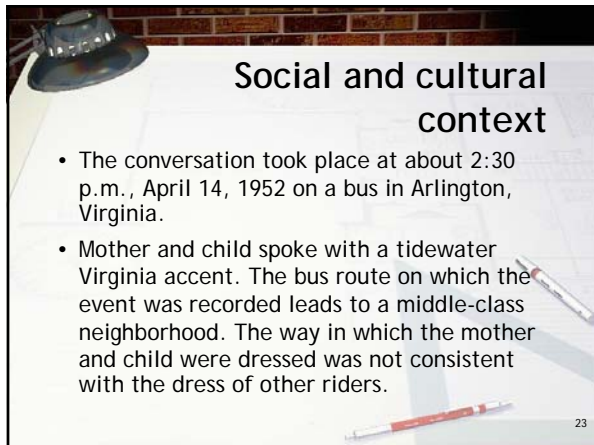10. Mother: ((loudly)) Shut up ((softly)) will yuh

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Social and cultural context

- *Activity*. In line 2 of the conversation between the mother and child, Birdwhistell reports a pause, and he attributed the pause to the mother. In other words, there was silence.
- Why not simply ignore the silence and continue with the child's talk in line 3. Why attribute the silence to the mother?
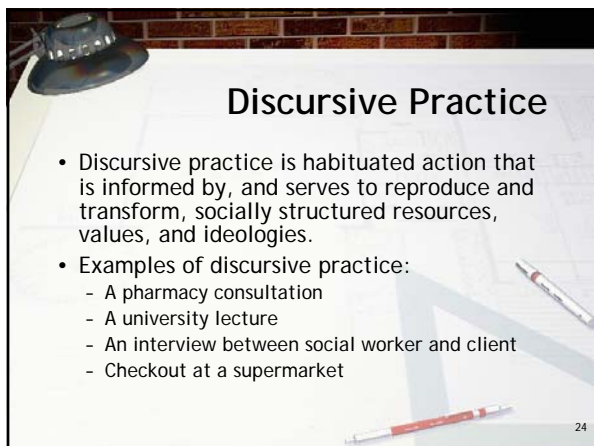
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Social and cultural context

- The conversation took place at about 2:30 p.m., April 14, 1952 on a bus in Arlington, Virginia.
- Mother and child spoke with a tidewater Virginia accent. The bus route on which the event was recorded leads to a middle-class neighborhood. The way in which the mother and child were dressed was not consistent with the dress of other riders.

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Discursive Practice

- Discursive practice is habituated action that is informed by, and serves to reproduce and transform, socially structured resources, values, and ideologies.
- Examples of discursive practice:
  - A pharmacy consultation
  - A university lecture
  - An interview between social worker and client
  - Checkout at a supermarket

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Interactional Competence (IC)

- The discursive practice is a consultation in a pharmacy between a patient and the pharmacy intern.

- The pharmacy is located in a store in a rural community in the Midwest.
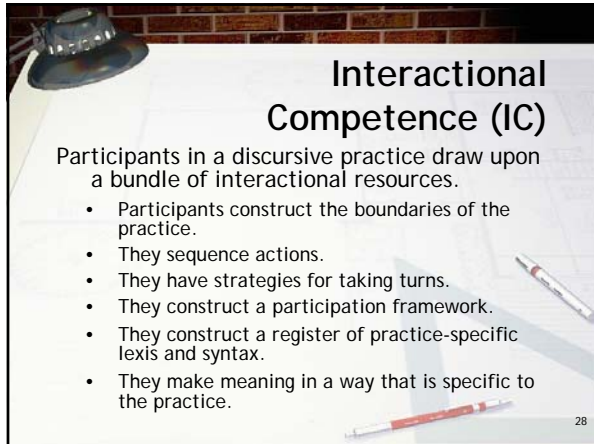
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Interactional Competence (IC)

- Interactional competence is a theory of communication that has its roots in linguistic anthropology.
- Interactional competence explains the socio-cultural characteristics of discursive practices and the interactional processes by which discursive practices are co-constructed by participants.

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Interactional Competence (IC)

- Interactional competence is co-constructed.
- Interactional competence is localized in a specific discursive practice.
- Participants in a discursive practice draw upon a bundle of interactional resources.
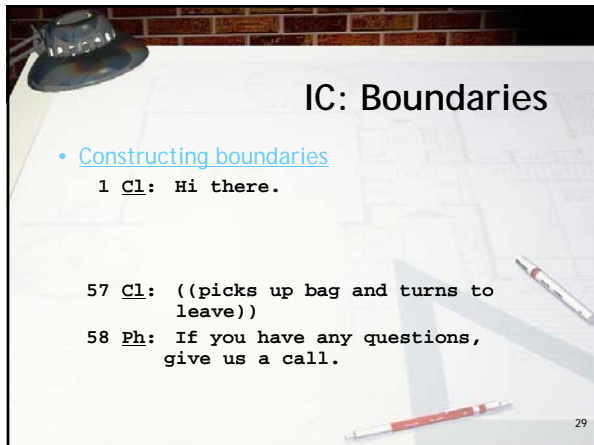- The configuration of these resources constitutes an architecture of the practice.

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Interactional Competence (IC)

Participants in a discursive practice draw upon a bundle of interactional resources.

- Participants construct the boundaries of the practice.
- They sequence actions.
- They have strategies for taking turns.
- They construct a participation framework.
- They construct a register of practice-specific lexis and syntax.
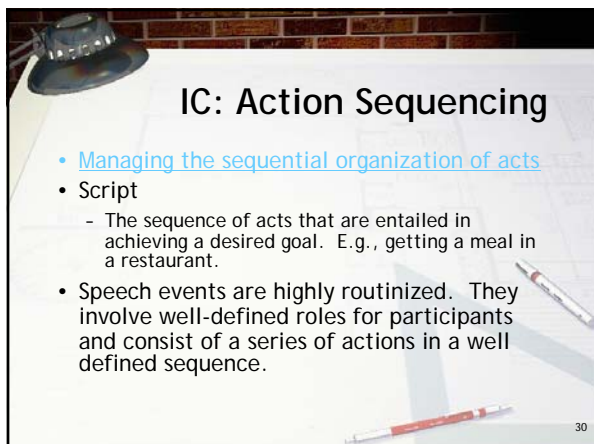- They make meaning in a way that is specific to the practice.

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IC: Boundaries

- Constructing boundaries

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 1 Cl: Hi there.



57 Cl: ((picks up bag and turns to
       leave))
58 Ph: If you have any questions,
       give us a call.
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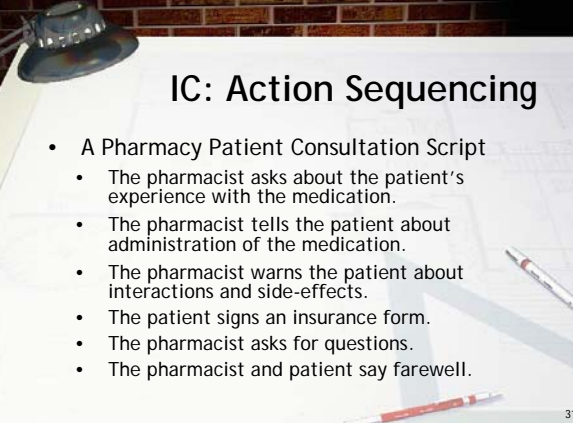
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IC: Action Sequencing

- Managing the sequential organization of acts
- Script
  - The sequence of acts that are entailed in achieving a desired goal. E.g., getting a meal in a restaurant.
- Speech events are highly routinized. They involve well-defined roles for participants and consist of a series of actions in a well defined sequence.
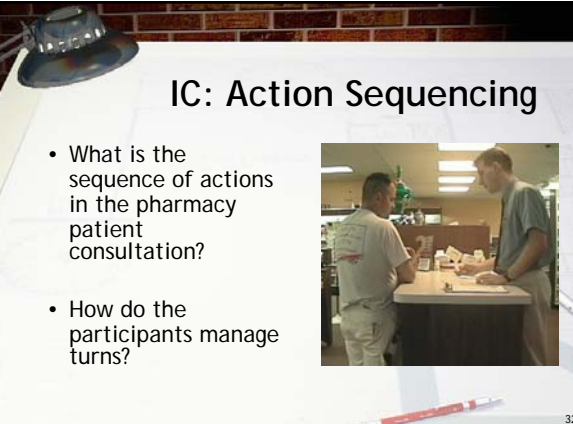
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IC: Action Sequencing

- A Pharmacy Patient Consultation Script
    - The pharmacist asks about the patient's experience with the medication.
    - The pharmacist tells the patient about administration of the medication.
    - The pharmacist warns the patient about interactions and side-effects.
    - The patient signs an insurance form.
    - The pharmacist asks for questions.
    - The pharmacist and patient say farewell.
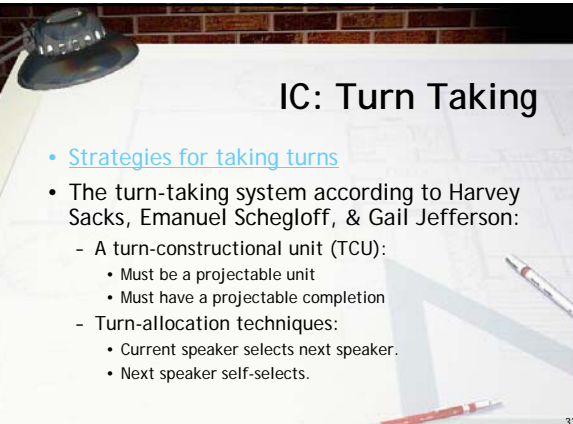
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IC: Action Sequencing

- What is the sequence of actions in the pharmacy patient consultation?
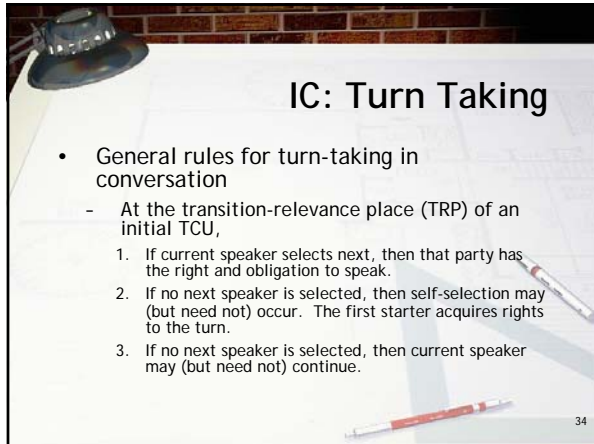
- How do the participants manage turns?

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IC: Turn Taking

- Strategies for taking turns
- The turn-taking system according to Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff, & Gail Jefferson:
    - A turn-constructional unit (TCU):
        - Must be a projectable unit
        - Must have a projectable completion
    - Turn-allocation techniques:
        - Current speaker selects next speaker.
        - Next speaker self-selects.

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IC: Turn Taking

- General rules for turn-taking in conversation
  - At the transition-relevance place (TRP) of an initial TCU,
    1. If current speaker selects next, then that party has the right and obligation to speak.
    2. If no next speaker is selected, then self-selection may (but need not) occur. The first starter acquires rights to the turn.
    3. If no next speaker is selected, then current speaker may (but need not) continue.
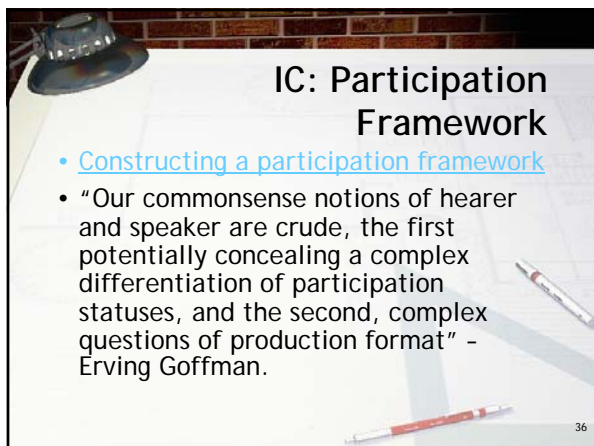
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IC: Turn Taking

- Rules for turn taking in the pharmacy patient consultation
  - The patient opens the conversation.
  - The pharmacist selects the next speaker.
  - The patient does not self-select.
  - The pharmacist closes the conversation.

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IC: Participation Framework

- Constructing a participation framework
- "Our commonsense notions of hearer and speaker are crude, the first potentially concealing a complex differentiation of participation statuses, and the second, complex questions of production format" – Erving Goffman.

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IC: Participation Framework

- Roles of hearers
  - Official and non-official hearers
  - Ratified and non-ratified participants
  - Byplay: Communication between a subset of ratified participants
  - Crossplay: Communication between ratified and non-ratified participants
  - Sideplay: "Hushed" words exchanged among bystanders
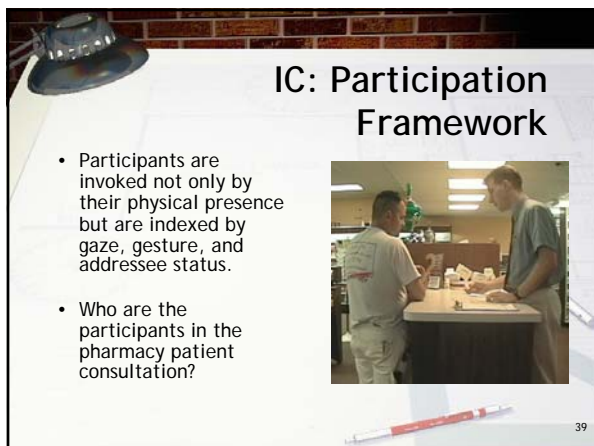
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IC: Participation Framework

- Production Format
  - An animator is the talking machine, an individual engaged in the role of utterance production.
  - An author is someone who has selected the sentiments being expressed and the words in which they are encoded.
  - A principal is someone whose position is established by the words being spoken, whose beliefs have been told, who is committed to what the words say.
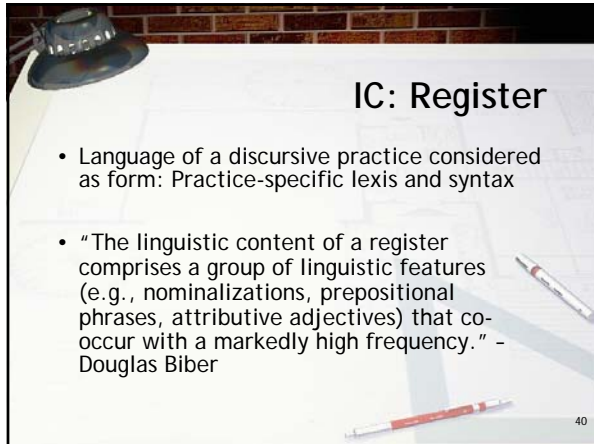
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IC: Participation Framework

- Participants are invoked not only by their physical presence but are indexed by gaze, gesture, and addressee status.

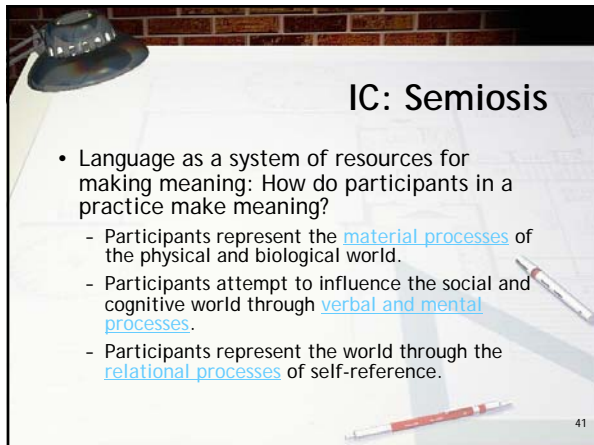- Who are the participants in the pharmacy patient consultation?

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IC: Register

- Language of a discursive practice considered as form: Practice-specific lexis and syntax

- "The linguistic content of a register comprises a group of linguistic features (e.g., nominalizations, prepositional phrases, attributive adjectives) that co-occur with a markedly high frequency." – Douglas Biber
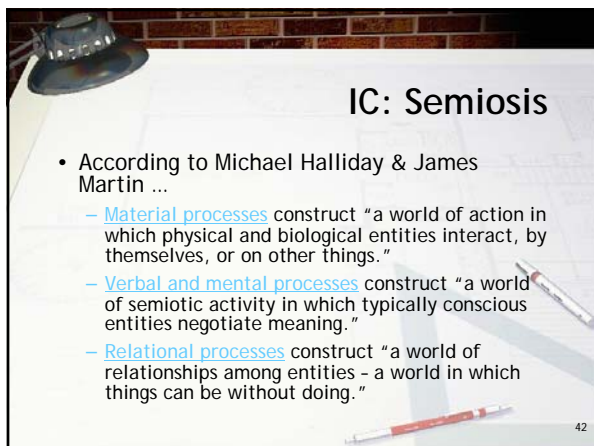
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IC: Semiosis

- Language as a system of resources for making meaning: How do participants in a practice make meaning?
  - Participants represent the material processes of the physical and biological world.
  - Participants attempt to influence the social and cognitive world through verbal and mental processes.
  - Participants represent the world through the relational processes of self-reference.
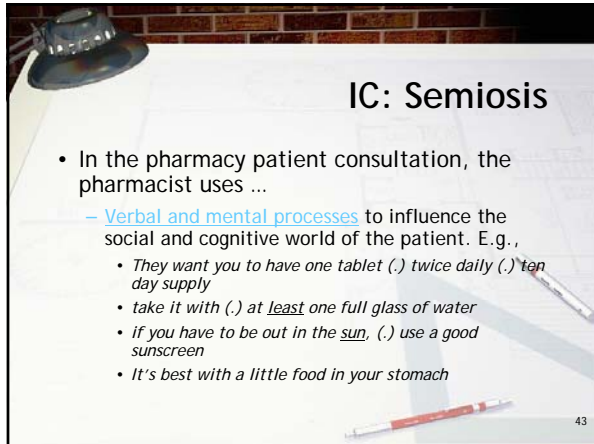
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IC: Semiosis

- According to Michael Halliday & James Martin ...
  - Material processes construct "a world of action in which physical and biological entities interact, by themselves, or on other things."
  - Verbal and mental processes construct "a world of semiotic activity in which typically conscious entities negotiate meaning."
  - Relational processes construct "a world of relationships among entities – a world in which things can be without doing."
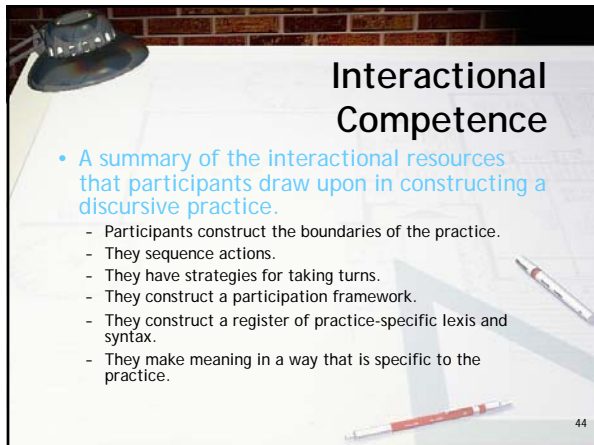
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IC: Semiosis

- In the pharmacy patient consultation, the pharmacist uses ...
  - <u>Verbal and mental processes</u> to influence the social and cognitive world of the patient. E.g.,
    - *They want you to have one tablet (.) twice daily (.) ten day supply*
    - *take it with (.) at <u>least</u> one full glass of water*
    - *if you have to be out in the <u>sun</u>, (.) use a good sunscreen*
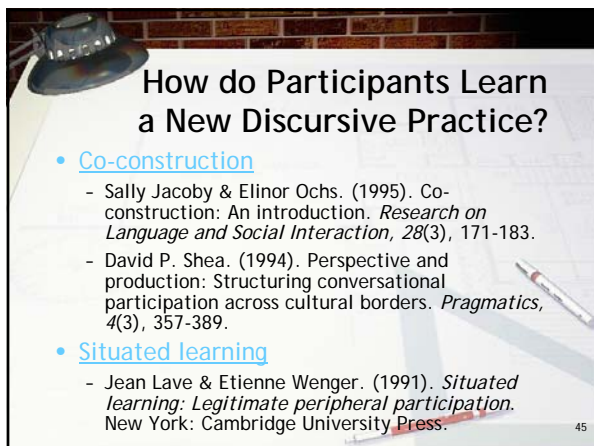   - *It's best with a little food in your stomach*

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Interactional Competence

- A summary of the interactional resources that participants draw upon in constructing a discursive practice.
  - Participants construct the boundaries of the practice.
  - They sequence actions.
  - They have strategies for taking turns.
  - They construct a participation framework.
  - They construct a register of practice-specific lexis and syntax.
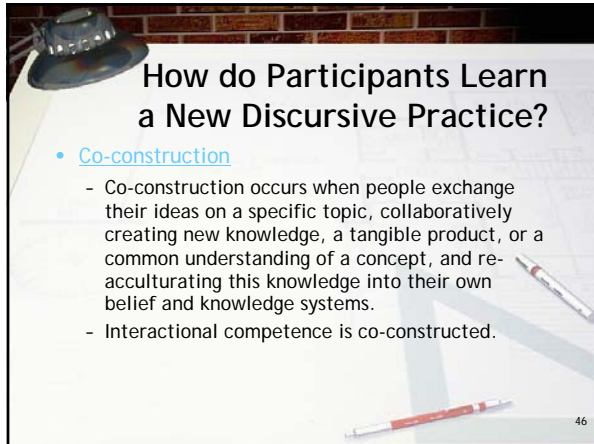 - They make meaning in a way that is specific to the practice.

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How do Participants Learn a New Discursive Practice?

- <u>Co-construction</u>
  - Sally Jacoby & Elinor Ochs. (1995). Co-construction: An introduction. *Research on Language and Social Interaction, 28*(3), 171-183.
  - David P. Shea. (1994). Perspective and production: Structuring conversational participation across cultural borders. *Pragmatics, 4*(3), 357-389.
- <u>Situated learning</u>
  - Jean Lave & Etienne Wenger. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation.* New York: Cambridge University Press.
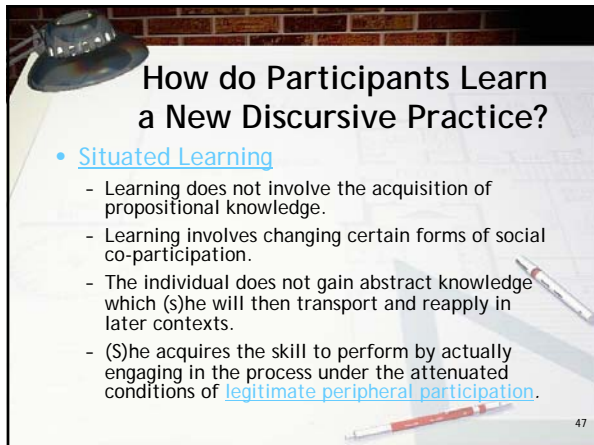
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Communicative Interaction and
Discursive Practice

How do Participants Learn a New Discursive Practice?

- Co-construction
  - Co-construction occurs when people exchange their ideas on a specific topic, collaboratively creating new knowledge, a tangible product, or a common understanding of a concept, and re-acculturating this knowledge into their own belief and knowledge systems.
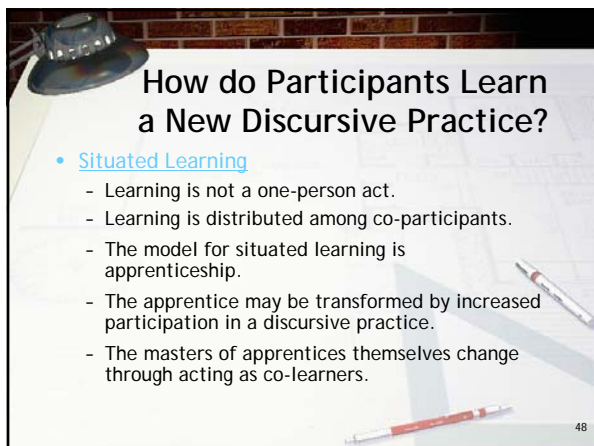 - Interactional competence is co-constructed.

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How do Participants Learn a New Discursive Practice?

- Situated Learning
  - Learning does not involve the acquisition of propositional knowledge.
  - Learning involves changing certain forms of social co-participation.
  - The individual does not gain abstract knowledge which (s)he will then transport and reapply in later contexts.
  - (S)he acquires the skill to perform by actually engaging in the process under the attenuated conditions of legitimate peripheral participation.

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How do Participants Learn a New Discursive Practice?

- Situated Learning
  - Learning is not a one-person act.
  - Learning is distributed among co-participants.
  - The model for situated learning is apprenticeship.
  - The apprentice may be transformed by increased participation in a discursive practice.
  - The masters of apprentices themselves change through acting as co-learners.

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Interactional Competence Differs . . .

- From other theories of spoken communication in a second language

    - The Four Skills
    - The Conduit Metaphor
    - Communicative Competence
    - Discourse Domains

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CONVERSATION—
WHAT A CONCEPT!

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Learning Activity

- Transcribe the conversation between Mr. Aziz and the social worker using the CA conventions in Table 5.1 of Everyday Talk.

- Describe the miscommunication or 'crosstalk' that occurs in this conversation.

- Use the theories of communication that we have discussed today to explain its source.

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