

# Observation and Conversation Analysis

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# Doing Observation

- **The ‘Recording Angel’**
  - Your impressions are not evidence
  - What did people say?
  - What did people do?
  - How do you justify the inferences you have made from the observations?
  - How can you link these at a second-order level to form generalizations = theory?

# **Kennedy Smith Rape Trial 1991**

- **William Kennedy Smith alleged to have raped Patricia Bowman at Easter 1991.**
- **Cross-examination of Bowman's friend, Ann Mercer, by Roy Black for the defence.**
- **Mercer has told the prosecutor that Bowman told her she had been raped by Smith**

## **Exercise**

- **This clip lasts 4 minutes and 21 seconds.**
- **Make the best verbatim note you can.**
- **In pairs, you will then have five minutes to determine why this is regarded as a classic.**
- **Be as precise as you can – exactly how does Roy Black manage to discredit this witness?**



## **Exercise**

- **In pairs, you have five minutes to determine why this is regarded as a classic.**
- **Be as precise as you can – exactly how does Roy Black manage to discredit this witness?**

# Conversation Analysis

- **Using modern technology to add value**
- **Defining how some recognized phenomena work**
  - **Persuasive rhetoric since Ancient Greeks**
- **Discovering new things**
  - **Resumptive repetition**





# **Resumptive Repetition**

- **3-turn structure for interaction**
  1. **Action**
  2. **Response**
  3. **Repair/next action**
- **Resumptive repetition**
  1. **Question**
  2. **Response**
  3. **Next question begins with final phrase of Turn 1**



## **Resumptive Repetition 2**

- **Encodes spatial and temporal information**
  - **Breaks down action into small components which are still chained together**
  - **Expands sense of duration**
- **Encodes identity information**
  - **Presumed relations between women and rapists**
- **Creates a poetic effect**

# **Types of Resumption**

- **Sequential**
- **Nonrepetitive**
- **Intrasequential**
- **Intra-turn with Suprasequential**
- **Contrastive List**



- **Nonrepetitive Resumption**









- **Intrasequential resumption**









- **Intra-turn resumption with  
Suprasequential Resumptive Repetition**





- **Contrastive List**



# **Membership Categorization**

- **Moral order of paired categories**
  - **Women and rapists occupy antagonistic categories**
  - **Mercer's actions are incompatible with this opposition**
- **Use of historic present up to line 209**
  - **Immediacy and charge**

## **Care Proceedings circa 1980**

**LAB: Were there ever other people staying overnight at Mrs Harper's?**

**LEO: Well, there was me**

**LAB: Apart from you?**

**LEO: Well, Connie stayed occasionally**

**LAB: Anybody else?**

**LEO: Mrs Harper's boyfriend**

**LAB: And was there anybody else?**

**LEO: No**

**LAB: Has there been anybody else when Mrs Godfrey [Family Aide] has come in the morning?**

**LEO: No**

# **Impact?**

- **Why is it so difficult to secure rape convictions**
- **Training in courtroom skills**
  - **Avoid problems of simulated interactions**
  - **Theoretically-informed improvisation rather than ‘tips and tricks’**

# Observation and Conversation Analysis

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