

Re: Goffman

(Ref. A)

"Response Cries" represents a genre of work which will not be familiar to many readers of Language, and one which should be. They have had an opportunity to read the work of the "conversational analysts" -- this kind of treatment goes beyond description to speculate, quite persuasively in my view, on some underlying "dubioses" of the behavior(s) described. I think, nonetheless, that the value of the paper can be substantially enhanced for linguist readers by an attempt to show linguist readers why such analyses are valuable for them - they should not have to do all the work required (to integrate this material into more specifically linguistic concerns) themselves. Sociologists, I believe, have the same complaint about the work of the conversational analysts and about Goffmanesque treatments like this - they find it interesting and even persuasive, but they want to know how it fits in. I am not claiming that the author of this piece should address fundamental questions of ling. theory, he/she need not undertake resolution of questions of generative vs. interpretive semanticist positions, or differences among formal theorists. The author could, however, say something about the necessity, given the goal of linguistics of understanding how humans communicate, of incorporating utterances such as those examined into a unified theory of linguistic (or at least, sociolinguistic) description. The paper would have been more valuable for this reader, moreover, if some attempt had been made to provide some sort of summary integration of the findings (since formalization would be a bit much to ask for - though I believe that even that potential can be discerned in the paper). It would also be helpful if the theme touched upon, of the ethological and extra-human analogs to the behavior described, could be more fully explicated. Finally, while the author cannot be criticized for not following up on issues not central to his/her specified interests, I found the passing comments about acquisition-related matters tantalizing, and would have found interesting some discussion of acquisition and of competence-performance considerations. All this said, I think the kind of analysis presented should be available to linguists - I guess I am just asking for more.

Some specific comments:

- p. 2. line 1: there are, as will noted, instances in which others are, at the least, intended overhearers.
- p. 2. line 3.: Norbert Weiner used to walk down the street talking to himself in German and/or Russian (sometimes with one interlocutor using one language and the "respondent" the other). Children would cross the street.
- p. 3. Piaget and Vygotsky refs.?
- p. 3. line 5 from bottom: sometime a rebuke, yes. But the following can be heard:
What's that?
(Sorry), I was only talking to myself.
- p. 5. line 5.: What is the situation here. Isn't it true that there is a good bit of solitary "dialogue" in what seems to be "taking-the-tole- of-the-other" role learning?
- p. 7 line ~~6~~ 9.: there should be a reference to Goffman's Frames here.
- p. 7. line 3. second full para. Need refs. I find the argument in this para. a little difficult to follow.
- p. 8. first S. sec. para.: somewhat obscure.
- p. 8. "communication tonus" is nice.
- p. 8. line 5 from bottom: Too strong? It is surely reportable, but unless behaviors intrude upon others may be a source of amused (and tolerant) superiority. When those in control interact with those out, they sometimes treat them like children - not felons. Moreover, those not totally out of control frequently regain at least some, or so attempt, if the situation seems so to warrant.

< Gzrimshaw

to
("Response crisis" - 2, Scary about the carbon screw up - that usually generates a response cry. Can be read by holding up to light!)

- p. 9. first full para. line 5 from bottom: Invisible friends of children are tolerated by parents - in some places and up to a certain age. They are not expected to accompany a child to school - and they are supposed to stay "in their room" when unfamiliar adults come as company. This is a theme which has been explored by Zenna Henderson, e.g., in "Loo Ree" in Holding Wonder, 1976.
- p. 10. line 6: Consider the following:
(Sustained laughter)
It's not that funny, Mom.
I wasn't laughing at you.
(This mother was doubtly "away")
- p. 12. 4 from bottom: See Herb Gans in current Jnl of Communication for a viewer's complaint about John Chancellor's failure to treat her (and others) as co-present.
- p. 14. line 6 from bottom first para: And, surely, sometimes not out of range!
- p. 16. last S. second para: It can be embarrassing when it does turn out to be dress . . . Is a quarter big enough for an adult to bend for, these days? Scarry for?
- p. 17. Section IV may seem, to linguists, to be of questionable relevance to their concerns. Could that relevance be explicated?
- p. 17. line fn.: Ref. for Piaget on Vygotsky?
- p. 20. first full S: Sometimes a single incredulous look at one's watch is considered a warrant for abrupt reversal of direction.
- p. 30. last S. first full para: NICE!
- p. 34. last full S: "but in the linguistic and propositional sense they are not statements"????
- p. 35. The material ~~at~~ at the top of the page is critical. It is not all clear, e.g., penultimate S.
- p. 35. line 2 from bottom: If they are non symbolic, how is it that they ~~are~~ always take the same (or very similar) morphological shapes?
- p. 37. Final clause in final S of first para. is elegant, but not very clear.
- p. 40 line 7: A response such as, "That's unlike you," is, however, legitimate.
- p. 45. S starting line 5 is not clear.

I very much like this paper and believe that it should be published. I think it will be much more valuable if some of the changes suggested ^e are made, especially those which would more clearly articulate the exposition with linguistic issues and concerns.