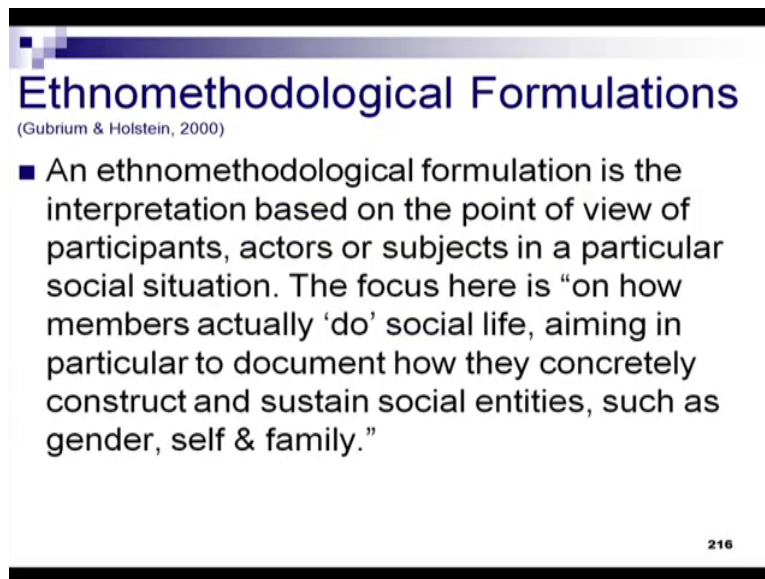


**Qualitative Research Methods**  
**Assistant Prof. Aradhna Malik**  
**Vinod Gupta School of Management**  
**Indian Institute of Technology - Kharagpur**

**Lecture 24**  
**Analyzing Interpretive Practice (Contd.)**

Welcome back to the NOC course titled qualitative research methods, my name is Aradhna Malik and I am helping you with this course and we will now be talking about, we were talking about analysing interpretive practice and we will continue with the same discussion in this lecture, we talked about hermeneutics in the previous lecture, we talked about phenomenology, we talked about hermeneutics, in this lecture we will talk about ethnomethodological formulations and conversation analysis and Foucauldian discourse analysis, okay.

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**Ethnomethodological Formulations**  
(Gubrium & Holstein, 2000)

- An ethnomethodological formulation is the interpretation based on the point of view of participants, actors or subjects in a particular social situation. The focus here is “on how members actually ‘do’ social life, aiming in particular to document how they concretely construct and sustain social entities, such as gender, self & family.”

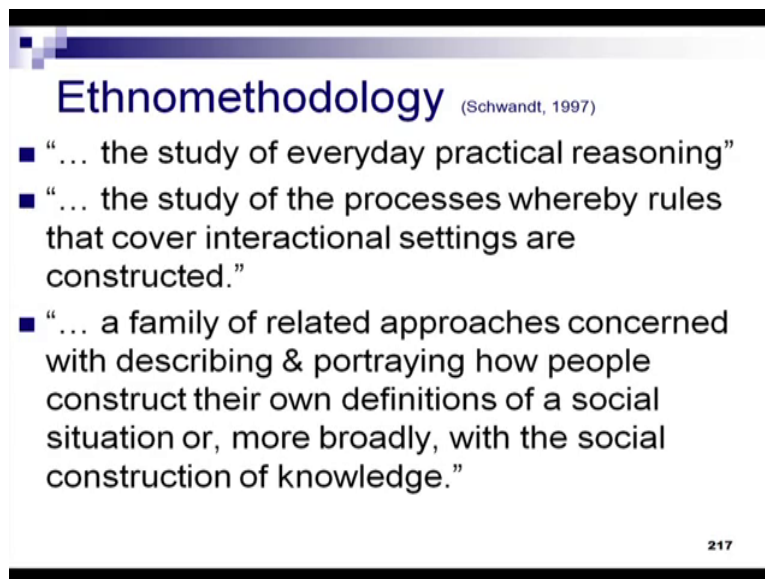
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Ethnomethodological formulations, an ethnomethodological formulation is the interpretation based on the point of view of the participants, actors or subjects in a particular social situation. The focus is “on how members actually ‘do’ social life, so it is based on the perspective of the participants, the observer gets the perspectives of the participants, the actors or the members of the situation or gets the perspectives of the people, who are actually doing the situation, who are actually carrying out the activities that we are trying to observe as researchers.

The focus is on how members actually do social life, aiming in particular to document how they concretely construct and sustain social entities, such as gender, self and family.” We are talking about real life, we are talking about social life, we are not talking about any special situation, we are talking about studying life as it happens and so we see life as it happens from the perspective of the people who are actually living the life as it happens.

Who are carrying out the activities that we are trying to understand and we see things from their perspective and that is called ethnomethodology. We have talked about ethnography now this is ethnomethodology.

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**Ethnomethodology** (Schwandt, 1997)

- “... the study of everyday practical reasoning”
- “... the study of the processes whereby rules that cover interactional settings are constructed.”
- “... a family of related approaches concerned with describing & portraying how people construct their own definitions of a social situation or, more broadly, with the social construction of knowledge.”

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Ethnomethodology is “the study of everyday practical reasoning” we are constantly making choices, we are constantly deciding what we should do, what we shouldn't do, etcetera, it is the study of everyday practical reasoning, I just asked somebody here in the studio for a bottle of water, now how did I decide that I wanted to have water, say half a minute before the lecture or maybe when if my throat starts drying up.

When will I decide to take a break between speaking and switching slides and then taking a sip of water, how will I make those decisions, how will I decide who to ask for that glass of water, you know when I needed, how can I decide when to connect with different people, how will I decide to live different aspects of my life as I live them, I am just giving you a very, very small rudimentary example of the way we do things.

We are constantly making decisions, we are constantly presented with choices, about interacting, not interacting, connecting, not connecting, when do you decide that you want to call up a loved one, when you have choices you know, how do you decide who to talk to first, who to talk to next, how do you decide when you want to do something and when you do not want to do the same thing, so how do you decide, how you been live, life.

And we see the things, then we study these things from the perspective of the people who are actually doing them. We don't think about these things, when you are, we just live life but ethnomethodology helps us see things from the perspective of the people who are actually living life as it happens.

It is “the study of the processes where by rules that cover interactional settings are constructed.” So what leads to the interactional settings that are constructed, what leads to the rules of or how are these rules of interactional settings constructed or how are these rules made, how do you decide when to pick up the phone and call your boss, how do you decide what do you know when to start a new topic, how do you decide when to stop talking, how do you decide whom contact first, if you have to contact five or six people.

How do you decide whom to contact first and whom to contact next, how do you decide when you are in the middle of a conversation, how do you decide you know when to interrupt the conversation and when not to interrupt the conversation, some of these rules are explicit, for example, in an official meeting please don't use your cell phones, sometimes your boss may say that I don't like it.

Sometimes these rules are implicit for example, if the phone rings in the middle of an official meeting typically we switch off our cell phones, when we go to the office, we are expecting a call, if its peers will say excuse me and maybe take a call, if we are sitting with our seniors, we will not take a call, no matter what, so these rules are implicit. Nobody tells them the senior may not mind, but some of us just don't.

So I leave my phone in my office, when I go to meet my boss, I just don't carry it with me, so I don't have the urge to pick up the phone, if I have it with me, it's on vibrate mode so I can decide there and then, if it is an important phone call, I will say excuse me and go out and take it. If its I just if I have the luxury of looking at the phone, I will look at it, if not then it

just keeps ringing and I know that somebody's calling me, as soon as I am done with the conversation with my boss and I will go out.

But then when I am sitting with the peer, maybe I will take that phone call and I will say excuse me, I think this is important, I cannot do that with my boss, so all of these things who decides, who makes these rules, how do we decide, what to do, what not to do, those things are then studied through ethnomethodology. These different rules that govern the social structure that is constructed around us are studied through ethnomethodology.

Ethnomethodology is “a family of related approaches concerned with describing and portraying how people construct their own definition of a social situation or more broadly, with the social construction of knowledge.” So ethnomethodology covers a number of approaches that aim to describe or portrait how people construct their own definitions of a social situation.

We try and understand how people construct or how people come to their own definitions of a social situation. How do I decide that something is important, how do I decide the something needs to be done, how do I decide the something does not need to be done. How do I describe that situation, so different approaches that find out that describe how people construct their definitions, how people arrive at their understanding of social situations.

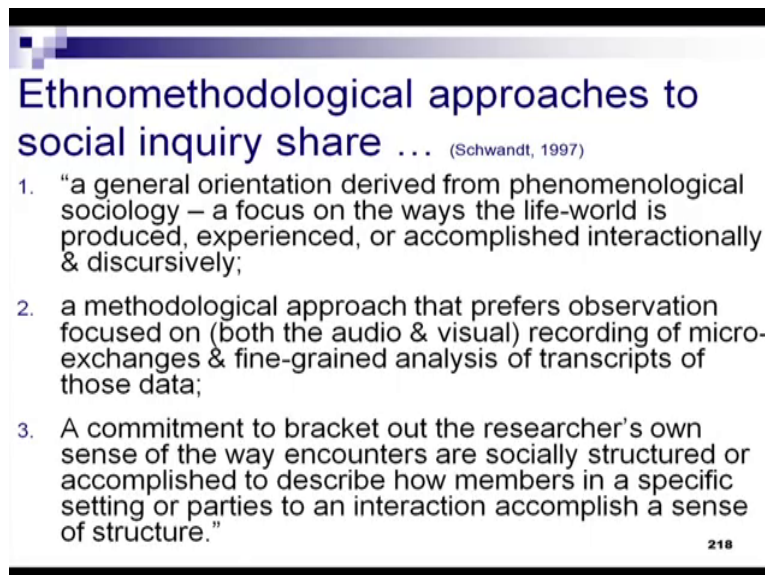
And what needs to be done in a social situation and what doesn't need to be done in that social situation or more broadly with the social construction of knowledge. And social construction essentially, implicitly, means it implies that others are involved, context is involved, prejudices are involved, biases are involved, preconceptions are involved, judgments are involved, all these things are involved.

We live life in and through biases, we live life in and through preconceived notions, when we study life, we cannot ignore the existence of these preconceived notions and judgments and biases etcetera. So we see life through these preconceived notions, judgments and biases, but at the same time as researchers we also must learn to distance ourselves and identify what it is that is governing, our understanding of a situation.

What is it that is preventing us from looking at another angle or what is it that is helping us looking, a look at a particular site, what is directing our attention to one aspect of the phenomenon and what is it that is taking away our attention from another aspect of the same phenomenon, okay. So biased towards something force us to look at one aspect of the same phenomenon.

Prejudice against something will prevent us from acknowledge that there could be another side of the phenomenon that we are studying and that is how life takes place, that is how our decisions are made, so on the one hand we are in situation, understanding that all of these things are playing role, on the other side we put ourselves out and we say okay. Now let me find out how, what is defining how I observe the situation, okay, alright.

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**Ethnomethodological approaches to social inquiry share ... (Schwandt, 1997)**

1. "a general orientation derived from phenomenological sociology – a focus on the ways the life-world is produced, experienced, or accomplished interactionally & discursively;
2. a methodological approach that prefers observation focused on (both the audio & visual) recording of micro-exchanges & fine-grained analysis of transcripts of those data;
3. A commitment to bracket out the researcher's own sense of the way encounters are socially structured or accomplished to describe how members in a specific setting or parties to an interaction accomplish a sense of structure."

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Ethnomethodological approaches to social inquiry share, “a general orientation derived from phenomenological sociology – a focus on the way the life-world is produced, experienced, or accomplished interactionally and discursively; A methodological approach that prefers observation and I am just going to read from this, it's just repetition of what I am telling you, a general orientation a focus on the way the life world is produced.

So one: is this general orientation we look at life as it happens, the second is a methodological approach that refers observation focused on both the audio and visual recording of micro exchanges and fine-grained analysis of transcripts of those data, so whatever is coming in, we are trying to analyze the interactions. Interactions help us construct social reality.

I am a student of communication, so as far as I am biased towards the importance of communication in understanding, how we perceive the world, how we receive the signals that are coming from the world, how we construct meanings from the signals and I will be very crude about it, I am just telling you about my own bias. I am a student of communication and I think communication is the most important thing that in the world.

You know communication is what makes the world go round. So identifying your own assumptions, identifying your own mindsets, this is a framework that we are coming from okay. A commitment to bracket out the researcher's own sense of the way encounters are socially constructed or accomplished to describe how members in a specific setting of parties to an interaction accomplish a sense of structure.”

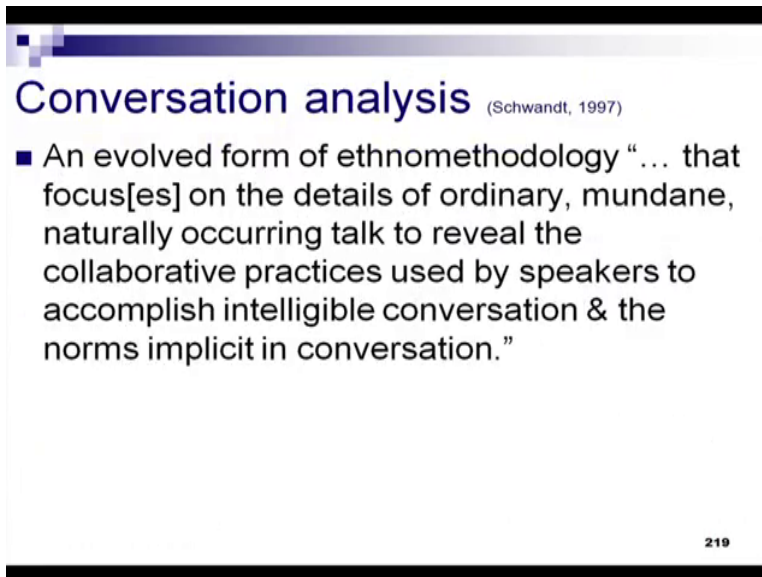
So these approaches require a commitment to pull out the researchers own sense of the way encounters are socially constructed, I have told you, I have a bias here, but identifying the bias is an essential part of being a good social researcher, I have a bias I will identify it, then I will distance myself and say okay, if I did not believe that communication is what makes the world go round.

What would I have seen, that is what I mean by distancing, I have bracketed it. As a communication student I would not call myself a scholar or an expert, I am still learning quite a bit. So as a student of communication I have drawn boundaries, as a student the communication I will see XYZ, but if I was not a student of communication, if I was not so incline towards how communication makes the world go round.

What would I have been able to see, so that is what a good researcher does. On the one hand you see things from the perfect, from your own frame of reference, then you pull out, then you see things from another side okay. And that commitment is required, when we talk about ethnomethodological approaches, that commitment to be a part of the situation and also be able to pull out of the situation.

And say okay I'm going to close my eyes to my life, as a student of communication and see things from maybe the perspective of a fellow colleagues, who is may be an engineer, physicist or chemist, who is not showing signs towards communication and see how they see the same phenomenon, alright.

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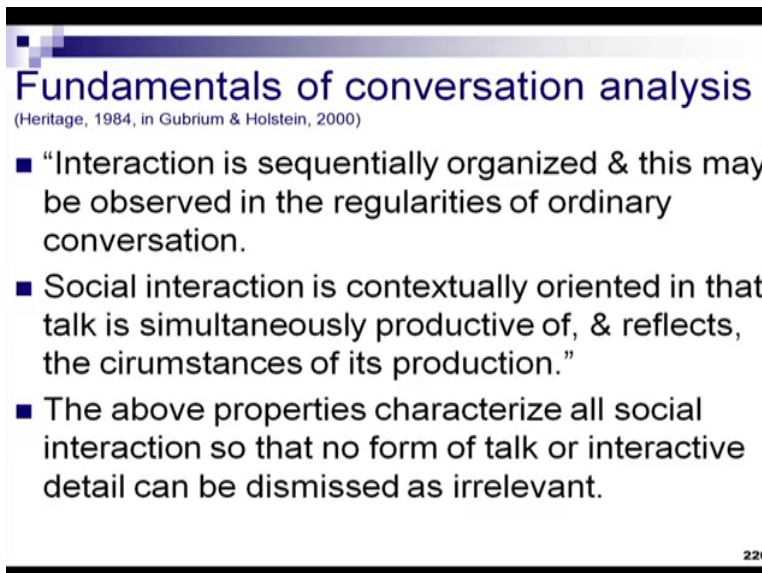
**Conversation analysis** (Schwandt, 1997)

- An evolved form of ethnomethodology “... that focus[es] on the details of ordinary, mundane, naturally occurring talk to reveal the collaborative practices used by speakers to accomplish intelligible conversation & the norms implicit in conversation.”

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Conversation analysis is, an evolved form of ethnomethodology “that focuses on the details of ordinary, mundane, naturally occurring talk to reveal the collaborative practices used by speakers to accomplish intelligible conversation and the norms implicit in conversation.” Conversation analysis studies how conversations take place, what are the rules, etc., I'm going to rush this a little bit, because we will discuss this in, how we are in, some strategies in the methods of inquiry, again, so I just rush through this okay.

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**Fundamentals of conversation analysis** (Heritage, 1984, in Gubrium & Holstein, 2000)

- “Interaction is sequentially organized & this may be observed in the regularities of ordinary conversation.
- Social interaction is contextually oriented in that talk is simultaneously productive of, & reflects, the circumstances of its production.”
- The above properties characterize all social interaction so that no form of talk or interactive detail can be dismissed as irrelevant.

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Fundamentals of conversation analysis are the first one here is “interaction is sequentially organized and this may be observed in the regularities of ordinary conversation. Social interaction is contextually oriented in that talk is simultaneously productive of and reflects, the circumstances of its production.” So conversation has patterns, there are patterns of

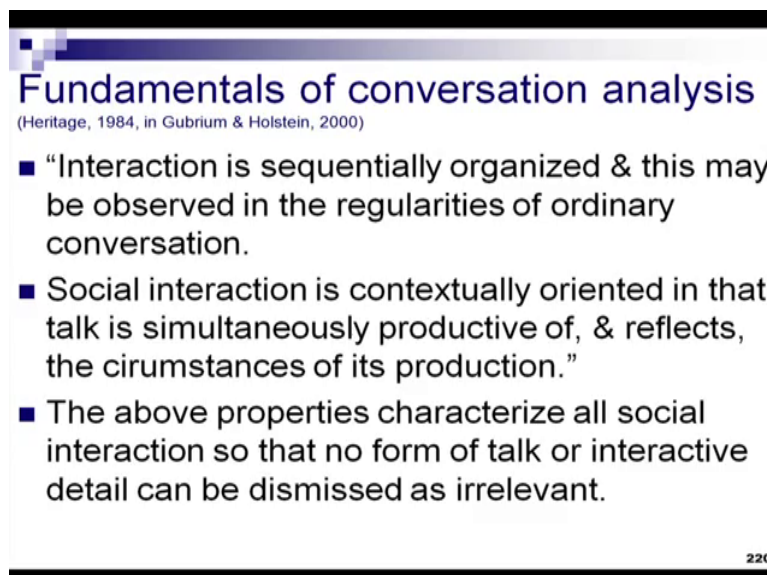
conversations and these patterns can be observed by observing the conversation, that we need to observe.

So these patterns occur regularly, patterns means that something is repeating itself, there is a regularity to the sequential organization of interaction, what comes first, what comes next, who speaks first, who speaks next, What topics are discussed, who changes topics, who stops talking first, who decides when to end the conversation etc., there are patterns to these within social situations.

And social interaction is contextual oriented in that talk is simultaneously productive of and reflects the circumstances of its production. So talk produces the context and also reflects the context with in which it is happening and an observation of both of these can help us analyze conversations.

The above property is characterize all social interaction so that no form of talk or interactive detail can be dismissed as irrelevant. Everything contributes, to the understanding of conversations, how conversations take place, how their interpreted, how they are analyzed, everything attached to conversations, will add to the richness of our understanding of those interactional situations.

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**Fundamentals of conversation analysis**  
(Heritage, 1984, in Gubrium & Holstein, 2000)

- “Interaction is sequentially organized & this may be observed in the regularities of ordinary conversation.
- Social interaction is contextually oriented in that talk is simultaneously productive of, & reflects, the circumstances of its production.”
- The above properties characterize all social interaction so that no form of talk or interactive detail can be dismissed as irrelevant.

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Foucauldian Discourse Analysis, again we can have a separate series of lectures on this, we don't have time for that, so I just briefly introduce you to this, Foucault “considers how historically and culturally located systems of power or knowledge construct subjects and their

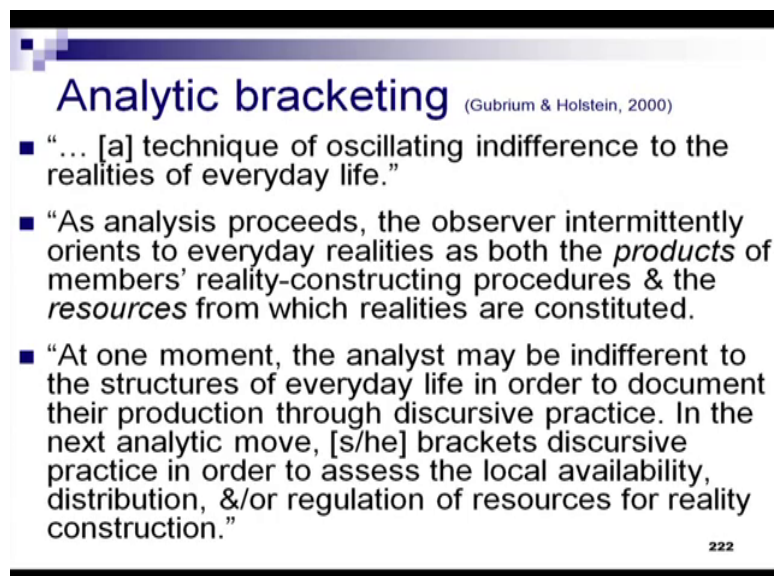


worlds. Foucauldian refer to these systems as ‘discourses’ emphasizing that they are not merely bodies of ideas, ideologies or other symbolic formulations but also working attitudes, modes of address, terms of reference and course of action suffused into social practices.”

So Foucault said that the systems, the historical and culturally located systems of power and knowledge essentially govern the way the world works, On the one hand ethnomethodologists try to find out what meaning is being constructed out of social interaction, and on the other, Foucauldians try to find out how that meaning is being constructed.

And the influence of different types of social interaction on the construction meaning. So the ideology that power sorry the belief that power, it is essential to identify the historically and culturally located systems of power or knowledge, in order to understand how the world is constructed out of interaction. is what to Foucauldian discourse analysis talks about, okay.

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**Analytic bracketing** (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000)

- “... [a] technique of oscillating indifference to the realities of everyday life.”
- “As analysis proceeds, the observer intermittently orients to everyday realities as both the *products* of members’ reality-constructing procedures & the *resources* from which realities are constituted.
- “At one moment, the analyst may be indifferent to the structures of everyday life in order to document their production through discursive practice. In the next analytic move, [s/he] brackets discursive practice in order to assess the local availability, distribution, &/or regulation of resources for reality construction.”

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Analytic bracketing is “a technique of oscillating indifference to the realities of everyday life.” I told you are a part of the situation and then you come out. “As analysis proceeds, the observer intermittently orients to everyday realities as both the products of the members’ of reality-constructing procedures and the resources from which realities are constituted.”

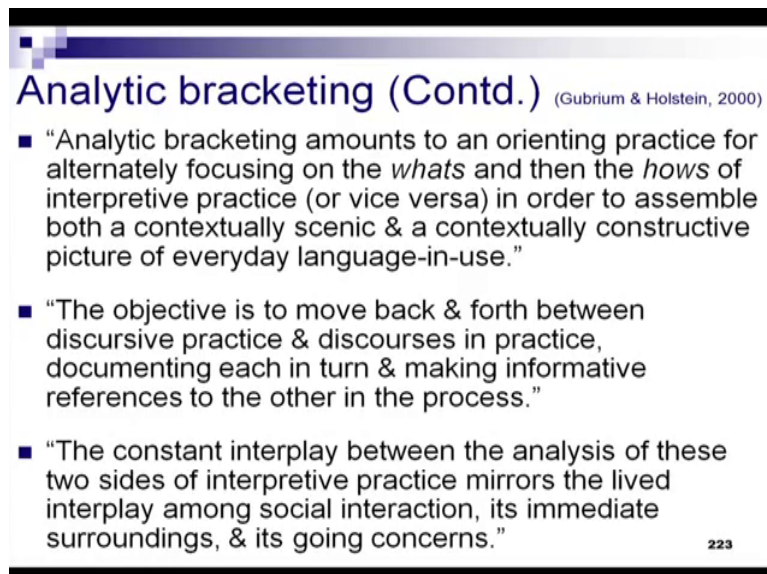
So the observer tries to understand what the members of that situation are knowing and what are their, what resources they are using to do, what it is that they are doing. “At one moment the analyst may be indifferent to the structures of everyday life in order to document a

production through discursive practice. In the next analytic move, he or she brackets discursive practice in order to assess the local availability, distribution and or regulation of resources for reality construction.”

So in one move you know on the one hand the analyst says okay, we just accept the way life is moving on, we see things, we can't see things unless we are in the situation and we take these connections for granted and then the researchers distance himself or herself and says okay.

But wait a minute, let me see what it is that is contributing to these interactions, these what is contributing to the making of these connections and let me take whatever it is that is contributing to the making of these connections and bracket these situations and the house of it and then put it back in the situation and see whether it really makes sense or not, whether I have understood something the way it was supposed to be understood or not.

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**Analytic bracketing (Contd.)** (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000)

- “Analytic bracketing amounts to an orienting practice for alternately focusing on the *whats* and then the *hows* of interpretive practice (or vice versa) in order to assemble both a contextually scenic & a contextually constructive picture of everyday language-in-use.”
- “The objective is to move back & forth between discursive practice & discourses in practice, documenting each in turn & making informative references to the other in the process.”
- “The constant interplay between the analysis of these two sides of interpretive practice mirrors the lived interplay among social interaction, its immediate surroundings, & its going concerns.”

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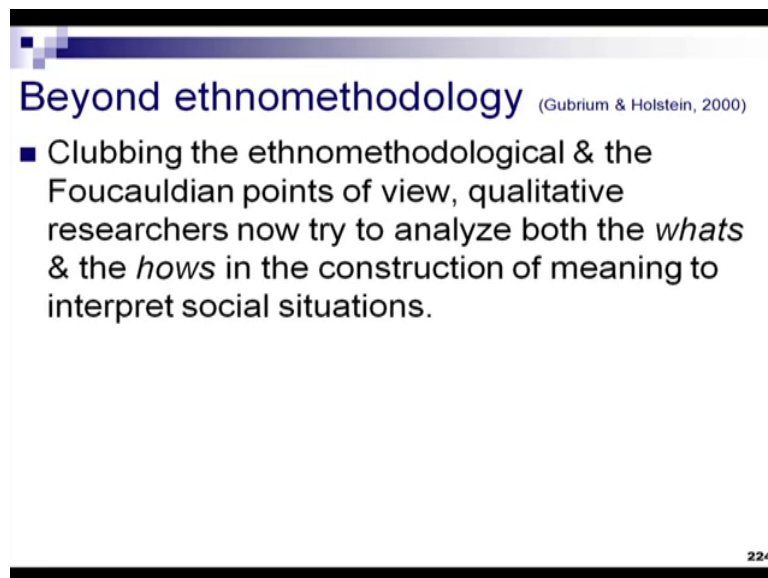
“Analytics bracketing amounts to an orienting practice for alternately focusing on the Whats and then the hows. What it is that is happening and then how is it that is happening, hows of interpretive practice or vice a versa in order to assemble both a contextually scenic and a contextual constructive picture of everyday language-in-use.”

On the one hand we appreciate, when we do analytic bracketing, on the one hand we appreciate whatever it is that is happening, on the other hand pull ourselves out and try to understand how these processes are taking place.

“The objective is to move back and forth between discursive practice and discourses in practice documenting each in turn and making informative references to the other in the process.” “The constant interplay between the analysis of these two sides of interpretive practice mirrors the lived interplay among social interaction, its immediate surroundings and its going concerns.”

So let's focus on the last sentence, last point here, the constant interplay between the analysis of these two sides of interpretive practice, which is the discuss the practice and discourse in practice, mirrored interplay among the social interaction is immediate surroundings, the connection social interaction with context is situated in and what governs, how the interaction takes place and how these connections with its immediate surroundings take place, that is what and analytic practice does.

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**Beyond ethnomethodology** (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000)

- Clubbing the ethnomethodological & the Foucauldian points of view, qualitative researchers now try to analyze both the *whats* & the *hows* in the construction of meaning to interpret social situations.

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Now what happens Beyond ethnomethodology, clubbing the ethnomethodology and Foucauldian points of view, qualitative researchers now try to analyze both the whats and the hows in the construction meaning to interpret social situations. So we go little bit further and we try and understand not only the what? But also the how? And then we move on to the why?

And quantitative researcher stake a claim to the Whys of interpreter practice they say we will go ahead and we will tell you why this happens in some situations that can happen, but unless you know the what and how it becomes a little difficult to get to the 'why' part. So these two

approaches work hand in hand here. But ethnomethodology initially started with just explaining what was happening? What is it? You know how are things happening? Then researchers took a step back and said okay.

Let's find out how these procedures, these processes are taking place, how are the social situations being constructed, how is reality being socially constructed, what role does interaction plays in this and that is one strategy of inquiry. The dance between studying the what and the how as a distance observer and this dance then constitutes the strategy of inquiry that we called ethnomethodology.

So that is all we have time for in this lecture, we will continue with some more discussion on the strategies of qualitative inquiry in the next class, thank you very much for listening.