Organization of Behavior in Face-to-Face Interaction

Editors

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General Editor's Preface

In order to understand species similarities and differences of all kinds — biological, psychological, social, cultural, linguistic — anthropology has always been interdisciplinary, calling upon whoever appeared to have knowledge relevant to a problem. The present book, which catches the human sciences at a moment of discovery, is an excellent example. It reaches back to a primordial problem in human relations — the behavior of people when facing one another in small groups — to ask how we can discover which regularities might turn out to be universal in the species, and why. It is authored by practioners of psychology, sociology, anthropology, ethnology, linguistics, and mathematics and is a prelude to the discovery, from scratch, of cultural differences which modify human behavior. This requires as well the broadest worldwide participation. Hence the occasion — and atmosphere — of an international Congress.

Like most contemporary sciences, anthropology is a product of the European tradition. Some argue that it is a product of colonialism, with one small and self-interested part of the species dominating the study of the whole. If we are to understand the species, our science needs substantial input from scholars who represent a variety of the world's cultures. It was a deliberate purpose of the IXth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences to provide impetus in this direction. The *World Anthropology* volumes, therefore, offer a first glimpse of a human science in which members from all societies have played an active role. Each of the books is designed to be self-contained; each is an attempt to update its particular sector of scientific knowledge and is written by specialists from all parts of the world.

General Editor's Preface

Each volume should be read and reviewed individually as a separate volume on its own given subject. The set as a whole will indicate what changes are in store for anthropology as scholars from the developing countries join in studying the species of which we are all a part.

The IXth Congress was planned from the beginning not only to include as many of the scholars from every part of the world as possible, but also with a view toward the eventual publication of the papers in high-quality volumes. At previous Congresses scholars were invited to bring papers which were then read out loud. They were necessarily limited in length; many were only summarized; there was little time for discussion; and the sparse discussion could only be in one language. The IXth Congress was an experiment aimed at changing this. Papers were written with the intention of exchanging them before the Congress, particularly in extensive pre-Congress sessions; they were not intended to be read at the Congress, that time being devoted to discussions — discussions which were simultaneously and professionally translated into five languages. The method for eliciting the papers was structured to make as representative a sample as was allowable when scholarly creativity — hence self-selection — was critically important. Scholars were asked both to propose papers of their own and to suggest topics for sessions of the Congress which they might edit into volumes. All were then informed of the suggestions and encouraged to re-think their own papers and the topics. The process, therefore, was a continuous one of feedback and exchange and it has continued to be so even after the Congress. The some two thousand papers comprising *World Anthropology* certainly then offer a substantial sample of world anthropology. It has been said that anthropology is at a turning point; if this is so, these volumes will be the historical direction-markers.

As might have been foreseen in the first post-colonial generation, the large majority of the Congress papers (82 percent) are the work of scholars identified with the industrialized world which fathered our traditional discipline and the institution of the Congress itself: Eastern Europe (15 percent); Western Europe (16 percent); North America (47 percent); Japan, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand (4 percent). Only 18 percent of the papers are from developing areas: Africa (4 percent); Asia-Oceania (9 percent); Latin America (5 percent). Aside from the substantial representation from the U.S.S.R. and the nations of Eastern Europe, a significant difference between this corpus of written material and that of other Congresses is the addition of the large proportion of contributions from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. "Only 18 percent" is two to four times as great a proportion as that of other Congresses;

moreover, 18 percent of 2,000 papers is 360 papers, 10 times the number of "Third World" papers presented at previous Congresses. In fact, these 360 papers are more than the total of ALL papers published after the last International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences which was held in the United States (Philadelphia, 1956).

The significance of the increase is not simply quantitative. The input of scholars from areas which have until recently been no more than subject matter for anthropology represents both feedback and also long-awaited theoretical contributions from the perspectives of very different cultural, social and historical traditions. Many who attended the IXth Congress were convinced that anthropology would not be the same in the future. The fact that the next Congress (India, 1978) will be our first in the "Third World" may be symbolic of the change. Meanwhile, sober consideration of the present set of books will show how much, and just where and how, our discipline is being revolutionized.

Among the other books in this series which will especially interest readers of the present volume are those on language, psychology, primate behavior, ritual education, and social theory.

Chicago, Illinois   SOL TAX
July 14, 1975

Preface

The articles collected in this volume were presented and discussed at a Research Conference held in the Department of Psychology of the University of Chicago. The proceedings of the Conference were reported to a session of the IXth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences in Chicago on September 3. This report serves as the basis for the Introduction.

The Conference was originally thought of by Richard Harris, who did much of the preliminary correspondemce, and who was responsible for getting the conference accepted as part of the program of the IXth Congress. Adam Kendon and Mary Ritchie Key joined forces with Harris to form an Organizing Committee in November of 1972, when Kendon also agreed to act as Chairman. Victor H. Yngve, of the University of Chicago joined the Committee to handle local arrangements. He was given much assistance by Starkey Duncan, and together they took care of the innumerable details of housing and hosting the participants and the conference sessions. We are very grateful indeed to the Department of Psychology of the University of Chicago for allowing us to use a room for the Conference sessions, free of charge, and for a small grant in aid of various running expenses. Without this assistance, the Conference would not have been possible. We should also like to thank Bronx State Hospital, New York, and Temple University, Philadelphia, for bearing some of the costs of postage and telephone calls.

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Introduction

ADAM KENDON

This introduction is based upon a report of the pre-Congress conference on face-to-face interaction that was read to a session of the IXth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences. In this report an attempt was made to characterize the main topics that were dealt with at the conference and to comment upon some of the more important themes that were discussed. It is reproduced here in full, though with some minor changes, but a few paragraphs have been added in order to provide some historical perspective. As we shall see, the approach taken in this conference to the study of interaction is relatively recent. However, as a discussant at the Congress session reminded us, the study of face-to-face interaction is by no means new. Indeed, it has been a focus of attention in social science at least since the beginning of the century.

One of the earliest social scientists to focus upon interaction was Georg Simmel. For him "SOCIETY is merely the name for a number of individuals, connected by interaction" (Coser 1965: 5). He believed that the main concern of sociology should be with the phenomena of face-to-face interaction. He published several essays which were directly concerned with certain forms of behavior in face-to-face situations, such as sociable conversation and coquetry, and in a well-known passage from his *Soziologie,* published in 1908, excerpted by Park and Burgess in their early and influential reader (1924) he deals with the "sociology of the senses," showing how the sensory organs are mobilized in interaction, including such topics as the interactional significance of mutual eye-to-eye gazes.

Simmel had an important influence upon the development of the

Chicago school of descriptive sociology, where a great deal of attention was paid to behavior in face-to-face situations. Paralleling this development, and closely related to it, was the growth of symbolic interactionism. This was developed by Cooley (1902) and later by Mead (1934), who emphasized the importance of understanding interaction for throwing light upon some of the key concepts of social psychology, such as the "self." By the second and third decades of this century, studies were emerging, particularly from industrial settings, which laid great stress on the importance of the "primary group" as the immediate setting for the behavior of individuals. This focused the interest of many upon the interrelations of behavior of people in each other's immediate presence. A parallel development in anthropology, the emergence of "functionalism," likewise led to a focus of interest upon the interrelationships between people and thus a concern with how they actually behaved in each other's presence.

These developments led to the emergence of several different methods of measuring behavior in face-to-face interaction, and in the fourth and fifth decades of this century there was a considerable increase in literature on face-to-face interaction. It is of interest to note that this literature is scarcely referred to by the contributors to this conference. Indeed, the approach represented here appears to be a separate and more recent development.

In the approach taken in this conference the focus of interest is upon the BEHAVIOR of face-to-face interaction and how it functions interactively. In this it contrasts with earlier approaches in which the phenomena of interaction were studied, not for their own sake, but because it was felt that by studying interaction light would be thrown upon the structure of social institutions or on the nature of human relationships. In the present approach the questions of concern have to do with the means by which occasions of interaction per se are brought off. Thus we find great interest in the description of patterns of speech or body motion as they occur in interaction. Linguistics and ethology, in particular, at least insofar as these are descriptive sciences, have had great influence here. We may also observe the influence of communication theory and general systems theory.

One of the earliest attempts to deal with behavior in face-to-face interaction was developed by Eliot Chapple. Here the attempt was made to identify some measurable aspects of behavior in terms of which consistent predictions could be made. Chapple has found, for instance, that individuals show certain characteristics in the way they pattern their periods of activity in time. He identifies a unit of behavior known

as an ACTION which, in talking situations, comprises the duration of time an individual spends in active speech or gesture. The frequency and duration of actions may be measured within occasions of interaction, and various quantitative indices of the individual's interactive performance may be extracted. These have been found to be predictive of how the individual may behave in a variety of other interactive situations (Chapple and Lindemann 1942; Chapple and Donald 1947; Matarazzo, Saslow, and Matarazzo 1956; Kendon 1963). Chapple has also proposed that patterns of social organization and the structure of social relationships may be described in terms of the frequency and patterning of interaction (Chapple 1940; Chapple and Coon 1942; Arensberg 1972). It will be seen, however, that Chapple's interest is in finding a single dimension of behavior which can provide a means of assessing individual differences in interaction style, and a means of giving quantitative expression to social relationships and social organization structure. Thus Chapple's focus, though upon behavior, is upon behavior as a means of measuring something else. His approach, though effective in giving a means of assessing the consequences of interaction, and having implications for the nature of that phenomenon, does not focus primarily on behavior in face-to-face interaction in all its complexity.

A rather different and more widely used approach to the analysis of interaction is one in which an attempt is made to devise categories in terms of which the CONTENT of what people communicate to one another could be classified. Here the usual procedure has been for observers to score the behavior in an interacting group in terms of sets of predetermined categories of meaning. The various frequencies with which the different categories are scored then become the data to be analyzed. The first fully systematic category system for the study of interaction was proposed by Bales (1950). His system has been very widely used, and a large number of studies in which it has been used have been published (see Hare, Borgatta, and Bales 1955; Hare 1962). Many other category systems have been developed, based upon a variety of theoretical principles, and aimed at a variety of questions. Many of these have been reviewed by Heyns and Lippitt (1954) and by Weick (1968). I shall not attempt here to comment specifically on any of these. I would like to point out, however, some of the more important features these various systems have in common.

First, the "acts" or units in terms of which the behavior is observed are not units of BEHAVIOR. They are CATEGORIES or PIGEON HOLES into which the observer may fit behavior. However, in classifying the be-

havior the observer classifies not so much the behavior itself as the intent that is judged to lie behind the behavior. Thus in Bales' system the categories are given labels such as "gives information" or "asks for opinion." Second, the categories are not derived empirically but from some set of theoretical presuppositions. In the case of Bales' category system, for example, the categories were derived from a theory of the interactive process as a problem-solving process. The problem-solving process was analyzed into various phases, the categories being derived from these phases. In the case of another category system, more recently proposed by Longabaugh (1963), the guiding theory was exchange theory — that people in interaction offer, through their acts, rewards and costs to one another. Other category systems have been derived from theories heavily influenced by psychoanalytic concepts.

In short, in all of these systems, behavior is looked upon not so much for its own sake, as for what motivations or intents it is expressing, or for what results follow upon it. It is in terms of these supposed motives or intents or in terms of its supposed results that it is classified.

In addition to these features, it is most important to notice that the use of the category approach involves a reliance upon natural human judgment of motive, intent, or result. This has certain very important consequences. It has meant that all those features of social interaction that we, in our ordinary daily lives, take entirely for granted, are also taken for granted by investigators using the category approach. For example, the investigator must assume, as he sits down behind his one-way mirror, that he knows when the meeting that he is to observe has begun and that all the participants know this too. He must assume that the participants know how to speak, how to maintain themselves as participants in the situation, that they know (and he knows) who is being addressed and who has the next turn at speaking. The whole of what might be termed the machinery of interaction, which we take for granted in our daily lives, is also taken for granted by the investigator using the category approach. Such an investigator, thus, is forever limited in what he can study of the phenomena of interaction.

Since 1960, approximately, there has been a steady increase in the number of investigators who have been interested in the direct measurement of behavior in situations of social interaction. Many of these studies have been reviewed by Weick (1968). For example, a number of studies have appeared in recent years in which particular behavioral variables have been examined, most notably personal space (Evans and Howard 1973), gaze (see, for example, Exline 1972; von Cranach 1971), various aspects of body motion and facial expression (see Davis 1972

for an extensive survey of the literature) and various aspects of vocalization, such as hesitation, and other "paralinguistic" features (see Harris and Rubinstein, this volume, for references to much of this literature). Secondly, and even more recently, studies have begun to appear in which attempts have been made to observe behavior systematically in a way somewhat similar to that followed in descriptive ethology. Studies using such methods are well summarized in Hutt and Hutt (1970), Blurton-Jones (1972), and McGrew (1972).

It is to be noted, however, that in much of this work the primary focus has been not so much on INTERACTION and how it is brought off, as it has been on the significance of the behavior measured for the psychological state of the individual. Much of the work on gaze, for example, has considered variations in amounts of looking in relation to such psychological variables as liking or embarrassment. The work on facial expression is almost wholly confined to investigating it as a symptom of emotional state. Much of the work done under the influence of ethological methods, done for the most part with children, has a predominantly diagnostic interest. That is, it has been concerned with characterizing sex differences in behavior, pathological behavior patterns such as autism, or with characterizing types of children in terms of clusters of behavior patterns.

The approach to interaction and the behavior of interaction represented by the present conference departs in several ways from the approaches referred to above. First of all, the focus is upon systems of behavior rather than upon systems of motivation, intent, or effect. Second, the focus is upon interaction itself rather than upon the behavior of individuals or upon the consequences of interaction for individuals. The starting point of this perspective, thus, is the interdependency of the behavior of individuals that obtains whenever they are in one another's presence. The endeavor, in this perspective, is to understand how OCCASIONS OF INTERACTION are organized. The encounter is taken as a starting point — the conversation, the greeting, the interview — and one seeks to understand how the behavior that participants make use of within such occasions functions in the creation of them. In other words, in this perspective the concern is with the behavior characteristic of occasions of interaction and with its significance for those occasions.

From this perspective, it quickly becomes apparent that the full range of behaviors observable in interaction must be comprehended. An integrated approach to behavior becomes necessary, and we cannot be content with dealing with behavioral variables one at a time. In

seeking to set up the pre-Congress conference whose proceedings make up this volume, therefore, we sought participants who had already expressed interest in developing such an integrated point of view.

This conference perhaps may be seen as one of a series. The first within this perspective was the paralinguistic and kinesics conference that was held in Bloomington, Indiana in 1962 which resulted in the volume *Approaches to semiotics* (Sebeok, Hayes, and Bateson 1963). Since then there have been three others: on Long Island in 1968, in Oxford, England in 1969, and in Amsterdam in 1970. The Amsterdam conference, organized by Erving Goffman and T. A. Sebeok, though unpublished, was of particular significance insofar as it was organized explicitly to promote the development of "interaction ethology" — a term Goffman has put forward to label the study of the behavior of interaction from exactly the perspective we are trying to distinguish here (see Goffman 1971: xii).

All of these earlier conferences brought together workers from different disciplines, and the present conference is no exception. In the present conference psychology, linguistics, anthropology, ethology, mathematics, and sociology are all represented. Yet, at this conference at least, in listening to the discussion, one would not so readily recognize these different backgrounds. This would appear to be because each participant recognized that the study of the behavior of face-to-face interaction is not adequately encompassed by any one discipline. Though the diverse skills and knowledge such a diverse range of disciplines can provide are needed, it seems that an adequate discussion of these phenomena demands new terms and new concepts which no existing individual discipline adequately supplies.

Several members of the present conference expressed some surprise at the apparent ease with which representatives of such a diverse range of disciplines were able to have profitable discussions. This ease could be accounted for by the joint recognition that no one existing discipline had an adequate language in which the phenomena could be discussed. It was also suggested that each participant recognized that his interest in face-to-face interaction is not a fully legitimate interest for him to have, insofar as he still claims to be a member of a particular field. Each thus feels somewhat peripheral to his official field, and it is this joint feeling of peripheralness that brought about a sense of commonality among members of the conference.

If there was a good sense of agreement among the participants that there is indeed a coherent field of study, yet one that cannot be contained within any existing discipline, there was also agreement that this

field is still in an emergent state. It was generally agreed however that an increasingly common set of approaches is emerging or, perhaps, an increasing degree of recognition of how the different approaches that different investigators follow fit together.

One theme that runs through many of the papers and that ran through much of the discussion which illustrates this general point in a more concrete way is that any current distinctions and definitions are quite unsatisfactory. There was a recognition that current notions of "language" are unusable. It was recognized that when people are in face-to-face interaction all aspects of their behavior and of the setting which they are in are involved in creating the order that may be discerned and that it is a matter of further investigation to establish how the various strands of behavior that may be distinguished — speech, gesture, spacing, posture, facial display — are interrelated and what functions they subserve.

A second theme, obviously closely related to the first, is that we need to re-immerse ourselves in the phenomena. It seemed to be generally recognized that we understand very little about how behavior in face-to-face interaction is organized, so that in order to gain more understanding we must go back and look at it. Sound-film and video-tape are thus the primary instruments because these are the only means available by which behavior may be "fixed" and so made into a specimen that can be repeatedly examined.

In sum, then, we may say that the perspective represented in this conference is characterized by an interest in the organization of behavior of face-to-face interaction. It is, therefore, descriptive in outlook, and it demands behavior specimens as material to work from. It does not seek to construct an extensive theoretical framework, but is content with only such local theory as is needed to make systematic descriptions of particular phenomena possible. It finds past distinctions, based upon narrower or less precise examinations of behavior, or based upon theoretical presuppositions more than upon observations, as less than useful.

We may now look at some of the specific topics dealt with at the conference, and comment upon some of the more important issues that were raised. In dealing with these topics, I shall treat them in what appears to me to be a logical order. This is not necessarily the same as the order in which they were considered in the conference. Furthermore, what follows is not intended to be a review of the papers that were presented. It is intended as a personal survey of some of the principal topics and issues suggested in the conference.