CATEGORIZATION IN TALK: A CASE STUDY OF TAXONOMIES AND SOCIAL MEANING

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Abstract

This article seeks to advance the usage-based discourse research that investigates meanings and processes of meaning construction in interaction by elaborating an empirically grounded interdisciplinary model. The paradigmatic and sequential analysis employed here brings together linguistic discourse analysis with an ethnomethodological perspective, and presents an innovative take on category organization in talk, explaining how to capture knowledge resources such as asymmetrical category contrast pairs in talk. In analyzing in detail the speaker's taxonomy construction in a sample conversation, the paper systematically explores the following two topics related to the speaker: what category characteristic he is orienting to as a resource for his present talk and what social meaning the speaker's taxonomizing is consistently communicating in the flow of talk. The proposed model captures a color binary—used to categorize people—of the 'colored' versus the 'white', entailed in the expression 'a so-called yellow colored people', and reveals that the category pair is used as an organizational device in the speaker's argument.

The paper claims that taxonomy analysis in sequence is useful to examine the selected words in relation to their semiotic resources.

Keywords: Categorization; Category as organization device; Color binary; Ethnomethodology; Race; Semiotic resources; Taxonomization; Taxonomy analysis.

1. Introduction

This paper proposes an interdisciplinary approach that looks at the process through which social categories like color binaries are oriented to and organize conversation as a means for talk. The proposed model incorporates the research perspectives of category devices (Sacks 1995) and membership categorization analysis in ethnomethodology (Hester and Eglin 1997; Hester and Hester 2012) into linguistic analysis, and technically employs Bilmes' (2009, 2011) approach to taxonomy as occasioned semantics in interaction.

The model has been developed in order to investigate the knowledge resources for choosing words in talk. To demonstrate the model, the paper analyzes one sample data set: A conversation between a student teacher and a supervisor at a supervision session in a teaching technique lab at an American university, where the student teacher proposes his teaching plan related to a "rural counterattack" movement in the United States in the early 1990s. By examining their on-going talk, the analysis focuses on the

expression ‘a so-called yellow colored people’ used by the student teacher, and captures his orientation to the race-related color binary in the talk. The model first observes the taxonomies the speaker creates with his words and expressions for explaining and describing his proposal, asking how those words and expressions are selected from the other possible semiotic resources. Then it systematically analyzes their relevant semiotic properties and explains the process through which the speaker organizes the occasioned categories such as color binaries of the ‘colored’ and the ‘white’, across the architecture of the taxonomies. By paradigmatically analyzing the semiotic properties of focal individual words in sequence, it explains the importance of this kind of taxonomy analysis: That it captures the speaker’s social knowledge that he is actually using for his argument.

The purpose of the present paper is thus twofold. It proposes a model of taxonomy analysis that systematically explains the speaker’s conceptual organization, and it elaborates the model by revealing the color binary in the taxonomization practiced on a sample data set.

2. Taxonomies as a resource for analysis

In general, taxonomy is a conceptual knowledge model used to classify things into hierarchical and horizontal arrangements based on their inclusion and contrast relationships. Descriptive theories in linguistics use this model as a technical tool to explain the syntactic and semantic relationships of linguistic features. For example, Halliday (1961: 264) used it to classify grammatical units (sentence, clause, word, and morpheme) in terms of rank scale and to explain how they are linked to exponents such as unit group, class, and term, as a system. Leech (1974: 106-109) used it to classify antonyms in the two category types of binary taxonomy and multiple taxonomy. Lyons (1963) used this term first in semantics and referred to it briefly in his discussion on the relation of hyponymy (1968: 456), although later he pointed out the ambiguity of the semantic relations of the hyponyms (1977). In more recent studies, taxonomy is treated as a semantic model to show how words are structured in lexical fields and are related in terms of their semantic properties in a taxonomic classification (Cruse 1986, 2004). For example, the difference and similarity of the words ‘sheep’ and ‘horse’ can be made clearer by categorizing them under the superordinate ‘animal’; and then ‘animal’, ‘bird’, and ‘fish’ can be categorized more clearly under the superordinate ‘creature’. However, as Cruse points out, the taxonomic lexical hierarchy, which is based on a sense relation, is not that simple. Categorization is taxonomically anomalous in real-life lexical classification, and to fully account for lexical items that are used as certain utterances in certain situations “we need to know their location in a taxonomic hierarchy relative to the generic level” (Cruse 2004: 155). Halliday and Matthiessen (1999) also point out the complication of many layers of organization that describe the relationships between words in a taxonomy. The difficulty of fully accounting for lexical relations of taxonomy in our everyday contexts also has been pointed out in technical and scientific classification (Kiu and Tsui 2011).

Taxonomy as a conceptual model has been extensively used in cognitive linguistics, too. Cognitive linguists have developed the concept of categorization to refer to a theory of mental processes and metaphorical associations to things. This perspective recasts the

traditional theory of categorization as a cognitive apparatus built into our thought and as a reflection of our perception of the world (e.g., Lakoff 1987; Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Their perspective has been developed on the assumption that meanings have cultural restrictions, in order to capture cultural meanings in language and to investigate systems of meaning from the perspective of human cognition. However, challenging this surging trend of cognitivism, discursive psychology (e.g., Edwards 1991) challenges their deductive approach. If language is defined within the framework of concepts like that of category, discursive psychologists argue, category exists apart from the particular linguistic expressions in use. They claim, then, that mental categories are not situated, and that categories, furthermore, are not for the researcher to theorize or generalize but for speakers to use in their talk. As Kiu and Tsui (2011) show, with ample natural data, people's category-mind is free and flexible, and this calls for a research shift to an ethno-method of category construction. According to them, people create their own taxonomies with a variety of vocabularies for their communicative goals, and the users' vocabulary in the real world does not always reflect that defined by the taxonomists or the experts.

This kind of view has been expressed in the early literature in ethnomethodology. Sacks' (1979) observation on teenagers' identity construction beat a path for later research to follow. His approach provided for an inductive perspective on taxonomy research, using the observational analysis of actual category use by a society's members (as teenagers), representing an ethno-method that includes the technique of detailed documentation with deep insight into speakers' orientation to categories. He depicted how the teenagers in his study deployed categories as a device for particularizing their identities. Sacks used a method allowing us to derive our understanding of those teenagers' selection of words from his observation; for example, how they create a category of a particular car (such as 'hot-rod') and how the category-related activities categorize the speakers themselves toward/against society. The approach is holistic and ethnomethodological in that it analyzes semantically propositional, pragmatically procedural, and socially constructional activity observing members' ways of taxonomy construction in their own right, based on the assumption that "members deploy the concept of category as a device" (Schegloff 2007b) and "for talking about it (the category) in ways that are adaptable to the situated requirements of description, and to differences of perspective, and to the need to put words to work in the pragmatics of social interaction" (Edwards 1991: 523). This perspective provides us with a new opportunity to reflect on how speakers' chosen words construct meanings as special in a given situation.

Sacks' (1972a, b; 1979) thought-provoking approach has been widely applied in multiple ways, to pursue the pragmatic analysis of language not only to capture conventionalized knowledge in situations but also to uncover speakers' logical ways of organizing that knowledge, and to show how they achieve such knowledge as a reasonable moral practice for talk. For example, Bilmes' (2009) analysis of a telephone conversation described by Sacks is one application of Sacks' idea. Bilmes focuses on the semantic negotiation between a social worker and a man who was involved in a family altercation, and examines how they select particular words and for what purpose. In his analysis, Bilmes employs a general theory of taxonomy that technically incorporates our context of linguistic knowledge into the analysis of the words actually used in interaction. He analyzes the speakers' taxonomical arrangements of the word

‘violence’ with the words ‘move’, ‘shove’, ‘hit’, and ‘smack’, and shows how the speakers are using semantics to negotiate the meaning of ‘violence’. To show the speakers’ ‘semanteme’ (i.e., the semantic relationships of the words the speakers select), he uses other ‘actually unuttered’ category members (i.e., ‘punch’) available from the semiotic resources of ‘violence’. Bilmes (2010) accepts such a context-based approach on the basis that researchers need to develop a method, if necessary, for revealing the answers to what they conceive as a problem to be solved.

The words chosen have available their alternative group members as semiotic resources which themselves construct their taxonomies. As long as speakers engage a particular word in salient ways and their semantic procedures are critical to word selection, it will be necessary to account for the paradigmatic resources, at least to the degree that the resources provide possible commonsensical explanation (Hayashi 2013; to appear; Kasper and Prior 2014). Although there are critiques of this view from an action-oriented conversation analysis perspective (see, e.g., Maynard 2011), the data-oriented research model this paper proposes shares the view that these semiotic resources provide practical semantic information on the choice of words. Unlike the action-oriented analysis, which looks for evidence that speakers themselves are orienting to the existence of regular structural patterns, this model looks for evidence that speakers themselves are orienting to special social meanings by choosing special words in special talk.

In addition to the thought on ‘category’ as a device, another contribution of Sacks’ (1972b) relevant to the present study is that of standard relational pairs between category members (e.g., parent–child, husband–wife). Though past studies in semantics and pragmatics and recent works on investigation of oppositeness in context have accumulated a wealth of information on the nature of oppositeness of words and expressions (see, e.g., Jeffries’ recent work [e.g., 2010]), Sacks’ followers’ work (e.g., Clifton [2009]; Hester and Eglin [1997]; Hester and Hester [2012]; Silverman [1998]; Jayyusi [1984]) provides an alternative way of observing the asymmetrical contrast pairs that are morally constituted for on-site orientation. Their idea of ‘orientation’ is especially significant for the present study’s goal of exploring systematically what contrast pairs the speaker orients to as a conceptual apparatus and what its consistent use in his talk socially communicates.

3. Justification for selection of the sample data

The model proposed above aims neither to show how speakers create taxonomies and use them in conversation nor to claim that taxonomy is a discursive phenomenon. These are given assumptions in the field of pragmatics. Instead, it aims to trace how conceptual categorical knowledge is applied to social categories like gender, age, and race in interaction and to capture the meanings concerned, not in the light of the established theories, but in the process of the speaker’s taxonomy construction. While reviewing the video-recorded data at the teaching technique lab, I realized that the color word ‘yellow’ used by the speaker needs to be explored partly because of his usage bias, but mainly because the speaker’s occasioned choices of expressions are sequentially organized in relation to some social knowledge. To understand that knowledge, it was necessary to recount the progress of the speaker’s activity of taxonomizing. In this

section I explain the steps towards integrating a framework to apply the proposed model, but the relevant background of the use of this model for race discourse research is briefly reviewed first.

The term ‘race’ was borrowed allegedly in earlier times by human biologists from general biology involved in classifying a variety of subspecies of plants and animals (Moore 2008: XI). In the sixteenth century the term emerged in English from the Italian *rassa* and the French *race* to describe people of common descent or origin (Barnshaw 2008: 1091). However, in later years, especially beginning in the early 1920s, the discovery of genes enabled us to observe that there are no scientific ways of classifying human beings into subspecies, that there are no specific genes that determine a person’s race, and that ‘race’ is a social and cultural construct (Omoto 2002: 540-541). Another method of classification of human beings was created based on phenotypical features such as skin pigmentation, hair, face, and physical structure. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, these physical variables in appearance gave shape to the concept of ‘race’. This was apparently when the language of ‘racism’ was invented, with the beliefs that the superficial traits “signified deep and profound differences among human populations in their psychology, temperament, and even moral structure” and that “human races were not just different from one another, but that some were superior to others” (Moore 2008: XI). Such discourses of race have survived (see, e.g., Benedict [1940]; Fredrickson [2002]; Moore [2008]); despite abundant scientific evidence that the idea of race as a signifier is fallible and there is no scientific ground to classify human beings in terms of physical differences (see Urano’s detailed review, 2009).

Researchers in the field of discourse studies have also supported the view that race and racism are social constructs by studying the language pertaining to it in micro and macro contexts and demonstrating that racial discourse embodies a political ideology which is repeatedly decontextualized, reconstructed, and reinterpreted in history (see Whitehead and Lerner [2009] for review). Billig (1995) argues that everyday practice is a major force for ideological reproduction, and that racial practice spreads epidemically through a variety of resources. However, some researchers claim the practice in recent years is continued predominantly in tacit ways, avoiding apparent racist language (van Dijk [1987]; in Foster [2009: 686]); treating race as a delicate topic (Pomerantz and Zemel [2003]; in Foster [2009: 686]); and bureaucratizing race talk with a sophisticated discursive strategy (Foster 2009: 699-700). To show just how tacit race discourse is, some research has focused on metaphorical expressions related to race in the media and revealed that racism strategically constructs a reality of opposites, such as ‘discriminating’ and ‘discriminated’, ‘inclusion’ and ‘exclusion’, by using metaphors with entailments in one part of the source domain that are particularly articulated in favor of the majority (the ‘white’) against the opposite minority (the ‘colored’), (e.g., van Dijk [1996]; Chilton [1996, 2004]; Semino and Masci [1996]; Goatly [1997, 2006]; Santa Ana [1999]; El Refaie [2001]).

Many studies in the relevant fields of discourse analysis have indicated the ideological aspect of racial categories with a variety of analytic parameters, but those parameters are often criticized as premised on a pre-given. To avoid predicting and hypothesizing, some fields such as conversation analysis (CA), related to the tradition of ethnomethodology, focus on the overt articulation of race-related words and expressions as linguistic evidence, and investigate how they are used as a device for turn-taking. While a growing body of discourse studies takes the approach of theorizing

the axioms of race and racism as ideology, conversation analysts take the approach of documenting how race is occasionally used and treated as relevant to the immediate talk, and expect us to reflect upon their documentations of speakers' inferential methods of constructing stereotypically taken-for-granted racial dualism. For example, Whitehead and Lerner (2009) capture race-related talk uttered at turn-by-turn moments and show how that talk is designed to tell or account for the referents' racial background indirectly. One of their examples includes the moment when a speaker described a father as 'white' in an episodic story to highlight the father's racial background. In another example, the speaker identified the victim of an attack as a 'white' friend to make a story relevant to the listener. These speakers' choices of color word do reflect society's knowledge about their social group, without necessarily saying that they are practicing racism directly. By saying 'white' the speakers are accounting for the social expectations about the person's ethnicity in the topic of the story, that is, that the father and the friend are white. The 'white' chosen in those particular contexts entails the 'non-white', and thus implies the color binary of the 'white' versus the 'colored'.

Similarly, West and Fenstermaker (2002) analyze the ways people portray themselves routinely as members of social categories like race, gender, and class. For example, when introducing themselves at a meeting, apparently non-white Americans added extra information that identified their racial background. The expressions they used include: 'As the immediate past Chair and representative of the California Legislative Black Caucus', 'Having been the first, as I understand it, African American appointed directly', and 'The only Asian face in the uh hundred twenty seven members'. West and Fenstermaker report that, in contrast, the white Americans attending the meeting did not portray themselves through words conveying color or ethnic background. Although West and Fenstermaker limit their analysis to documenting the facts of the self-representations, these expressions reveal the speakers' accommodation to social norms and expectations, as in Whitehead and Lerner's examples. The one group contextualized their accommodation by 'not saying' color, while the others did so by 'saying' color and ethnicity. The speakers in these examples did not talk about race as a topic, nor did they make any statements about the color dichotomy, but their use of color words was designed to convey race-related implications instantly accessible to their listeners.

Color in these examples is a practical social code to divide human beings into racial categories in an ostensible way. However, in the world of natural signs there is no rule for connecting color to human beings, although metonymy in language leads to such a connection often being taken for granted—as if accessing color was a normal action for referring to human beings. Extensive past studies in various fields have pointed out the delusion of such associations, and color-related racial discourse is generally carefully avoided in social interaction. Nevertheless, the association is still surprisingly pervasive, and ethnic identity is often highlighted with color words in everyday conversation. The color expressions in the above examples function not only to identify the referents or selves but also, as Hill (2005) explains, indirectly index their tacit social behavior, which allocates individuals and groups of people into the category of either the 'white' or the 'colored'. Hill argues that the penetration of this racial classification is transparent enough to form a part of everyday social life in the United States to the extent that people cannot live a life without touching on it. Saying or not saying 'white' or 'non-white' is regarded as a social code of communication that is

interwoven profoundly within the fabric of the social norms and this inescapable performance accounts for the social norms that embrace this color binary.

The model of the present paper, however, does not rely for its analysis on the assumption of the color binary as a social norm, as it takes the position that the color binary emerges in concrete situations in the speaker's ways of orienting to the social norm, and its task is to capture the moments and to show that the speaker is presenting the binary in observable ways to the listeners at those moments. The model thus envisages that social and cultural categorical knowledge is 'constitutively organized for the inference' (Jayyusi 1991: 240-241) in 'stretches of talk' (Schegloff 2007a, b) as 'a means for talk' (Edwards 1991, 1997). It employs a radical localism that punctuates the flow of speakers' talk at the moments when the researcher locates the emergence of the color binary, that is, when the emergence is sufficiently evident to the researcher to provide insight into its emergence.

4. Sample analysis

The segments I analyze were taken from a pre-conference that took place at a teaching technique lab in an American university, where students pursuing a teaching qualification take a class called 'Clinical Supervision' as part of their course requirements. They attend a lecture class and learn theories and methodology of teaching in the first semester, and then apply them to their teaching in the lab practicum in the next semester. The lab practicum consists of three activity sessions: Pre-conference, post-conference, and practical teaching. In the practical teaching sessions, the students are called 'student teachers'. They teach their major subjects to students who are hired by the university department. In the pre- and post-conferences, preceptors (called 'supervisors') supervise student teachers on a one-to-one basis and give advice to the student teachers before and after the practical class so that they can improve their teaching skills. Approximately 20 minutes are spent for each session. All sessions are routinely videotaped, and supervisors use the videotaped materials for review and preparation for the next class.

The trained supervisors teach student teachers using a helping model (Egan 1975/1994; Blumberg 1980) that involves three steps of action: Identifying the problem, finding preferred alternatives, and developing action strategies to achieve the goal. At the supervision session, supervisors are expected to adhere to an affective norm that consists of four factors: 'Empathy', 'regard', 'unconditionality', and 'congruence'. Supervisors are also to be conscious of student teachers' feelings, to communicate with them on equal terms, to accept behaviors even if the supervisors may not approve of them, and to assure student teachers that the supervisors trust them (see Hayashi and Hayashi 2002 for details of the supervision and the sessions and for the longer transcript; however, some fragments used here are not included in that transcript). It is not only supervisors but also student teachers who are expected to observe these norms as a teaching technique. Therefore, both supervisors and student teachers organize their turns in the session, and student teachers are expected to design their questions to ask the students based on this model.

The investigated segments involve discussion of a male student teacher's (hereafter ST) teaching plan for the next class. Prior to this meeting, ST has reported to his male

supervisor (hereafter SV) the questions he was going to ask in the next class, and in the present session they discuss whether the questions are strong enough for the students to explore. SV expresses his dissatisfaction with the questions ST has prepared, and says that they are too broad to invite the anticipated responses from the students. Then, a conflict develops. Although SV advises that ST would not be able to summarize the point of the lesson using these questions, ST says that the students do not have to arrive at a conclusion if they cannot, and that he wants to keep the questions open for free discussion. After several question-answer exchanges with ST, SV asks what his goal for the lesson was in the first place, and from this develops one of the basic information identification sequences, which can be schematized as follows (terms are paraphrased from Schenkein [1978]; see Schenkein [1978: 69] for the structural organization). Sets of these types of organization sequences occasionally emerge with recognizable ranges of variation in ST's response to SV's advice that ST change the prepared questions:

ST:	information-rich puzzle
SV:	information identification move
ST:	information-rich solution
SV:	comment

4.1. *Semiotic field of rural counterattack*

ST's procedure of encoding a taxonomy of rural counterattack first appeared in ST's information-rich puzzle as shown in Segment 1 when he explains his teaching plan.

Segment 1

1 SV:	O.K. And you don't care what the conclusion is.
2 ST:	Ahhhhhh I do.
3 SV:	Hah hah ha
4 ST:	But whatever conclusion they come up with hopefully it will fit in through
5	all the processes we use.
6 SV:	O.K. but you're not going to try to drag them to certain one if they decide
7	to go another way. Alright and how will be your overall conclusion
8	for the whole thing.
9 ST:	The overall conclusion should be something to the effect of ahhh
10	yes this type of thing should have occurred within the rural
11	community, not the urban community.
→ 12 SV:	What kind of a thing are we specifically talking about.
→ 13 ST:	The rural counterattack.
14 SV:	The what.
→ 15 ST:	Rural counterattack which whether things like the Klu Klux Klan was
16	a rural phenomena.
17 SV:	Alright.
→ 18 ST:	The immigration laws which put a stop on a certain number of Asian-type
→ 20	people that come into the country. This was a rural a movement. There's
21	too many a so-called yellow colored people coming into the United States.
22	We've got to put a stop to it. That was a rural movement. Ah mmmmm All
23	these movements which was rural attached to the city.
24 SV:	Alright. How how are you going to start this out now because you're
25	wanting to explore some ideas about something right.

Being asked a question ('and how will be your overall conclusion for the whole thing.') in lines 7 and 8, ST answers that his expected overall conclusion is that 'this type of thing'¹ (line 10) should have occurred within the rural community, not the urban community' (lines 10-11). By saying 'this type of thing', ST is pointing at a certain referent, which is the 'knowable' (Pomerantz 1980) idea that is at ST's side but not at SV's. So, SV tells him to identify the information puzzle in line 12.² Then, ST identifies the knowable idea as the 'rural counterattack' (line 13). In ST's saying 'rural counterattack', SV comes to know that ST had prepared the questions in order to elicit some features about the rural counterattack from the students so that they can further explore them. However, SV then makes the second information identification move ('The what.') (line 14), in which he further pursues ST's articulation (Pomerantz 1984). ST then formulates 'some features', listing two specific examples, the Ku Klux Klan and the immigration laws (lines 15-23). These specifications construct the entity of the rural counterattack as the members of the rural counterattack, by the taxonomy shown in Figure 1 (I call this semantic field a 'first layer' of taxonomy). This is a lucid moment in which the referent of 'this type of thing' is also identified.

Figure 1. Taxonomy of rural counterattack (the first layer)

In the course of interaction, SV repeatedly advises that the students cannot come up with these tokens as examples of rural counterattack because they did not learn about them in the previous lessons. Later, during the several turn exchanges following the interaction in Segment 1, which involved the SV's advice that ST should redesign the questions in accordance with what the students had learned previously, SV prompts ST to realize the problems with a series of questions (lines 1-2, 6, 9-10 in Segment 2). As a result, ST changes his question to 'what type of movements were common in the twenties' (line 12), with which he can solicit 'prohibition' and 'fundamentalism'.

Segment 2

1 SV:	All right and of course what what is the problem with asking them to come
2	up with these kinds of things in an exploratory discussion.
3 ST:	They could be so off base.

¹ With regard to the 'this type of thing', it was, in fact, mentioned in the preceding conversation at this session, where ST says that he wanted to discuss the rural counterattack verbalizing clearly the phrase, 'rural counterattack'. However, SV, though he sent an acknowledgement token ('ok'), did not pay attention to this, and did not develop the additional discussion on it there, as SV's concern at that moment was how ST should organize the beginning of the lesson.

² There are two possible reasons why ST did not say the tokens in a distinguishable way here. One is ST's problem. He attends the meeting without concrete idea of the lesson topic. Therefore he did not specify the entities of the referent of 'this' when SV told him to identify it (line 12). Even in his second response to SV's repair (line 14), ST does not specify it (see the incomplete relative clause in line 15), and instead he repeats the same verbal phrase. The other is that ST thinks his proposal of the topic was accepted by SV in the previous lesson.

- 4 SV: Yeah an and they may not/
 5 ST: /come up with any of them.
 6 SV: Yeah why not.
 7 (1.5)
 8 ST: Because we haven't gone over it yet.
 9 SV: OK and that's not part of their their background. Have you got any ways you
 10 think you might ah be able to get them to dream up some [()]
 11 ST: [Well I could ask]
 → 12 them what type of movements were common in the twenties because we've
 → 13 discussed things like prohibition fundamentalism.
 14 SV: OK.
 → 15 ST: Those are the other rural counterattack movements.

This conversation takes a canonical form for these clinical supervision conversations which they call the 'supervision model'. After ST listed the Ku Klux Klan and the immigration laws, SV guided ST to change the questions because they bore on unknown items. Then, ST asked a new question (line 12). This is an ordinary procedure within the supervision model, of helping student teachers to prepare a proper question plan for an exploratory lesson. However, ST claims that the items he expects to elicit are the Ku Klux Klan and the immigration laws but not 'prohibition' or 'fundamentalism', even though the students may come up with them (see his 'other' in line 15). His persistence on eliciting the first two features (the ones in Figure 1) creates the sequential variation of the model. This is the interactional condition in which ST redesigns the questions in a later sequence in Segment 3, and which is the concern of the present study, in order to explore what aspects of the social norm are constructed in the questions and why the questions matter for SV. However, before we examine those questions, ST's selection of the first two features needs more exploration.

4. 2. *Semantic field of immigration laws*

ST's explanation of 'the immigration laws' in lines 18-32 in Segment 1 (excerpt Segment 1a below) proves that the 'the immigration laws' has subcategory members which concern limitations on immigration, such as limitations on European immigration and Mexican immigration, and thus it constructs a taxonomy that formulates the semantic field illustrated in Figure 2, by which 'limitations on Asian immigration' becomes one of these specifications. Therefore, his statement about 'The immigration laws which put a stop on a certain number of Asian-type people' reveals that the 'limitations on Asian immigration' is ST's special selection.

Segment 1a

The immigration laws which put a stop on a certain number of Asian-type people that come into the country. This was a rural a movement. There's too many a so-called yellow colored people coming into the United States. We've got to put a stop to it. That was a rural movement.

Figure 2. Immigration Laws (the second layer)

By the same token, the expression ‘Asian-type people who come into the country’ formulates the semantic field of the ‘limitations on Asian immigration’, which includes the category members of the immigration of ‘Japanese’, ‘Koreans’, ‘Chinese’, and so on, as its taxonomy illustrates in Figure 3. Through its footing, the ‘Asians’ further formulates the members of ‘Japanese’, ‘Koreans’, ‘Chinese’, ‘Thais’, ‘Vietnamese’, ‘Indians’, and others in Asia, as illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 3. Limitations on Asian Immigration (the third layer)

Figure 4. Asians (the fourth layer)

Regarding the relationship between ‘Asian’ and the color ‘yellow’ in his description, ST equates ‘Asian’ to ‘yellow colored people’. This equation manifests itself in his elaboration or alternative expression, ‘The immigration laws which put a stop on a certain number of Asian-type people that come into the country. This was a rural a movement.’ for ‘There’s too many a so-called yellow colored people coming into the United States. We’ve got to put a stop to it. That was a rural movement.’ Through semiotic resources of color, when used to refer to people, ‘yellow’ indicates one of the subcategories of ‘Asians’ in this taxonomy because ‘Indians’ are ‘Asian’ but not

‘yellow’³, and thus ‘yellow’ and ‘Asians’ are in an ‘a kind of’ relationship. However, in excerpt 1a, ST treats ‘Asians’, in ‘limitations on Asian immigration’, and ‘yellow’ as synonymous, and by virtue of this association, the ‘Asian’ here locally refers to ‘yellow colored’ people. Noteworthy here is that ST acknowledges that the color ‘yellow’ is used in this way by people, but not necessarily by ST, by using the expression ‘so-called’, as we noted above.

As ST’s talk unfolds, the first layer of his taxonomy merges into the second, the second to the third, and the third to the fourth. We will then know that ‘Asians’ is included in the field of the rural counterattack as one of its objects. This means that these layers reveal one of the imports of ST’s questions previously submitted to SV; that is, his questions were motivated to evoke Asians as the object of the rural counterattack.

4. 3. *Hybrid Taxonomy of Ku Klux Klan*

Later, after ST’s response in line 15 in Segment 2, SV makes an information identification move in regard to ST’s selection ‘Ku Klux Klan’ by asking the following specific question in Segment 3: ‘How much you you el elicit the statement about the Ku Klux Klan if it doesn’t come up’. Then, ST responds that he would provide such hints as ‘what do they think of small town people’ (lines 4, 9) and ‘what about color’ (line 12). As it is obvious that the words ‘small town people’ and ‘color’ in these questions are selected to elicit ‘Ku Klux Klan’, the semiotic meanings projected by these words are framed in terms of the Ku Klux Klan. To explore the meanings constructed by this framing, we will observe the taxonomies of the respective words.

Segment 3

- 1 Supervisor: How much you you el elicit the statement about the Ku Klux Klan
- 2 if it doesn't come up (2) how much you a [(unintelligible)]
- 3 Teacher: [Well] I could ask them to to:: when they think of rural people
- 4 what do they think of (2.5) small town people [probably]
- 5 Supervisor: [Do you think that's] going to cause them to:: think of that though.
- 6 Teacher: Yeah well as I keep trying pry (1) prodding it should
- .
- .
- .
- 7 Supervisor: [if it doesn't] show up/
- 8 Teacher: [I'm going to] /I'm going to have them to look at what small
- 9 town people what do you think of small town people.
- 10 Supervisor: Uhhhhh sit around on Saturday night uh you know going to
- 11 the movie maybe uhh sit outside the pool and all drinking a beer.
- 12 Teacher: And then I'll sa::y well what about color.
- 13 Supervisor: Well there's a pretty sunset lots of orange and uh you know the wheat
- 14 [gold and yellow]/
- 15 Teacher [()]/I don't get these students like you.

³ Historically, the ‘Asian-type people’ the immigration laws enacted against are Asian immigrants, more specifically Japanese immigrants. To describe the Japanese immigrants, ST uses the color terminology. Though there may be no agreement among theories and assumptions on the definition of metonymy, ST’s occasioned practice of using color apparently adopts metonymy. In the fields of semiotics and related linguistics, the agreed assumption is that the color perception is social semiosis and the attribution is socially and culturally motivated as a basic technique to categorize a human’s identity.

First, the introduction of ‘small town people’ structurally refers to the relationship between ‘small town people’ and the ‘Ku Klux Klan’ in such a way that ‘Ku Klux Klan’ is one of its specifications (Figure 5) selected from the semiotic resources of a variety of people living in a small town.

Figure 5. small town people (the fifth layer)

As for the second word, ‘color’ in ‘what about color’, it does not belong to a hierarchical structure in the same way as ‘small town people’. While ‘small town people’ is based on a hyponymy (inclusion) relation, the ‘color’ situated here is attributed to humans (see section 3) and predicates race. For this reason, it sets up a ‘prejudice against people of color’. SV points out that this attribute is biased (lines 7, 9, 11 in Segment 4, which is the continuation of Segment 3). Through the footing of this kind of interactionally and particularly occasioned meaning of color, a particular type of category membership of color is constructed in the question; that is, ST’s association of the word ‘color’ creates a category-bound attribute of ‘Ku Klux Klan’ (illustrated by the arrow in Figure 6).

Figure 6. Ku Klux Klan (the sixth layer)

If category-bound attributes enter into the inclusion taxonomy, the semantic field constructs more than one kind of relationship, making it what Bilmes calls a hybrid taxonomy (2009: 1603-4). According to Bilmes, unlike the hyponymy relation, the attribute relation is a ‘part of’ or a ‘feature of’ relation, and in the hybrid taxonomy the ‘part’ of relation is dominant (see also Pearson and Johnson [1978]). Therefore, although ‘Ku Klux Klan’ is a hyponym, more specific (lower) than ‘small town people’ (the ‘Ku Klux Klan’ is a ‘kind’ of ‘small town people’), the attribution (i.e., ‘prejudice against people of color’) is placed as a part of the ‘small town people’, because the

‘prejudice against people of color’ is a ‘part’ of the Ku Klux Klan.⁴ By virtue of this ‘part of’ relationship, ‘small town people’ presupposes ‘prejudice against people of color’ (illustrated by the arrow in Figure 7).

Figure 7. Prejudice Against People of Color (the seventh layer)

4. 4. *The color binary in taxonomies*

ST's initial questions (the ones he reported) were designed to make students think about the immigration law and the Ku Klux Klan; now, however, ST makes the hypothetical statement that he may ask the redesigned questions in the exploratory lesson (line 6 in Segment 4, which is the immediate sequel of Segment 3, as mentioned above). In response to this statement, however, SV indicates two points: one is the difficulty of the inference (see SV's turns at lines 10, 13 in Segment 3) and the other is the bias inherent in using these cues.

ST's responses to the points raised by SV enhance his position in asking the questions. To the SV's first point, he says, 'I don't get these students like you' (in line 15 in Segment 3). This response is made to SV's reactions at prior turns (lines 10-11 and 13-14) and reveals that ST's students do not answer as SV does, but do understand his motive of giving cues and answer as he expects them to (i.e., he can elicit what he expects with the words 'color' and 'small town people', so he asks the questions). Responding like this is his method of telling SV that the relationships of 'small town people' and 'color' for the Ku Klux Klan are a moral matter. This position is repeated in his response 'It'll be just be a Ku Klux Klan was something that come up within rural America in the 1920s' (lines 14 and 15), which also presupposes that he asks the questions. As for SV's second point, which is about the bias, ST's responses sound incoherent, because he denies SV's point that the quotes are biased ('No' in line 8 in Segment 4 below) on the one hand, but on the other he admits the bias regarding their

⁴ Let me cite Bilmes' (2009: 1904) explanation of the hierarchy relationship in the hybrid taxonomy as follows:

"When *z* is at a lower taxonomic level than *x*, no matter how many intervening levels there are between *z* and *x*, if even a single connection is partonomic, then *z* will be said to be a part of *x*."

Cruse (1986) also attempts to distinguish taxonomic hierarchy, in which there is a hierarchy of classes, from meronomic hierarchy (a part-whole hierarchy), in which there is a class of hierarchies. In meronomic hierarchies such as 'arm is a part of body' and 'hand is a part of arm' and 'finger is a part of hand', then 'a finger is a part of body'.

contextual relevance, saying that he would not drill it down ('It'll be just be a Ku Klux Klan was something that come up within rural America in the 1920s. It won't say why' in lines 14 and 15 in Segment 4).

However, these outwardly incoherent responses reflect ST's consistent categorization practice regarding the color-race association. The first response ('No') reports his confirmation that the association is a matter of commonsense knowledge, while the second ('It won't say why') reports that he is orienting to the other commonsensical social knowledge in relation to the association. To get at the information on the feature he says he would avoid, we need to delve further into the way the relationships of 'small town people' and 'color' for the Ku Klux Klan are made commonsensical.

Segment 4

- 1 Supervisor: I agree with you your statement what about color uh do you think there
- 2 might be a better word that might bring it in rather than color.
- 3 Teacher: Race.
- 4 Supervisor: Yeah I think that would probably if you get to that point you know and I don't
- 5 see anything wrong by the way we're trying to think of a number of things.
- 6 Teacher: Ahhhmmmm I may use them in exploratory too if they come up with things.
- 7 Supervisor: OK. Are those quotes going to be biased.
- 8 Teacher: No. They're going to be informational strictly informational.
- 9 Supervisor: Alright. Well what are they going to be biased information.
- 10 Teacher: You mean saying why it was rural. No.
- 11 Supervisor: OK. Because if it was biased information.
- 12 Teacher: It'd be directed.
- 13 Supervisor: Ya we'd be getting into a directive.
- 14 Teacher: It'll be just be a Ku Klux Klan was something that come up within rural
- 15 America in the 1920s. It won't say why.

If we pay attention to ST's paradigmatic choice of words, such as the pronoun 'we' at the onset of the session when he explains the rural counterattack (see Segment 1 and in Segment 1a) and look closely at the structural arrangement, we will get the information, as his paradigmatic choice of this word 'explicitly identifies the process of the production of the meaning' (Fairclough 2003: 143).

Before exploring ST's selection of the word, however, we will briefly review the taxonomies we have observed in sequence and then examine his choice in vertical and sequential combination.

In the previous sections, we have schematized respectively the semantic entities of 'rural counterattack', 'immigration laws', 'Asians', 'small town people', 'Ku Klux Klan', 'yellow (colored)', and the attribution, 'prejudice against people of color'. First, we found that all category members are characterized in ways that point at the 'Ku Klux Klan' as a kind of 'rural counterattack', and that the 'Ku Klux Klan' is a kind of 'small town people', so that 'small town people' logically becomes a kind of 'rural counterattack'. Through these footings, we noted that the 'prejudice against people of color' is part of the 'rural counterattack', because 'prejudice against people of color' is part of the 'Ku Klux Klan'. In section 4.2. (Figure 7), we focused on the sequential construction of 'Asians' and observed the way 'Asians' is equated to the color 'yellow'. By virtue of this equation, 'prejudice against people of color' includes 'prejudice

against Asians'. As 'prejudice against people of color' is part of the 'Ku Klux Klan', the equation logically reflects 'prejudice against Asians' as part of the 'Ku Klux Klan'. We have also noted in the same section that 'Asians' was created as an attribute (i.e., an object) of the immigration laws; therefore it is also an attribute of the 'rural counterattack'. We also noted that ST's category-bound attributes show up across the taxonomies by virtue of a hybrid taxonomy. Through these footings, 'Asians' are constructed as color-biased in the rural counterattack category, as Figure 8 illustrates. As Figure 1 and Figure 8 are sequentially relevant, 'Asians', which is a category member of 'immigration laws', is color-biased in the 'description of the immigration laws'.

Figure 8. Taxonomy of the Revised Questions (the eighth layer)

We now return to the semantic resources that ST locally engages to account for how 'Asians' is color-biased. When equating 'Asian' to 'yellow colored people' in Segment 1 (see also Segment 1a), ST selects among his paradigmatic selections the pronoun 'we' as the agent that prohibits the immigration of the yellow colored Asians. As Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 274) explain, the word 'we' conventionally carries inclusive or exclusive meanings or both. To understand which categorical meaning the 'we' denotes depends on the structure in which it is used in relation to the relevant surrounding expressions. The membership category of 'we' for this particular occasion creates a contrasting pair of 'yellow colored people' versus 'non-yellow colored people' by virtue of the syntactic opposition relation of the agent and its object; that is, the 'we' reflects the mutual exclusiveness of the category group of 'yellow colored people'. It then follows that membership in the 'non-yellow colored people' group also emerges on this occasion in the taxonomy, with its two social category groups: Immigrants from other areas than 'Asia' as conceived here (including non-yellow colored Asians) and non-immigrants who are indigenous Americans or black people (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Category membership of we in “we’ve got to put a stop to it.”

If we recall the activities of the Klan in the early 1920s in American history, as compared to its activities in the nineteenth century, the Klan in the era of the '20s extended its preconceived thought to stigmatize groups other than African Americans. Klan thought formulated a variety of category groups targeted for segregation, including other non-white groups, foreigners in general, and non-Protestants, as well as African Americans. Therefore, if we take into account this historical background, the agent ST is referring to in order to identify who is responsible for the exclusion becomes ambiguous at this moment of his talk.

However, the specific membership of the ‘we’ unfolds as ST’s talk proceeds. Language does provide some compelling evidence for the view that oppositions are reflections of one particular way of viewing the world and the human experience (Jeffries 2010: 15). The expression ‘what about color’ (line 12 in Segment 3) presupposes that ‘color’ embeds the opposite, a ‘non-color’, and thus sets up the contrasting category pair, ‘colored people’ and ‘non-colored people’. That is, the color binary lexicogrammatically develops in the expression, that is, the ‘we’ ST chooses linguistically endorses his orientation to this social category.

Moreover, ST’s taxonomy, which we have reconstructed, logically clarifies the additional implied meaning of the ‘we’. We already saw that the ‘Ku Klux Klan’ has attributes that include ‘prejudice against people of color’ and ‘prejudice against Asians’, and that by virtue of their relationships with the ‘Ku Klux Klan’, ‘small town people’ has the same attributes: ‘Prejudice against the people of color’ and ‘prejudice against Asians’. In this way, a series of taxonomies in the flow of talk accounts for the ‘we’ as equivalent to white people in small towns in the United States in the 1920s, and reveals ST’s position of asking the questions as commonsensical cues based on this meaning of ‘we’. Although it can be seen that ‘color’ in this particular expression has as members ‘white’, ‘yellow’, and ‘black’, according to this logical account it appears that its members are divided into two groups, and we can view the color binary here; the ‘non-colored’ is ‘white’, and the ‘colored’ is ‘yellow’ and ‘black’, as shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10. Category membership of color in “what about color”

The multiple layers of taxonomy have now been unpacked here. We have delved far enough to understand that the word ‘yellow’ in ‘a so-called yellow colored people’ in Segment 1 formulates a binary opposition against ‘white’. ST’s orientation to the social norm of a color–race association in his saying ‘so-called’ has now become evident in the taxonomies, which show that this association represents a white versus nonwhite color binary practice.

5. Conclusion and implication

Speakers marshal various kinds of conceptual resources, such as comparison, classification, enumeration, and generalization, to construct meanings in interaction. This article sought to advance empirically grounded research that explores such knowledge resources, which speakers rely on in interaction. In general those resources are used occasionally, practically, and frequently, in and for talk, although they are not verbalized on the surface and are often used as taken-for-granted moral resources. Categorization is also one of these resources. The present paper was particularly interested in categorization and its organization in interaction; what categorical meanings are constructed as social norms and how are they organized in talk? To explore this question, the paper proposed an interdisciplinary model bringing together linguistic analysis and an ethnomethodological perspective, building on Bilmes’ (2009) taxonomy approach.

The paper elaborated this model by analyzing a sample of institutional talk. It employed the following procedure to identify categorical meanings constructed by the choice of words. First, it observed the ways the speaker locally created promiscuous taxonomies on the surface of his talk and revealed that taxonomizing was practiced using relevant expressions, with reference to a special color category involving a color–race association. People generally do not need such an ‘exposing’ approach in order to understand this association, because it can be easily summoned up by conventional implicature, as occurred to SV, who asked whether there was a better word than ‘color’ (see the exchange in lines 1–3 in Segment 4). Obviously what ST is doing with these expressions is attributing this conventional implicature to his listeners.

However, the social meaning I attempted to explore involved no theoretical extensions of implicature. Therefore the paper explored further the speaker's taxonomization to find out the indexical meaning of the association. It revealed, in the speaker's procedure of taxonomization, that the association was based on the color binary of 'white' versus 'non-white'. The social meaning of the color binary, which the speaker was going to elicit from his listeners as a moral knowledge, was systematically created in the semantic structures of his taxonomy.

As the sample data analysis demonstrated, a conceptual analysis of the emergent structures of properties of meanings of chosen words in talk serves as an analytic tool for exploring and making convincing arguments on social meanings in practice.

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