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. . . making studies work out to do what you want them to is really hard . . . most studies are really first stabs at objectives they can't realistically be expected to realize. Given the way things work, they are usually first and last stabs.

(Sharrock, 1989: 675)

ABSTRACT In this article the author reviews a segment from a report of a research project that she undertook in 1991. In this initial entry into the research world, the research process used aimed to make audible one part of the 'personal practical knowledge' of a group of music teachers. By critiquing one segment of the report and contrasting this with a re-analysis of the original data upon which this segment relies, an alternative view of the research process and the research findings may be gained. The research process used in the first report aimed to allow teachers' voices and knowledge to become explicit. In fact, it may be seen to gloss over underlying discourses and in doing so, romanticize those voices. Concomitantly, a re-analysis of the original data using methods drawn from conversation analysis reveals the ways in which the researcher's voice is indelibly inscribed in the research process. The critique presented here elucidates the ways in which 'theorizing as ideology' may be accomplished by a novice researcher in the writing of a research report. Further, the utilization of conversation analysis to investigate interview transcripts of teacher talk demonstrates an approach to data analysis which might be further explored by researchers employing interviews as a method of data generation.

KEY WORDS: *conversation analysis, data analysis, interview data, qualitative research, re-analysing data*

Introduction

Few researchers either take the opportunity, or indeed are presented with an opportunity, to take more than one 'stab' at a given project. Using a research

report I produced as a novice researcher, I first locate and describe the mechanisms by which other novice researchers might engage in 'theorizing as ideology' (Smith, 1974). Using data from this previous research project, I then demonstrate how such data generated for analysis may be subsequently re-analysed and re-viewed from a different theoretical position in order to produce an additional and different reading. In the first analysis, descriptions of one informant's life world (Mazeland and ten Have, 1998: 1) are organized by the thematic content of talk. In a second reading of the interview transcript, I analyse the sequential interaction of speakers' utterances to investigate how accounts are constructed and co-produced by speakers. This demonstration of different types of data analysis follows the work of others who have found that theoretical insights may be gained from the explication of multiple 'readings' of particular data sets. This approach is indicative of a growing awareness among researchers that linear interpretations of texts are but 'one' way of looking. (See, for example, Baker, 1991; Honan et al., 2000; Reid, 1998; Reid et al., 1996; Wolf, 1992.)

Two approaches to analysing interview data

1. THEMATIC ANALYSIS

The first approach to data – that of thematic analysis – is arguably the most common approach to analysis of data in the social sciences (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997). Here, the interviewer generates empirical data 'about the social world by asking people to talk about their lives' (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997: 113). Briggs (1986) notes that the interview is the 'bastion' of research in social sciences (p. 1). He argues that when researchers view interview data as simply 'statements that report, describe, interpret, and evaluate communicative acts and processes' and seek to maintain this approach in undertaking data analysis, then 'what is said is seen as a reflection of what is "out there" rather than an interpretation which is jointly produced by interviewer and respondent' (p. 3). From this orientation, the research subject produces information in which the researcher discovers or describes 'an "objective", "real" world "out there"' (Foddy, 1993: 12). Following Briggs (1986), who critiques commonsensical, unreflexive treatments of interview data, in this article I argue that a 'thematic' analysis that does not consider the theoretical notion of 'reflexivity' (Woolgar, 1988) will produce a naive and possibly 'romantic' reading of data generated in research interviews (Hargreaves, 1996). In effect, the research report produced from this type of analysis may be in danger of exemplifying 'theorizing as ideology' (Smith, 1974).

The research process used in the earlier study (Roulston, 1992) referred to in this article aimed to make audible one part of the 'personal practical knowledge' (Connelly and Clandinin, 1984) of a group of music teachers – that of how exemplary teachers worked with inaccurate singers in

classrooms. The critique presented here shows how the use of interview data in this study – although aimed at allowing teachers' voices and knowledge to become explicit – may be seen to gloss over underlying discourses and in doing so, romanticize those voices (Hargreaves, 1996: 12) and produce a naive and partial reading. This partial reading might be seen to exemplify the 'realist genre' noted by Woolgar (1988: 28), who argues that the conventions of such an approach encourage the unproblematic and unhesitant singular interpretation of text, the unreflexive perception of a reported reality (subject/object) and the essentially uninteresting character of the agency involved in the report's generation.

Whether or not a researcher is explicit in accounting for his or her ability to work reflexively, his or her voice is indelibly inscribed within the research process. For example, as in many qualitative studies, this inscription of the 'researcher's voice' was initially made explicit in the methodology of the final report of the research project: the researcher was the main instrument in this study (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982: 27; Merriam, 1988: 19), assuming the roles of both interviewer and observer-participant (Roulston, 1992: 48).

However, the critique which follows indicates that the researcher's interests may well have overtaken, transformed and moulded the 'teacher's voice' to a point that it is no longer recognizably related to the original data generated. Since the researcher played a key role in the generation of data in research interviews, the concept of 'reducing bias' by the inclusion of unknown teachers and schools in the project (Roulston, 1992: 48–9) may be seen here as both unrealizable and ludicrous.¹ By casting a critical eye on the research report, some of the 'tricks-of-the-trade' which may be used by researchers – however unwittingly – to make 'studies work out to do what you want them to' (Sharrock, 1989: 675) will be revealed. I take as my starting point Smith's (1974: 41) 'recipe' for an 'ideological representation of what people think':

Trick 1. Separate what people say they think from the actual circumstances in which it is said, from the actual empirical conditions of their lives and from the actual individuals who said it.

Trick 2. Having detached the ideas, they must now be arranged. Prove then an order among them which accounts for what is observed.

Trick 3. The ideas are then changed 'into a person', that is they are constituted as distinct entities to which agency (or possible causal efficacy) may be attributed. And they may be re-attributed to 'reality' by attributing them to actors who now *represent* the ideas.

Researchers, particularly inexperienced ones, do not knowingly set out to perform these three tricks. In fact, they are generally in pursuit of 'answers to a question'.

The original project

The research question certainly seemed simple enough – how do elementary music teachers teach inaccurate singers to sing accurately? What are their beliefs and assumptions about inaccurate singing? More specifically, what do they do about it? To investigate these questions, I conducted a naturalistic study over a period of six months in which I interviewed 19 music teachers in two provinces in Canada. The sample consisted of three cohorts: (1) six elementary music teachers recommended by Board consultants on the basis of their effective work with singing; (2) four music consultants with the participating school boards; and (3) nine well-established music educators who attended an international music education conference in 1991. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed thematically.

After a brief descriptive introduction to each of the six elementary teachers, the report summarized the observations and assumptions about inaccurate singers put forward by each participant. This was followed by a section describing espoused views on techniques used, together with techniques observed by the researcher in classrooms. The next section, entitled *The Psychology of Teaching* detailed four themes derived from the data: ‘Singing is OK’, ‘When and Where’, ‘The Will to Learn’, and ‘Classroom Atmosphere’. Under the first of these sections, segments from an interview with the sole male teacher of the first cohort were included, see Extract 1.

Extract 1 (Roulston, 1992: 94–6)

Respect as a characteristic of classroom behaviour in music lessons is also required by Andrew,² who was observed carefully explaining correct listening responses prior to individual singing performances by kindergarten children. Similarly to Sonia, Andrew actively works to convey the message that singing is a desirable activity. He speaks of an ‘experiment’ conducted with a group of inaccurate singers in a composite grade five/six class. In Andrew’s words, the boys were ‘street kids’, wearing ‘half-sleeve and AC DC jackets.’ The following event took place in an inner city school with a high transient population:

All the girls were beautiful singers . . . all the boys [were] droners.
I said to the boys, ‘Guys, you know, the girls sound so good.’
(And being male this helped.) ‘Do you think that girls are better than you?’
[Their response was], ‘Oh forget it, no way!’
So I made that little comparison. ‘Well you know in class . . . the boys always do a lousy job and the girls do a good job. How would it be if we get together for some recess practice, and we’ll just surprise the girls.’
‘Yeah, yeah, right on man!’

Andrew describes his approach as ‘very jock’ and ‘nothing prissy.’ He adds that ‘I would dress up in a tracksuit, we’d just build this camaraderie of ‘men’. . . . They really respected me because I coached the basketball, I coached the floor hockey, and I did all these sports things with them.’ The respect which these boys had towards their teacher in other school activities was an important factor in Andrew’s work with the group.

I said, 'Look, as far as I'm concerned, only prissies don't sing.
 Any guy who's worth anything sings.'
 It . . . confused them because their mentality of singers was 'fairies'.
 I said, 'Are you calling me a fairy?'
 'No, Mr. Howard. Sorry, no, no, no.'
 'Because I sing.'
 So OK.

After about ten recess practices, Andrew describes the group's singing as 'pretty close to in-tune.' Together the class now had a 'good sound' — no longer a 'group of droners over here and a group of angels over [there]'.

A critique

In Extract 1, I concentrated on categorizing and rearranging the data to produce accounts which 'investigate "interiors" (states of mind) or "exteriors" (descriptions of social settings) through a representational view of language' (Baker, 1997b: 130–1). Fragments of this story are reproduced in Extract 2 to underpin claims about this teacher's work with inaccurate singers.

Extract 2 (Roulston, 1992: 106)

This anecdote serves to illustrate how his strategies with this particular group of children were based upon his assumption that children sing inaccurately because of sociological reasons. He told the group that boys should sing, saying, 'Any guy who's worth anything sings', and 'Only prissies don't sing'.

Andrew states that these boys equated being a singer with being a 'fairy', and describes an earlier encounter with this concept, adding that it gave him 'extra motivation to get these kids singing.'

I grew up with [music]. When I was in [the] University [choir], we toured a lot of high schools. . . . The most commonly asked question . . . was 'Are you gay?' Their idea [of] male singers [was] 'You're a bit funny.' So that's a bit of a sore point with me.

Andrew's words indicate that dispelling a concept which he believes to be false — that singing for males is unmasculine — was one of the reasons motivating him to help these inaccurate singers. His description of the approach which he took in working with these boys — 'very jock' and 'nothing prissy' — serves to reinforce the conclusion that for this teacher, in order to teach some boys singing skills, it is first necessary to establish singing as an acceptable masculine activity.

It is evident from the descriptions presented in Extract 2 that the process of analysis used concentrated on the 'contents of the respondents' thoughts (beliefs etc.)' which have been 'expressed in the medium of language' (Baker, 1997b: 130). This extract also displays the hallmarks of the process described by Smith (1974, citing the work of Zetterburg) to get from 'the original individuals who described, judged and prescribed to the end product of "social beliefs", "social valuations", and "social norms"' (p. 42):

Individuals are asked questions, presumably in an interview.
 Their answers are then detached from the original practical determination in

the interview situations, and from the part the sociologist played in making them. They become data. Note that the questions are not data (trick 1).

The data are coded so as to yield 'descriptions', 'evaluations', and 'prescriptions' (trick 3).

There are various intervening procedures which it would be tedious to elaborate on here leading up to the statistical manipulation of the data to find the 'central tendencies' (trick 2).

The original individuals are now changed into the sociologists' aggregate. *Their* beliefs, their values, their norms are now attributed to this 'personage' as 'social beliefs' 'social values', and 'social norms'. It is then perfectly within the bounds of ordinary sociological thinking that social beliefs, norms and values be treated as causing behaviour (though Zetterburg does not recommend this as the next step) (trick 3 and conclude) (original emphasis).

How is this process evident in the extracts presented here?

First, the responses included in the passage from *Singing is OK* were elicited in the context of a research interview with a teacher. Second, the questions are not included in the report, although research questions and topics may be found in Appendix D (Roulston, 1992: 171–2). Which of these topics elicited the statements described in the report? Since the answers have been detached and are not included with the teacher's statements, it is impossible to know. Given the following admission that the questions changed throughout the study, it makes the task of question identification by the reader even more difficult (see Extract 3):

Extract 3 (Roulston, 1992: 55)

As the research process progressed, certain lines of questioning proved less relevant particularly the fifth area ('knowledge') and were no longer pursued. From preliminary data analysis, themes emerged which presented further questions for later interviews.

Third, the data have been coded under the theme 'Singing is OK', a subsection included under a larger heading of *The Psychology of Teaching*. Fourth, while 'statistical manipulation' has not been used in this *Qualitative Study of Effective Teacher Action*, the 'central tendencies' of the data have been located to produce 'clusters' of descriptions which relate thematically. Finally, these descriptions are used as evidence to support statements about the 'social beliefs' of the participants. See Extract 4:

Extract 4 (Roulston, 1992: 109)

Teachers in this study show by both words and actions that they actively aim toward establishing an atmosphere in which singing is viewed by children as an acceptable activity in which to participate, and risk-taking on the part of the students can take place.

Upon inspection, the researcher's voice in this first attempt at interview analysis may be heard clearly, perhaps even more clearly than the voice of the teacher described. Hargreaves (1996) notes that researchers aiming to make

audible 'teachers' voices' may well insert into accounts a 'particular and positive moral loading in the sense, for instance, that all teachers are concerned with their students' good' (p. 13). The process by which this may be accomplished has been explicated elsewhere.

[T]he author is engaged in a complex set of 'readings' – of observations and inferences. These are transformed into the personal narrative of the ethnographer, who constructs this textual 'reality' from the shreds and patches of appearances and verbal testimony. Even though the informants speak, their authenticity is warranted by the ethnographer's incorporation of them into the definitive record (Atkinson, 1990: 61).

This demonstration of the process whereby 'theorizing as ideology' is accomplished highlights a number of conceptual flaws in the final report. First, my work as researcher in the generation of data is obscured – since my contribution to the talk is not included in the final account. Second, the notion of reflexivity has not been addressed. Third, the final report is insufficiently theorized.

It might also be argued that reports such as these *do* provide insights and findings concerning teachers' practice readily accessible to music teachers. For practitioners, it is just such glossed reports and descriptive accounts – that is, 'what teachers say' and 'what teachers do in "real" settings' – which practicing music teachers find accessible, practical and of immediate use in the conduct of their work. However, the assumption that interview accounts are merely descriptions of 'real world' events *outside* the interview setting is seriously flawed, as I show in the second section of this article. Any interview account is a socially situated event in which descriptions and accounts flow from the interaction between speakers present.

Therefore, while the approach to the analysis of interview transcripts that I demonstrate next clearly orients to a different audience – the community of academic researchers with a specific interest in the conduct of qualitative research – it may also be informative to practitioners. What might practitioners learn from this type of analysis? In the next section of this article, I demonstrate how fine-grained analysis of descriptions of events from interview talk illuminates the cultural worlds of speakers, or what Silverman (1993a) calls a 'cultural universe and its content of moral assumptions' (p. 108). For accounts of 'real world' interaction, it is quite possible that practitioners might be better served if researchers were to look to the analysis of talk-in-interaction occurring *in* 'real world' settings for insight and information.³

2. CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

Conversation analysts emphasize 'talk-in-interaction' and seek to describe the 'underlying social organization' (Goodwin and Heritage, 1990: 283) and 'collaborative practices speakers use and rely upon when they engage in intelligible interaction' (Holstein and Gubrium, 1994: 265). Conversational

analysis grew out of various developments in phenomenology, ethnomethodology, language philosophy and sociology in the 1960s (Goodwin and Heritage, 1990: 283), and is a broad term that covers all aspects of interaction. Grounded in ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967), this type of analysis investigates *how* people talk to one another. Silverman (1993a) argues that this approach to data analysis of interview talk provides direct access to 'a cultural universe and its content of moral assumptions' (p. 108).

The sociologist Harvey Sacks worked to invent a systematic method for studying conversation and utilization of conversation analysis may be noted in the fields of anthropology, education, medical practice and counselling, and sociology. One of Sacks' first points of departure from the ethnographic tradition was to provide the data 'where the reader has as much information as the author, and can reproduce the analysis' (1992, Vol. 1: 27). Conversation analysis (CA) was initially applied to the investigation of talk in everyday settings – that is, casual or mundane conversation, but has since been applied to 'other forms of "talk-in-interaction" ranging from courtroom and news interview conduct to political speeches' (Goodwin and Heritage, 1990: 284). Researchers in the field of education have utilized CA extensively to investigate talk in educational settings (see, for example, Baker, 1997a, 1997c; Baker and Johnson, 1998; Baker and Keogh, 1995, 1997; Heap, 1997; McHoul, 1978; Mehan, 1983, 1985, 1991; Perrott, 1988).

Heap (1997) has identified the major CA contributions in the field of educational research, classifying them as either 'straight-ahead' or 'applied'. Here I use an applied CA approach – drawing on procedures outlined and demonstrated by Baker (1983, 1997b) – to re-analyse the data-set. Baker (1997b) points out three underlying principles in applying conversation analysis to the research interview:

- (1) [I]nterviewing is understood as an interactional event in which members draw on their cultural knowledge, including their knowledge about how members of categories routinely speak; (2) questions are a central part of the data and cannot be viewed as neutral invitations to speak – rather, they shape how and as a member of which categories the respondents should speak; (3) interview responses are treated as accounts more than reports – that is they are understood as the work of accounting by a member of a category for activities attached to that category (p. 131).

Baker (1997b) argues that when interview data are viewed as 'talk-in-interaction', the process of data 'collection' may be better described as data 'making' or data 'generation'. In this view the interviewer and respondent are 'ordinary competent members of the culture and the analyst . . . *post-hoc* ethnomethodologist, looking for the social-organisational work being done by interviewer and respondent' (p. 131). A reading of the transcript based on this approach to data analysis will show how Andrew's story 'telling' may also be seen as story 'making'. By identifying the 'cast of characters' used by speakers in interview talk, and the activities with which these characters are

associated, the cultural knowledge of the participants is made audible (Roulston, 2001). This approach to analysis leads to a different order of research question. For example, how do music teachers characterize their work through their talk? How is this talk expressive of cultural knowledge? What moral portrayals of members are achieved in talk?

In the next section I examine what happens when the dynamics of the talk-in-interaction presented in the first section of this article are investigated from a CA perspective. The characterizations to be found in these anecdotes from the world of music teaching are collaborative productions accomplished by two speakers – both of whom are music teachers – and demonstrate the moral order of each speaker's cultural knowledge of a particular working domain. As Silverman (1993a) points out, it is misleading to assume that by concentrating on the social interaction in the interview one is privileging 'form over content' (p. 108). In the interview analysis here, this includes 'moral tales' concerning teacher beliefs about music education and the individuals who inhabit this world *in addition to* practical teaching knowledge as it exists within the day-to-day exigencies of music teaching in a school setting. This approach yields understandings concerning social practices in school settings in addition to illuminating and clarifying the researcher's 'work' in the generation of such research data.

The original data

Rather than refer to the original report for transcript data (Roulston, 1992), for the purpose of this analysis I have listened to the audio-recording of the interview and re-transcribed it. This process revealed some interesting features. First, in the process of completing the original transcription, I had edited out certain features of the conversation. A large number of my responses (including acknowledgment tokens such as 'um', 'yeah') were missing in the first transcription. Stumbles, slips, and repairs in the respondent's conversation had been erased. Evidently, in transcribing I had notated not what had been said, but my interpretation of what I believed the respondent had *meant*. This is by no means an uncommon technique in transcriptions of interviews. Stake (1995), for example, recommends that '[g]etting the exact words of the respondent is usually not very important, it is what they mean that is important' (p. 66). Here then is a second transcription of the first section of this excerpt from the interview (see the Appendix for a transcription key).

[ISAL/19 June 1991]

- 1 R yeah how do you cope with that? what do you do?
 2 A oh if you get them (.) when they're first in Grade 7 no hope for them [I don't believe
 3 R [oh I see yeah
 4 heh heh heh write them off heh heh heh
 5 A I think best you can do (1.0) that's how I feel right now [I might change later=
 6 R [yeah

- 7 A =later but ah you can just get them to love music like R::ob that big kid
 8 R yeah? [at the concert
 9 A [who stands on the right he's a Grade 7 and there's another kid there's a boy
 10 who's in Grade [7 (.) and they love it
 11 R [mm yeah
 12 A so they're there
 13 R yeah
 14 A but teaching them how to sing oh hhhhh-
 15 R well if they don't have motivation to sing and they don't think it's what boys should
 16 do they're not going to sing no matter what you do really

The topic of conversation in this section is the problems inherent in helping older students to sing accurately. At lines 15–16 I formulate the preceding section of conversation. This formulation may also be seen as an 'assessment', since it offers a viewpoint from a teacher perspective of the difficulties associated with teaching older students to sing. According to Pomerantz (1984: 57), by making assessments, speakers claim knowledge about that which is being assessed. This is evident in the following statement:

- 15 R well if they don't have motivation to sing and they don't think it's what boys should
 16 do they're not going to sing no matter what you do really

This formulation displays the characteristics outlined by Heritage and Watson (1979: 128–9) – preservation, deletion and transformation. The idea that it is not possible to motivate older inaccurate singers to sing (lines 2 and 4, 14) is preserved. The notion that another alternative for the teacher is to get the students to 'love music' (lines 7, 9, 10) is deleted. The transformation that occurs through the addition of the reference to inaccurate singing as a problem specific to boys is included in the element 'they don't think it's what boys should do'. At line 17, my respondent ostensibly agrees with this formulation, but the prolonged syllable 'ye::ah' appears to have indicated potential disagreement. My next utterance indicates that I have heard the possibility for contention at this point, since I pursue an answer by repeating the question 'will they?' The three-second pause at line 19 may be read as a 'delay device' to a forthcoming disagreement (Pomerantz, 1984: 70).

- 17 A ye:[ah
 18 R [will they?
 19 (3.0)

Rather than providing a disagreement at this juncture, the teacher's response to this question takes the form of a 'story preface' (lines 20–28). Sacks (1992, Vol. 2: 228) has noted that one of the functions of a story preface is to provide information to the listener about 'what it will take for the story to be over'. In this case this is supplied in the description of the boys as sounding 'crappy' (line 26).

- 20 A you ↑know (.) I did something at [previous school] my other school now why was I
 21 doing that? uh
 22 (2.0)

- 23 A oh ↑I know what it wa- no what was it (.) I did an experiment
 24 (2.0)
 25 A there was a Grade 5 class or was it a Grade 5/6 split (.) and all the girls were
 26 beautiful singers and all the boys sounded (.) crappy
 27 R heh heh heh heh
 28 A it was terrible all droners
 29 R yeah

This is reinforced by the teacher's next remark 'it was terrible all droners' (line 28). According to Sacks (1992, Vol. 2: 228) adjectives such as 'terrible' are used 'not just to arouse interest but to instruct hearers to use that term to monitor the story – when they've heard something they can name, the story will be over.' By taking this line of reasoning, a clear 'ending' to the story may be heard at lines 95–8, with the repetition of the term 'droners' originally heard at line 28.

- 95 A but at least the ↑guys (.) you know like were not (.) a group of droners here and a
 96 group of angels over here [huh heh
 97 R [yeah
 98 A they were (.) it sounded like a good class sound you know

The main business of the story takes place from lines 20–72. Throughout this section Andrew has full control of the 'floor', while as interviewer I laugh or furnish response tokens ('yeah', 'mm'). At two points I insert questions of clarification (lines 46 and 59) concerning (1) the age of the students:

- 46 R heh heh heh heh what grade was this?
 47 A 5/6 split

and (2) the pitch range Andrew used in working with the boys.

- 68 R ↑yeah above what middle C?=
 69 A =middle C yeah

In this story Andrew portrays the experiment he conducted with Year 5/6 boys who were 'all droners' (line 28). With extra practices during recess time, he was able to teach the boys to sing. At lines 74–80, Andrew presents the 'point' of his story. This moral conclusion may also be seen as a disagreement to the assessment given previously at lines 15–16.

- 74 A and these are all street kids who would drone (.) now the point I'm trying to make is
 75 that I think (.) even with older kids (.) if you can work with them (.) that much time=
 76 R =mm=
 77 A =you can teach them to sing too (.) so this business about ah (.) them not being able to
 78 sing=
 79 R =yeah=
 80 A =is hogwash I think=

Here Andrew has used the device of story-telling in a powerful way to support his assessment that 'even with older kids (.) if you can work with them that much time ... you can teach them to sing too'. I now present some of the conversational resources used by this teacher to support his assertion that it is 'hogwash' that some children are not 'able to sing'.

A moral portrayal of inaccurate singers

In lines 25–8 the two types of singers in the class are clearly delineated through the use of extreme case formulations (ECFs) (Pomerantz, 1986), and are divided into ‘boys’ and ‘girls’. While in this account all the girls are ‘beautiful’ singers, all the boys are ‘droners’.

- 25 A there was a Grade 5 class or was it a Grade 5/6 split (.) and all the girls were
 26 beautiful singers and all the boys sounded (.) crappy
 27 R heh heh heh heh
 28 A it was terrible all droners

These inaccurate singers are portrayed as the worst kind – droners. In lines 42–4 Andrew adds an additional component to this description. These boys are portrayed as the most difficult kind to teach singing – ‘street kids’ who are devoted fans of the heavy metal band, AC DC.⁴

- 49 A um very this is street kids [too remember they are very (.) a lot of these kids have
 50 R [yes
 51 A grown up on the streets so they were like wearing half sleeve jackets and -hhh (.) AC
 52 DC jackets and their greasy hair up to here=

Later Andrew reinforces his portrayal of these boys as ‘tough street kids’ by distinguishing them from ‘middle class’ ‘yuppy’ children. In this secondary portrayal the boys are the kind who are ‘arrested for stealing bike parts and stuff’.

- 151 A =and it was nice to see these these ↑street kids ↑really () looking kids you know=
 152 R =yeah=
 153 A =they were not (.) by any means your (2.0) oh you know like=
 154 R =middle class kind [heh heh hhh
 155 A [middle class growing up yuppy group n::o these kids you know
 156 (.) were arrested for stealing bike parts and stuff like this heh heh heh heh

In these passages Andrew has achieved a portrayal of a particular sub-group of boy. Members of this group of boys all ‘sound crappy’ in class (line 26), are ‘droners’ (line 28), and ‘always do a lousy job’ in class (lines 38–39). This depiction of boys who are poorly motivated and not able to sing well in classroom music lessons is contrasted against girls who are all ‘beautiful singers’ (line 26), ‘do a good job’ (line 39), are ‘just too good to compete with the boys’ (lines 94–5), and sing like ‘angels’ (line 96).

In later talk Andrew portrays a transformation which has taken place as a result of his teaching. In this depiction these street-wise boys have been able to gain some access to high culture – that is, Western art music. Here Andrew vividly demonstrates the boys’ display of their new-found (but still unmusical) singing skills by singing the theme from J.S. Bach’s *Fugue in G Minor* to ‘da’, complete with a rude interruption.

- 159 A but if you can in ↑stil that=
 160 R =yeah=
 161 A =mentality in them no imagine (.) these kids kids (.) this is the kids I was talking

- 162 about we did *Jesu Joy* uh um (.) Bach's *Fugue in G Minor*
 163 R yeah
 164 A now these kids are street kids are heh heh going around singing ((sings
 165 opening of Bach's *G Minor Fugue* in a loud and in-tune but unmusical way to 'da'))
 166 R heh heh heh heh
 167 A ((loud rude voice)) [SHUT UP you know heh heh heh
 168 R [heh heh heh heh heh heh heh
 169 A ((continues singing melody)) [heh heh heh heh heh
 170 R [heh heh heh heh heh that's good
 171 A you know it's an image that uh you don't think of these kids to have
 172 R ↑mm
 173 A so that was really successful

These portrayals of the 'street-wise' but unmusical boys are constructed in conjunction with Andrew's self-portrayal as a successful and competent teacher. This account is received with appreciation and admiration by me (see lines 160, 163, 170, 172 and the shared laughter from lines 167–70).

In the next section I focus on how Andrew portrays his role as a teacher working with this group of 'difficult' boys.

A teacher's self-portrayal

In his account of his 'experiment' with a year 5/6 class, Andrew provides a self-portrayal of someone who is able to reason with his students, easily convincing them of the worth of his teaching endeavour – that is, to help them to sing in-tune. This occurs in lines 30–44:

- 30 A I said 'This is ridiculous' so I said I really said to them '°Guys you know (2.0) the
 31 girls sound so good°' and I and being a male this helped I [said you know like
 32 R [yeah
 33 A '°Do you think girls are all (.) all better than you guys?°'
 34 'Oh forget it no way what are you talking about no'
 35 R heh heh heh heh heh heh heh
 36 A so I made that little comparison
 37 R =mm=
 38 A ='Well you know when I'm in class and I actually sing the boys always do a lousy
 39 job and the [girls do a good job' you know like (.) -hhh I said
 40 R [yeah
 41 A 'How would it be if we get together for some recess practise and we'll just surprise
 42 the girls'=
 43 R =yeah=
 44 A =((mock macho voice)) 'Yeah yeah right on man' you know heh heh heh

Throughout this section, Andrew employs 'direct reported speech' (Holt, 2000). Holt notes that this conversational device may be used by speakers to appear to present others' utterances as they were originally delivered. Holt also notes that speakers 'can also exploit features such as the design of the reported speech, the sequence in which it occurs, and prosody to implicitly convey their attitude toward the reported utterance' (p. 426).

In this talk, Andrew not only reports the boys' utterances, but his own talk. This is accomplished with gusto, animation and wide variation in volume

(see lines 30–1, 34, 44). In this portrayal the boys concerned side with their teacher who is adopting a particular kind of masculinity (lines 31, 44). In the direct reporting of their speech (*'Yeah yeah right on man'*, line 44), they are portrayed as excited participants actively engaged in Andrew's project of learning to sing accurately. My appreciation for Andrew's story is shown at line 35 with laughter, and followed up with response tokens ('yeah', 'mm') at lines 37, 40 and 43.

Andrew continues his self-description of a teacher who is both dedicated and encouraging – he gives up recess breaks to work with the boys, and assist them to learn to sing in-tune. In his recounting of this event, Andrew physically demonstrates his work with the boys by singing and clapping at key points in the account (lines 60, 64) to illustrate his enthusiastic and lively approach to his work.

- 57 A so we got together at recess (.) and we did (.) I taught them how to sing we did
58 technical [work with them
59 R [mm
60 A so I said I started down low I said OK ((sings low pitch to 'mm')) 'Match this pitch'
61 and then I got kids to sing by themselves=
62 R =yeah=
63 A =only boys only boys (and of course) as soon as somebody would get it I'd say *'That's*
64 *it'* really encourage them and clap ((claps hands)) for each other and (.) and ah (1.0)
65 pretty soon (.) they were all singing (.) um up there

This portrayal of the students as very difficult to teach and motivate – children who do not have the 'right' musical background – together with the self-portrayal of teacher as an enthusiastic and positive role model, who intervenes to help them, provides a certain depiction of an event. In this version, even the *most difficult* students can be motivated to sing, if the teacher is willing to help them and commanding of their respect. The moral portrayal presented by Andrew in this talk does the work of supporting the assertion made at lines 77–80.

- 77 A =you can teach them to sing too (.) so this business about ah (.) them not being able to
78 sing=
79 R =yeah=
80 A =is hogwash I think=

While this account most certainly could have ended at this point, it does not, due to the formulation that I make at the next turn.

- 81 R =so it's more a matter of ti::me that you can spend=
82 A =time and motivation=

At line 81 I have failed to acknowledge my respondent's self-portrayal of 'charismatic teacher able to conquer all odds'. Rather, my formulation serves to provide a summary of Andrew's story which highlights the crucial factor in success as 'time you can spend' with students. While not overtly disagreeing with me, Andrew amends my formulation in his next utterance – 'time and motivation' (line 82). In lines 84–98 Andrew proceeds to elaborate

on his achievement of teaching the boys to sing.

- 84 A =we got together and those kids were singing as well as the girls=
 85 R =mm=
 86 A =well perhaps that's a
 87 (1.0)
 88 A nu::h maybe not as well as the girls=
 89 R =but they were singing
 90 A they were singing they were in-tune
 91 R yeah
 92 A pretty close to in-tune
 93 R yeah
 94 A the girls were just hh oh they were just they were too good to compete with the boys
 95 but at least the ↑guys (.) you know like were not (.) a group of droners here and a
 96 group of angels over here [huh heh
 97 R [yeah
 98 A they were (.) it sounded like a good class sound you know

Throughout this section Andrew adjusts his description of the outcome of the experiment. Firstly the boys were 'singing as well as the girls'. This is downgraded firstly to 'maybe not as well as the girls', then to 'pretty close to in-tune'. Finally the description settles to a 'good class sound'. It seems here that the story is finally complete.

However, in response to my search for further clarification in regard to the students' reactions to the event as described here, Andrew produces another account of his teaching practice. My questions in lines 99, 101 and 103 may be seen to challenge Andrew's account of 'tough boys' willingly involving themselves in a joint experiment learning to sing with their teacher.

- 99 R how did they feel the kids?
 100 A oh they had tremendous pride
 101 R did they?
 102 A yeah
 103 R the boys were a lot happier with themselves?
 104 A ↑yeah cos I I'd sort of I really hammed that up=

Andrew elaborates further on the topic of his work, this time giving a specific portrayal of 'how' his work was accomplished. In this self-portrayal Andrew highlights his conscious adoption of a particular form of 'macho' masculinity epitomised in his use of the term 'jock'.

- 106 A =I said you know like uh I (1.0) I did it from a (.) very (.) jock=
 107 R =yeah=
 108 A =[perspective it's 'OK guys' and we'd [give each other high fives
 109 R [yeah yeah [heh heh heh heh heh heh
 110 A you know I'd say 'Alright you were ((claps hands)) singing in-tune' you know like
 111 nothing prissy
 112 R yeah
 113 A these are just not prissy kids
 114 R yeah
 115 A you know and I would whenever we'd do that I'd dress up really in a tracksuit and ah
 116 R yeah
 117 A we'd (.) you know we'd we'd just build this camarade[rie] of 'men' you know

- 118 R [mm
 119 A HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH
 120 R heh heh heh heh () how long did this ↑take?
 121 A oh (.) I'd say ten practices
 122 R mm
 123 A ten recess times

Andrew's version of the event is again challenged by me in lines 124–7 when I laughingly question the idea of the group of 'boys-as-described' willingly coming to ten recess practices.

- 124 R ↑yeah and they all came along to recess practice?
 125 A well I kind of said [you have to HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH
 126 R [oh I see heh heh heh heh no cho(h)ice he(h)re yo(h)u're go(h)ing
 127 to do it -hhh

At this point I discover that the students were *not* as willing participants as has been formerly suggested and Andrew's account may be seen to be undercut (Silverman 1987: 257). Andrew's response in line 125 'well I kind of said you have to' followed by shared laughter could be seen to show a shared understanding that 'boys-as-described' would *not* take part in recess practises unless compelled.

Heritage (1984) has investigated the use of the particle 'oh' in natural conversation, and proposes that its use indicates a 'change-of-state'. This is evident in line 126 and later at line 132. In line 126 I formulate an alternative version of events surrounding the experiment – one in which the boys do not take part willingly, but are compelled by their teacher ('oh I see heh heh heh heh no cho(h)ice he(h)re yo(h)u're go(h)ing to do it -hhh'). My laughter throughout this utterance serves to reinforce the 'heckling' nature of my comment. Andrew's next utterance indicates that he has recognized my challenge to his account of a 'successful experiment', and he proceeds to reiterate his version of events. Here Andrew rebuts my version of him as a teacher who uses his authority to 'make' students come to recess practices by constructing a self-portrayal of a teacher who has the *respect* of his students because of his involvement in coaching sport (lines 128–33). Thus Andrew can be seen to hold to his version of 'charismatic-teacher-and-motivator'. This direct rebuttal of the alternative version of events I have presented at lines 126–7 is underscored by Andrew's inclusion of an emphasized 'look' in his utterance at line 128:

- 128 A and plus I I'd worked as a look
 129 (2.0)
 130 A u::mm (.) they really respected me because I I coached the basketball
 131 [I coached the floor hockey [and I you know I did all these sport [things with them
 132 R [o::h I see [yeah [yeah
 133 A so they really respected me

Sacks (1992) has noted the attention which people give to descriptions about themselves – 'It's interesting in that they're controlling an impression of themselves for somebody who couldn't matter less' (Vol. 1: 580). Silverman

(1993b) notes that 'Sacks argues that this happens because we can be held responsible not only for our descriptions but for the *inferences* that can be drawn from them, that is, the sort of person who would say such a thing about themselves or others' (p. 741). In the account above it is pertinent to note Andrew's repair of the 'account' which I have damaged at lines 124–7. It is evident that my formulation of Andrew using his authority to tell his students 'you're going to do it' is unsatisfactory, and Andrew alters this to one of a teacher who commands enough 'respect' from his students that they will take part in the experiment *willingly*.

Andrew continues his self-portrayal with a description in which the boys had equated his identity as a singer with homosexuality. In this account Andrew is seen to 'take on' the boys, and use his authority as an adult to challenge them 'man-to-man', with a subsequent 'back down' on the part of the boys involved.

- 135 A so I said 'Look (.) as far as I'm concerned (1.0) only prissies don't sing'
 136 R o:::h I see
 137 A any guy who's worth anything (.) sings=
 138 R =yeah=
 139 A =you know and at first it was like (1.0) ['^oWhat?'^o heh heh heh heh
 140 R [heh heh heh heh
 141 A but it confused them because their mentality of singers was (.) you know like (.) fairies
 142 sing[()] [fairies sing and I said 'Are you calling me a fairy?'
 143 R [yeah [heh heh heh heh
 144 R [HEH HEH heh heh heh [heh heh heh heh heh
 145 A ['NO Mister Howard sorry no no no' [heh heh heh heh heh 'because I sing' so oh
 146 OK so it confused them to begin=

Andrew's account of his experiment concludes with a description of his personal motivation for pursuing this work with the boys, that of dispelling the notion that male singers – including himself – are gay.

- 181 A you know like () when I was in university we went and toured a lot of the high
 182 schools
 183 R yeah
 184 A in the university choir and the most commonly asked question in high schools from
 185 us was 'Are you gay?'
 186 R yeah
 187 (1.0)
 188 A -hhhh
 189 R heh heh heh heh what's this got to do with it HEH HEH [heh heh heh
 190 A [NO WE'RE NOT GAY
 191 [you know do we look ↑gay what do you think?
 192 R [heh heh heh heh heh heh heh heh heh heh heh
 193 A but their idea was you know like you're [male singers so then [you're you're
 194 R [yeah [yeah
 195 A a bit ↑funny you know
 196 R yeah
 197 A so (.) that's a bit of sore point with me
 198 R yeah
 199 A so I I had an extra motivation to sort of get these ki(h)ds ↑singing

This section of interview talk is completed when Andrew returns to his 'moral point' concerning the teaching of singing to children:

- 211 A yeah and the original point I was making was that any kids even to begin with
 212 (.) in elementary school
 213 R yeah
 214 A you can teach them to sing if you can motivate them properly and you know what
 215 you're doing

As in lines 77–80, Andrew once again reasserts strong opposition to the assertion I have made at lines 15–16 that if *students* (particularly boys) are not motivated to sing, any amount of work by *teachers* to teach them to sing will be unsuccessful. In Andrew's account, if a *teacher* is motivated enough, *any* child may be taught to sing in the primary school – even the most difficult street-wise boys.

Moral versions of the music teacher

Sacks (1992) offers the notion of 'fragile' stories as those that are 'more complicated than your story has them' (Vol. 2: 504). Such a story, notes Sacks, 'might be heard in a way that leads to a questioning or a doubting of the version the teller gives' (p. 505). As I have outlined earlier, at key points in the interview when Andrew's story could have been taken as complete, I pursue a further account. This occurs at lines 99–104 and 124–7. My questions and comments at these points have to do with the students portrayed in Andrew's story: were they pleased about learning to sing and did they voluntarily attend practices in their free time? At each of these junctures, Andrew responds to these challenges by providing a further portrayal of himself as an effective teacher.

Taken as a whole then, across this section of interview talk, we see different versions of 'music teacher' produced by speakers. Initially at lines 15 and 16 I present a version of a music teacher as being unable to 'teach' boys sing accurately if they are not motivated to learn.

- 15 R well if they don't have motivation to sing and they don't think it's what boys should
 16 do they're not going to sing no matter what you do really

A second and contradictory version is presented by Andrew in lines 62–5. The teacher in this version is *able* to motivate boys – regardless of how unmotivated they may be – to sing:

- 77 A =you can teach them to sing too (.) so this business about ah (.) them not being able to
 78 sing=
 79 R =yeah=
 80 A =is hogwash I think=

I present a third version of the teacher at lines 126–7. As interviewer, I propose a teacher who uses his authority to *compel* difficult boys to learn to sing in their recess time:

- 125 A well I kind of said [you have to HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH
 126 R [oh I see heh heh heh heh no cho(h)ice he(h)re yo(h)u're go(h)ing
 127 to do it -hhh

Andrew counters this portrayal by producing another version of a (male) teacher who is respected by his male students because of his sporting prowess. In this version, the boys work with their teacher out of respect, not compulsion:

- 128 A and plus I I'd worked as a look
 129 (2.0)
 130 A u::mm (.) they really respected me because I I coached the basketball
 131 [I coached the floor hockey [and I you know I did all these sport [things with them
 132 R [o::h I see [yeah [yeah
 133 A so they really respected me

Prior to this interview, Andrew was aware that he had been recommended to me by a music adviser as a possible participant in my research project on the basis of his successful work with children's singing. It is possible that Andrew's story might also be read as a demonstration of how 'competence' may be described by someone identified as an 'exemplary music teacher'. The topic of my research had been clearly delineated prior to this interview – how do exemplary music teachers work with inaccurate singers? Andrew's account then exemplifies how a speaker might also utilize the interview setting as a strategic site – in this case to 'do the talk of an exemplary (heterosexual) male music teacher'.

This analysis, then, provides access to the joint interpretation of a specific research topic that is accomplished in a particular interview setting between an interviewer and interviewee (Briggs, 1986: 3). In this instance, the production of particular 'versions' of actors within the interview has been contested by the interviewer and defended by the interviewee. Would 'street-wise' boys willingly come to singing lessons during their recess times? Did these boys learn to sing in-tune from a teacher whom they respected? The answers to these questions cannot be derived from these interview accounts. However, what is patently obvious in this analysis of interview data is the morally laden nature of one cultural world – that of music teaching.

Conclusion

The critique of the first reading presented in this article provides a warning to novice researchers concerning the ways in which 'theorizing as ideology' (Smith, 1974) may be so easily accomplished in the writing of research reports. Through the utilization of conversation analysis to analyse interview transcripts, novice researchers might further explore their roles as researchers and interviewers in the process of data generation and subsequent data analysis.

The secondary analysis presented here provides some insight into the

interaction that took place in one particular interview setting. It also provides additional information concerning teacher beliefs and assumptions – both my own and my respondent’s – which have been omitted from the previous report. Although my original report claims to investigate the underlying beliefs and assumptions which teachers hold about inaccurate singing and its remediation, it can be seen from this second analysis of the data that a naive and partial reading was achieved. Indeed, Briggs (1986) has cogently argued that ‘the single most serious shortcoming related to the use of interviews in the social sciences . . . [is] the commonsensical, unreflexive manner in which most analyses of interview data are conducted’ (p. 102). By re-viewing the data used in the first report described here, this shortcoming is made apparent.

By using the tools made available by CA, I have demonstrated how another order of data may be accessed. Silverman (1993a) describes this order of data as a ‘cultural universe and its content of moral assumptions’ (p. 108). As a researcher, this is an uncomfortable procedure to undertake for one’s shortcomings as interviewer and/or analyst are immediately illuminated. Nevertheless, this process follows Briggs’s (1986) recommendation ‘to ask tough questions with regard to the effect of our actions on the data, and on the people we are studying’ (p. 124), and the example presented here may serve as a cautionary tale to novice researchers.

There are many ways of viewing this teacher’s story and, as noted earlier, the version represented in text may well vary in accordance with the audience for whom it is intended. Following Woolgar (1988: 30), who argues for the disruption of the ‘apprehension’ of texts as ‘objective’ accounts, the two possible readings of this data set include:⁵

1. A report on what a teacher believes, and what he did – as in the original analysis; or
2. a situated display of identities (those of music teacher and/or researcher; exemplary teacher; male/female teacher) – as in the second analysis.

When the latter view is taken, this music teacher’s story may be seen to reveal a vast fund of knowledge of cultural particulars used in ‘story making’ in response to a particular interviewer in a particular social setting.

The analysis presented in this article serves as an example of how one might critically examine the process of data analysis. As Briggs (1986) notes,

That the political dimensions of methodological issues are seldom examined or discussed should come as no surprise. We gather our data in encounters that focus on the topics under discussion rather than on the research encounter itself. We further this process in our analysis of interview data (p. 124).

It is to be hoped that qualitative researchers continue to take up the challenge offered here by analyzing and presenting interview data in all its complexity, to produce rich, adequately theorized accounts concerning whatever research topic is at hand.

NOTES

1. Briggs (1986) takes the position that 'bias' is a 'highly problematic theoretical premise'. See his discussion for details (p. 21).
2. All personal, place and school names used are pseudonyms. Andrew was one of the six exemplary music teachers identified and interviewed for the study.
3. Ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts have employed this approach extensively. See MacLure and Walker (2000) and Verkuyten (2000) for two recent examples of conversation analytic approaches to naturally occurring events in school settings.
4. It is interesting to note the inclusion of a reference to AC DC, an Australian heavy metal rock group. At the time of this research I was in Canada studying towards a Master in School Music degree with an emphasis in Kodály studies. The Kodály approach to music education emphasizes the development of an appreciation for the great works of Western art music. In this context then, the use of AC DC as a referent may be seen as a portrayal of students who involve themselves in the 'worst' kind of music as opposed to that which is educationally and musically worthwhile and valid.
5. This is by no means the only interpretation of this data. See for example, another possible reading in Roulston and Mills (2000).

APPENDIX

Transcription conventions used:

Teacher	T
Researcher	R
()	words spoken, not audible
(())	transcriber's description
[two speakers' talk overlaps at this point
[
=	no interval between turns
?	interrogative intonation
(2.0)	pause timed in seconds
(.)	small untimed pause
th:::en	prolonged sound
<u>why</u>	emphasis
YES	louder sound to surrounding talk
heh heh	laughter
the(h)n	word spoken in laughing voice
-hhh	in breath
hhh-	out breath
°little°	softer sound to surrounding talk
↑really	rising intonation

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