

***CRITIQUING RESEARCH INTERVIEWS FROM AN CA PERSPECTIVE: TREATING INTERVIEW AS SOCIAL PRACTICE***

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**Abstract**

In this paper, the author attempts to review several CA-inspired critiques on research interviews in social science. After succinctly illustrating the basic concepts of research interviews, CA's approaches to human interaction and interview practices will be delineated whilst highlighting co-constructive elements of the talk-in-interaction. Then, several prevalent assumptions of research interviews, which researchers across the social sciences have taken for granted, will be addressed based on several CA-informed studies.

Subsequently, two particular shortcomings of interview data representation/analysis, *the deletion of researcher* and *decontextualised stand-alone quotes*, will be discussed grounded on a constructionist perspective. In closing, micro-interactional analysis of interview data will be suggested as a valuable approach, regardless of the theoretical/analytical orientation that such research would be based on.

**Keywords:** *qualitative inquiry, qualitative research, research interview, ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, membership categorization analysis*

**1. Introduction**

Within the field of qualitative inquiry, researchers have long relied on different interview methods to collect data. That is, a diverse array of research topics in social science has been examined through interviews. Due to its significant influence on data generation and analysis as such, robust textbooks and journal articles with respect to research interviews have been

published. However, the topical variety of the methodological literature is rather narrow as they are unduly dependent on the polarisation of *appropriate* and *inappropriate* interviews and a list of simplified techniques. They only explicate how the interview should be conducted, how to encourage the interviewee to talk openly and trustfully and what the questions assume the respondent will focus on (Talmy and Richards, 2011; Alvesson, 2003; Richards, 2011). Consequently, linguistically and socially complex situations involved in a research interview have been glossed over whilst treating interview as an economical tool for touching subjects in the interviewee's knowledge and experience (Alvesson, 2003). This approach naturally gives rise to the silence in the analysis of the interviewer's side, including their positioning, participation and contribution toward data generation.

In attempts to problematise this rudimentary status of interview practices, several social science researchers have utilised ethnomethodological analytic procedures such as conversation analysis (CA) and membership categorization analysis (MCA). These analytic stances have significantly contributed to exposing hidden aspects of interviewing and being interviewed. This paper seeks to critically review this type of alternative analytic approach in order to provide some insights to the talk-in-interaction of interviews. This, in turn, will illuminate the centrality of both interviewer and interviewee as a topic of analysis (Rapley, 2001; Roulston, 2006).

It seems appropriate to begin the paper by elucidating basic elements of the research interview along with how CA conceptualises it, which is one type of talk-in-interaction.

## **2. What is a research interview? Different structures and formats of research interview**

The research interview is a data collection method aimed at gathering information and grasping issues related to the general objectives as well as specific questions of a particular research project (Gillham, 2000). As it has been one of the most commonly used methods in social science, various types of interviews have been developed and employed by researchers in different disciplines; however, the basic building block of all forms of interviewing in general is the question-answer sequence (Roulston, 2010a). That is, a researcher poses questions in order to elicit answers from a participant. In other words, two interlocutors are engaged in asking and answering questions no matter what the structure of the interview is. This fundamental unit of interaction, in turn, generates three different categories of research interviews for the purposes of social science studies in terms of question and sequence types: structured, semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews.

Roulston (2010a) suggests a clear distinction between the three interview structures based on forms of question and sequence. For example, structured interviews are followed by tightly scripted questions in a particular order, thus, the participant should select responses from a range of choices that are strongly constrained. Semi-structured interviews comply with interview protocols including several pre-formulated questions as it provides the same starting point for each interview. Notwithstanding this pre-determined component, questions may not always be administered in the same sequence. In addition, after asking interviewee each question, the interviewer follows up with additional queries seeking detailed descriptions about what has been uttered. Unstructured interviews are loosely guided by the pre-specified structure, which means both interviewer and interviewee are able to initiate questions and discuss topics. Consequently, the sequence in unstructured interviews is highly likely to be a free-flowing and less asymmetrical conversation. Moreover, the interviewees can select their own terms to participate in this spontaneous talk-in-interaction.

Social science researchers specify the forms of interview not only by structures as noted above, but also types of contents they aim to explore based on their research topics. Namely, qualitative research in social science has developed several formats of interviewing such as phenomenological, ethnographic and feminist interviewing. All these interviews seek different purposes; however, they also have some shared ground in terms of their tendency to employ open questions and heightened awareness of ethical issues.

Phenomenological interviews explore participants' experience, in particular, their meaning-making process of the lived experience (Seidman, 2013). The interviewer seeks to explore how each participant reconstructs his/her feelings, perceptions and interpretation concerned with the experience by suggesting open questions through an unstructured sequence. Meanwhile, ethnographic interviews are aimed to examine descriptions and meanings that participants ascribe to events in their cultural world (Roulston 2010a). This cultural world embraces a wide range of issues such as norms, languages, spaces, artifacts, events and shared activities and experiences. Whereas phenomenological interviews focus on obtaining descriptions of a particular lived experience, ethnographic interviews are attuned to gain elaboration upon major facets with regard to the cultural world which the participants belong to or are part of (Spradley, 1979; Roulston, 2010a). Most importantly, ethnographic interviews exist as an extension of an ethnographer's fieldwork, such as participant observation and casual conversation with the participants, based on a harmonious relationship (Spradley, 1979).

Feminist interviews tend to employ a highly unstructured/open-ended sequence like phenomenological and ethnographic interviews do. Nevertheless, it has its own distinctive objective to expose the invisibility/silence of women in male-defined social science research

(Reinharz and Chase, 2002). That means, the aim of the feminist interviews is to rediscover the gender impact not only on a research topic but also the interview process itself (ibid). Under this agenda, it puts great value on the self-disclosure/openness of the interviewer, egalitarian relationship, attentive listening to the discourse created by female interviewees and willingness to engage in under-studied topics related to women's lives (Roulston: 2010a).

In sum, all these categories of interviews are based on a conversation, which is a basic mode of interviewing. In addition, the conversations are composed of questions and answers and these two are dynamically interchanged by participants. Grounded on this fundamental conceptualisation of research interviews in terms of their structure and format, the next section is mainly aimed to explore how CA approaches research interviews and, in particular, how it attempts to analyse interview data based on its emphasis on the ongoing contextualisation process of human interaction.

### **3. CA's approach to talk-in-interaction and research interview**

Conversation Analysis (CA) is a research methodology originated from Ethnomethodology (EM) invented by the sociologist Harold Garfinkel in the 1960s. EM refers to the study of members' common sense knowledge and reasoning practices for organising mundane activities and it made a huge impact on the birth of CA (Seedhouse, 2004; Roulston, 2006; ten Have, 2013). Now researchers in the diverse disciplines using EM and CA tend to consider that CA is EM's younger sibling which has successfully pioneered its own way of doing systematic analysis (ten Have, 2013).

CA's primary analytic focus is to examine 'the norms, practices and competence underlying the organisation of social interaction' (Drew and Heritage, 2006: 1) as this field of

study is predicated upon a premise that ‘talk-in-interaction is the primordial site of social life’ (Mortensen and Wagner, 2013: 3). Namely, CA posits that shared meaning, mutual understanding and the coordination of human conduct are accomplished through procedures of social interaction (Goodwin and Heritage, 1990).

CA conceptualises human interaction as a ‘sequentially embedded process in a local ecology of activities’ (Mortensen and Wagner, 2013: 3). Put simply, it states that any action lies in a stream of interaction. In this stream of interaction, a current action is designed by previous actions, simultaneously designing further actions. CA explicates this matrix of interaction as ‘an empirical specification of the dynamic view of context’, which demonstrates an ongoing relation of *context shaped* and *context shaping* (Goodwin and Heritage, 1990: 289). This means that interactants reflexively investigate the ongoing discourse in terms of assessing its structure and salient meaning (Bauman and Briggs, 1990). This, in turn, dynamically reconstructs the context that offers organisation for their activities (Duranti and Goodwin, 1992). In this vein, it can be claimed that CA analyses entail the sequences within which each speaker’s actions emerge and where they are connected with each other (Goodwin and Heritage, 1990).

Based on this intrinsic nature of human interactions, CA approaches interviews differently, which is apart from the prevailing treatment of interviews in social sciences (Kasper, 2013). The prevailing treatment pertains to several commonsensical, unexamined preconceptions of research interviews, which will be thoroughly discussed in the next section (e.g. treating a research interview as an instrument for collecting data, a self-evident report, a neutral and transparent conduit of interviewees’ subjective worlds and so forth). Contrary to

the existing assumptions of interviewing, CA attempts to view any types of interview from a set of empirically grounded prerequisites as follows:

1. Interviews are a form of locally achieved social interaction.
2. Interviews are jointly produced by interviewer and respondent.
3. Participants' talk in the interview accomplishes a range of social actions, stances, and identities
4. All features of the participants' interactional conduct may shape the flow of the activity and generate the interviewee's responses' (Kasper, 2013: 1).

An expanding body of research in social science has investigated interview data through an ethnomethodological filter (Roulston, 2014). For instance, Baker (2002, 2004) claims that ethnomethodologists attempt to analyse interviews in the same way as they treat other interactional events such as naturally-occurring conversation or institutional talks. In addition, she argues that an interview is a conversational interaction so it is problematic to stipulate an interview is mere data collection. It is, rather, a process of making data. Within this data generation conduct, questions from the interviewer are not a neutral invitation. They are paramount assets enabling participants to shape how they account themselves as competent members of a particular category attached by the researcher. It also allows the researcher to explore how interviewees position their social identities based on category incumbencies whilst touching upon some moral terrains.

To summarise, from the EMCA perspective, research interviews are regarded as one domain of talk in which the *how* accounts are jointly produced by participants and which can be examined along with *what* is talked about (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995, 2004; Roulston, 2006). Holstein and Gubrium (2004) refer to this aspect with a coined term, *active interview*, which treats the interview as a meaning-making project entailing interpretive accomplishment, communicative contingencies and narrative resources. Aligning with

Holstein and Guburium's theorisation, EMCA researchers consider that the interview is located in a stream of social interaction, in which both the interviewer and interviewee routinely employ their knowledge and experience to offer articulations of events associated with a research topic (Roulston, 2006).

Armed with the conceptions of the EMCA's approach to interview practices, how social science researchers have resensitised interview studies from a different theoretical/analytic perspective will be discussed in the following section.

#### **4. Problematising taken-for-granted assumptions of research interviews from a CA perspective**

Several researchers in applied linguistics and discursive psychology have attempted to critique what they have seen as an incomplete appreciation of qualitative interviews. For example, they argue that we are living in an *interview society*, where interviews are 'a pervasive feature of the discursive landscape' (Sarangi, 2003 cited in Talmy, 2010: 130). However, there has been under-investigation of how research interviews have been conceptualised in this landscape (Talmy, 2011). In other words, there has been significant inconsistency in how the interview has been, and continues to be, theorised in social science (Talmy, 2010). Indeed, there are numerous methodologically oriented textbooks concerning interview techniques, yet the ideologies underpinning all those techniques have not been thoroughly examined (ibid). Rather, interview research in social science has been fraught with a taken-for-granted assumption that interviews straightforwardly provide a resource in relation to participants' experiences, attitudes, beliefs, identities and orientations toward a wide range of social and cultural phenomena. This, in turn, has proliferated uncritical adoption of the interview in various empirical studies and researchers have been overly



reliant on a simplistic notion, 'you ask, they answer, and then you will know', during the process of interviewing (Holloway 2005 cited in Talmy, 2011: 27).

Discursive psychologist, Potter and Hepburn (2005) exemplify the aforementioned problems of research interviews with actual interview excerpts transcribed and analysed by CA principles. They suggest a constructive argument indicating a series of contingent drawbacks in the design, analysis and representation of qualitative interviews in psychology research. By casting a critical eye on the interview data, Potter and Hepburn advance several problems of qualitative interview as follows: the absence of the interviewer in the data transcription and analysis; the conventions of representation of interview interaction; specificity of observations; the unavailability of the interview setting; the failure to shed light on interviews as interaction. To be specific, they pinpoint that the interviewer's talk, as well as a fuller transcription entailing salient minutiae of moment-by-moment interaction, have been taken out of data extract and analysis. In addition, qualitative interview literature in psychology tend to represent interview data as large chunks of text reproducing respondents' talk. Thus, it is difficult to observe specific components of the talk, which may suggest a crucial analytic point of view. It is also hard to work out what category the researcher used in order to recruit interviewees, along with diverse interactional features of the interviews. They stress that all these problematic aspects of qualitative interviews are more or less correctable by changing the way interview talk is represented in terms of the form of the transcript.

Talmy (2010) draws upon *cartographies of communicability* in order to problematise key preconceptions of qualitative interviews in applied linguistics. The cartographies of communicability are based on three ideologies of language and communication: language as a transparent vessel; division of the private from the public sector; and a nostalgia for the

primordial face-to-face communication and social life (Briggs, 2007 cited in Talmy, 2010).

Talmy tries to link the communicable cartography of interviewing with *an interview as research instrument* perspective, which is the main critique for research interview practices. *An interview as research instrument* is a product-oriented perspective viewing an interview as a tool to elicit a self-disclosing report from participants and its problematic elements can be encapsulated as follows: interview data tend to be regarded as participants' report of their objective/subjective reality whilst producing decontextualised stand-alone quotes deleting the interviewers' role and participation; the researcher tends to obfuscate imperative power asymmetries embedded in interactions in terms of the entextualisation, decontextualisation and recontextualisation process; the researcher tends to employ undertheorised notions of voice and giving voice to participants; the analysis of interview data tends to over-rely on recurrent cases whilst ignoring critical events or themes that do not occur repeatedly. In sum, all these elements result in the negligence of looking at the *hows* of an interview *process* whilst only touching upon the *whats* of an interview *result*.

In opposition to the previous perspective, Talmy (2010) proposes *a research interview as social practice*, which conceptualises the interview as a locally/socially situated and collaboratively produced phenomenon by both the interviewer and the interviewee. That is, the interview itself is a site for investigation and, therefore, a reflexive procedure of the collaborative knowledge production is achieved through interviewing. An ideological as well as an analytical ground of *a research interview as social practice* perspective is based on a range of *micro* analytic approaches such as discourse analysis, conversation analysis, narrative analysis, membership categorization analysis and interactional sociolinguistics. Consequently, *an interview as social practice* necessarily entails some sort of micro-analysis in order to thoroughly examine interactional performance and detailed linguistic features.

Most importantly, interviewers are not invisible in the analysis procedure any more as their questions, participation and contribution are included in the transcription as well as analysis.

The key idea of the argument is that *a research interview as social practice* is distinctive from the commonsensical notion in social science research, which was referred to as *an interview as research instrument*. This alternative approach is aimed at focusing not only on interview contents but also on the interactional and narrative procedures of knowledge production (Talmy, 2011). Subsequently, the interviewee can be transformed from a repository of responses to an active interlocutor who is in the process of sharing rich details of experience with the interviewer (Kasper, 2013; Talmy, 2011). In other words, an *interview as social practice* perspective sheds light on *assembly process* as in what is assembled through an interview (Holstein and Gubrium, 2003 cited in Talmy, 2011, Holstein and Gubrium, 2004 cited in Kasper, 2013).

In an example of the previous discussion on *an interview as an instrument/social practice* perspective, Roulston's (2001) research clearly demonstrates what the suggested critiques actually signify in terms of analysing interviews. Roulston revisits her original interview data collected in 1991 for an MA dissertation and critically re-analyses one particular data-set of the interview in order to contrast her previous reading with alternative results and aspects generated by CA approaches. In other words, she juxtaposes two different analytic approaches, which applied to the same data-set whilst underlining potential benefits and insights accrued from CA analysis.

This research indicates strikingly different analytical points of view; one resulting from thematic analysis applied for the research project in 1991 and the other one resulting from

CA employed for the current paper. For example, the representations of data reveal a marked distinction, as can be seen in Appendix 1, even if both research projects used exactly the same recording for the analysis. As Potter and Hepburn outlined earlier, the data analysed by thematic analysis here tend to be large blocks of text. Roulston (2001) critiques this kind of data representation/analysis as naïve and unhesitant single interpretation since it only focuses on the contents of the interviewee's thoughts whilst eliciting partial descriptions of social events *outside* the actual interview setting. Along with this, the questions from the researcher are not included in the extracts, which means the interviewer's vital role in the production of data has been neglected.

Contrary to the previous reading, the utilisation of CA to analyse the same set of interview data illuminates how another order of data can be produced through embracing various linguistic features such as acknowledgement tokens from the researcher, formulation, story preface, the use of the particle and so forth. The second reading of the data allows the researcher to illuminate on 'a situated display of identities' whilst viewing the interview's talk as a moment by moment story making rather than a linear story told by the respondent (Roulston, 2001: 298).

In this section, three papers written by several researchers from different disciplines have been introduced in order to examine why they have problematised current research literature using qualitative interviews. This approach proposes a new conceptualisation, *interview as social practice*, which brings a more reflexive and thorough manner in reading interview data as we can see in Roulston's study. Based on this discussion, issues addressed so far will be expanded using a particular theorisation of the qualitative interview in the closing sections.

## 5. Discussion

In examining undertheorised preconceptions of research interviews in social science research, *an interview as social practice* has been introduced as one possible approach to surmount the suggested pitfalls. In this section, two particular assumptions of the research interview will be discussed in detail: *the deletion of researcher* and *decontextualised stand-alone quotes*. The critique of these two assumptions originates from a *constructionist conception of the interview*, which is the core theoretical basis of *an interview as social practice* perspective.

The constructionist approach conceptualises an interview as a socially situated account in which both the interviewer and the interviewee play active roles, thereby enabling researchers to explore *how* interview data are co-constructed by the speakers (Roulston, 2010b). In particular, this approach tries to excavate *how* they make sense of a research topic, *how* they perform different kinds of actions or identities and *how* they assemble what comes to be regarded as morality, rationality or social order based on the notion of culture-in-action (Baker, 2000; Baker, 2002; Roulston, 2010b). Interestingly, this perspective even embraces some interviews, which seem to have failed in terms of irrelevant/minimal answers or refusal of responses. It envisages that the problematic interviews would provide fruitful ground for developing methodological questions, which are rarely suggested at the beginning of a study (Roulston, 2010b). That is, the constructionist perspective seeks to elucidate *how* various conversational resources become visible in problematic interactions in a research interview rather than simply labelling it as a failure.

Adjacency pair, suggested by Harvey Sacks, is one of the crucial bases of the constructionist's critiques of research interviews. Adjacency pair refers to a sequence of two utterances which are adjacent, generated by different interlocutors, ordered as 'a first part and

second part and typed, so that a first part requires a particular second, or range of second parts' (Heritage, 1984 cited in Wooffitt, 2005: 32). For the interview interaction, this turn-taking system can be interpreted as once the question is delivered, a slot is available for the answer to the previous question (Roulston, 2011). Hence, all questions constrain the range of possible next utterances and their format of responses (Kasper, 2013). Based on this conception, it can be argued that interviewees' responses are orient to, shaped by, and designed for the interviewer's questions, thus, an interview is a collaborative endeavour between the interviewer and the interviewee (Talmy, 2011).

Due to its emphasis on locally accomplished aspects based on the concept of adjacency pair, critiques from the constructionist approach highlight two specific problems in presenting and analysing interview data in social sciences studies; *the deletion of researcher* and *decontextualised stand-alone quotes*. Constructionist-informed researchers such as CA analysts call into question the negligence of the researcher's role in the generation of interview data despite his/her significant implication in what the interviewee ends up talking about, and how they talk about it (Wooffitt and Widdicombe, 2006). They contend that the interviewer's questions and talks have been constantly omitted from the final representation of an interview excerpt. Hence, a range of potentially notable insights associated with the data, analysis and interpretations of a study can be lost or distorted (Talmy, 2010; Talmy, 2011).

CA practitioners also raise questions about large blocks of respondents' quotations, which are most widely employed to present data in interview studies. This sort of quotational display reproducing an interviewee's comments is based on conventional approaches to data analysis such as thematic analysis, and Roulston's (2001) study presented in the previous

section is a good example. Thematic analysis posits that interviewee's talks are not affected by their interactional context. Rather, these approaches predicated that themes naturally emerge if the data go through a series of systematic processes in order to be coded, grouped and summarised (Talmy, 2011). It also tends to relegate the theoretical notion of reflexivity, inevitably embedded within the interviewer's questions, as well as the whole interview procedure (Roulston, 2001). By doing so, respondents' talk is represented as a nominal description and abstract summarisation at the end whilst being distant from a stream of social interaction in which and for which it was generated. That is, readers are not able to observe the interaction that the participants share *before* the presented quote comes up, as well as the interaction the participants move on to *after* the presented quote ends. Simply, the interviewee's answers exist in 'a social vacuum which is divorced from and immune to interactional contingencies' (Wooffitt and Widdicombe, 2006: 40).

Furthermore, when it comes to transcription, content and thematic analysis do not include conversationally live features such as laughter, pause, intonation, emphasis, stumble, slips and so forth. Rather, the interview excerpt is composed of the interpretation of what the researcher believed the interviewee had meant rather than what had been actually said (Roulston, 2001). Therefore, researchers as well as the readers are likely to lose an opportunity to observe possibly critical components of the interview interaction.

## **6. Conclusion**

In this literature review, the author has attempted to critique the normalised status of research interviews across social sciences from the EMCA perspective. In particular, the under-appreciation of data representation and analysis in interview studies, which is outlined as: 1) little or nearly no concern over interviewers' talk and 2) decontextualised quotational

display lacking of fine-grained details of talk-in-interaction, have been highlighted.

Following the critical discussion documented earlier, it can be concluded that the talk in research interview is always locally managed and collaboratively constructed by interactants. Indeed, it is situated in a 'specific local interactional context produced in and through the talk and concomitant identity work of the interviewer and interviewee' (Rapley, 2001: 317).

Based on the addressed critiques of research interview practices, we can espouse micro-analytic attention to interview data, which sensitively treats how the interviewer and the interviewee delicately assemble a wide range of here-and-now contexts as well as linguistic features. No matter what a social science researcher employs as an analytic stance and its theoretical backgrounds, it is worthwhile carefully observing the interactional/situated nature of the talk in an interview with heightened awareness and enhanced analytical sensitivity. This approach to interview data, in turn, would generate high quality studies providing effective, rich and adequately theorised findings in regard to a wide range of social and cultural phenomena.

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## Appendix

### **Thematic Analysis** (Roulston, 1992 cited in Roulston, 2001: 282)

Respect as a characteristic of classroom behaviour in music lessons is also required by Andrew, 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!’

**Conversation Analysis** (Roulston, 2001: pp. 287-289, 291)

[ISAL/19 June 1991]

- 1 R yeah how do you cope with that? what do you do?  
2 A oh if 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  
17 A ye[:ah  
18 R [will they?  
19 (3.0)  
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  
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

**Transcription conventions used:**

( ) 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  
why 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

**About the author**

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