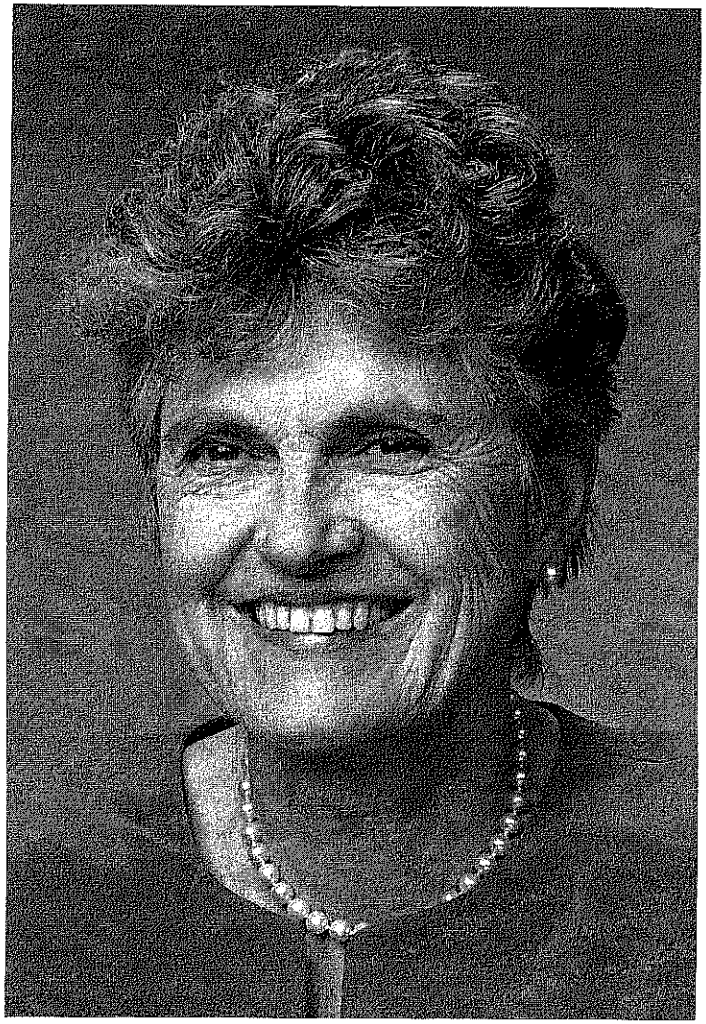

Susan Moore Ervin-Tripp

Social Interaction, Social Context, and Language

Essays in Honor of Susan Ervin-Tripp

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4 SHIFTING FRAME[1]

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Within interaction, speech events set up the sequential relevance of appropriate next moves, constraining the realm of appropriate next actions and ways in which those involved are to participate. Any speaker's communicative action is both context-shaped and context- Renewing. As Heritage (1984, p. 242) states,

> A speaker's action is context-shaped in that its contribution to an ongoing sequence of actions cannot adequately be understood except by reference to the context — including, especially, the immediately preceding configuration of actions — in which it participates. . . . Since every "current" action will itself form the immediate context for some "next" action in a sequence, it will inevitably contribute to the framework in terms of which the next action will be understood.

For example, it is expected that participants will answer invitations with acceptances or rejections, summonses with answers, or a ritual insult with a similar move in kind. Listeners to stories are expected to interject displays of attentiveness, displaying their alignment and engrossment in the events being recounted.

While speech events make such proposals about appropriate next moves, participants in fact have available an array of different ways of responding to ongoing talk. They may elect to initiate talk (or activity) which is not proposed by a preceding action or the ongoing activity but instead shift the "frame" (Goffman, 1974) or structure of intelligibility (for example, whether a communication is to be heard as serious or playful). Shifting frame frequently involves a change in stance or "footing" (Goffman, 1981): That is, a "change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance" (Goffman, 1981, p. 128). Shifting frame is not done capriciously, rupturing ongoing discourse; it occurs in orderly ways as practical solutions to interactional dilemmas, reshaping the speech event, or constructing distance from the tone of the activity in progress.

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[1] This paper was presented in the invited session on "Constituting Social Life through Talk: Interweaving Perspectives from Conversation Analysis, Ethnography, and Activity Theory" at the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the American Association for Applied Linguistics, Seattle, February 29, 1992.

FRAME TRANSFORMATIONS IN ARGUMENT

While Goffman laid out a programmatics for looking at the phenomenon of footing, he did not analyze how shifts in footing are achieved in actual moment-to-moment talk. The intent of this chapter is to demonstrate some of the methodical procedures listeners in conversational interaction make use of in recasting a prior speaker's talk to reshape meaning. Shifting frame may occur on different levels within an utterance, changing the phonology of words (example 1), the utterance's interpretation as a type of speech act (examples 1 and 2), or one's affective stance towards talk being spoken (examples 3 and 4).

One speech activity in which changes in footing occur quite frequently is argument, an event arising with "two or more disputants articulating adversary positions (or "theses") with respect to some topic, including at least an exchange of assertion and counter-assertion with some attendant expansion" (Coulter, 1990, p. 185). Children's disputes in particular provide a perspicuous locale for investigating the phenomenon of changes in footing. Throughout argumentative talk children make creative use of the language provided by their opponents in prior turns, shaping it to their own ends, often with minimal semantic shifts (Labov, 1974). Consider the following argument between 12-year-old African American girls, in which Ruby plays with both the speech act and the phonological structure of Bea's moves. This conversational interaction was collected during an 18 month ethnographic study of African American children in Philadelphia. Data are transcribed according to the Jefferson system described in Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974):

(1) (Ruby is sitting on top of Bea)

1	Bea:	Get off!
2	Ruby:	No. Ain't there's another way?
3	Bea:	Come on, **Ruby**.
4	Ruby:	Come on, Where we **goin**.
5		Don't say that **either**.
6	Bea:	Come on. // Get off. All y'gotta do-
7	Ruby:	Cuz I gotta answer.
8	Bea:	[Get off.
9	Ruby:	[All ya gotta say **is** (0.2) I mean get-
10		I mean um- um **Move** please.
11		and I can't get no rhymes on that one.
12	Bea:	**Move** please.
13	Ruby:	Where the move at.
14	Bea:	I'm tryin to get off rather,
15	Ruby:	**Wa**ther, wh- oh: the weather you want?
16		The day is sunny and tomorrow's gonna be ra-

This sequence contains a number of playful mishearings that demonstrate ways that participants might transform a prior utterance in a subsequent move. For example, the

words "Come on" in line 3 are quite clearly a recycle of the request made in line 1, that Ruby get off Bea. However, when abstracted from a particular context the words could have a range of different meanings. In line 4 Ruby plays with this fact. She first uses a partial repeat format ("Come on"), a turn preface also used in other-initiated repair, to recycle part of Bea's prior utterance. She then treats Bea's prior talk as a request to go somewhere, rather than a request to get off. In line 12 Bea makes a request "Move please" — that has the following format:

[Verb (action requested)] + [Please]

A very similar format is used with nouns when asking for objects (for example, "Salt, please" to request salt at the dinner table):

[Noun (object requested)] + [Please]

In line 13 Ruby treats the verb in line 12 as a noun by asking, "Where the move at."

In line 15, by systematically varying its phonological structure, Ruby provides a second transformation, changing "rather" into "weather." This is accomplished by utilizing an initial repair-like structure (repeating part of the prior utterance with falling rising intonation; Goodwin, 1983) and effecting phonological changes — first changing the "r" in "rather" to "w" and then changing the "æ" in rather to "ɛ":

| ræther
| wæther
↓ wɛther

Through this stepwise transformation, Ruby is able to humorously transform Bea's request for her to move into a request for information about the weather. While operating within the parameters of prior speaker's talk, she shows the way in which she can play with both the speech act meaning of the utterance and phonological structure of words within it, to counter her opponent.

FRAME TRANSFORMATIONS DURING STORIES

Playful rendering of talk in which events are transformed from actual to imagined events occur in the midst of storytelling as well. Rather than displaying appropriate enthusiasm for current descriptions or stories through questions (Edelsky, 1981; Goodwin, 1982a, p. 805; 1982b, pp. 89-90; Polanyi, 1979, p. 221; Tannen, 1981, pp. 10-12), exclamations (Goffman, 1981, p. 28; Goodwin & Goodwin, 1992b), or brief comments (Goffman, 1981, p. 29; Goodwin & Goodwin, 1992a; Polanyi, 1979, p. 219; Tannen, 1981, p. 143; Shultz, Florio, & Erikson, 1982, p. 96) participants may open up a complex conversational floor which is simultaneous yet subordinate to the main floor being managed by storyteller and principal addressed recipient(s), through byplay (Goodwin, 1990) — teasing (Drew, 1987), heckling, or playfully dealing with a description or story.

In the following example, which occurs during a family dinner, storyteller is attempting to relate events about experiences which have occurred during the past week.

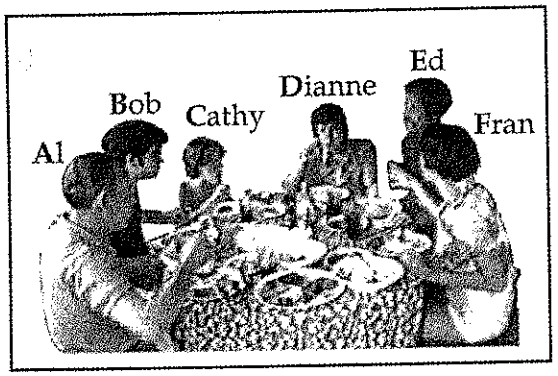


FIG. 4.1.

Fran is describing a table in a mansion belonging to the Christian Coalition group she is a member of which she recently visited. In the midst of this telling participants enter into joking talk about the ongoing speaker's talk, or byplay.

(2)
1		Fran:	**They** have a hu:ge **lon::g** table in the **mi**ddle
2			that would seat *h I~don't~know
3			**ho**w~many~people.=//*h And **then they** have- a
4	→	Bob:	Hundreds.
5		Fran:	**little** [dining room table at the e:nd.
6	→	Al:	[(°**Hun**dreds~at~ **least.**)
7		Fran:	Which [is the~size~of **ours.**
8	→	Ed:	[°King **A**rthur:'s. **ta**ble.
9		Fran:	*h **BY** [**t**heir **ba**:y **w**indow.
10	→	Bob:	[Was it **rou:nd**?
11		Fran:	Y'know? **Plus** they have- *h in **a**ll their
12			**be**drooms they have: what~are they
13			called.= **W**indow **s**eats:?

In describing the table, Fran uses a rhetorical device to indicate the table's expansiveness. When she says "*h I~don't~know how~many~people" (spoken rapidly, as indicated by the "~"'s between words) she is indicating the large size of the table, in effect providing an assessment of it, rather than asking help in locating a specific number; as she speaks these words she produces nonvocal appreciative lateral head shakes while her head is directed towards the table. As shown by the "=" (latched talk) sign following her sentence completion she continues quickly on with her talk, not dwelling on the number. Nonetheless this talk is hearable as a perturbation and constitutes one sort of conversational object which regularly engenders entry of recipients in a byplay mode. Bob playfully treats "I don't know how many people" as the initiation of a word search. Providing a candidate solution — "hundreds" — he overlaps her continuing talk (as indicated by the bracket) with a guess at the number and looks toward Ed, signaling his

invitation to him to coparticipate in commentary on the talk. Al speaks next in a low voice looking towards his plate; rather than attending to Fran, he builds on and elaborates Bob's guess with "ſhundreds~at~least." This theme now gets developed into fanciful versions of the table with Ed's "°King Arthur:'s. table." (produced looking toward Bob with his head in an arched mode — See Fig. 4.2), while Cathy and Dianne gaze towards the speaker, Fran. Bob's subsequent elaboration — "Was it rou:nd?" — is built on the King Arthur theme.

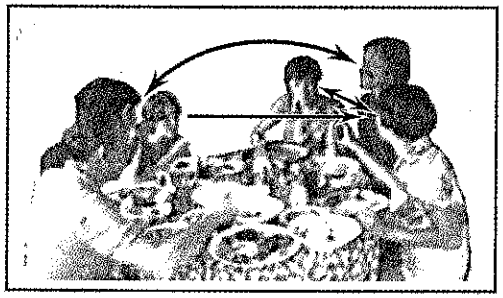


FIG. 4.2.

Differing stances towards Fran's talk are taken up by the women and men at the table. Assessments in stories provide a locus for appreciative commentary; frequently a recipient will provide an assessment (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1992a) concurrently with speaker, showing she is in agreement with the affective stance taken by the speaker. In listening to Fran's story, Cathy and Dianne through gaze and appreciative head shakes display their agreement with the principal storyteller, and willingness to coparticipate in savoring her past experience. By way of contrast, the males present distance themselves from what from their perspective might be considered an overblown assessment by entering a competing participation framework, and dealing with the object under discussion from a humorous point of view.

Fran's original attempt to indicate the expansiveness of the table has been extracted for treatment in ways that are not relevant to the story and becomes a point of departure for an extended playful sequence that occurs simultaneously with the continuation of her description. Indeed another important feature of byplay is its timing with respect to the story proper. Both Al and Ed chain their talk to Bob's commentary rather than Fran's. Specifically, rather than attending to Fran's currently relevant utterances they instead deal with talk of Fran which occurred earlier; time lag in dealing with talk on the floor is frequently a feature of byplay and constitutes one other way in which recipients can selectively operate on a speaker's talk.

In this example of storytelling, as in the previous argumentative sequence, participants selectively operate upon features of a speaker's talk; in accordance with their own interactive projects, recipients provide readings alternative to the speaker's projectable

ongoing action. In both instances, participants are roughly status equals. Work situations where there are clear differentiations in status between participants (i.e., boss–employee or employee–customer) and where the institution provides a context within which one is obligated to articulate company policy, provide quite different contexts and constraints for the manipulation of frame.

INTERTEXTUALITY: SHIFTING FRAME IN A SERVICE ENCOUNTER

Though participants to work situations may not be in a position to create radical frame shifts, they can in various ways restructure alignment or affective stance. In the following examples (drawn from a 3-year ethnographic study, The Workplace Project, analyzing work practices in a mid-sized airport) airline ticket agents frequently distance themselves from the company-related policies they are obliged to articulate, when they come in conflict with the lived experience of passengers they attend (i.e., when passengers must be told they have to find their own means of ground transportation because fog will prevent a plane from flying.)

In the following, an agent, attempting to solicit volunteer status from a customer, encounters resistance from him in agreeing with her proposed plan. He assumes a deadpan face and intermittently looks away. The agent subsequently adopts a new strategy, shifting frame by importing into her talk "traces" of speech from the official airline loudspeaker broadcast genre which is used to solicit volunteers.

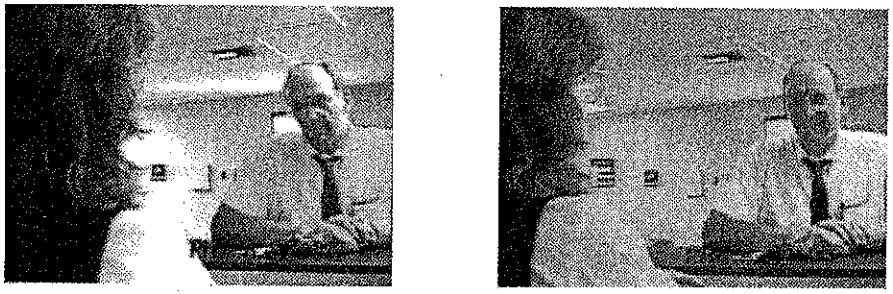
"Come-on" speeches typically are presented as offering amazing benefits to those who volunteer to fly on a later flight: for example, vouchers that "can be used against any fare, even discounted ones, to any of our over one hundred eighty worldwide destinations." Here the ticket agent makes use of a similar tactic but instead of foreign air travel offers a cab ride "through the hills of Santa Cruz to Monterey."

(3) Agent: O:kay, Mr. B at um
(if) you're going to Monterey
we're offering a (.)
two hundred dollar travel voucher
and a cab ride, as an alternative, (.)
cuz the flight is oversold.=
Would you like to ride (.)
through the hills of (.)
((smiling voice)) Santa Cruz
and up into Montere(hhh)y eh heh
[
Passenger: ((smiling)) heh

Importing talk from another genre into the present can provide a parody or a commentary on the present interaction. In his discussion of intertextuality Bakhtin (1973, p. 156) has proposed that parody and stylization are types of "double-voiced" utterances and as such are intended to be interpreted as the perspective of two speakers. Here the gate agent appropriates the stylized talk of an absent hypothetical agent to make her volunteer solicitation announcement. In analyzing how parody works Morson (1989, p. 65) has proposed that:

> The audience of a double-voiced word is therefore meant to hear both a version of the original utterance as the embodiment of its speaker's point of view (or "semantic position") and the second speaker's evaluation of that utterance from a different point of view.

In the midst of her speech soliciting a volunteer, the gate agent uses a smiling voice intonation to color her description of the option available — taking a cab ride "through the hills of Santa Cruz." In response the passenger reconfigures his alignment, matching the agent's affect by producing a smile and a small laugh. As she continues "up into Montere(hh)y eh heh heh" the agent subsequently produces talk embedded with laugh tokens (Jefferson, 1979); as the passenger begins smiling, the agent, monitoring her recipient (Goodwin, 1980), produces more laugh tokens, thereby creating an affective stance congruent with the passenger's altered humorous orientation. As illustrated in the following two video frame grabs of Fig. 4.3, one before (frame A) and another after (frame B) the frame shift, her talk is effective in reconfiguring the passenger's alignment to the current encounter.



A: Initiating the solicitation B: Shifting frame

FIG. 4.3.

The work of a gate agent entails a skillful management of changing alignments towards the talk she is producing and often makes use of such strategies of "double voicing." In their work, gate agents are often situated within conflicting participation frameworks. While on the one hand they are obligated to articulate the company's policy, on the other they are obliged to present themselves as sympathetic listeners to passenger concerns. By slight shifts in alignment to their talk, agents deal with the conflicting constraints of their jobs. While taking up a humorous stance towards ongoing talk, they distance themselves from the very talk they are producing and step outside of the official gate agent role, if only momentarily, to align themselves with a passenger.

THE USE OF THE BODY IN MODULATING STANCE: RECIPIENT MOVES OF RESISTANCE

Within ongoing interaction participants not only make use of explicit contextualization cues (Gumperz, 1982) such as laughter or parody of a genre in the talk they produce; they might also utilize their bodies to subtly shift alignment towards what is being said. While in the previous example an airline employee displayed her less than full affiliation with the very talk she was producing, in the next example an employee distances herself from the position of her boss through a shift in her body "attunement" (Kendon, 1985).

In the airline one not only experiences a "managed heart" (Hochschild, 1983) but also a managed body. Aspects of one's physical appearance, such as body proportions, hair style, and dress, are all subject to ongoing review by supervisors. In the following, while two ethnographers are filming and asking a gate supervisor about the duties of overseeing employees, an agent approaches. Using the agent as an example of someone who steps outside the bounds of employee rules, the gate supervisor playfully chides her for her hair style. In so doing he touches her body to index points of reference in his speech.

(4) 1 Super: See actually- hair that_s- more than shoulder length is supposed to be pulled back at the crown.
2 Agent: It's clipped- by my ears.
I just got mine cut though.
I got two and a half inches cut off.
3 Super: This is a shoulder.
And this is a hair.
This is longer than that. so,
But- It's okay. I'm just telling for their benefit.
4 Agent: Oh yeah. I'm sure.
It's probably gonna come down or
I'm gonna get fired.
5 Super: Well // we will be-
6 Agent: Total insubordination.
7 Super: Well we will be having reviews next month.
=Remember?
8 Agent: Thank you Daniel. Are you trying to scare me?
9 Super: No. Never.
And your uh:, scarf's hanging out again.
°Heh heh heh heh

As he says "See actually- hair that's- more than shoulder length is supposed to be pulled back at the crown." (line 1) the supervisor touches the agent's hair.

FIG. 4.4.

Ten seconds later after she argues "It's clipped- by my ears. I just got mine **cut** though. I got two and a half inches cut off," he again touches her as he makes reference to a company manual's ruling about hair not being more than shoulder length:

Gate Supervisor: This is a shoulder.
And this is a hair.
This is longer than that. so,

FIG. 4.5.

It is most common to think of transformations in activity frame with respect to ongoing dialogue (Goffman, 1974). In the present example a radical shift in orientation towards the activity in progress occurs with respect to realignment of the recipient's body, a crucial feature for understanding the meaning of human activity (Bourdieu, 1990, pp. 66-79; Foucault, 1984; Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 121, pp. 146-147).

In response to the supervisor's touch a second later (during "This is a hair") the gate agent rolls her eyes towards the ceiling and tenses her body, lifting her head, assuming a military-like stance. This gesture lengthens the distance between her hair and her shoulder, making her hair appear shorter; simultaneously she repositions her eyes so that they are not gazing directly at him. Metaphorically, she transforms herself into someone resembling a cadet at attention anticipating an army officer's inspection. In this way she waits out the intrusive gesture, resisting but enduring it, while distancing (Goffman, 1961) herself from the present activity.

FIG. 4.6.

In order to understand this transaction it is crucial to understand talk as reciprocal embodied action. The talk of the supervisor as well as his nonvocal actions are important in the construction of his chiding action. However, the speaker's action does not stand alone. Its meaning is co-constructed through the response of recipient to it; the activity in progress is distributed across both parties to the interaction. The supervisor's assault, turning the agent's body into an object for public scrutiny, involves a simultaneous re-shifting of her body as she adapts to what he does. In much the same way that cocktail waitresses endure without comment the fondling of their customers (Spradley & Mann, 1975, p. 104), the agent resists making open counters to the supervisor's touch, and continues to hold her hair available for the supervisor's touch.

Later (line 4), as he backs away, she makes an open complaint: "It's probably gonna come down or I'm gonna get fired." This complaint is answered by the supervisor's threat that the airline "will be having reviews next month" (line 7). Acts controlling the appearance of women's bodies, such as supervisors requiring women to wear their hair a specific length or propping quarters against attendants' ears to see that their earrings do not violate a dress-code regulation (Kilborn 1993, p. A7) can result in political activity so forceful it necessitates the President's intervention, as was shown in the November 1993 American Airlines flight attendants' strike.

While most discussion of frame transformations has dealt with speaker categories and verbal interaction (Goffman, 1974), here clearly the transformation of the activity is as much in the eyes and posture of the recipient/beholder as in her talk. Moreover, her

transformation of the activity does not occur in a subsequent response position, but rather in the midst of ongoing activity, thus shaping and constituting its meaning as a particular type of event. Thus what the activity comes to be is inherent neither in an abstract set of underlying preconditions defining the speech act nor the speaker's intentions, but rather emerges through the mutual and collaborative framing of the activity in progress by the recipient as well as speaker.

CONCLUSION

Four examples of frame shifts have been presented in this paper. Though the sequencing structure of a speech activity may propose certain forms of next moves and alignments, participants may selectively operate on talk in progress, through phonological shifts (#1), extracting parts for comment in ways subversive to speaker's projected activity (#2), or recasting its meaning through parody and paralinguistic commentary (#3 and #4). Such commentary may occur during ongoing talk, rather than at talk's boundaries, so that the sense of what the activity has come to be is negotiated in its course. Demonstrations of the way in which talk may be crafted for particular interactive ends — whether refusing to go along with a projected argument structure (#1) or story line (#2) or taking up a stance which distances oneself from the talk in progress (#3 and #4) — display some of the optionality available to participants in talk. Rather than buying into the projected type of speech activity under way, participants to talk may "elect to deny the dialogic frame, accept it, or carve out such a format when none is apparent" (Goffman, 1981, p. 52) through specifiable shifts in frame.

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5 CODE-SWITCHING OR CODE-MIXING: APPARENT ANOMALIES IN SEMI-FORMAL REGISTERS[1]

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"You can't call me honey, you're not the mommy."
— A little girl in California (reported by Susan Ervin-Tripp)[2]

INTRODUCTION

The first piece I ever read on the interaction of social dimensions with choice of language variety (or as we now all realize, language production more generally) was Susan Ervin-Tripp's (SET), "An analysis of the interaction of language, topic, and listener," in the now classic special 1964 issue of the *American Anthropologist* edited by Gumperz and Hymes. Within an interview study of native Japanese women who had married American men and come to live in the San Francisco area, SET did an "experiment," seeking to identify how ethnicity of interviewer, language of interview, and topic, influenced code selection and, when code was "fixed" — interference. Many of her reported findings, e.g., that each of the variables just listed affected speech production of those interviewed and that effects were cumulative, are not surprising from the perspective of what we know today — some, such as differences in answers to the same question in different languages, show an influence of language of discourse which is still

[1] I am indebted to Doug Maynard for a particularly helpful reading of an earlier version of this paper.

[2] This example is about rules for language use; it certainly doesn't tell us much about code-switching. But of all the stories about language in use told me by Susan Ervin-Tripp it is my favorite — and the most often retold.