THEMATICS IN CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS - A CASE STUDY OF A DIALOGUE

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Abstract:

Conversation Analysis (CA), a research tradition that grew out of ethnomethodolgy has some unique methodological features. It studies the social organization of "conversation" or "talk-in-interaction" by a detailed inspection of tape recordings and transcriptions made from such recordings. In doing conversation analysis, the analyst identifies a prevailing theme or object around which a conversation is centered. He then goes on to extrapolate how this chosen theme is constructed in the conversation. This paper explores the theme of identity and power construction in the dialogue between two personalities - Vic and the Unknown Lady. It uses two theories-the speech act theory and the relevance theory. There are hardly any prescriptions to be followed if one is to do a "good CA". A chosen theme, which a conversation analyst bases his exploration on, is termed in the terminology of Schenkein (1978), as "a sketch of an analytic mentality". In the words of Heritage and Atkinson (1984), "*The central goal of conversation analytic research is the description and explication of the competences that ordinary speakers use and rely on in participating in intelligible, socially organized interaction"*. This paper has thus attempted to do a sketch of an analytic mentality and explicate the competences of the two conversationalists-Vic and the Unknown Lady- in their admonishing of the dominant theme of **identity and power construction** in the dialogue between them. Among other findings, the study notes significantly that identity construction involves inclusionary and exclusionary processes in conversational interactions and that words are weapons. The study establishes the fact that power indeed creates identity and that language draws boundaries, making it implicative that identity presupposes similarities and differences.

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Keywords: conversation analysis (CA), transcriptions, identity, dialogue, power construction, conversationalist

1. Introduction

During the 1960s and 1970s, conversation analysis emerged from within sociology and in particular from a small group of sociologists who were dissatisfied with what they saw as the excessive quantitative formalism in their discipline. These researchers were influenced in significant ways by a small group of social scientists who had developed an approach which they coined "ethnomedology". This methodological outlook was very skeptical about the fact that when social scientists turn to a particular problem or group of people and start studying them, they bring certain pre-conceived ideas about what they are looking at to the analysis which influences their classification and coding procedures.

Instead, ethnomethodologists focus on peoples own ideas and understandings about whatever it is they are doing and it is these understandings which should guide the analysis. Ethnomethodlogy can be defined as the study of "ethnic" (the participants own) methods of production and interpretation of social interaction. Ethnomethodology focuses on providing a rational analysis of the structures, procedures and strategies that people themselves use when they are making sense out of their own everyday world and their actions and interactions within it.

Conversation analysis, or as it is sometimes known, the study of "talk-in-interaction", takes to heart the ethnomethodological focus on what people actually say and do. The analysis centered on a process of first identifying elements and structure in naturally occurring conversation and then through a detailed procedure of micro-analysis, identifying participant-oriented evidence for the models, concepts and ideas that people use. In a sense, CA is concerned with uncovering the implicit ideas and understanding people possess and use in their own everyday interactions.

The purpose of this research is to find out how the themes of identity/ power construction as well as gender ideologies are explicated in the conversational dialogue between Vic and the Unknown Lady. The analysis is based only on the transcribed recording of the dialogue (scope of the research). Characteristic of every transcribed recording, some parts of the dialogue are missing due to inaudibility of voice of the speakers .This however does not affect the line of explication of the themes or concepts under study herein.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conversation Analysis

Conversation analysis (commonly abbreviated as CA) is an approach to the study of social interactions, embracing both verbal and non-verbal conduct in situations of everyday life. (Garcia and Jacobs 1999). In the opinion of Perakyla (2008), conversation analysis is a method for investigating the structure and process of social interaction between humans. It focuses primarily on talk but integrated also the non-verbal aspects of interaction in its research design. In simple elementary terms, therefore CA is the study of talk. According to Garfinkels (1967:1), CA provides the platform or avenue for us to describe the procedures by which conversationalists produce their own behavior, understand, and deal with the behavior of others. For Heritage and Atkinson (1984:1), conversations are orderly not only for observing analysts but in the first place for participating members (Schegloffs and Sacks, 1973:290; Sacks, 1984a:22). This orderliness is seen as the product of the systematic deployment of specifiable interactional methods-"devices", "systems", an "apparatus"- that are used by members as solutions to specifiable organizational problems in social interaction. In sum, a conversation is an interaction sequence with defined beginning, turn-taking and an end with some sort of purpose on a set of goals.

2.2 Brief History of Conversation Analysis

The concept of conversation analysis was started by Harvey Sacks and his co-workers-Emmanuel Schegloff and Gial Jerfferson-at the University of California in the United State in the 1960s. Harvey Sacks was greatly inspired by Harold Garfinkel's theory of ethnomethodlogy and Erving Goffman's conception of the interaction order. Since the inception of the concept, CA has become an established method used in sociology, anthropology, linguistics speech-communication and psychology. (Zimmerman and West, 1975). The main concern of conversation analysis is mostly on the processes involved in social interaction in normal ordinary day to day engagement of people. At the centre of this social interaction is turn-taking by the participants in a conversational slot. Without turns, there is no conversation.

2.3 A Speaker and a Conversation Defined

A speaker is someone creating some sort of utterances or speech act directed towards an audience of one or more people. The speaker's utterances could be verbal or non-verbal. (Bozen 1996: 4). A conversation on the other hand according to Holmes (2008) is a combination of organized utterances and turns used with purpose among speakers. This

implies that in a conversation we have more than one participant since turn-taking is an integral part of the definition.

2.4 Data in Conversation Analysis

Recordings form the basic data of conversation analysis. The transcriptions made after these recordings are to be seen as a convenient form too represent the recorded material in written form, but not as a real substitute (Psathas and Anderson, 1990). By making a transcription, the researcher is forced to attend to details of the interaction that would escape the ordinary listener. Once being made transcripts provide the researcher with a quick access to a wide range of interactional episodes that can be inspected for comparative purposes. Furthermore, as noted transcripts are being provided with their analysis as an essential part of CA's research reports, giving the reader a way of checking the analysis presented. It is to be stressed however that transcriptions cannot represent the recordings in their full detail. They are always and necessarily selective. The system used in CA is specifically designed to reveal the sequential features of talk.

2.5 The Intricacies of Conversational Analysis

CA advocates Eggins' and Slade's work on how 'conversation consists of 'chat' and 'chunks' is particularly useful when talking about turn-taking in a chatroom setting. Their isolation of 'chat' segments focuses on those where structure is managed 'locally', that is, turn by turn, which is essentially how text-based chatrooms, during the period they were examined, function. The 'chunks' are those aspects of conversation which have a global, or macro-structure, where the structure beyond the exchange is more predictable. 'Chat' equals move by move unfolding of talk. 'Chunk' segments need an analysis which can capture the predictable macro or global structure' (Eggins, Slade, 1997. p.230). This distinction allows for both turn-by-turn examination of individual postings and acknowledgements that there is already in existence a generic or consensual set of models by which such postings are constructed, received and interactively managed by chatters.

Eggins and Slade, working on "natural" or informal language use, provide a useful set of clues to the notoriously "unstructured" features of online chat. While such analysis continues the work Conversational Analysis (CA), for theorist Howard Sacks, it is more focused to revelation of the evolving and changing regulatory systems of specific speaking groups, and less to the establishment of CA as a theorized systematics for language analysis. Like my own study, CA for Eggins and Slade is a tool for discovery of how a given group communicates, and not – or at least not primarily – to promote a perfected and universalist means for language analysis. I explore how Sacks's CA can detect change in the rules of engagement in chatrooms, where conversation is moved from an oral environment of

physical presence to an on-line texted environment of virtuality. At the same time, Eggins' and Slade's work on 'chunks' takes us closer to Discourse Analysis: a means of analyzing language as it relates to cultural paradigms and as it deploys certain favoured frames of explanation. DA's driving focus is on establishing ideological positions for its (talk) texts. Bakhtin identifies "utterance" as the primary building block of dialogue; utterance is to dialogue while lexia is to hypertext. Without more than one utterance, there can be no dialogue for, as Michael Holquist (1990) argues, every "utterance" is always an answer to another utterance that precedes it, and is therefore always conditioned by, and in turn qualifies, the prior utterance to a greater or lesser degree (1986, p. 60)"ii[41].

Astri Wold in '*De-coding oral language*' (1978) emphasizes the importance of whom we are speaking with. In direct oral communication, we have the cues of the other person, either from sight or from hearing their intonations, tonal variations, vocality and so on. We then choose our words in a way which we perceive will suit (or occasionally not suit) the other person. For example, if we know our listener is from a higher or a lower social background than us and we want to appear as of the same social grouping we will take on the air of their social background.

In extending an existing method into a new field of text, CA thus offers a way of viewing online conversation. Conversational turn-taking is, for example, according to conversation analysis, integral to the formation of any interpersonal exchange (Boden, 1994, p. 66). Boden compiles a succinct list of the "essential features of turn-taking" which also applies to chatroom talk:

1) one speaker speaks at a time 2) number and order of speakers vary freely 3) turn size varies

2) turns are not allocated in advance but also vary 5) turn transition is frequent and quick and

3) there are few gaps and few overlaps in turn transition.

When Richard Parrish in "Conversation Analysis of Internet Chat Rooms" (2000) talks about chatrooms as having a role in the way people discuss politics, he is able to show turn-taking in IRC (Internet Chat Rooms) as influencing patterns of debate. IRC gives people the opportunity, he says, to discuss issues without the usual constraints of power relations exerted between authority and audience. He talks about the egalitarianism of chatrooms and how people are able to construct their own personal and group perceptions of a situation. He writes a few paragraphs on conversational analysis, and lists some essential features of turn taking, analyzing a 15 minute segment of chatroom talk. He makes the observation in his discussion (amongst other things) that chatroom conversation, unlike group conversation

offline, is not dyadic; that is, the speaking does not tend to break down into two-party talk. Parrish concludes that this more open and hyper-linking system suits a consensual and cooperative model of political discussion. His work however asserts one instance of an extrapolation from "chat" to "chunk" – from specific instances of talk relations, to their linking into broader forms and formats constituting recurrent chat behaviours – and it are at this point that IRC analysis moves from the micro-analysis of such techniques as CA, to the paradigmatic work undertaken in Discourse Analysis.

2.6 Analysing Talk / Conversation

Like the speech act theory, Conversation Analysis (CA) believes that talk "does" things. Like Grice's co-operative principle, it observes that what talk does depends on (at least) the assumption that one piece of talk is relevant to another as far as talk-in-interaction from these two or conversation is concerned. CA however, departs from these two theories of pragmatics in important ways. It doesn't depend on invented examples it doesn't limit itself to units like sentences and it wants to understand social action (perhaps the most important). Indeed, conversation analysis (CA) started in sociology.

Surely, the question of how people do things with language is/ a linguistic one and the question of how come CA started in sociology worth's discussing. The tart of CA in sociology all began with Harvey Sacks a young PLD student who was listening to tapes of emergency psychiatric telephone calls. He sat as the desk of the help-line for these calls and kept noting things that struck him as sociologically interesting. That is interesting for what they told him not about "psychological" matters like depression and distress but about how people do such basic human actions as "introduce themselves", "have a problem" and "sound concerned". These things are sociologically interesting because sociology is about human action (Sacks argued). Even when sociologists are apparently talking about something more abstract (like "the health profession" or "mental disorder") they must mean what real people actually do. A term like "mental disorder" must be a shortened for a whole load of specific actions that people do. So if you have tape recordings of real people "doing" those actions you have a very solid base of data. For Sacks, this data is much more solid than what sociology normally have!

Things like questionnaires and surveys which are characteristic of sociological research never really show you how people "did" actions, which are only what they said afterwards about them that show this.

By the idea of actions, Sacks found engagement with the world to be most basic. Engaging with the world to him meant engaging in talk. Once action is established to be integral in engaging with the world, one easily appreciates the fact that rules must be in place. How to use these in social interaction so as to make meaning of the world I what,

according to Sacks, it means to be human. So he started there and then, trying to discover what rules people were using when they engaged with each other through talk.

Sacks asked: "Why not look at what people actually say? With a tape recorder, you can listen over and over again. No linguist ever did that unless they had a specialized interest in prosody or the sounds of language for their own sake; he was looking for "meaning and action".

Sacks takes us through one of his numerous phone call tapes. The kind of action understood and explained by Sacks in conversation is clearly illustrated in the ensuring piece of telephone conversation. It helps to start with one of the first things that Sacks noticed which was how someone managed to call the emergency line and not give his name. this might not strike us as odd today, when we are used to calling service centre's and getting straight down to business with our talks. But it was different from other calls Sacks received and he puzzled over it. Normally what happened was that when the call taker gave his name the caller reciprocated. This is what happens in ordinary greetings after all.

Sacks shows us this stretch of talk (Sacks 1992 pg 7-8, edited) and invites us to think about it. [A is the call-talker, B is the caller].

A: This is Mr. Smith may I help you.

B: I can't hear you.

A: This is Mr. Smith.

B: Smith?

A: Yes. Can I help you?

B: I don't know hhh I hope you can

B, the caller manages not to give his name.

That might be a significant thing to do (psychologically sociologically etc). the question here is how does the caller manage that?

If you think about it, it must be something to do with "avoiding answering" what the call-talker says when he picks up the phone. So, that implies one rule straightaway:

"If what precedes your turn is an introductory greeting, then you must respond in the same way.

But as we see B doesn't respond in the same way. He rather manages not to sound strange or rule so he must be employing the use of yet another rule, something like: "Not hearing is an acceptable reason to be excused the demands of the previous turn". So very simply we see that there are rules even here (in this comparative "tiny" bit of conversational behavior). We see this not by abstract theory but by looking at what people do. It goes without say therefore that in CA according to its father Sacks, we must cling to the basic idea of following normative rules which people generally expect you to follow, if talk is really to meet its social relevance role of interactivity or engaging with the world. From the foregoing

literature of the genesis CA, the crucial point, worthy of note, is that Sacks set out to understand human actions through investigating how people engage with each other in detail and in his research he discovered a very complex world as far a talk-in-interaction is concerned.

2.7 Speech Act Theory and Conversation

There is a common sense argument shared by philosophers and linguists in favour of the possible extension of speech act theory to discourse analysis. This argument is the following: Speech acts are not isolated moves in communication: they appear in more global units of communication, defined as conversations or discourses.

Vanderveken (1994, 53) gives an explicit version of this thesis when asserting that speakers perform their illocutionary acts within entire conversations where they are most often in verbal interaction with other speakers who reply to them and perform in turn their own speech acts with the same collective intention to pursue with success a certain type of discourse. Thus, above all, the use of language is a social form of linguistic behavior. It consists, in general, of ordered sequences of utterances made by several speakers who tend by their verbal interactions to achieve common discursive goals such as discussing a question, deciding together how to react to a certain situation, negotiating, consulting or more simply to exchange greetings and talk for its own sake. For terminological convenience, I will call such ordered sequences of speech acts conversations. The basis of this argument is that conversation is made of sequences of speech acts. This certainly is a plausible theoretical claim but gives rise to a certain number of objections, raised mainly by Searle (1992) in his skeptical argument. These objections concern essentially the possible relations between questions and answers in conversation, and can be stated as follows.

First of all, questions are defined in speech acts theory as requests for information, and as such impose representative acts as replies. But this cannot be correct, since a reply may have another illocutionary point (as a promise) if the question is a request for a promise.

Secondly, certain questions require a directive as a reply, and not a representative, when the question contains a modal auxiliary verb cf. The exchange: "Shall I marry Sally?" - "Yes, do"/ "No, don't" / "*Yes, you
shall" / "*No, you shall not").

The third counter-example is given by indirect reponses, which do not satisfy syntactic conditions, although the answer is pragmatically appropriate.

To these three arguments, we could add an even more embarrassing one: answer is not a specific illocutionary force, which could be analysed by the seven components of illocutionary force (cf. Searle & Vanderveken 1985). Answer is a functional discursive

qualification, but certainly not the semantic definition of a speech act type. These objections make explicit an important difference between the structure of illocutionary acts and the structure of conversation. In speech act theory, and more precisely in illocutionary logic, illocutionary force is decomposed into seven components, which are all necessary conditions for the successful and non-defective accomplishment of illocutionary acts. These components (cf. Searle & Vanderveken 1985, 12-20) are the illocutionary point, the degree of strength of the illocutionary point, the mode of achievement of the illocutionary point, the propositional content conditions of the illocutionary act, the preparatory conditions of the illocutionary act, the sincerity conditions of the illocutionary act, and finally the degree of strength of the sincerity conditions. That prediction about the sequencing in conversation are difficult to come by follows from the fact that the internal structure of illocutionary acts (and more specifically the set of conditions for success) cannot determine the set of possible replies for any type of illocutionary act.

By contrast, discourse analysis, while specifying sequential relations in discourse between speech acts, does not constrain sequencing in conversation depending on the set of possible components of illocutionary force. The constraints are not structural, in the sense of speech act theory; they are on the contrary functional. This means that the basic structures of conversation (exchanges) are made of lower order conversational units (moves) which carry functional properties. If speech act theory has been used so extensively within this paradigm of discourse analysis, it is because the functional properties associated with speech acts as units of meaning have been exported to speech acts as units of communication and discourse. This has several consequences for the description of speech acts within discourse analysis.

The first consequence is that the structure of conversation is not only based on a hierarchy of constituency, but is also functional. To take a classical discourse model (cf. Sinclair & Coulthard 1975), discourse categories

Exchange, move, and act) are defined functionally. For instance, an act of ELICITATION is part of a move of ELICITATION, which governs an exchange of ELICITATION. Thus, all discourse constituents receive a communicative function, that is, an interactive meaning. But we are here far from the conventional and semantic-meaning defining speech acts in speech act theory.

As we have just noticed, discourse analysis supposes principles of constituency which allow interpretive or functional inheritance. If we assume, as above, that an ELICITATION is a two-place predicate relating utterance-units and discourse-units, we must assume too that the functional properties of the smallest discourse units (acts) are inherited by the larger constituents (moves and exchanges). This principle is structurally identical to the projection principle in generative grammar: a phrase is a maximal projection

of a lexical head (for instance NP is a maximal projection of a N); in discourse, then, an exchange is thus functionally a maximal projection of an act.

The principle of functional projection is not a necessary consequence of discourse analysis. Another classical discourse model, the Geneva hierachical-functional model (cf. Roulet et al. 1985, Moeschler 1985, Moeschler 1989a) makes a different claim : functional values do not stand in a one-to-one relationship with discourse structures. In this model, there is a basic difference between rules of discourse formation and principles of functional interpretation.

The structural dimension is based on the following rules of formation:

R1 Units of type Exchange are made of units of type Move.

R1' Exchanges are composed of at least two Moves.

R2 Units of type Move are made of units types Act, Move or Exchange.

R2' Moves composed by a single Act are well-formed.

R2"Moves composed by an Act and another discourse-unit type (Move or Exchange) are well-formed.

R2"' Moves composed by a single Exchange are ill-formed.

Thus, the following discourse structures are well-formed:

(1) a. <E <M1 <A>, M2 <A>>>

b. <E <M1 <A>, M2 <E <M1 <A>, M2 <A>>>, M <A, M <A, A>>>>

c. <E < M1 <E <M1 <A, A>, M2 <A>, M3 <A>>, A>, M2 <A>, M3 <A>>>

Where E = exchange, M = move, A = act

The structures in (1a-c) are the hierarchical representations corresponding to the following short exchanges in (2)-(4):

(2) A Are you ready?

B We can leave.

(3) A Are you ready?

B Why?

A We must leave now.

B Okay, but when I am in a hurry, I always forget something.

(4) A Are you ready? Because we must leave now.

B Yes I am

A Good. Let's go

B Let's go

A Okay

We can represent the bracketing structures given in (1) by the following tree-schemata:

Are you ready?

We can leave.

Are you ready?

What are the functional counterparts of the structural aspects of conversational discourse? There are two dimensions of functional properties associated with the structural device: the first dimension is a restricted inheritance principle, and the second, a general procedure for assigning interpretation to discourse constituents.

The first principle is a principle of functional composition:

Principle of functional composition

(i) Constituents of exchanges bear illocutionary functions.

(ii) Constituents of moves bear interactive functions.

Definitions

(i) Illocutionary functions are of three types: initiative, reactive, and reactive-initiative.

(ii) Interactive functions are of two types: directive, and subordinate.

The first move of an exchange (M1) is always initiative; the final move of an exchange is always reactive. For instance M2 in the exchange <E <M1, M2>> is the reactive move, and M1 is the initiative move. An inserted move (for example
M2 in the structure <E <M1, M2, M3>>) is a reactive-initiative move.

2.8 Sequencing and Interpretation in Conversation

The basic notion of discourse analysis, as defined on other occasions (cf. Moeschler 1982, chapter 3; Moeschler 1985, chapter 3; Moeschler 1986; Moeschler 1989b; and also Moeschler & Reboul 1994, chapter 17), is appropriateness. I have assumed that units of communication are evaluated in terms of their degree of appropriateness. As units of communication are units of discourse, two types of appropriateness can be distinguished: contextual appropriateness and co-textual appropriateness. Cotextual appropriateness depends on conditions of contextual appropriateness, which can be generally defined as sequencing constraints. Conditions of co-textual appropriateness are imposed by initiative moves, and have scope over reactive moves. These conditions of satisfaction (thematic condition (TC), condition of propositional content (CPC), illocutionary condition (IC) and condition of argumentative orientation (CAO)) impose on the reactive move to share a common theme to the initiative move (TC), to be propositionally related to the initiative move (by implication, contradiction or paraphrase) (CPC), to bear an illocutionary force compatible with the illocutionary force of the first move (IC), and to have a shared argumentative orientation, that is, an argumentive co-orientation (CAO) (cf. Anscombre & Ducrot 1983). The relation between conditions of satisfaction and cotextual appropriateness

is a comparative one: the more conditions the reactive move satisfies, the more cotextually appropriate it is.In (9B1-B5), the degree of cotextual appropriateness increases, together with the degree of satisfaction of the conditions of cotextual appropriateness:

(9) A Can you give me the time?

B1 I have a serious headache. -TC

B2 The postman has just passed. +TC, -CPC

B3 Is it not already ten o'clock? +TC, +CPC, -IC

B4 It is not yet ten o'clock. +TC, +CPC, +IC, -CAO

B5 It is ten o'clock. +TC, +CPC, +IC, +CAO

When the thematic condition, the condition of propositional content and the illocutionary condition are satisfied, discourse is said to be coherent . If only the thematic condition and the condition of propositional content are satisfied, discourse is said to be cohesive. So a coherent discourse is always cohesive, whereas the reverse is false.The converse notion is the notion of conditions of contextual appropriateness. These conditions do not hold of the reactive, but of the initiative move. For any initiative move, the degree of contextual appropriateness is determined by the reactive move, and more precisely, by the degree of cotextual appropriateness of the reactive move. We can formulate this dependency relation between cotextual appropriateness and contextual appropriateness as stated by the following principle (cf. Moeschler 1982 and 1989b): Principle of dependency. The more sequencing constraints the reactive move satisfies, the more the initiative move is contextually appropriate; the less sequencing constraints the reactive move satisfies, the more the initiative move is contextually inappropriate. The consequence of the principle of dependency is the following: sequencing and interpretation in conversational sequences are closely related. This is so because a dialogical sequencing, whether appropriate or not, always gives an image of the interpretation of the initiative move, and retroactively defines its degree of contextual appropriateness. The following principle gives a more precise definition of this relation: Principle of dialogical interpretation. The interpretation of a move is dialogical, and results from the dialogical sequencing to which it gives rise.

In (10) below, the degree of contextual appropriateness of the initiative move is a function of the degree of cotextual appropriateness of the reactive move B1-B5:

(10) A Peter is a friend whom one can count on.

B1 By the way, what are you doing tonight? -TC

B2 Would you call that a friend? +TC, -CPC

B3 Do you forget he voted against your project? +TC, +CPC, -IC

B4 He never inspired me confidence. +TC, +CPC, +IC, -CAO

B5 I think so too. +TC, +CPC, +IC, +CAO

This set of principles yields a presumably robust approach of discourse sequencing. If we map the set of structural constraints defined in section 2 with the set of sequencing constraints defined here, we should have a powerful theory of discourse representation. An explicit version of this theory, containing a syntax, a semantics, and a procedure of analysis, has been proposed in Moeschler (1989a) and applied in computational linguistics for modelling person-machine dialogue in Bilange (1992) and Pernel (1994). So far so good. But we are here far from the projection philosophers of language have made on conversation. We are also far from the basic principles of speech act theory, in which speech acts are conventional units of meaning. What is specific to the discourse theory presented so far is that illocutionary force is no longer a complex unit of meaning made of seven components (what we generally call a speech act), but is reduced to the functional and sequential properties of moves. Beside the fact that in speech act theory, there is no reason to take an ANSWER as specific relational illocutionary force (the symmetrical counterpart of a question), while such reactive illocutionary function is required by the structural-functional device, there is a major difference between initiative and reactive moves that speech act theory cannot account for. This difference can be formulated as stated in the following asymmetry postulate: The asymmetry postulate of illocutionary functions.

Whereas a reactive move is a function with two moves as arguments, an initiative move is a function with a move as first argument, and a function as second argument.

2.9 Illocutionary Logic and Conversation

Recent work by Alain Trognon and Christian Brassac offers a good illustration of how the sequencing problem can be treated within speech act theory, and more specifically illocutionary logic. Trognon & Brassac (1992), for instance, propose a general procedure of interpretation and sequencing for indirect speech acts and conversational implicatures. If we take as a prototypical example the indirect request, *Can you pass the salt?* ,their analysis proceeds as follows: By passing the salt, the interlocutor satisfies the request, which entails its success, of requests), which entails the satisfaction of the question, which entails its success. (Trognon & Brassac 1992, 89; the translation is mine).To make a long story short, we have the following chain of entailments:

(13) SATISFACTION(REQUEST) ® SUCCESS(REQUEST) ® SATISFACTION (QUESTION) ® SUCCESS(QUESTION)

The element which determines the satisfaction of the primary illocutionary act (the request) is the passing of the salt that is the action that should be obeyed under the illocutionary point of the directive act. I do not intend to discuss here the principle of illocutionary logic under which satisfaction implies success, but this analysis calls for the following remarks. First, the retroactive procedure is close to the principle of dialogical

interpretation. The analysis goes backwards, that is, moves from the satisfaction of the primary illocutionary act to the success of the secondary illocutionary act.

As a natural procedure of interpretation, it seems very strange, for at least two reasons: it is contradictory to the basic principles of speech act theory, which proceeds from the derived illocutionary act to the literal illocutionary act; once the illocutionary point is obtained, it seems odd to go on processing until the source of the derived illocutionary point is found. This leads naturally to the second objection.

Second, the analysis is counter-intuitive, and does not constitute an interpretation procedure. It implies that in speech act theory, as well in illocutionary logic, the literal meaning of an utterance like, *Can you pass the salt?* has the illocutionary force of a question. But the illocutionary point of this utterance is not that of a request for information; thus, the question is a secondary act, and it conveys a primary illocutionary act. Speech act theory predicts that the illocutionary point is a directive, because the utterance questions a preliminary condition of directives; so, the literal meaning is a question, and the derived meaning (which corresponds to speaker's meaning) is a request. The conclusion is very simple : Trognon & Brassac's proposal within illocutionary logic is another version of the principle of dialogical interpretation, for which the interpretation problem is part of the sequencing problem. The revised version of their analysis proposed in (14) under the most classical version of speech act theory has the advantage of giving a coherent procedure for utterance interpretation.

2.10 Relevance Theory and Sequencing in Conversation

There ought to be a radical pragmatic treatment of the sequencing problem within Relevance theory. The argument developed in these papers is that sequencing explicated via discourse connectives cannot be explained by principles of discourse structure or discourse sequencing, because discourse connectives often contradict either their conventional meaning or the predictable discourse structure they should make explicit. The meaning of discourse connectives is what Wilson & Sperber (1993) call procedural encoding, and refers to the nature of context (as a cognitive construct), and to the possible contextual inferences. I will give a brief overview of this type of analysis with an example of conversational use of the French connective parce que ('because'). Let us take the following example, drawn from a phone call (cf. Schmale-Buton & Schmale 1984, 190-191), translated here from French (where S = the secretary of the practice and P = the patient) :

(15) S1 you should come at the very beginning of the afternoon

P1 at what time

S2 well at two o'clock but not later because just after I don't know if he visits as he has no appointment

P2 yes

P2' he will be there just before two o'clock or

S3 yes

P3 (parce que) because if I come a little before two o'clock he will be there

S4 he will be there yes yes yes

This example raises two types of problems for conversational pragmatics: the first problem is structural and sequential, and bears on the discourse function of connectives like parce que; the second problem is interpretive, and bears on the possibility of the standard causal reading of parce que. I will discuss briefly these two aspects of (15), which will demonstrate that a discourse oriented analysis is hopeless. I will then turn to an alternative interpretation, within a few postulates of Relevance Theory.

The first problem is structural. Very informally, the sequences P1-S4 is composed by three exchanges, as described in (16):

(16) a. <E1 <QUESTION (P1), ANSWER(S2), EVALUATION(P2)>>

b. <E2 <QUESTION (P2'), ANSWER (S3)>>

c. <E3 <QUESTION (P3), ANSWER(S4)>>

These exchanges are related, and one of the interpretation is to represent the integration of forward-oriented exchanges: there is a consecutive relation between E1 and E2, and E2 and E3. It is because the answer in E1 that P questions S in E2, and so on.

2.11 Summary

As can be seen by my discussion of the literature, though there has been significant research done on aspects of chatroom and other forms of online discourse, I have not been able to find research using conversational analysis as a lens to examine the broad diversity of chatroom talk, nor the finer complexities of its structures and patterns of use. From the forgoing literature under review, it is abundantly obvious that researchers and scholars have uncovered a lot on conversation analysis. However, a large chunk of the work done in CA centre on:

a) language use (grammar) in conversations rather than the thematic import of conversations, and

b) the structure of language in conversations (e.g turn-taking, propelling factors of continuity, sequencing, etc).

If the basic purpose of language is to communicate, then perhaps, an analysis of a theme(s) embedded in a piece of conversation should be much more preferable to the analysis of rule application (grammar) and the structuring of the language. My choice of the analysis of themes embedded in this conversation is informed by the fact that the literature I

have reviewed within and without this work shows that such analysis in CA has not been done yet by any researcher known to me. The work in this paper - extrapolating the theme of identity and power construction and gender ideologies - therefore fills this gap.

3. Conceptual Framework/ Theory/ Methodology

Considering the nature of Conversation Analysis, especially from the foregoing literature under review, it is abundantly obvious that no piece of conversation can be said to be well analyzed without review application of the underlying principles and nuances of the speech Act Theory and the Relevance Theory. The conceptual framework or theories on which my researches with lean are therefore these two. Speech acts are not isolated moves in communication. They appear in more global or wholistic units of communication called conversations or discourses. Vanderveken (1994;53) connects the speech Act Theory to CA in his assertion:

> "*Speakers perform their illocutionary acts within entire conversations where they are most often in verbal interaction with other speakers who reply to them and perform in turn their own speech acts with the same collective intention to pursue, with success, a certain type of discourse.*"

This means that conversation is made of sequences of speech acts. This certainly is a plausible theoretical claim through it gives rise to a certain number of objections raised mainly by Searle (1992) in his skeptical argument. These objectives concern essentially the possible relations between questions and answer in conversation.

Inherent in the Relevance theory is the problem of sequencing a conversation. By this, one understands that turns or sequences of speech acts or utterances play a monumental role in the natural flow or progression of a conversation. In this analysis, we are dealing with the expansion of a dialogue between Unknown Lady and Vic in which case relevance of a utterances primarily ensures continuity and spontaneous flow of the conversation.

Therefore, the speech acts produced by Vic and Unknown Lady which in aggregation, forms the conversational dialogue in this work, contained in them individually a sense of "relevance" based upon which the unfolding of the conversation thrived from sum beginning to end: hence, the need for the applicant of the speech act and relevance theories.

Methodologically, the work shall include transcribed recordings of a dialogue between Vic and the Unknown Lady. Sample population is therefore made of two people - Vic and Unknown Lady. This research is purely qualitative as it does not involve the use of numeracy but an analysis of information. Tables and charts shall be used in the analysis and

interpretation of data. My research design also builds on the advice from Ten Have, using his ideas about 'good CA' seen in the review of literature; and not following prescriptive protocol, but rather devising my own methodological practice from elements most useful to my forms of data and means of data collection. In addition, the idea of illocutionary logic which, as seen in the reviewed literature above, is widely recommended by authorities in CA as a very strong version of dialogical interpretation which usually conveniently caters for the problem of sequencing in CA shall be brought to bear in the analysis of this conversational dialogue .The questions this piece of research seeks to answer include;

1. Does the theme of Identity and Power Construction really exist in the dialogue between Vic and the Unknown Lady?
2. Which excerpts in the dialogue point to this theme?
3. How do the two conversationalists-Vic and the Unknown Lady-convey or express this theme?

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1 Introduction:

The data in this CA is the dialogue between Vic and the unknown Lady. A cop f this transcribed dialogue is attached to this work as part of the report on the analysis of this conversational dialogue. For ease of reference and analysis, the Turns (T) or conversational slots, totalling 124 have been numbered T1 to T 124. To understand each table in the analysis, study the respective keys preceding the tables.

4.2 Data analysis

As mentioned earlier in the review of related literature on CA, every dialogue/conversation possesses (an) illocutionary force(s) which propels the flow of illocutionary acts forming the conversation. In this dialogue, the theme of identify and power construction is expunged by six identifiable constructs of identify and power.

1. Rhetorical questions: in order to drum home their message more succinctly, the two conversationalists employed the use of the figure of speech known as rhetorical question heavily. The import of rhetorical questions as usually to place emphasis on a point and this has been done in 25 instances across the dialogue as captured in the table below.

   These 25 instances of emphasis placed on points summarily point to the fact that Rehab Appoh is relegated to the background ion the subject s of identity and power construction.

2. Sarcasm: the dialogue has in it a good dose of sarcasm, teasing out the naivety in Rachael Appoh in her wild goose chase attempts to challenge her superior Nana Oye Lithur. All indications from the point of view of the conversationalists, shows that Oye Lithur stands very tall in terms of identify and power juxtaposition with Rachael Appoh her deputy.

3. Scornful expressions: in the Opinion of the conversationalists, about Oye Lithur's high social standing, the conversationalist's skill fully scolds Rachael Appoh with expressions of scorn. This further heightens the extant of her persevered naivety on the part of the speakers. They see her though a friend, to be operating far below the belt and so does not deserved their company any longer.

4. Personality pointers: identity and power in this dialogue has been abundantly crafted through the information we gather on the character traits and attitudes of Oye Lithur and Rachael Appoh. Whilst Oye Lithur is rated very highly socially and personality-wise Rachael Appoh is portrayed in bad light to be arrogant and uncouth through her over-simplification of like.

5. Diminutive expressions: viewing Oye Lithur and Rachael Appoh as a giant and an ant respectively, the conversationalists find the use of diminutives, particularly pronouns diminutives very appropriate to draw this thick line of difference, hence their repeated use of "that Rachael" This girl" etc in the dialogue.

6. Expressions showing political power: in terms of political inclination, Rachael Appoh from indications throughout the dialogue ranks very far from Oye Lithur as far as Ghana's body politic is concerned. She is at the apex of political administration in Ghana (can cause an appointment or a sacking) vis a vis Rachael Appoh who is only an Mp and a deputy minister and comes nowhere near the top hierarchy of Ghana's political administration.

The detailed diagrammatic representation of these constructs follow in the tables below.

Table 1: Rhetorical Questions Relegating Them to the
Background in Terms of Power and Identity

SN	Rhetorical Question	Turn (T) Number	Page	Oye Lithur	Rachael Appoh
1	And I said, what can you do to disgrace her?	18	2	No	Yes
2	And I said, you'll disgrace her but what do you know about her?	22	2	No	Yes
3	For how long have you worked with her?	22	2	No	Yes
4	And what has she done that you want to discredit her?	22	2	No	Yes
5	So why do you want to disgrace her?	24	2	No	Yes
6	Is that how you do things?	25	3	No	Yes
7	What money?	33	3	No	Yes
8	So you were not there at first?	33	3	No	Yes
9	You think nobody has a problem?	40	3	No	Yes
10	In any case, were you the one that watched her grow wings?	48	4	No	Yes
11	But how well does she know her for her to say she (Oye Lithur) has grown wings?	50	4	No	Yes
12	Oye Lithur, can something move her?	76	5	No	Yes
13	You say Oye, how can you fight Oye Lithur?	97	7	No	Yes
14	I asked her: Rachael, you and Oye Lithur, who does the Ghanaian Public, believe is unintelligent?	103	7	No	Yes
15	Do you know what she said?	110	8	No	Yes
16	What do you mean?	114	9	No	Yes
17	And I said you won an MP; didn't you win?	115	9	No	Yes
18	Rachael, didn't Rachael win?	115	9	No	Yes
19	Me, did I win my seat?	115	9	No	Yes
20	Did I win my seat?	115	9	No	Yes
21	Why should she be at war with the minister?	95	6	No	Yes
22	What is the point?	95	6	No	Yes
23	Does Tony Lithur not have clout for Oye to be my enemy?	13	2	No	Yes
24	Don't you see her character?	123	10	No	Yes
25	Why can't you Rachael just humble yourself in this world you are in?	31	3	No	Yes

Key:

"Yes" in columns 5 and 6 means the person is a victim of Relegation.

"No" in columns 5 and 6 means the person is not a victim of Relegation.

"Turn (T)" in column 3 means the turns/conversation slots taken by each speaker.

Table 2: Sarcastic Expressions of Who Wills More Power

SN	Sarcastic Expression	Turn (T) Number	Page	Oye Lithur	Rachael Appoh
1	She said she will disgrace Nana Oye Lithur.	18	2	No	Yes
2	Nana (inaudible name) has grown wings.	47	4	No	Yes
3	You say your Boss has grown wings.	48	4	No	Yes
4	"Nana Oye has grown wings"	49	4	No	Yes
5	So, that look helps her in the public, Oye has bad public image.	99	7	No	Yes
6	Then, you want to use your intelligence to overthrow her. Yeah.	101	7	No	Yes
7	She says her. I said yes.	103	7	No	Yes
8	Oye has grown wings.	110	8	No	Yes
9	I wish her all the best but (inaudible expression).	112	9	No	Yes
10	You want to fight Oye Lithur.	119	9	No	Yes
11	You want the president to choose you, Rachael Appoh [who couldn't even vetting] over his loyal friends wife who is always with the in the house.	120	9	No	Yes

Key:

"Yes" in columns 5 and 6 means the person does not will more power.

"No" in columns 5 and 6 means the person wills more power.

"Turn (T)" in column 3 means the turns/conversational slots taken by each speaker.

Table 3: Expression of Scorn at the Two People over

Who Does Not Play Her Role Well Socially at the Ministry

SN	Scornful Expression	Turn (T) Number	Page	Oye Lithur	Rachael Appoh
1	You can't fight your minister and you want to be friends with me.	13	2	No	Yes
2	She will be your enemy forever.	14	2	No	Yes
3	Oh, I have stayed away forever.	15	2	No	Yes
4	When she calls to find out how you are faring; oh, you're busy. So, you'll call her back. That's all.	16	2	No	Yes
5	Now, you can't go to Oye Lithur's place.	27	3	No	Yes
6	(Inaudible voice), I can't walk with you.	35	3	No	Yes
7	When she calls me, I don't pick up again.	35	3	No	Yes
8	I don't want to see her face again in my life.	63	5	No	Yes
9	As for me, I don't want to get close to Rachael at all.	77	5	No	Yes

Key:

"Yes" in columns 5 and 6 means the person who does not play her role well socially at the ministry.

"No" in columns 5 and 6 means the person who plays her role well socially at the ministry.

"Turn (T)" in column 3 means the turns/conversational slots taken by each speaker.

Table 4: Pointers That Depict the Personalities of the Two People

Table 4A: Oye Lithur

SN	Personality Pointer	Turn (T) Number	Page	Good/Powerful Or Bad/Uncouth
1	As you said, Nana Oye was her Nana Oye before she got a ministerial appointment.	7	1	Good/Powerful
2	And her husband is no mean person than Tony Lithur; president's lawyer (laughs amidst indistinct voice)	8	1	Good/Powerful
3	There are some people you don't court trouble for yourself with.	9	1	Good/Powerful
4	Oye Lithur is (inaudible expression) married.	23	2	Good/Powerful
5	You are throwing pebbles against a giant.	81	6	Good/Powerful
6	Oye Lithur issued one statement which made you appear that you are unintelligent.	105	7	Good/Powerful
7	And Oye Lithur is an institution.	104	8	Good/Powerful
8	Oye Lithur was Oye Lithur before she entered into politics.	104	8	Good/Powerful
9	Oye Lithur does not care.	106	8	Good/Powerful
10	Nana Oye Lithur's educational background; you've not even attained a quarter.	34	3	Good/Powerful

Key:

"Good/powerful" in column 5 means the person is tagged well by the expression depicting personality pointer.

"Bad/uncouth" in column 5 means the person is tagged badly by the expression depicting personality pointer.

Table 4.B: Rachael Appoh

SN	Personality Pointers	Turn (T) Number	Page	Good/Powerful Or Bad/Uncouth
1.	Rachael is dull but I am very intelligent.	4	1	BAD/UNCOUTH
2.	Rachael as you said she is arrogant.	11	2	BAD/UNCOUTH
3.	Rachael; Anita Owusu told me that Rachael is very ambitious (inaudible) - Negative sense.	13	2	BAD/UNCOUTH
4	Rachael's problem is humility.	55	4	BAD/UNCOUTH
5	I tell you Rachael is arrogant.	57	4	BAD/UNCOUTH
6	So I stood up and offered her my seat but Rachael told me to sit down.	57	4	BAD/UNCOUTH
7	And you're so arrogant.	66	5	BAD/COUTH
8	Sena rather humbles herself. She talks with humility.	69	5	BAD/UNCOUTH
9	Rachael really has a problem.	70	5	B AD/UNCOUTH
10	Rachael is exposing herself too much.	71	5	BAD/UNCOUTH
11	Thinking you'll destroy Oye lithur.	75	5	BAD/UNCOUTH
12	Let her be, she is averse to good counsel.	78	5	BAD/UNCOUTH

13	She doesn't listen.	79	5	BAD/UNCOUTH
14	I will say that Rachael, the way you are becoming unpopular with (inaudible voice); I want to stay away from you for a while.	81	6	BAD/UNCOUTH
15	Rachael is too ambitious (inaudible voice).	110	8	BAD/UNCOUTH
16	Rachael is very egoistic.	111	8	BAD/UNCOUTH
17	She thinks politics is a joke.	118	9	BAD/UNCOUTH
18	She is loud – mouthed.	123	10	BAD/UNCOUTH

Table 5: Diminutive Expressions Religating Them to the Background In Terms Of Power and Identity

SN	Diminutive Expression	Turn (T) Number	Page	Directed To Oye Or Rachael?
1.	And I said; so, this girl is so foolish to this extent that she can go to the chiefs and tell them what goes on in the ministry.	1	1	RACHAEL
2.	And I said; this girl, you've gone to this extent.	3	1	RACHAEL
3.	Then that Rachael has a problem.	60	5	RACHAEL

Table 6: Expressions Showing Each One's Plce/Standing In Ghana's Body Politics

SN	Expression Showing Political Body	Turn (T) Number	Page	Directed To Ote Or Rachael
1.	Even when Ghanaians vilify her that then president should not give her a position, it didn't even ruffle her.	76		OYE
2.	But yet, the president went ahead to confirm her.	98	7	OYE
3.	I learnt that even before the verdict, Nana was with the justices and all that.	101	7	OYE
4.	You didn't know the role she has played for us to win the court case.	101	7	OYE
5.	Tony Lithur and john Mahama, they've got an alliance. They are allies, you understand. They defend each other.	105	8	OYE
6.	Even you who won your seats, they have crammed you, two, in the Gender	116	9	RACHAEL

5. Graphic Presentation of Data

To conclude the analysis of data, the measurement of these six (6) social constructs of power and identity are represented on the bar chart below according to the relationship between each of them and the two personalities-Nana Oye Lithur and Rachael Appoh.

By rating in terms of (1) Dumning Rhetorical Questions (2) Sarcastic Attacks (3) Scornful Reprimanding (4) Bad/Uncouth Personality (5) Diminutiive Imaging and (6)

Political Standing for the two personalities here in contention, the following table emerges from the information in the tables above:

SN	Social Construct Of Power And Identity	Nana Oye Lithur	Rachael Appoh
1.	Dummying Rhetorical Questions (DRQ)	0%	100%
2.	Sarcastic Attacks (SA)	0%	100%
3.	Scornful Reprimanding (SR)	0 %	100%
4.	Bad /Uncouth Personality (BUP)	0%	100%
5.	Diminutive Imaging (DI)	0%	100%
6.	Political Standing(PS)	83.3%	16.7%

The figures above are presented in the bar chart below:

Key:

Di = Diminutive Imaging; **Bup =** Bad/Uncouth Personality;

Ps = Political Standing; **Sr =** Scornful Reprimanding;

Drq = Dumming Rhetorical Question; **Sa =** Sarcastic Attacks,

X = Point Of Index
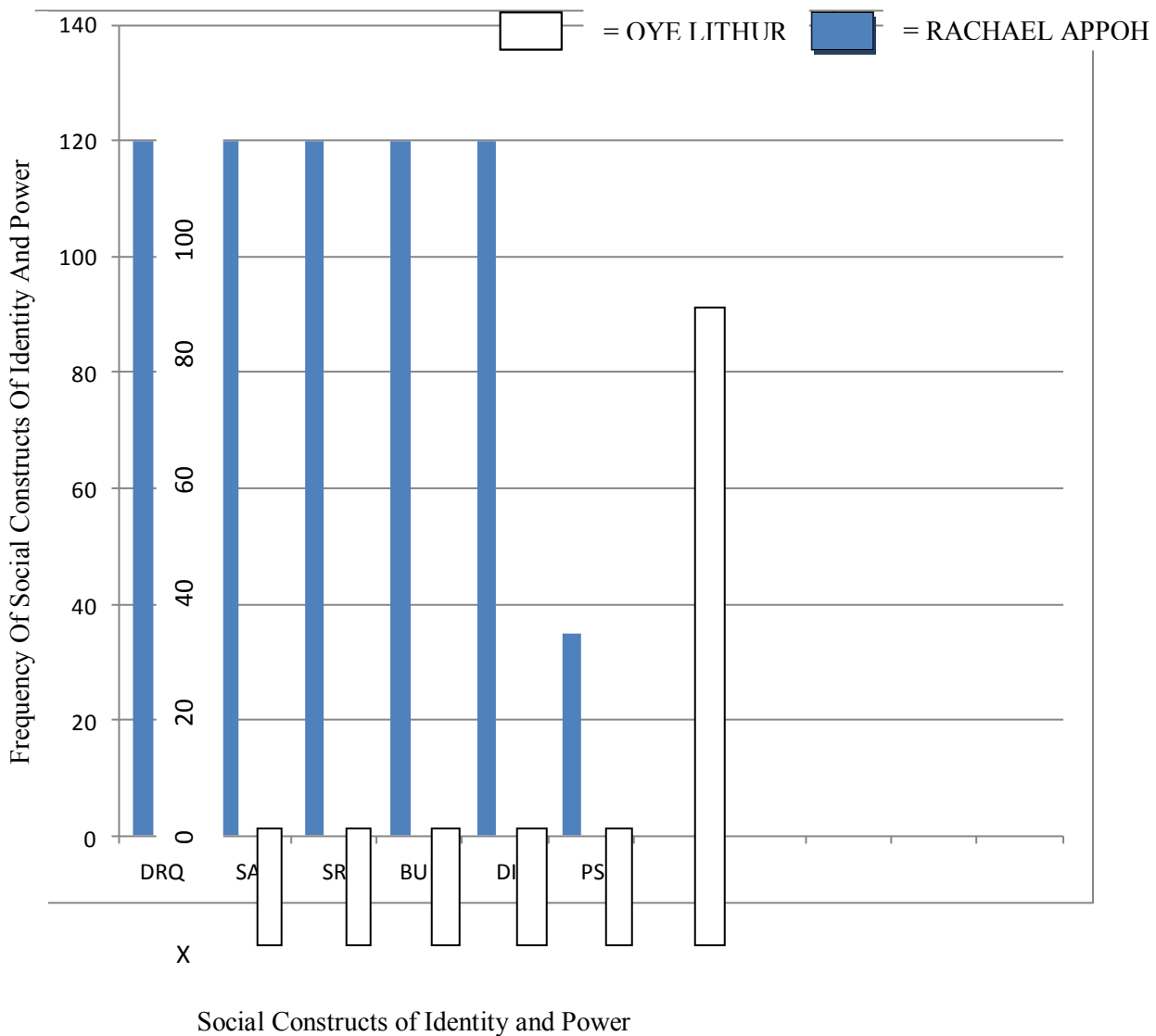
5. Findings and Discussions

From the analysis of the data, it was discovered that the theme of identity and power construction permeated the dialogue with abundance of evidence. The six underlying social constructs of identity and power construction embody these pieces of evidence across the length and breadth of the conversation with the use of rhetorical questions dominating the other five. Nana Oye Lithur is portrayed as overwhelmingly having an upper hand over her deputy Rachael Appoh as far as the construction of identity and power is concerned. Rachael Appoh only managed a 16.7% political authority as against Nana Oye's 83.3%. For the rest of the five social constructs, she rates zero to Nana Oye Lithur as conveyed in the tables and chart above.

Appropriate excerpts to bark each of the identified six social constructs have been presented on the tables above with their appropriate references of the pages and turns (illocutionary acts) with their corresponding numbers. For the purposes of easy reference, a transcribed version of the recorded dialogue is attached to this paper as part of the final report on this conversation analysis.

In edging out the theme of identity and power construction, the conversationalists used rhetorical questions extensively, painting a very clear and vivid picture of the overly imbalanced power relations between Nana Oye Lithur and Rachael Appoh. The points made by the speakers in the dialogue were emphasized and resounded through this literary device. To project Nana Oye Lithur higher over Rachael Appoh, the conversationalists teased out Appoh's naivety in challenging her "giant" boss with a number of sarcastic renditions. The conversationalists, finding Appoh's behaviour too incredible and strange to understand, show gross scorn for her though she used to be in their company as a friend. This further widens the gap of identity and power between Oye and Appoh .For the conversationalists, Appoh must be behaviourally inept to have put up such an attitude towards her boss who wills great political power and possesses an enviable reputation both locally and globally. They therefore spite her as arrogant and insubordinative. The socio-cultural standing of Appoh and Oye are a thousand miles apart.

Nana Oye Lithur is elderly and commands socio-cultural respect whilst Rachael Appoh is very young. The speakers in this dialogue, thus, draw this distinction skillfully with their use of pronoun diminutives-"This girl","That Rachael", etc. In terms of their place in the political landscape of Ghana, Oye heralds the call far above her contender, Appoh (83.3% against 16.7%). It is worth mentioning, the fact that the key principles underpinning the analysis of conversations, namely sequencing, illocutionary acts, and the relevance theory, which have been explained in the literature review, have been carefully applied in this work .

Drawing down the curtains, the three research questions have been well answered by the findings as explained above. That is, the theme of identity and power construction is present in the dialogue; enough evidence (excerpts) have been found to be reinforcing this theme in the dialogue and this theme has been explicated adequately using six identified social constructs as the yardstick.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Summarily, the findings in this piece of research conclude and recommend the following:

1. That power creates identity. Therefore, name-making comes after power possession.

2. That identities are always created or recreated in specific contexts. They are "co-constructed" in interactive relationships. As such, one can consciously craft out one's own identity and can change image using different social contexts.

3. That identity construction always implies inclusionary and exclusionary processes; i.e, the definition of oneself and others. Implicatively, it suggests that to "identify" oneself in society using power, one should be able to place oneself appropriately among other "powerful" people in terms of power relations.

4. That identities that are individual and collective, national and transnational are also produced or reproduced and manifested symbolically. Therefore, group identities should have a semiotic connotation apart from the verbal expression of it.

5. That language is used to draw clear boundaries between "us" and "others". The dialogue in this work clearly shows the difference between the conversationalists and Rachael Appoh (the subject of discussion) on one hand, and Rachael Appoh and Nana Oye Lithur on the other. Language has great power of identity and should, thus, be used meticulously.

6. That the notion of identity pre-supposes that there are similarities or equivalences and differences (idem and ipse, Ricoeur 1992). It is because of the element of similarity that there is the need for identity creation so that the differences between people in terms of power relations can be seen. Therefore, to gain identity, one must first break the social similarity with the masses.

7. That words are weapons and must be used carefully (Fairclough 1989; Chitton 2004; Wodak 2009 a & b). Words tell the world about an individual. In the dialogue under study in this work, we get to know the arrogant and insubordinative character of Rachael Appoh through her illocutionary acts (utterances). To gain identity and power, one must watch ones words in social relations.

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