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Paper **90**

**Interpretative & representational dilemmas in a linguistic ethnographic analysis:
Moving from 'interesting data' to a publishable research article**

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Some interpretive and representational dilemmas in a linguistic ethnographic analysis: Moving from "interesting data" to publishable research article [1]

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&

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> *I have fundamental concerns with the match of the data episode being presented with the theoretical constructs being explored, with the presentation of data collection and analysis methods, and with the contribution being offered in this draft of the article, and so I'm recommending rejection of the manuscript. However, because I value the theoretical concepts being explored in this article and because I was intrigued by the episode, I do feel some regret about rejecting.*

This quotation comes from one of the four reviews received on the first draft of an article submitted to (and later published in) *Reading Research Quarterly*[2]. The article was based on linguistic ethnographic analysis of a video-recorded literacy lesson in which an English Primary School teacher invoked the televised talent show *X-factor*[3] as a way of organizing the class to provide feedback on pupil writing. Like the reviewer, this lesson intrigued us. In particular, we were drawn to a seven minute segment in which patterns of classroom talk shifted in line with the (sometimes conflicting) demands of *X-factor* versus the traditional classroom genre of feedback on student writing. We spent a considerable amount of time analyzing this episode, and also played it back and discussed it with teachers in the school. As indicated in the reviewer's comment, however, the move from 'intriguing episode' to published article was by no means straightforward. In this chapter we discuss (1) the key concepts and principles we drew upon in our analysis of the episode, and (2) the interpretive and representational dilemmas that we confronted as we moved from data analysis to academic argument, including:

- How to hook the focal case on some theoretical problem that would be of interest to readers without reducing the complexity of the episode to that one issue or making claims that overstep the data?

- How to justify – retrospectively – our case selection in a way that is both honest and acceptable?

- How to treat "context": How to cut up the data (i.e. when does the episode start and end)? What details guided our interpretation, and what information should we include in the published framing of the case?

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[1] Draft chapter to appear in Smeyers, P., D. Bridges, N. Burbules & M. Griffiths. (eds.). *International Handbook of Interpretation in Educational Research Methods*. Springer.
[2] Lefstein & Snell (2011a). The other three reviews were much more positive.
[3] *X-factor* is a highly popular British television music talent show in which would-be pop stars audition in front of a panel of celebrity judges in order to demonstrate that they have what it takes to be a successful recording artist (i.e. the allusive "X-factor"). The show was originally aired in 2004 and has been exported throughout the world, including to the USA (*American Idol*), Canada (*Canadian Idol*), France (*Nouvelle Star*), Brazil (*Ídolos)* and the Arab States (*Super Star*).

- What should be the relationship between the different sources of data in the analysis – especially, ethnographic "lurking and soaking" vs. the video record?

- How to "protect" the dignity of the teachers and pupils involved, without compromising the integrity of the analysis?

Ultimately, investigation of these and related questions leads to reflection on the relationships between data and theory in linguistic ethnography, and on how academic institutions and genres impinge upon practices of interpretation and representation.

We begin by providing a brief overview of Linguistic Ethnography. Next we outline the research project that frames this particular case study (including research aims, fieldwork site, data collection and analytic frameworks). We then provide further information about the focal episode and why it piqued our interest. Finally we share excerpts from our analysis of this episode, exemplifying some of the key principles of Linguistic Ethnography outlined in Section 1, and then reflect on key interpretative and representational issues in the move from data analysis to the 'theoretical contributions' reported in the final article.

1. Linguistic Ethnography

Linguistic ethnography refers to a body of research by scholars who share an orientation towards using linguistic and ethnographic approaches to address questions in a range of academic fields and professional contexts (education, psychology, anthropology, linguistics, health, and management, among others)[4] (Maybin & Tusting 2011: 515). Linguistic Ethnographers combine powerful, precise linguistic procedures for describing patterns of communication with ethnographic commitments to particularity, participation and holistic accounts of social practices (Rampton & U.K. Linguistic Ethnography Forum [UKLEF], 2004; special issue of the *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, Volume 11, Issue 5, 2007). In a sense, this synthesis constitutes a move to tie down ethnography, 'pushing ethnography towards the analysis of clearly delimitable processes, increasing the amount of reported data that is open to falsification, looking to impregnate local description with analytical frameworks drawn from outside', while simultaneously opening linguistics up, 'inviting reflexive sensitivity to the processes involved in the production of linguistic claims and to the potential importance of what gets left out' (Rampton et al., 2004, p. 4).

Linguistic ethnographers share a particular analytic disposition – not "method" in the sense of a set of techniques that need to be followed, but rather a more general approach to data. We summarise our own take on this approach as follows:

- *Data driven*: Viewing data as situated interaction prior to investigating it as an instance of a theoretical construct. Language and communication data are taken as the 'principle point of analytic entry' (Rampton et al. 2004: 11) into the issues researchers would like to address. For us this involves extensive immersion in classroom data, investigating interaction from multiple perspectives (e.g. teacher, different pupils) before homing in on any particular educational issue (e.g. interactional change, writing pedagogy, dialogue).

- *Rigorous eclecticism:* Drawing upon and combining analytic techniques from a variety of approaches to the study of language, communication, and society, including the ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1972), Goffman's theories of social interaction (Goffman 1974,

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[4] These researchers have joined the UK Linguistic Ethnography Forum (www.uklef.net), attend regular annual conferences, seminars, and colloquia. Set up in 2001, UKLEF now has over 500 members, around half of whom are UK-based.

1983), interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz, 1982), linguistic anthropology, micro-ethnography, conversation analysis, and multimodal analysis. In Section 4 we demonstrate how we selected a range of tools/techniques for the analysis of classroom data.

- *Openness and systematicity:* Embracing openness and adventurousness in interpretation, yet also accountability to evidence, to procedural rigour, to conceptual frames and to competing interpretations. For us, this involves beginning with relatively free, creative (and time-consuming) interpretive brainstorming before subjecting our ideas to more disciplined, systematic investigation.[5] This process produces much more description and data than the analyst would ever eventually want to use; and in doing so it makes room for the unpredictable, ensuring that as little as possible gets left out.

- *Attention to detail:* Aware that careful investigation of small-scale phenomena is invaluable for understanding what's going on, linguistic ethnographers work through data slowly, attending to every detail as potentially significant (the 'aesthetic of smallness and slowness' – cf. Silverman [1999]).

- *Interplay of micro-, multimodal- and transcontextual analyses:* Engaging in a layered and iterative analytic process that, for us, involves (a) micro-analysis – attending to the way participants build up an interactional event moment-by-moment, such that each utterance (or gesture) responds to what came before while simultaneously setting up expectations for what can follow (i.e. the notion of sequentiality within conversation analysis, see e.g. Heritage 1997); (b) multi-modal analysis – replaying and reanalysing the video-recording without audio, in order to focus on non-verbal communicative resources such as seating arrangements, body postures, dress, gesture, gaze, and writing, and in such a way to bring into view those pupils whose participation in the lesson was less vocal (and were thus relatively absent from the verbal transcript); and (c) transcontextual analysis – examination of textual trajectories into and out of the event, attending for example to texts recruited by participants (e.g. student worksheets, preceding lessons, curricular frames), and to the entextualisation of the interaction in the episode as it is distilled into teacher reports, our transcripts and so forth.

We demonstrate the key principles of a linguistic ethnographic approach in Sections 4 and 5 below; but first some background information on the wider study.

2. The Research Project: 'Towards Dialogue'

The episode investigated in this chapter is drawn from a corpus of audio- and video-recorded literacy lessons collected as part of the ESRC-funded, 'Towards Dialogue: A Linguistic Ethnographic Study of Classroom Interaction and Change' project (RES-061-25-0363). The background to this study is the finding that despite multiple attempts by educational researchers (see e.g. Burbules, 1993; Nystrand, Gamoran, Kachur & Prendergast, 1997; Wells, 1999; Alexander, 2005), and more recently, the UK Government (DfES, 2003; QCA, 2005), to promote dialogic pedagogy[6], classroom talk has remained relatively unchanged (Lefstein, 2008; Smith, Hardman, Wall & Mroz 2004). Teachers dominate classroom interaction, talking most of the time, controlling topics and allocation of turns; pupils talk much less than the teacher, for shorter durations and in most cases only in response to teacher prompts. The *Towards*

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[5] See Lehrer (2012) for an introduction to and critique of brainstorming, and Berkun (2012) for a response to Lehrer.
[6] Defined broadly as "a pedagogy that exploits the power of talk to engage and shape children's thinking and learning, and to secure and enhance their understanding[6]" (Alexander, 2008, p. 92). For further discussion see Lefstein (2010) and Lefstein & Snell (2011c).

Dialogue project aim was to advance understanding of why this pattern of classroom interaction is so resistant to reform, and how dialogic pedagogy can be fostered and sustained.

The project employed an extended case study design (cf. Burawoy, 1998) that included a professional development programme intended to facilitate dialogic teaching of literacy in one primary school, and linguistic ethnographic study of processes of continuity and change in the wake of that intervention. The fieldsite, Abbeyford Primary[7], is a relatively large community primary school in East London, England. We chose to work in this area because the Local Authority has a long-standing interest in dialogic pedagogy and a history of developing and implementing pedagogical innovations. A senior Local Authority advisor recommended Abbeyford Primary on account of its highly regarded, stable, and experienced teaching staff and leadership team. Furthermore, the staff had positive experiences in a previous intervention and were keen to experiment with their practice.

Data Collection

The professional development programme ran from late November 2008 until mid July 2009 and involved bi-weekly workshops with seven participating teachers. Roughly half of these meetings included collaborative lesson planning, while in the remaining sessions we facilitated participating teachers' group reflection upon video-recorded excerpts of their own classroom practice[8]. These sessions were audio-recorded and documented in fieldnotes. Concurrent with the professional development sessions, we visited the school two to three times a week to observe and video- and/or audio-record participating teachers' literacy lessons, and also to spend time informally observing school life. For each lesson observed we wrote detailed field notes, which, together with the video/audio data, formed the basis for discussion at weekly research team meetings. During these meetings we selected extracts for use in the reflection workshops.

We augmented our participant observation with interviews with the teachers (participating teachers were interviewed at the beginning and end of the process and some also took part in one-to-one feedback sessions), pupil learning environment surveys, and collection of artifacts (such as lesson plans, pupil writing, photos of wall displays). In summary, the data collected for this project included: 73 audio- and/or video-recorded literacy lessons; audio recording of 19 professional development workshops and 15 teacher interviews; pre and post-surveys of 150 pupils; detailed fieldnotes based on participant observation; and related artifacts.

Data Analysis

In order to investigate continuity and change in classroom interactional patterns, we subjected a sub-set of lessons to computer-assisted systematic observation. We sampled 10 lessons each from three participating teachers, and for each whole-class segment of these lessons, we coded discourse moves for actor, function and pedagogic activity using the systematic observation software, *The Observer XT* (Noldus 2008). We then calculated relative durations and rates of select discourse features for each of the lessons, and contrasted the distributions of these features between teachers, over time, and between pedagogic activities (for in depth discussion of this analysis see Snell & Lefstein 2011). A subset of 19 episodes were selected on the basis of relatively high rates of features often associated with dialogic pedagogy (such as teacher open questions and probes, and pupil challenges). The video recordings and fieldnotes for these episodes were then analysed with regard to what aspects of classroom activity did and did not change, and conditions that facilitated the emergence of dialogic patterns. To date, eight of

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[7] A pseudonym, as are all names of teachers and pupils used in this chapter.
[8] For more detail on the professional development component of the project, see Lefstein & Snell (2011b).

these episodes have been transcribed in detail and subjected to linguistic ethnographic micro-analysis. These episodes were selected on the basis that they: (1) included a dense clustering of dialogic features or an interesting/anomalous discourse pattern, as identified in the systematic observation and subsequent analysis; and/or (2) highlighted particularly salient phenomena that emerged in the course of the fieldwork (e.g. importing discourse genres from outside of the school context, direct challenges to pupil and teacher positions, and radical shifts in teachers' footing in whole class discussions), and which were of interest for the professional development programme. The *X Factor* episode, which forms the focus of this chapter, was one of the segments selected for detailed linguistic ethnographic analysis (the reasons for this selection are discussed in the next section).

3. The Focal Episode: Playing *X Factor* in a Literacy Lesson

Ms. Leigh, the teacher appearing in the focal episode, had been teaching for 11 years and also served as assistant head teacher and literacy coordinator. Over a nine-month period, we visited Ms. Leigh's classroom 13 times. Her lessons were always interesting and enjoyable, and often innovative in their integration of music, visual aids, noncurricular texts, and dramatic performance with the official curriculum. Class feedback on individual pupil's written work was a relatively common activity at Abbeyford Primary, part of the routine lesson sequence used to develop pupils' writing skills. In Ms. Leigh's literacy classes, feedback was usually given in the final few minutes of the lesson, in which several pupils read out their written work and received comments. Ms. Leigh typically provided detailed individual feedback, and also often gave other pupils the opportunity to evaluate the work of their peers. In most cases, this peer-feedback was directed by Ms. Leigh (e.g. 'Spot the interesting technique that Carl has used'; 'Is there anything you would change about Rachel's word choices or the style she's writing in?'). Pupils were keen to provide feedback in these situations and often offered additional advice to the pupil-writer (e.g. 'Can I make a suggestion for William? Because I know in his story he goes back in time, so maybe erm once he's done the first bit- when he goes back in time he can do that little star thing [asterisk]'). In the focal episode, however, these practices and norms were momentarily disrupted following a brief reference to popular culture.

Summary Description

This event took place in a January literacy lesson, in the middle of a unit on writing short stories about a storm. Prior to this lesson the pupils wrote first drafts of 'timed stories' (written under conditions of limited time to simulate the national tests), which Ms. Leigh assessed, providing pupils with their assessment levels and targets for improvement. The pupils then redrafted their stories. In the focal lesson, they shared their targets, after which one pupil, Harry, read out loud his first draft. Ms. Leigh then announced:

> We're going to be your judges now. So we're going to have *X-factor*. We're going to decide marks out of ten for how much Harry has improved in the second version of his story.

Harry then read his second story out loud. Ms. Leigh projected this text on the board and instructed the pupils to discuss in pairs what they thought of the second story, and the extent to which it had improved upon Harry's first draft. These consultations last about 30 seconds, after which the pupils all turned to face Harry and raised their hands to display their scores (see Figure 1 below). At this point, almost all eyes were on Harry, and more than half the class had their backs to Ms. Leigh who was located at the front of the room (off screen, beyond the right edge of the picture). Harry (circled in the picture) rose out of his chair and surveys his scores, commenting enthusiastically about the nines and tens.

Figure 1. Harry surveys his marks

This was the first time Ms. Leigh had introduced *X-factor* into her classroom, and we were intrigued by pupils' immediate and positive responses to the mere mention of the televised talent show. For example, one pupil, William, raised his arms above his head in the trademark "X" sign and hummed the show's theme tune. Harry removed his jumper, readying himself for the contest. Later, when Ms. Leigh asked students to decide 'How many marks out of 10 do you think we should give Harry for the improvement to his story?', Harry held up both hands and projected a perfect score of 10 around the room in the manner of an *X Factor* contestant pleading with the audience for telephone votes; William responded by showing Harry a nil sign. Readers are recommended to view the video clip online at http://vimeo.com/17810542. A full transcript of this event can be found in Lefstein & Snell (2011a). Here we provide a brief summary of the segment that followed delivery of the pupils' scores.

Harry received feedback on his second story from six pupils, three of whom were nominated by Harry, while the others were nominated by Ms. Leigh, who also offered her own evaluative comments. Most of this discussion revolved around the question of whether the description, and in particular the quantity of descriptive words, in the first story was better than that of the second, allegedly improved story. This line of reasoning began with William, who was chosen by Harry to be the first pupil judge, even though his score of five was relatively low. William and Harry were friends, but they were also keen competitors in classroom tasks, and because they were confident, outgoing students, they were at the centre of most of the classroom discussions we observed.

Excerpt 1:

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132   Harry:      excuse me
133               explain why you've only give me a five
134   William:    because
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135   Pupils:      ((laughter))
136                ((most pupils put down their hands))
137   William:     becau:se in the first story y-
138                you had more descriptive (.) words
139                and you didn't ex-
140                in the second story you didn't [explai:n the:
141   Julie:       ((to neighbouring pupil)      [(xxxxxxxxxx)
142   William:     man who was changing the weather
143                and
144                the characters (.)
145                a:nd
146                in the other one-
147                because in the first one you had (.)
148                better descriptive words
149                in that one you had more
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Julie (who was caught whispering during William's turn) was selected by Ms. Leigh to give feedback following William. She quoted William (almost) directly: 'yeah like because h- the better- the first one was better because he had like more descriptive words but in that one he didn't like describe the person who was changing the weather much' (compare with lines 137-138 and 140-142). Ms. Leigh challenged this line of criticism, first by calling on a pupil, Tamara, to comment on the *quality* of the words chosen (lines 163 – 202), then by highlighting some words that she felt were particularly advanced (173-185). The next pupil judge, Gina, continued this more favourable assessment of Harry's second story:

Excerpt 2:

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244   Harry:       why did you give me a ten out of ten Gina
245   Gina:        well because the description was really good
246                and (.) erm
247                instead of using like just
248                hot a:nd sunny
249                you actually use- used like
250                scalding heat blazed and
251                it was really good description
252                and it was very very like
253                like it was like level four or five in vocabulary
254                because it was really really good
255                and erm
256                the way you described Scarlett was really really good
257   Ms Leigh:    why
258                what did it do for you as a reader
259   Gina:        because
260                it makes you think (.) that she like
261                she's really nice and pretty
262                and erm you-
263                you want to: know more about her
264                because erm like you've described her so well
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Harry was then invited by Ms. Leigh to choose a final judge. With some resignation, he selected Callum, who was enthusiastically projecting a score of four in Harry's direction:

Excerpt 3:

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283   Ms Leigh:    right Harry we've had
284                a girl and a boy
285                so now somebody else who's given you
286                not a ten out of ten
287                not a five out of ten
288                [>come< o::n who's going to give Harry some honest feedback
289                [((Callum changes from six fingers to four))
290   Callum:      me ((moves hand in Harry's direction))
291   Harry:       er ((looks around the room))
292   William:     four ((points to Callum's hand))
293                (2)
294   Harry:       Callum go on
295                why did you give me a four
296   Callum:      er well like
297                you never really explained as much
298                [as like the first one
299                [((Rachel and William raise their hands))
300   Harry:       I didn't get up to there [peo:ple
301   Callum:                               [yeah but you c-
302                (2)
303                okay
304                you could have like done the characters
305                like you and the Ms Leigh or whatever you were
306                [or was you even in it
307   Harry:       [((looks back at first version of story on his desk))
308                oh you mean describe the Ms Leigh [and stuff
309   Callum:                                        [yeah
310   Harry:       aw right yeah
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Harry acquiesced to Callum's criticism and demonstrated orally how he might have added more description of one of the characters (lines 315 – 324), but Ms. Leigh challenged the idea that more description is necessarily better, demonstrating how minimal descriptive details can provide excellent characterisation without slowing down plot development:

Excerpt 4:

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326   Ms Leigh    okay
327               using that simple phrase here
328               Scarlett her simply put up hair
329               gives me lots of details about Scarlett
330               because now I can see Scarlett inside my head
331               her hair's put up
332               so maybe she's one of these people
333               that likes to be able to
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334                 run around
335                 without having to spend lots time touching her hair and
336                 checking she looks right in the reflection
337                 you know
338                 it tells me that she's a person that's
339                 maybe clean tidy organised efficient
340                 it's simply put up but she looks quite attractive
341                 so she cares about her appearance
342                 but not enough to be vain
343                 so a simple phrase like that
344                 actually helps to give you lots of character details
345                 if you'd have said erm
346                 the teacher's placid voice
347                 it tells you straight away
348                 using the word placid
349                 that actually the teacher's nice and calm
350                 just like me hey Callum
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At the end of the segment Ms. Leigh summarised the discussion by asking, 'Do we all generally agree [Harry's] story improved from yesterday?' (lines 404-405). The pupils assent, and William initiated a round of applause for Harry, who asked, 'Should I bow?' (line 411).

Why did this episode stand out?

Throughout the fieldwork we selected episodes that highlighted issues related to dialogic pedagogy and/or interactional change for use in stimulating individual and group feedback discussions with the participating teachers. The lesson described above was among those selected, in the first instance as basis for a one-to-one feedback conversation with Ms Leigh in mid-March 2009; ten weeks later, the *X-factor* episode was discussed in a session with all seven participating teachers. We were drawn to this episode for a number of reasons. First, it represents relatively positive practice – e.g. pupils are actively engaged, authority is decentred (without loss of control), and multiple perspectives on story writing are drawn out in the discussion – yet also poses pedagogical problems from which the teachers can learn (e.g. how to shift from specific focus and feedback on one pupil's work to general principles and insights relevant to the entire class). Second, the extract captures well a set of issues related to evaluations of pupil writing, which had repeatedly emerged in our field notes, and which we wished to investigate with the teachers. Third, the episode displays significant shifts in interactional patterns, including high incidences of extended pupil utterances and pupil-pupil exchanges (i.e. those not directly mediated by the teacher). Finally, we were interested in exploring the hypothesis that importing discourse genres from outside of school (including popular cultural discourse genres) can be an effective way of changing classroom interactional norms.

Our intuition (based on participant observation) was that this episode was conspicuous as the most sustained use of popular culture in the corpus of Ms. Leigh's lessons. Systematic review of fieldnotes confirmed this intuition. Though it was not unusual for Ms. Leigh to refer to television shows, music, novels (and her own personal experiences of these) in her explanations, these references were mostly fleeting. The *X factor* episode is the only case in the corpus in which this kind of reference was built into an extended activity. As such, this episode poses a critical case for exploring issues related to interactional change in the classroom: an instance 'where the concatenation of events is so idiosyncratic as to throw into sharp relief the principles underlying them' (Mitchell, 1983/2006, p. 37). Linguistic ethnographers

often focus on such examples, instances that highlight 'creative practice' that breaks away from the status quo (Rampton et al. 2004: 7). In the next section, we illustrate the way we used linguistic ethnographic analyses in order to uncover the processes underlying this change[9].

4. Linguistic Ethnographic Interpretation

Our inquiry was largely inductive, grounded in data and observations, but that does not mean that we approached the data atheoretically. The overall study and research problem (concerning processes of interactional change) were framed by the concept of discourse genre. Our use of the term is inspired primarily by Bakhtin (1981, 1986) and the way his concept of speech genre has been taken up in linguistic anthropology (e.g. Briggs & Bauman, 1992; Hanks, 1987, 1996) and linguistic ethnography (e.g. Maybin, 2006; Rampton, 2006). At the heart of this approach to genre is the idea that in different spheres of social activity recurring situations give rise to relatively stable ways of using language and interacting. These relatively stable ways of communicating, or 'discourse genres', serve both as resources for fashioning utterances and as constraints upon the way those utterances are understood and judged by others.[10]

Building upon research and theory in linguistic anthropology (e.g. Hanks, 1996; Wortham & Rymes, 2002) and an ethnographic study conducted by one of us on the enactment of the National Literacy Strategy (Lefstein, 2005), we hypothesised that classroom activity is resistant to change in part because of the inherent durability of discourse genres (such as the canonical Initiation-Response-Feedback pattern of classroom talk), which elude direct teacher control (Lefstein, 2008; Rampton, 2006), and further speculated that importing and adapting generic models from extra-curricular contexts might be a promising strategy for instigating change. The *X Factor* episode stood out (at least in part) because it offered an opportunity to explore this idea. It's important to note, however, that discourse genre was for us a 'sensitising concept', 'suggest[ing] directions along which to look' rather than a 'definitive' concept 'provid[ing] prescriptions of what to see' (Blumer 1954: 7; see also Rampton et al. 2004). This distinction is significant because simply noticing the introduction of *X Factor* into the classroom did not constitute the end of our analysis; rather it was a springboard for further study. So, having noticed what appeared to be the "importation" and enthusiastic embrace of an extra-curricular discourse genre, we then began to think systematically about the various dimensions of this and the more conventional discourse genres employed in the classroom, and how they might be expressed in the episode. The results of this exercise are produced in Table 1, which contrasts the discourse genre of conventional classroom feedback with *X factor* in relation to a range of social, interactional and discursive dimensions.

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[9] For a comprehensive analysis of this episode readers are recommended to consult the original article (Lefstein & Snell 2011a).

[10] See Lefstein & Snell (2011a) for a more detailed exposition.

Table 3

Contrasting Discourse Genres

	Feedback in a literacy lesson	*X-factor*
Social field	Education / schooling	Entertainment / television / music
Central task	To evaluate and improve a pupil's written work	To evaluate and improve a contestant's stage performance
Participants and roles	Teacher and pupils	Celebrity judges / mentors, contestants, coaches and audience
Purposes	*Teacher*: to improve an individual piece of pupil writing; to teach the rest of the class about qualities of good writing; to produce an institutionally adequate lesson; categorise pupils according to national standards of achievement *Pupils:* to perform well, be accepted by peers, get through the lesson	*Producers / judges*: to produce an entertaining show (as indicated in viewer ratings, which lead to advertising revenue); to organise contestants according to their relative talent, and promote the best performers to the next level *Contestants*: to win the show and/or launch a career in the entertainment industry
Sequential structure / stages	Will typically include the following (though not necessarily in this order): • discussion of targets / criteria, • sharing of pupil work, • judgement and/or interpretation of the work, • suggestions for improvement, • conclusion	Will typically include the following (usually in this order): • review of contestant's participation in competition so far (through edited clips) • contestant's stage performance • critique of performance by judges (with some suggestions for improvement) • interview with contestant (who then has the "right-to-reply" to the judges' comments)
Topics / themes	Issues arising from pupil written work that are salient to the official curriculum	Contestant's performance (but this focal point often overridden by discussion of judges' own careers, arguments between judges etc.)
Interactional norms	Speaking dominated by the teacher, who also allocates the floor; primarily IRE/F	Speaking dominated by judges; host allocates the floor to individual judges, but judges also assume the power to self-select; lots of interruptions and overlap
Social	'Emotionally flat' (Goodlad, 1984).	Emotionally charged.

relationships	Pupils are emotionally invested in peer relations, but these are downplayed in the public spaces of lessons	There is a competitive relationship between judges, but to their own acts, judges provide support and guidance in their role as "mentor"
Language use	Polite or at least disciplined; use of standard grammatical forms	"Brutally honest" assessments of a contestants' potential; highly emotive responses.
Evaluative criteria	National curriculum attainment levels and related learning objectives, divided into word, sentence and text levels	Does the contestant have the "X-factor"? This encompasses musical talent, personality (e.g. genuineness, likeability), and moral character (e.g. humility, niceness)

The juxtaposition of the two genres demonstrates a basic structural overlap – i.e. both involve the evaluation of a performance and provision of feedback for improvement – alongside important divergences: contradictions at the level of underlying purposes, differential distribution of roles and authority, differences in the way language is used etc. The next step in our analysis was to ask: How are the tensions between the two genres managed by participants in the interaction? How, if at all, does *X Factor* shape conventional classroom feedback, and vice versa?

Different participants oriented to different aspects of these two genres at different times. On occasions, some participants appeared to orient simultaneously to both. William (the first pupil judge) had given Harry a score of 5 out of 10 and evaluated Harry's first story as being better than the second because he claimed it had 'more descriptive words' (line 138), 'better descriptive words' (line 148), and overall greater explanation of character (lines 140-144). This assessment draws upon the resources of the school feedback genre: William's comments refer to specific elements of Harry's stories (e.g. line 142) and tap into shared frameworks for assessment (which highlight the importance of descriptive vocabulary). William's rather critical assessment of Harry's second story may also draw upon his experience of *X factor*. *X factor* contestants who appear overly confident or arrogant (an accusation that might be levied at Harry) are usually "put back in their place" by the judges' sobering comments. By adopting the critical stance of an *X factor* judge, while also drawing upon his knowledge of the school-based genre, William is able to orient both to the classroom task of peer-assessment, and to his social relationship with Harry. Note also that rather than grading Harry on the improvement he made to his story through the redrafting process (as Ms. Leigh had requested), William is actually evaluating which version of the story is better. This focus on categorical judgment rather than on the process of improvement is more in keeping with *X factor* evaluative criteria than school assessments, and it sets the tone for the following discussion. This shift in focus threatens to undermine the school ideology of continuous improvement, according to which feedback and editing necessarily lead to better writing (and better writers) – we return to this point later.

Another consequence *of X Factor* is that it carves out a space for Harry to take on some unconventional roles and assume non-pupil interactional privileges (standing up, nominating pupils, interrupting). And Harry seems to rise to the occasion, performing for the class and winning their appreciative laughter. This is tolerated by the teacher, to a point. She shifts in and out of the *X Factor* frame according to competing pedagogical goals. For example, part way through the discussion of Harry's story's (lines 239-241), Ms. Leigh is about to select the next speaker in accordance with traditional classroom discourse norms and participant roles ('Okay Callum what did you give-'), but stops herself ('oh

sorry, I shouldn't do that should I') and transfers authority to the pupil-contestant Harry ('Harry, you had two more choices for people who gave you marks'), in keeping with the *"X factor"* rules she established (it is significant that the teacher did not establish for herself a legitimate participant role in *X factor*: she is neither contestant nor judge). At the point at which she needs to discipline a pupil who is not paying attention, she shifts into conventional teacher recitation mode: 'Julie, what were you going to say, because you- I could see you *((makes whispering noise))* on the back there'. When she can see that student interest is waning (evident through pupil gaze and body positioning), she shifts back to *X Factor*, and takes it up a gear: 'Come o::n, who's going to give Harry some <u>honest</u> feedback?' These changes in tone and participant role (from teacher to *X factor* host and back again) mark a shift in 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 and reception of an utterance' (1981: 128)[11].

In addition to using the linguistic anthropological concept of discourse genre, we also drew upon conversation analysis, multimodal analysis and the notion of indexicality (i.e. the social meanings that language can evoke) in our analyses. All three can be seen at work in an interpretation of Excerpt 3[12].

 Beginning with conversation analysis, and its focus on the sequential unfolding of interaction, we note that Ms Leigh's utterance on line 288 clearly sets up the expectation that pupils should bid for a turn to be Harry's final judge. More specifically, the way her utterance is phrased appears to invite a certain kind of response. Within *X factor,* 'honest' often means Simon Cowell-like harsh criticism, and there's some evidence that this is what Ms Leigh is trying to invoke in the stress she places on 'honest' and in the elongated vowel sound of 'o::n', which makes Ms Leigh's 'come on' sound like something of a rallying call. So the preferred response here is not simply that pupils should bid to give their evaluation, but also that the resulting evaluation should be "brutally honest". From a multi-modal perspective, we see Callum (who is sitting directly opposite Harry) respond to this. He reduces his score from an original six fingers to four during Ms Leigh's utterance and appears eager to speak – his right hand, which displays the score, is outstretched towards Harry, and he pleads, 'me' (line 290). William, who is sitting next to Callum, points to the latter's score and exclaims, 'four'. Harry surveys the room, studiously avoiding Callum's gaze (even though Callum is sitting directly between Harry and Ms. Leigh). Having not found a socially acceptable alternative, Harry rather begrudgingly selects Callum.

Callum responds to Harry's question on line 295 by bringing the discussion back to the issue of character description, echoing the idea originally expounded by William that more is better (lines 297-298). Callum's utterance is marked as a 'dispreferred response' (Hutchby & Wooffitt 1998; Levinson 1983; Schegloff 2007): Callum hesitates, uses the discourse marker 'well', and stalls with the filler 'like'. Further evidence for this interpretation can be found in Harry's next turn. He responds defensively and with more than a hint of exasperation, appealing not just to Callum but to the whole class to cut him some slack: 'I didn't get up to there, people' (line 300). As he speaks, Harry's body tenses and he holds out his hands, palms up, in a beseeching gesture. The utterance is also marked by a 'stylised' local accent (e.g. l-vocalisation in 'people', a recognisable feature of London speech in which the <l> at the end of a syllable is pronounced using a sound closer to a vowel), perhaps as a way of indexing a sense of camaraderie with his peers (i.e. his *X factor* audience) (cf. Snell 2010). These two boys are friends, but Callum has been asked to take on a role usually reserved for teachers, and has also arguably been

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[11] Students were also able to instigate a change in footing, though in practice only certain students (i.e. those who were often at the centre of classroom discussion) took advantage of this opportunity.

[12] We do not aim to provide an exhaustive analysis of the episode here but rather demonstrate how our interpretation takes advantage of linguistic ethnographic key concepts and principles.

encouraged to take a more negative evaluative stance by Ms Leigh; that this feels slightly awkward and out of the ordinary is shown here through preference organisation and indexicality.

Finally, we move away from the here and now of the focal episode and begin to think 'transcontextually', about how this episode might link up with broader social structures, institutions and ideologies. One way to do this is to focus on the movement of texts (both written and oral) into, through and beyond the episode. In this episode relevant texts include: the first draft of Harry's story; the teacher's oral and written assessments of this draft; Harry's second, revised draft; National Literacy Strategy documents; available assessment criteria.

Close analysis of the extract reveals that of the six pupils who offer an assessment of Harry's stories, four follow William's line, almost word-for-word. This repetition is not immediately apparent. For example, take Julie's evaluation: 'yeah, like because h- the better- the first one was better because he had like more descriptive words but in that one he didn't like describe the person who was changing the weather much'. She does not cast her comment as building upon or agreeing with William; in fact, her relative lack of fluency, the hesitation, and use of the filler 'like' gives the impression of real-time processing of thought. But noticing this repetition is significant because the majority of the pupil contributions in this segment can be traced back to William's initial utterance – going back to Goffman (1981) these other pupils act as 'animators' of ideas originally authored by William (though they pretend to be the author[13]) – and this becomes important when considering to what extent these pupils are engaging in a meaningful discussion of story writing.

Based on these pupil assessments we might expect the first story to have more and better descriptive words. However, systematic comparison of the descriptive words used in the two stories (see Lefstein & Snell 2011a, Table 4) suggests that actually there were *more* adjectives in the second version. And in terms of quality, many of the word choices in the second version appear to fulfil implicit National Literacy Strategy criteria for 'high level' descriptive words – the teacher herself highlights these word choices as being 'very advanced' (lines 74-86). So, if the pupils were not orienting to differences between the two stories, what were they talking about? One possibility is that pupils were attending primarily to available assessment criteria.

The pupils' evaluations – both negative and positive – appear to be based upon an implicit set of criteria for assessment of story value, according to which (1) more character description = better story (2) more descriptive words = better character description , and (3) more advanced words = better description / better story . This way of thinking about writing quality appears to be widespread in English primary schools, and is inadvertently promoted, alongside competing approaches, in policy documents and supporting materials.

One way in which these ideas have entered the classroom is through the VCOP scheme of assessment. Within this scheme, four key aspects of "good" writing are identified – Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers, Punctuation – and in each area the items are hierarchically ordered into attainment levels (which are displayed visually in a pyramid structure). According to this scheme, for example, 'exciting' and 'so' are level 1 words while 'formidable' and 'outstandingly' are level 5. VCOP pyramids are displayed prominently in the classroom and are often referred to by the teacher (and also by pupils themselves). Prior to the focal extract, the teacher spent 10 minutes discussing the written feedback she gave the pupils on their timed stories in terms of VCOP targets (e.g. asking for a show of

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[13] An additional complication that Goffman's production format does not account for; perhaps an additional role of 'plagiarizer' would be appropriate.

hands to indicate who 'had a V-type target…a C target'). The pupils were thus primed to judge Harry's writing using this frame. VCOP is implicit, for example, in William's judgement that the first story had 'better descriptive words' and explicit in Gina's later (and opposing) statement that the description in the second version 'was like level four or five in vocabulary' (line 153). Ms. Leigh also orients to this framework in lines 85 and 109-115 when she refers to 'advanced' word choices. Although it may have been difficult for many pupils to see or remember Harry's stories, VCOP texts – and associated evaluative framework – were on the tips of everyone's tongues.

Going back to William's initial evaluation, then, it would seem that he drew from a number of resources on hand, fusing together (a) topic – character description, which was highlighted by Ms. Leigh in her initial feedback to Harry and in her instructions to the pupil-judges: '[Harry] has to make sure he was adding enough detailed description to give us some ideas about what was going on'; (b) assessment criteria – based upon VCOP, which is posted on the wall and was also flagged up by Ms. Leigh at the beginning of the lesson; and (c) a combative critical stance, based upon the *X factor* judges, especially Simon Cowell.

In this section we've demonstrated some of the key concepts and methods we drew upon in our analysis of the episode, including discourse genre, footing, indexicality, and micro, multimodal and transcontextual analyses. These concepts assisted us in interpreting what was going on in the episode. In the next section we turn to issues arising in the move from a detailed interpretation of an episode to the construction of an argument, and ultimately an academic article, and how this move in turn impinges on the interpretation and representation of the case.

5. Constructing an Argument: Issues in Interpretation and Representation

a) Pinning the case on a theoretical problem

The primary criterion for the success of scholarly work – and its publication – is to make a significant contribution to knowledge in the relevant domain, usually by advancing theory. Empirical findings are significant inasmuch as they modify or otherwise inform our theoretical perspectives. Note that the priority of theory to data is also implicit in the structure conventional to academic articles: theoretical background and problems precede research method and findings. This is not at all straightforward, however, in research such as that discussed here, wherein the construction of knowledge takes an 'empirically driven trajectory' (Rampton 2011); that is, when ideas emerge inductively, grounded in the data. This 'bottom-up' approach is typical of linguistic ethnography:

> instead of asking, 'top-down', "what can linguistic analysis contribute to issues already identified by other social researchers?", the driving question tends to be a 'bottom-up': "what more general issues can the description & analysis of my experience help to clarify?" (Rampton et el. 2004: 15)

But how did we move from interesting data and observations to the reporting of theoretically and practically relevant findings?

As already noted, part of the reason for our initial interest in the *X Factor* episode were the significant shifts in interactional patterns, which appeared to be associated with the importing of a popular culture discourse genre. This was not, in and of itself, particularly newsworthy, but it prompted us to dig deeper into the research literature on popular culture in the classroom. There we found a broad consensus in favor of importing popular culture into classrooms, in order to attain a range of advantages,

including: bringing the passion and energy that pupils have for popular culture into the classroom; bridging the funds of knowledge (cf. Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez 1992) students bring with them from home and the relatively specialised discourse genres and knowledge they encounter in school, thus empowering disenfranchised students; making use of everyday experiences to make sense of and build academic knowledge (Kwek, in press; Luke, Kwek & Cazden, 2006), and moreover to see the potential relevance of school knowledge to their everyday lives (Teo, 2008). For these reasons the research literature is generally very positive about the educational and emancipatory potential of discourse genre 'hybridity' or 'third space' (see e.g. Barton & Tan, 2009; Gutierrez, 2008; Moje, Ciechanowski, Kramer, Ellis, Carrillo & Collazo, 2004; Pahl & Kelly, 2005; but cf. Moss 2000, Duff 2003) -- whereby school-based discourse genres *inter-mix* with everyday and popular culture genres. While the *X-factor* episode exhibited some of these processes, and to a certain extent presented some cause for celebration, we saw the episode as far more complicated and problematic than existing research literature would suggest. The disparity between the enthusiasm for popular culture reported in the research literature and what we actually saw happening in the classroom can be described as the 'contrastive insight' (Hymes 1996: 5; see also Rampton 2006: 32) that framed our subsequent analysis. We noted, for example, the following apparent contradictions between the *X Factor* episode and the research literature:

- the introduction of *X Factor* led to fundamental shifts in interactional patterns and new student roles, *but* appeared to lead to a narrowing rather than an expansion of learning opportunities, with *X-Factor*-ish critical stance and confrontations at times distracting the class from meaningful discussion;
- the mixing of popular culture and school discourse genres led to shifts in classroom power relations, *but* these shifts did not involve empowerment of conventionally marginalised students in this classroom; rather, power shifted from the teacher to those pupils who already held a dominant role in this class.
- the class shifted back and forth between *X-factor*-influenced performances and more traditional forms of classroom participation, *but* on a number of occasions different participants appeared to be simultaneously participating in different generic events.

These contradictions became the theoretical "hook" upon which to hang the empirical case. We used the episode to explore the complexities of discourse genre hybridity, and to highlight some of the shortcomings of current models and metaphors for describing the mixing of school and popular culture discourse genres. For example, the insight that different participants can participate in different genres at the same time has implications for how one theorises the mixing of school-based and popular culture discourse genres. Neither complete separation (script and counter script) nor integrative third space hybridity is an appropriate description for Ms. Leigh's lesson, which seems rather to embody a contested hybridity[14].

b) Justifying our case selection.

A challenge in building an argument on the basis of one brief episode is to demonstrate to the readers (and yourself) that this one case is worthy of attention, that it is in some way a strategically selected, 'telling case' (Mitchell, 1983). This episode intuitively stood out to us as participant observers in the school, but subsequent systematic discourse analysis[15] confirmed the critical nature of this episode,

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[14] See Lefstein & Snell (2011a) for a full account of the phenomena that seem to us particularly noteworthy for future study of discourse genres and their interaction in classrooms.

[15] See Lefstein & Snell (2011a) for detailed analysis.

highlighting how the *X factor* episode stands out against other episodes in the corpus in relation to key structural indicators of dialogic interaction.[16] Relative to the rest of the corpus of Ms. Leigh's lessons, the episode exhibits a high proportion of student questions (a rate of 30 per hour, compared to an average of 5); over twice as many open questions (i.e. questions for which there is no single correct response) and many fewer closed questions; less frequent evaluation of pupil responses, and the feedback Ms. Leigh does give is 'elaborated (i.e. involves an extended response); and a high rate of pupils responding directly to one another (113 per hour compared to an average of 11).

We presented this quantitative evidence in the article, but we were troubled by the retrospective nature of our "case selection", which didn't feel entirely honest. After all, selection of the case arose organically from the exigencies of fieldwork: specifically, the need to choose (in the middle of the data collection process) an appropriate case for conducting a feedback conversation with Ms. Leigh and subsequently a reflection workshop with all the teachers. On the other hand, the episode wasn't selected *arbitrarily,* it intuitively stood out in our ethnographic experience. We could rely on such a claim, but where possible, why not test intuitions, moving from vague terms like 'feedback in Ms. Leigh's lesson was usually/generally/often...' to rather precise quantification. Linguistic ethnography is open to quantitative data and analyses; indeed, we might see such analyses as part of LE's move to 'tie ethnography down'.

c) *Cutting up the data.*

One key interpretive dilemma in any case study is deciding how to demarcate the boundaries of the case. In this study, we started with the eight-minute discussion of Harry's story as a focal episode for discussion with the teachers in the school. Then, as we homed in on *X factor* as a key reference point, we expanded the boundaries of the case: Ms. Leigh introduces *X factor* a few minutes before the discussion, prior to Harry reading the second draft of his story out loud. Such a segmentation of the data produces a relatively coherent episode with a beginning (Ms. Leigh: 'We're going to have *X factor*'), middle (the judges' assessments) and end (Harry: 'should I bow?'). It especially makes sense in light of the focus on importing popular culture and *X factor*: the beginning marks the first mention of *X factor*, the middle the substantive content of the game, and the end evokes the closing event in a public performance.

However, given a different theoretical focus, we could have just as easily cut up the data differently, and such different segmentation would have made just as much sense. For example, if our focus had been on the ways in which assessment categories penetrate classroom discourse, our "episode" would have begun much earlier, with pupils reading out their targets for improvement. Or, alternatively, if we had studied the development of pupil writing, we would have ended the episode much later, e.g. after the final set of Harry's revisions to his story. The important point for our current purposes is to note that the theoretical questions and analytic frame guide the segmentation of the data, and help to grant the resulting episode a sense of coherence. That said, it is nevertheless useful to check to see how participants are orienting to the transitions between interactional segments, in other words, whether our segmentation of the data reflects the way they're making sense of the activity. And, indeed, Ms. Leigh signals to the class the transitions into and out of the *X-factor* activity (see, lines 1-3 and 417-8).

The significance of demarcating the case is that we devote our most systematic and thorough analysis to the resulting episode, including detailed transcription and micro-analytic brainstorming. This segment is also that which we played back to and discussed with the participating teachers. Nevertheless, over the course of the analysis, we found ourselves searching for references, clues and

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[16] We distinguish between structural, epistemic, interpersonal, substantive and political dimensions of dialogic pedagogy (Lefstein, 2010; Lefstein & Snell, 2011c).

contextualizing information in the rest of the lesson and indeed in the entire corpus, as discussed in the next section.

d) Sources of data: balancing the video record and ethnographic background

Having segmented the data and created an episode, we spent a lot of time with our heads in the video and audio record. Our viewing and listening is of course informed by our knowledge of the school, class and other lessons we've participated in, but this latter ethnographic knowledge is often implicit, and as such does not as readily find its way into the written account of our argument. Rhetorically, it's easier to make claims on the basis of the video – pointing to transcript line numbers, and specific linguistic and paralinguistic features – than on the basis of more amorphous ethnographic impressions. This tendency led to our writing an initial manuscript so narrowly focused on the episode that one reviewer questioned our ethnographic credentials:

> *Why do the authors seem to know so little about the classroom intertext, about the relationships among the students and the positions they typically occupy? … I don't think that the word ethnographic should really be used to describe such a study.*

We quote this review point because it highlights an important issue, namely, the relationship between different sources of data in linguistic ethnography – especially, ethnographic "lurking and soaking" vs. micro-analysis of the video record. Our analysis of the video-recorded extract was informed by our understanding of what constituted a standard lesson in Ms. Leigh's classroom and how this compared to the rest of the school, and by our knowledge of pupils' classroom performances and social relationships. The challenge was to make this kind of *implicit* knowledge, grounded in ethnographic experience, *explicit* for the readers, thus 'highlighting the primacy of direct field experience in establishing interpretative validity' Maybin & Tusting 2011: 517).

In later versions of the article we drew much more explicitly on a number of different sources of data and presented these sources as evidence. For example, one of our key claims was that the introduction of *X Factor* gave more power to those pupils (such as William and Harry) who were already at the centre of classroom activity rather than to those pupils who were on the periphery of classroom interaction. This was based on our observation of this classroom over the period of a school year, but could be substantiated by drawing upon evidence from field notes, which mention these two boys by name for 12 of the 13 lessons we observed in Ms. Leigh's classroom, and which document Ms. Leigh's own concerns (raised during informal conversation and in one of the reflection meetings) about the dominance of these boys. Similarly, we bolstered our claims about pupils' enthusiasm for *X Factor* and for Simon Cowell with evidence from outside of the event. First, the school held its own *X Factor* competition at Christmas, in which Ms Leigh's class participated. Second, one of the teachers commented on the pupils' interest in and interpretations of *X Factor* (and related shows) during the reflection meeting on the episode:

> I was talking about *Britain's Got Talent* in my class today, and they all could tell you that, well, Amanda's not very good, because she just says they're all quite good, and Piers[17] is, sort of, like, in-between, but Simon really tells the truth, he's really mean to them. But they like Simon because he is mean and he helps them get better. So, as well, they know, sort of, the different ways of giving feedback, as well. They all want to be a Simon Cowell, because he actually does tell the truth. (Comment in workshop, June 1, 2009)

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[17] Amanda Holden and Piers Morgan were judges on Simon Cowell's show *Britain's Got Talent.*

This comment is significant in that it confirms our sense that Simon Cowell, with his trade-mark harsh but fair criticism, was a salient figure for pupils in this school.

e) Protecting the dignity of research subjects

We've shared project video-recordings with researchers and practitioners in numerous forums, and have frequently been disturbed by the speed with which observers rush to judge – often harshly –the teachers appearing in the recordings. This phenomenon is probably due in part to the fact that we have slowed down the recordings, dissecting them move by move, and thereby exposing any shortcomings for all to see. It's easy to forget that there's a wide gap separating the slow analysis of a lesson from its experience in real time. In light of this experience we've been keen in our written account to protect the teachers' and pupils' dignity, especially since they and we won't be there to contest unfair reader judgments. However, we're also wary that this desire to protect the research participants not compromise the integrity of the analysis. For instance, recall that Ms. Leigh summarises the discussion of Harry's stories by asking, 'Do we all generally agree [Harry's] story improved from yesterday?' (lines 404-405). The pupils assent, and William initiates a round of applause for Harry, reintroducing *X factor* as a salient frame. This is a curious account of the discussion, since actually the question of which story was better had been contested throughout, and if anything, most pupils had voiced the opinion that the first draft of the story was, in fact, better than the second. Since the initial response of the children was to prefer the *first* story, this could have led to a more in-depth discussion of how the different language elements contribute to the narrative effects, instead of manoeuvring the children round to accepting the teacher's view that the story was improved after editing. Should we have acknowledged this point? Is this episode an example of bad teaching? Was the lesson as a whole a failure? And is it the role of the researcher to make such evaluations[18]?

A commitment to research ethics and professional practice means that researchers should always respect the sensitivities of their participants and avoid causing any disruption or undue stress or embarrassment to their lives (see e.g. Rampton, Channell, Rea-Dickens, Roberts & Swann 1994). In addition to being bound by professional codes of conduct, many researchers, especially those undertaking ethnographic fieldwork, also feel a personal commitment to research participants: teachers who make us welcome in their classrooms and open up their practice to observation deserve our respect. But professional integrity also demands that the researcher stay true to the data. So, how can the researcher protect their participants' face without compromising the integrity of the analysis? For us, the answer in this case was to situate the lesson within the wider context.

In discussing this lesson with us and the other teachers, Ms. Leigh mentioned multiple goals, including: to encourage pupils to engage in a process of continuous editing and redrafting to improve their work; and to build enthusiasm for story writing and encourage whole-class participation. Ms. Leigh's summary of the discussion makes sense in the context of these goals. It also makes sense within the context of the ideology embedded within the classroom feedback genre in UK schools more generally: pupils should be rewarded with praise for presenting their work, and feedback-and-redrafting necessarily leads to improvement. It would not have been easy for Ms. Leigh to relinquish control and explore the children's suggestion that the first story was better than the second because the challenge to the pedagogical aims might have been too costly (i.e. the aim of demonstrating that editing improves a piece

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[18] Further consideration of the relationship between linguistic ethnographic and professional cultures can be found in Lefstein & Snell (2011b).

of writing)[19]. Ms. Leigh was also subject to institutional constraints. She was aware, for example, that the designated hour for literacy was coming to an end, and that there were other tasks to complete before their time was up.

Overall, then, it's crucial to acknowledge that most of the issues we raise with respect to the *X Factor* episode are rooted in the broader policy environment in which Ms. Leigh works and against the boundaries of which she is pushing, and moreover, Ms. Leigh was herself critical of many of these practices in discussions about the episode with us and with the other teachers. We also acknowledge in the article that Ms. Leigh was recognized by the Local Authority as a leading teacher for the purposes of filming exemplary lessons, and that we also hold her in very high regard.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter we've explicated the linguistic ethnographic approach we adopted in investigating the mixing of school-based and popular culture discourse genres. We've outlined key principles of linguistic ethnographic interpretation and demonstrated how we applied them to classroom data. Finally, we have examined tensions between these principles and other academic practices and genres, and some of the interpretive and representational dilemmas that arise from these tensions. For example, the linguistic ethnographic commitment to an inductive, data-driven approach is in tension with the genre of the academic journal article, which prioritises theory over data and expects that case selection precede analysis. We have shown, however, that while inductive, our approach was by no means atheoretical: our analyses were guided by the 'sensitising concept' of discourse genre. We have further demonstrated how careful mediation between theory and data gave rise to a 'contrastive insight' that framed the analysis and became the theoretical hook upon which to hang our focal case. This case emerged from our ethnographic experience – it stood out as a classroom discourse event that diverged from the status quo – but we were able to demonstrate the critical nature of this episode using quantitative analyses.

Throughout the chapter we have highlighted central dilemmas in the process of interpreting and representing the case (e.g. the consequences of the decisions we made in cutting up the data), and in the final presentation of our analysis (e.g. how to balance micro-analysis of the video data with less tangible ethnographic experience). For each dilemma we have presented the problem and described – and attempted to justify – the way in which we responded to it. Nevertheless, in closing, we should emphasise that doubts still linger, and that we don't see linguistic ethnography as necessarily providing a solution to the problems we have discussed, but rather as a methodological prism that brings them into view, and forces us as researchers to confront them. As such, we see this chapter as contributing to a growing tradition of methodological reflexivity in linguistic ethnography (e.g. Rampton 2011; Blommaert & Rampton 2011; Copland, Shaw & Snell forthcoming). We hope that it has served to further underscore the importance of such reflexivity as a critical component of the research process, and to highlight linguistic ethnography as an interdisciplinary space in which theoretical and methodological challenges are thrown into sharp relief and tackled head on.

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[19] Ms. Leigh may also have been as confused about these evaluations as we were – recall that most pupils followed William's lead in orienting to available frameworks for assessment rather than to the actual stories in voicing their assessments.

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