Introducing a GURT 2018 Panel on Communicating with the Public: "Third Parties" in Question-Answer Sequences

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This forum is dedicated to a panel on *Communicating with the Public: "Third Parties" in Question-Answer Sequences* organized by Professor Hansun Zhang Waring for the 2018 Georgetown University Round Table (GURT) in Washington, DC. The panel was devoted to research conducted as part of a larger, two-year grant-funded project led by Professor Waring and Elizabeth Reddington at Teachers College, Columbia University. Specifically, the panel examined how representatives of a philanthropic foundation communicate their mission and programs to various audiences on various platforms. This introduction (originally delivered by Professor Waring) offers a brief overview of the 2018 GURT panel on *Communicating with the Public* and is followed by the four panel papers.

Communicating with the public in this forum entails interactive exchanges in goal-oriented, organized events in front of diverse audiences with "strangers" as addressees. Classic and major works on communicating with the public have examined, for instance, the norms and practices of televised news interviews (Clayman & Heritage, 2002a) and the methods of delivering effective public speeches (Atkinson, 2015). In this line of work, Clayman and Heritage (2002a) have shown how news interviewers balance the professional demands of neutrality and adversarialness and how public figures as interviewees struggle to do answering without compromising their own agendas and credibilities. Atkinson (2015) has also identified specific methods for honing one's public speaking skills through effective use of words, visual aids, and body language. Rather than focus on the messaging of well-known public figures through high-profile events such as national televised interviews and public speeches, the papers in this forum turn to the relatively "mundane" work that representatives of a philanthropic organization engage in to communicate their message to the public in relatively spontaneous interactions on a variety of platforms with a specific focus on question-answer sequences.

A sizable body of work has been done on question-answer sequences, yielding enlightening findings on how questions are deployed to implement myriad actions and accomplish an assortment of institutional tasks (e.g., Clayman & Heritage, 2002b: Freed & Ehrlich, 2010; Tracy & Robles, 2009), and how responses may be formatted to display various stances towards, or degrees of resistance to, questions (e.g., Fox & Thompson, 2010; Raymond, 2003; Schegloff & Lerner, 2009; Stivers & Hayashi, 2010). Rather than detail the core activities of questioning and answering, the papers in this forum explore matters that may be considered ancillary to question-answer sequences but integral to such sequences in the environments of broadcast interviews and publicly-available webinars. In particular, the papers explore how "third parties" such as the moderator, the computer screen, or the audience become "procedurally consequential" (Schegloff, 1992) for the development of question-answer sequences.

The database consists of a variety of publicly available sources that involve representatives of a U.S. philanthropic foundation communicating their mission and programs devoted to improving public health to external audiences, including 10 moderated panel discussions/presentations, 4 theme-based webinars, 22 applicant webinars, 7 conference talks, 9 podcast interviews, and 6 televised interviews. The participants across the data are presenters, moderators, audience members, interviewers, interviewees, and in one particular case, an

automated voice. Presenters typically include not only foundation officers but also individuals from other non-profit organizations, government agencies, or academic institutions who may be grantees or in partnership with the foundation in advancing its mission. As such, all presenters represent the foundation's interests to various extents and are referred to as "foundation representatives" in the forum papers. The names of the participants, the foundation, and the foundation's health mission and programs have been anonymized in the papers.

All four papers are conducted in the conversation analytic (CA) framework—"the science of analyzing conversations second by second," as British social scientist Elizabeth Stokoe (2014) describes it in her TED talk. The goal of CA is to identify and better understand the often nuanced communication practices that participants may not be consciously aware of. In order to uncover these practices, conversation analysts examine data asking the question *why that now?* (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973)—why something is said in that particular way at that particular time. In this process, analysts examine not just what is said, but how it is said, considering the volume, pitch, pace, inbreath, outbreath, length of a silence, etc. within an utterance (see Appendix for transcription conventions). CA has been used to study interaction in a wide variety of institutional contexts such as medical visits, counselling, and customer service encounters, and its findings have been used to help practitioners identify problems, devise solutions, and enhance efficacy (e.g., Antaki, 2011; Clayman & Heritage, 2002a; Heritage & Clayman, 2010; Maynard, 2003).

As will be seen, the contributors to this forum describe how moderating contributes to maximizing the efficiency of Q&As, how the computer screen is leveraged to manage various contingencies of the Q&A, how the audience is oriented to with *but*-prefaced talk that regains the focus of questions and answers, and finally, how the viewing public becomes the recipient of responses co-authored by the interviewee and interviewer. Findings of the papers contribute to the literature on question-answer sequences by highlighting the role of "third parties" within the domain of communicating with the public.

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APPENDIX

Transcription Notations

. (period)	falling intonation
? (question mark)	rising intonation
, (comma)	continuing intonation
- (hyphen)	abrupt cut-off
:: (colon(s))	prolonging of sound
wo<u>r</u>d (underlining)	stress
<u>word</u>	the more underlining, the greater the stress
WORD (caps)	loud speech
∘word∘ (degree symbols)	quiet speech
↑word (upward arrow)	raised pitch
↓word (downward arrow)	lowered pitch
>word< (more than and less than)	quicker speech

<word> (less than & more than)	slowed speech
hh (series of h's)	aspiration or laughter
.hh (h's preceded by period)	inhalation
[ ] (lined-up brackets) [ ]	beginning and ending of simultaneous or overlapping speech
= (equal sign)	latch or contiguous utterances of the same speaker
(2.4) (number in parentheses)	length of a silence in 10ths of a second
(.) (period in parentheses)	micro-pause, 0.2 second or less
( ) (empty parentheses)	non-transcribable segment of talk
((*gazing toward the ceiling*)) (double parentheses, italics)	non-speech activity or transcriptionist comment
{((*words*))-words} (curly brackets and dash)	dash to indicate co-occurrence of nonverbal behavior and verbal elements; curly brackets to mark the beginning and ending of such co-occurrence when necessary

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