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Interdiscursivity: Conventions,
Gaps, and Renegades

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Keywords

power, authority, intertextual/interdiscursive gaps, scholarly citation, language

Abstract

This review argues for renewed attention to interdiscursivity—processes through which linguistic or other semiotic elements taken from one context are integrated into another, forging links among texts, contexts, and people. We examine historical and institutional structures that guide processes of interdiscursivity to focus on three interconnected interdiscursive processes. First, conventional interdiscursivity (re)produces power structures, such that people deem certain interdiscursive connections as appropriate, proper, or otherwise normalized. Next, attention to interdiscursive gaps—socially structured spaces of silence and elision—reveals complex, power-laden logics of selection and erasure underpinning the (re)production of authoritative interdiscursive configurations. Finally, renegade interdiscursivity is how people refuse conventional links and forge novel connections with the marginalized, silenced, and left out. Throughout, we conceptualize material linguistic forms as evidence and manifestations of power and authority to show that attending to and remaking interdiscursive patterns can be a way to contest and remake structures of power and authority.

INTRODUCTION

Consider plagiarism. A student appropriates someone else's words in classwork, reproducing another's text without attributing authorship to its so-called original enunciator. This quotidian occurrence exists within a moralizing frame; instructors or administrators might say the student has stolen, engaged in intellectual dishonesty, and transgressed norms of academic integrity and sincere conduct. It is disingenuous, deceitful, and corrupt and should be punished—or so the story goes.

Now, consider plagiarism's converse: scholarly citation. Again, another's text is ventriloquized but with a crucial caveat: The author indicates—using some form of accepted convention—a source for the recontextualized discourse. This also is a quotidian occurrence, though generally unremarkable. Again, a conventionalized and moralizing frame explains what transpired: Scholarly labor took place, intellectual ideas were synthesized, and knowledge was laudably produced.

Both examples involve interdiscursivity, processes through which linguistic or other semiotic elements taken from one context are integrated into another, forging links among texts, contexts, and people. Interdiscursivity permeates all language use—textual, verbal, technologically mediated, sung, and signed—and always requires selection and transformation to integrate stretches of discourse from real or imagined prior contexts into new ones. Such integrations, or recontextualizations, require a calibration of relationships between the here-and-now and there-and-then, such that some connections are lost and others are highlighted. Acts of plagiarism, for instance, sever or obscure the interdiscursive links that evidence a given stretch of discourse's potential relatedness to another discursive context. Scholarly citation involves making salient precisely those links of interdiscursive relatedness that plagiarism suppresses, binding this particular instance to a larger web of discursive productions. Although plagiarism is condemned and scholarly citation lauded, both involve leaving out certain connections to produce particular effects, as even in scholarly citation, not all possible sources are referenced and not everyone's ideas are included, nor are all forms of knowledge production made relevant (Stolte 2024).

Anthropological work on interdiscursivity has centered on how certain interdiscursive links are made salient, naturalized, or perceived as socially significant while others are diminished. Briggs & Bauman (1992) proposed the concept of “intertextual gaps” to recognize how speakers harness “intertextuality” (see the sidebar titled *Intertextuality and Interdiscursivity*) to channel social authority. Through emphasizing similarities in form, content, or generic composition of one's utterance with a previous, socially recognized discourse, speakers minimize the intertextual gap between their own speech and some ratified source of authority, foregrounding the likeness between the two instances of discourse to harness the authoritative discourse's social power (think scholarly citation). By highlighting differences between the here-and-now of language use and a there-and-then precedent, speakers maximize the intertextual gap, distancing themselves from the prior instance while asserting the authority of their own voicings and the current context, avoiding association with previous contexts (think plagiarism).

Interdiscursive gaps are always a part of constructing relationships between spatiotemporally separated discourses (Eisenlohr 2021). We find the metaphor of interdiscursive gaps useful as a reminder that not all possible connections among discursive events are evidenced and that the absence of connection can be consequential. Patterns of interdiscursive connections and gaps, moreover, are evidence of the norms, power structures, and conventions that shape possibilities to link or to leave out. Analytical focus on what types of patterns people (re)produce through interdiscursivity, then, can shed light on structures and processes that enable and authorize the forging of certain links, ensuring the patterned uptake of specific genres, discourses, and language users while systematically occluding others.

Citation: processes of indicating connections across texts while reflexively evidencing the text's status as originating in another context

Recontextualization: processes of integrating stretches of discourse that originate in one context of use into a new context of use

Uptake: participants' engagement with previously occurring language use, such as turns at talk, text, and other linguistic or semiotic activity

INTERTEXTUALITY AND INTERDISCURSIVITY

Intertextuality and interdiscursivity are versatile concepts deployed in various ways by different authors, often interchangeably (Prentice & Barker 2017). Both are rooted in a Bakhtinian conception of dialogism (Bakhtin 1981), according to which all language use is socially and historically constituted, and every utterance is permeated by others' words, ideas, and utterances. Both terms foreground the (always potential) interrelations between a stretch of discourse and a potentially infinite horizon of discursive events, including the contexts, speakers, and social relations indexed by them. Kristeva (1969) coined "intertextuality" as a modification of Bakhtinian dialogism applied to the domain of the textual. Shifting "the focus from *utterance*. . .to *text*" (Bauman 2005, p. 145, emphasis in original), Kristeva (1980) defined intertextuality as "an *intersection of textual surfaces* rather than a *point* (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings" (p. 65, emphasis in original). Interdiscursivity, on the other hand, recovers the broader applicability of Bakhtin's dialogism by expanding the narrow focus on the textual, foregrounding the full range of actual or potential interrelations among moments of discourse—whether textual, verbal, or signed or by partaking in other semiotic modalities.

People build interdiscursive patterns by attending to and choosing among numerous texts and contexts to make specific stretches of discourse and experience relevant to their here-and-now. These recontextualizations and the links or gaps they produce are evidence of the power structures that mediate and systematize interdiscursive configurations. Conceptually, our approach builds on conversation analysis (CA)'s central insight: Speakers' uptake of previous turns at talk and other contextual elements serves as evidence of what they find and make relevant in interaction, as "each conversational action is treated as both displaying an understanding of prior and projecting subsequent conversational actions" (Goodwin & Heritage 1990, p. 288). While CA focuses on recorded and transcribed speech events, interdiscursivity works "beyond the speech event" (Wortham & Reyes 2015) to forge links to other contexts, such that the uptake of recontextualized materials becomes evidence of what language users make relevant.

Forging connections between discourses is never unguided (Irvine 2005) but grounded in interactional needs and the relations of inequality, hierarchy, power, and forms of personhood that they presuppose and entail. As Bakhtin (1981, p. 294) observed, "The word. . .[always first] exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions," such that how others use words (and other aspects of language) provides the grounds for new uses. Participants bring such "intertextual knowledge" to interactions to assess whether an utterance "resembles/parodies/plagiarizes/comments on/answers/abstracts on another text" (Hill 2005, p. 113), and they then display these understandings through their uptakes, recalibrations, and reproductions. Researchers have used analytical tools such as stance and alignment to demonstrate how people show where they stand vis-à-vis other people and the flow of interaction, often recontextualizing personae, voices, or other interdiscursive forms from other contexts for specific effects (e.g., Goodwin 2007, Jaffe 2009, Jones & Schieffelin 2009, Kiesling 2019). Stance-taking and acts of alignment can thus be evidence of interdiscursivity in action.

Interdiscursive acts are materially grounded within particular contexts of use, which, in turn, points to how interdiscursivity is always radically underdetermined; it is only in particular contexts of use that people forge (or not) spatiotemporal relationships among two or more stretches of discourse. In taking this perspective, we align with recent scholarship on the consequential aspects of listening and other ways that people attend to other people's words, actions, and embodied experiences (e.g., Duranti & La Mattina 2022, Green 2024, Vaidya & Friedner 2024; see Marsilli-Vargas 2025, this volume). Much of this work has focused on power and its enactment through careful engagement with who attends to whom, on whom the burden of understanding

falls, and to what effects. Scholars have also examined interdiscursive links beyond the human, showing how humans, nonhumans, ancestral spirits, and the divine get mutually ensnared in webs of meaning-making. As Feld (1982, 2024) shows, for the Bosavi of Papua New Guinea, birds were spirit reflections of dead humans whose songs and sounds were perceived as ancestral talk, which, in turn, became the basis for human songs. Or, in the context of religious practice in Guatemala, Knowlton (2015) describes how devotees composed and strategically placed votive text artifacts to reframe a bodily change as “healing,” which was “the result of an interdiscursive chain of communication between themselves and a particular supernatural agent through ritual” (p. 248). Attention to webs of human and nonhuman sensual links to each other via the material and sentimental world offers a way to broaden the stakes of scholarship on interdiscursivity.

Intertextual knowledge and its display in interdiscursive practices are shaped by ideologies and material realities of race, gender, class, ability, institutional prestige, nationalism, and (post)coloniality, such that interdiscursive patterns—uptake after uptake—maintain some connections while occluding others. It is this iterative nature of interdiscursivity that lends it authority, power, and consequence. As Gal (2018) argued, “[U]ptakes are generative” (p. 15); they do not just reflect preexisting links in the world. But what do uptakes generate as they accumulate and crystallize into particular interdiscursive constellations?

Take our examples of plagiarism and scholarly citation, each an interdiscursive pattern that generates effects, such as academic sanction, moral evaluations, and the formation of canon. Such effects are not predetermined, however, as plagiarism may occur without detection, scholarly citational patterns can be problematized, and canon can be challenged. In addition, actors are positioned differently vis-à-vis their abilities to detect, declare, problematize, and challenge these effects, such that even the most conventionalized interdiscursive patterns can be differently evoked, named, and utilized. It is this type of push and pull that produces the underdetermined nature of interdiscursivity, which in turn makes it—and attention to it—generative and powerful but also potentially liberatory.

In the sections that follow, we foreground historical and institutional structures guiding processes of interdiscursivity and provide analytical tools for elaborating these processes while also sustaining a political commitment to dismantling their hegemonic power. To do this, we group interdiscursivity into three areas: conventional interdiscursivity, interdiscursive gaps, and renegade interdiscursivity. First, we show how people use interdiscursivity to reproduce power structures, deeming certain connections and specific ways of calibrating interdiscursive gaps as appropriate, proper, or otherwise normalized by the power, authority, and convention invested in those connections. Second, we dive into the inevitable absences—i.e., the gaps—produced by interdiscursive configurations, showing how gaps—like uptakes—are also generative, though often beyond the control of their producers. By foregrounding what is excluded in interdiscursive regimentation, we highlight how even the most hegemonic power, authority, and convention are never total. Finally, we examine renegade interdiscursivity, i.e., how people rebel against and refuse conventional links, forging novel connections with the marginalized, silenced, and left out. Renegade interdiscursivity is the power and possibility of forging unconventional connections that may correct the historical—and scholarly—record. The effects of renegade interdiscursivity, however, are also not predetermined; acts of interdiscursive refusal and innovation can create the possibility of change or, conversely, (re)produce new forms of conventional interdiscursivity.

INTERDISCURSIVITY AND POWER, AUTHORITY, AND CONVENTION

Interdiscursivity is always a socially consequential aspect of language use. People enact, reinforce, and contest power and authority by reaching beyond any speech event to construct or reject

links between certain here-and-nows and some constellation of real or imagined there-and-thens. Scholars often overlook the importance of interdiscursivity as an analytical concept worthy of specific attention, perhaps because of its ubiquity. A focus on interdiscursivity, however, directs scholars toward certain questions: How are political and social authority, agency, and inequality constructed through people's uptake of others' language (Wirtz 2014)? What are the consequences of avoiding or taking on someone else's words (Cavanaugh 2012)? Who can take credit or be held accountable for certain words and ideas (Parikh 2018)? Who is simply an animator, ventriloquist, or messenger and can neither take credit nor be held accountable for particular words or ideas (Goffman 1974, Inoue 2011)?

Form is central to how and why interdiscursivity functions. For example, Spitulnik (1996) demonstrated how radio listeners in Zambia took up certain forms of radio broadcasters' talk. These recontextualized phrases did particular pragmatic work, like seeking an addressee's attention by repeating the phrase, "Hello Kitwe!" (Kitwe being a radio station whose signal was frequently interrupted). Scholars have conceptualized interdiscursive formal configurations using different metaphors to understand the types of connections produced. Interdiscursive webs (Murphy 2023, Wirtz 2011) imply spatiotemporal diffusion, whereas chains (Agha 2005, Wilce 2005) depict a spatiotemporal one-after-another. Type/token relationships (Silverstein 2005) diagram separation and connection between enduring sources and isolated manifestations. Echoes (Love 2023) emphasize diminution across spatiotemporal repetition, while (natural) histories (Goodman 2002, Silverstein & Urban 1996) depict a sprawling growth, and publics (Graan 2022, Gal & Woolard 2001) presuppose a shared common space of exchange. Shadow conversations (Das 2021, Irvine 1996) imply connections forged outside of conventional or authorized contexts, and chronotopes (Cavanaugh & Shankar 2014; Dick 2010; Perrino 2007, 2011) bundle linguistic elements into crystallizations of spacetime. Genre, as an "orienting framework for the production and reception of discourse" (Briggs & Bauman 1992, pp. 142–43), affords relative constraints and flexibilities, enabling the production or refusal of authority (Shankar 2012). These interdiscursive forms reveal distinct patterns, each inflected by different material relationships to power and authority.

Ordinary lives get entangled in interdiscursive forms through quotidian language practices such as repetition (Urban 1996), citation (Nakassis 2012), reported speech (Inoue 2003), gendered distributions of speaking and silence (Gal 1991b), and the use of algorithmic search engines on the interdiscursively structured World Wide Web (Bax 2018, Hill 2005). Indeed, people often give meaning to everyday interactions through interdiscursivity, as it mediates between "situated encounters and larger sociocultural formations of knowledge and authority" (Goodman et al. 2014, p. 450). In doing so, people may participate in audit cultures and documentary regimes in global food systems (Cavanaugh 2016, Dunn 2007) and university administrations (Brenneis 2009, Shore & Wright 2000), wrangle with government bureaucracies (Hull 2012, Paz 2018, Riles 2006), participate in classroom learning (Mehan 1996), and even successfully land a joke (Love 2024). In engaging in such activities, people forge and uphold authority when their interdiscursive practices run smoothly or without perceived deviation from the norm.

The material affordances of interdiscursive forms shape their potential for uptake. For example, how documents and other material artifacts are produced, disseminated, and archived is essential in state and institution building (Cavanaugh 2016, Gupta 2012, Hull 2003). Entextualization practices can produce material artifacts that embed stretches of language into new contexts, such as objectifying and transforming speech from an ephemeral sonic presence to more materially enduring forms (Das 2020, Cavanaugh & Shankar 2017, Silverstein & Urban 1996). People may posit these material artifacts as evidence of historical "facts on the ground" (Abu El-Haj 2001) or imbue archived documents with power by attending to them as "direct" reflections of past events (Stoler 2009), their pastness ostensibly indexed by the artifacts' materiality, like fading ink or

Entextualization:
interactional processes through which stretches of discourse become stabilized as text artifacts; framing or objectifying the result as socially meaningful

yellowed pages. The (re)production of power through selectively foregrounding certain material artifacts becomes apparent particularly in times of regime change. For example, after the fall of the Soviet Union, state actors in Eastern Europe brought heretofore forgotten dead heroes into national imaginaries by retelling their stories in national newspapers and reburying their bodies in national soil, thereby reconstituting interdiscursive links to non-Soviet histories (Gal 1991a, Verdery 1999). People's continued, though also shifting, interdiscursive uptake of particular material and linguistic forms may smooth over political and historic ruptures, such as in repeated performances of oral traditions such as Aitys poetry in precommunist, communist, and postcommunist Kazakhstan (Dubuisson 2021). As Riskedahl (2007) argues, interdiscursivity can be what emotionally aligns current events with past events, as people in Lebanon, for instance, drew together specific signs of violence while ignoring others to forge a collective memory that cohered.

The "master narrative" of modernity (Taylor 2007) is an interdiscursive configuration shaped and legitimated by global and colonial inequalities. The notion of "modernity" minimizes interdiscursive links among certain pasts while maximizing others, rendering what is said, made, or done in the here-and-now new and different from perceptions of the past (Strassler 2010, Love 2016). The concept of "tradition," in this context, became the interdiscursive "mechanism that bridges the historical juncture represented by the event of modernity" (Bauman & Briggs 2003, p. 11). Similarly, people forge moral or religious authority through interdiscursive deployments of ancestors' words, texts, images, and names in everyday interaction, linking the past, present, and future in lived experience (Basso 1996). This authority may take the form of reading or reciting a prophet's words (Eisenlohr 2006), making present and quoting sacred texts (Haeri 2003), or depicting national martyrs and voices of ancestors (Feld 1982, Love 2024).

The construction of language as a bounded object of analysis was interdiscursively embedded in these master narratives of modernity. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, European linguists constructed the linguistic family tree, describing and grouping languages to reconstruct past relationships among groups of people. In doing so, linguists erased patterns of multilingualism and other linguistic mixing so that connections among communities were de-emphasized to facilitate the categorization of bounded groups of speakers, often into nations. Consistent, repeated interdiscursive orientation to linguistic purity (not mixture and contact) organized colonizing and colonized peoples, structuring social interaction and political-economic dispossession (Gal & Irvine 2019, Heller & McElhinny 2017, Irvine 1995, Trautmann 2006). Scholars eventually conventionalized this linguistic family tree, obscuring its histories of production and rootedness in social evolutionary perspectives ranking European colonizers and their languages as the most civilized. This "totalitarian drive for a single, unique [monolingual] root" lies at the heart of Western colonial master narratives (Glissant 1997, pp. 14–15). This interdiscursive work to create colonially mediated relationships among newly bounded languages was central to nation-state formation.

These colonial interdiscursive processes and practices created binaries such as oral/written, premodern/modern, and primitive/civilized, which scholars recursively projected onto different groups of people (Irvine & Gal 2000). For example, scholars viewed oral texts as unmediated mirrors of a primitive past, while written forms became evidence of civilization. The conventionalization of ontological distinctions between oral and written texts facilitated the erasure of their conditions of production. Goodman (2002) shows how verbal Algerian Kabyle poetry genres were made to interdiscursively connect Western aesthetic categories to North African poetic conventions. Over more than a century of engagement with this poetry, text producers erased Kabyle authors' names and genders while severing connections to contexts of use, creating a sense of authenticity, and accumulating profits. In colonial printed annotated collections and recorded postcolonial albums, the poetry's material forms circulated in local, national, and global markets, redefining their interdiscursive reach.

Like coloniality, nationalism is deeply interdiscursive; masses of people who will never physically meet attune to each other's existence through shared experiences of textual and verbal forms. Circulating shared, standard languages through print capitalism or other text artifacts can facilitate ethnolinguistic nationalist identities (Anderson 1983, Eisenlohr 2006; but see critiques in Irvine & Gal 2000, Kroskrity 2000). Nationalism is an interdiscursive pattern that knits together a certain version of history with an anchoring geographical territory, smoothing over what and who are left out of instances of "we, the people" while presuming a temporal and indexical order of discursive uptake (Lee 2001). For example, as Inoue (2006) shows, male novelists in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Japan did not simply overhear school girls' speech in public spaces and extexualize it in the emerging genre of nationalist novels. Instead, they created an "inverse indexicality" in which "women's speech" was made to appear as temporally preceding its extexualization, such that reported speech was an interdiscursive practice that produced voices that cohered over time (see also Harkness 2014, Lempert & Perrino 2007, Mendoza-Denton 2011). Japanese male novelists created an affective grounding for modernization, standardization, and nationhood by constructing, highlighting, and keeping this gendered alterity separate. The production of nationalist languages demonstrates how forging interdiscursive links among ephemeral voices and text artifacts such as novels, magazines, and newspapers produces both patterns and gaps that shape people's lives, aspirations, and senses of belonging as modern subjects.

Racialization can also be understood as interdiscursive practice and process. "Mock Spanish"—i.e., truncated Spanish phrases and words used by non-Spanish white speakers to index a humorous, congenial, or cosmopolitan persona—is a linguistic form involving precise interdiscursive uptakes: White speakers deploy just enough Spanish with the right type of incorrectness to sound funny but not enough to be mistaken for trying to speak Spanish (Hill 1998). These repeated and patterned interdiscursive configurations produce white public space where Spanish speakers of color are intensely surveilled and, in contrast, white English speakers create positively evaluated personae and feel entitled to their parodic play. Other interdiscursive patterns mobilized in processes of racialization include the discursive attribution of violence and its potential among US high school students (Smalls 2018) and the formation of embodied eliteness in the Philippines (Reyes 2017). These and other patterns of interdiscursive uptake may colonize the senses whereby people perceive others as looking like a language and sounding like a race (Rosa 2019), structuring sensorial perceptions of seeing and hearing. In addition, dominant immigration narratives create powerful interdiscursive political geographies for racialized newcomers by linking to external antimigrant voices while occluding internal voices from migrant communities (Dick 2011, Perrino 2020).

The power of multimodal interdiscursive processes to produce emergent social effects and configurations has only become more consequential in the age of artificial intelligence (AI), disinformation, and algorithmic bias. Websites have deployed visual, aesthetic elements of mainstream news sources—such as newspapers—to shape interdiscursive and intermodal uptakes, creating an impression of truthfulness through graphic designs that superimpose the "web of plausibility" onto the "web of facticity" (Murphy 2023). Lamoureux & Hagerty (2024) demonstrate multiple repercussions—for themselves and other women—of gendering intelligent personal assistants (IPAs) such as Siri and Alexa, arguing that "in a cyclical exchange, machines animated by feminine stereotypes deanimate real women, as they are attributed the qualities of machines" (p. 177). Interdiscursive connections between technologized female voices that provide care and real women's speech impact how real women's voices are heard and responded to.

Across these examples, interdiscursivity is a tool through which powerful institutions and actors produce and reproduce themselves. Scholars have conceptualized interdiscursive configurations to capture how links among people are created through their uptake of real or imagined

there-and-thens in their here-and-nows. But gaps in these configurations always exist, generating new possibilities, to which we now turn.

MEDIATING INTERDISCURSIVE GAPS

No matter how all-encompassing an interdiscursive configuration may appear, it is never total (Bakhtin 1981) because gaps mediate all interdiscursive connections—whether in spatiotemporal iterations or in the people, objects, histories, or ideas that get left out in making interdiscursive connections appear smooth. Scholars have drawn on the notion of interdiscursive gaps in various ways (Dent 2013, García 2019, Graber 2023, Hodges 2019, Nevins 2010). In this section, we argue that interdiscursive gaps can be used as evidence of the power structures and institutional arrangements mediating—and enabling—interdiscursive linkages. We also focus on how ordinary people make sense of interdiscursive gaps and bring them into view for particular social effects. Unearthing what has been left out of conventional interdiscursivity may enable people to make interventions in their sociopolitical contexts, such that attention to interdiscursive gaps can be an important site of social struggle.

For example, language transmission and social reproduction—especially in historically marginalized, nondominant-language communities (e.g., Meek 2011, Perley 2012, Schwartz 2018)—have been sites where people attend to interdiscursive gaps with consequential effects. Ahlers (2017) elucidates how gaps in Northern Californian Indigenous language transmission became a focal point of attention as people had different understandings of how speakers use language today compared to use in the past. Master/apprentice programs for language transmission became places where novices, fluent speakers, and scholars negotiated the meaning of such interdiscursive gaps in transmission. Whereas non-Native scholars attributed differences between the past and present as evidence of “language endangerment,” “death,” or “incomplete acquisition,” Northern Californian Indigenous language speakers focused instead on continuity with the past, arguing, for instance, that their language practices always already allowed for extensive interactional variation across particular morphological features. This example illustrates that attention to interdiscursive gaps exposes differences in community-internal and -external understandings of linguistic practices in the past and present, generating opportunities for social struggle and community formation.

The conditions, abilities, and circumstances that shape possibilities for recognizing spatiotemporal or formal gaps are always shaped by language ideologies, i.e., mediating links between social structures and linguistic practices (Gal & Woolard 2001). Instances of translation and interpretation, often mediating different language ideologies, make interdiscursive gaps particularly consequential (e.g., Kunreuther & Rao 2023, Ward 2016). For example, during Christian missionization, the introduction and translation of new texts, especially the Bible, attuned people to divergent ideologies of what language is and does, such as whether it is possible to speculate about others’ interior thoughts (Schieffelin 2008) or how language mediates between the living and the divine (Robbins 2001). Such ideologies can influence people’s engagement with the temporality of interdiscursivity, such as temporal perceptions of chronology in prior versus subsequent texts. For example, Handman (2010) shows how Guhu-Samane Christian communities of Papua New Guinea performed different local-language translations of the New Testament, coming to mirror distinct understandings of social-temporal transformation that people understood these translations as enacting. Their reflexive struggle over maximizing or minimizing the gaps between source and target texts provided “local people with the ritual means to comment on and enact their hoped-for place within a Christian model of conversion and salvation” (p. 578).

Recognizing how media practices and technologies sustain interdiscursive gaps has been particularly consequential for scholarly analysis, providing crucial insights, for instance, into the innerworkings of religious and communal experiences across time and space. Media—“objects and processes that connect people, concepts, or social formations standing in relations of difference” (Eisenlohr 2015, p. 294)—often smooth over interdiscursive gaps with powerful effects; a particular medium is often effective only when it vanishes from view, obscuring the spatiotemporal disjunctures it bridges. For example, diasporic religious communities—such as Twelver Shi’ite Muslims in Mumbai, India—ritually collapse the past, present, and future through listening to audio-recorded retellings of the Prophet’s grandson Hussain’s murder and other Urdu poetic genres of lament, which transform listeners into emotionally charged witnesses of Hussain’s death at the Battle of Karbala in 680 AD. Listeners’ experiences of spatiotemporal transcendence rely on media ideologies that shape the sense of technology as being able to deliver a “live and direct” experience (Eisenlohr 2021). Such mediated experiences of interdiscursive gaps enable people to bridge the meaning of past injustices with present political and social grievances.

In contrast, Jones & Schieffelin (2009) demonstrate how YouTube comments offer evidence of participants’ interdiscursive uptakes of key phrases that harmonize and contrast participants’ linguistic practices with those represented in videos and other comments. Both these attunements and dissonances show how people attend to gaps between previous contexts of use (i.e., television commercials about cell phone texting) and new contexts of use (YouTube comments), by which participants refashion themselves into particular types of people in the process (e.g., people who embrace or reject “texting-talk”). In a patriarchal society fixated on policing young women’s speech, these representational gaps enable joyous celebrations of young women’s linguistic innovation, unsettling commentaries seeking to render their language—and personhood—problematic.

Interdiscursive gaps, as that which has been left out or erased, can also take materially and sensually palpable forms, such as pages missing from files. Scholarly attention to such gaps may create “the possibilities of writing about the absence of evidence and the history of destruction of records” (Sassoon 2000, p. 118). Colonial archives created interdiscursive connections to support colonization and its enactments, transforming colonized voices or leaving them out entirely, as when colonial scholars erased the multilingualism that characterized much of Western Africa (Irvine & Gal 2000). Meanwhile, postcolonial states have sometimes destroyed these same archives to support their own power, creating other gaps. In this sense, the historical archive not only contains documents but also “seeks to reassemble and inter the traces of the deceased—always incomplete, always unknowable, and always, at least partially, the project of our own desires” (El Shakry 2015, p. 920). Attention to interdiscursive gaps requires a multimodal and multisensorial engagement not only with material objects of memory but also with acts and processes of forgetting, such as nationalist erasure (Irvine & Gal 2000) or generational “becoming past,” whereby “each generation’s works become saturated with its own forgetfulness of the past” (Munn 2013, p. 365). That which has been forgotten, erased, or marginalized in historical narratives—pushed into the gaps—indexes power structures. But attending to gaps may provide opportunities to contest these structures, a point to which we now turn.

RENEGADE INTERDISCURSIVITY: CREATIVITY, TRANSFORMATION, RESISTANCE

Patterns of interdiscursive uptake can be unnoticeably smooth, forging connections and creating gaps. But they can also trouble social norms and authority when people (deliberately or otherwise) break with convention, e.g., eavesdropping (Larson 2017), gossip (Cameron 1996,

Jones et al. 2011), plagiarism (Duranti 1993, Perlman 2019), and so-called hallucinations produced by generative artificial intelligence (GAI). Furthermore, people's refusal of conventional connections can produce a renegade interdiscursivity (Hartman 2019, Ralph 2014), simultaneously dangerous and innovative connections that garner ethnographic, analytical, and scholarly potential as well as moral panics, institutional censure, and social upheaval. If "uptakes are generative" (Gal 2018, p. 3), what do they generate when they deviate from convention?

Renegade interdiscursivity can be deliberate action. For example, in post-World War II London, diverse subcultural groups engaged in intense interdiscursive and intermodal struggles, transforming and reattuning ordinary material objects and ways of speaking to disrupt hegemonic and normative social norms (Hebdige 1979). In another example, performances at a nongovernmental organization in New Delhi enabled participants from one transgender group (kotis) to produce generic gaps to parody another transgender group (hijras), which, in turn, contested new types of global, class-based notions of gendered identities (Hall 2005). Noncitizens in Israel made public bids for national belonging, such that ideals about citizenship and belonging in Israel were forged "in the discursive and interdiscursive tangles of intimacy and publicness" (Paz 2018, p. 3). Alternately, political slogans in the United States are segments of language engineered to enhance their potential for rapid widespread uptake such that "slogonization" may be "a useful way to conceptualize the political pragmatics of interdiscursivity" (Joersz 2015, p. 305). Finally, the use of sacred Arabic words in religious spaces by queer Muslims transforms or queers Muslim practices: Responsibility for modesty is redistributed, sacred spaces are reorganized, and performance of sermons is altered (Thompson 2020).

As mentioned above, colonial and national archives function to police, control, and dominate (Battaglia et al. 2020, de Jong & Murphy 2014) and, therefore, are never neutral. But reading archives against the grain [or "along the archival grain" as Stoler (2009) argued] may produce a renegade interdiscursivity to recreate the historical record. Hartman's (2019) "fugitive text of the wayward" reconstructs the rich, radical lives of Black women in Philadelphia and New York in the early twentieth century from their archival traces and absences. Hartman's renegade historiographical approach requires "[breaking] open archival documents" to create a different "archive of the exorbitant, a dream book for existing otherwise" (pp. xvi–xvii), illuminating archives as institutions made from authorized and authorizing interdiscursivity that also contain the potential to reconstruct lives previously ignored or erased. Attention to gaps—pictures not taken, texts not written, and people who refused to be made into a problem—to create new links is the work of renegade interdiscursivity.

Renegade interdiscursivity can be problematic for conventional authority and potentially transformative, but it also occurs in everyday life, creating mundane uptake potentials that forge new connections. Consider, for example, the meme: "a popular term for describing the rapid uptake and spread of a particular idea presented as a written text, image, language 'move,' or some other unit of cultural 'stuff'" (Knobel & Lankshear 2007, p. 202, quoted in Jones & Schieffelin 2009, pp. 1059–60; Flamenbaum 2022). Memes are tight formal assemblages marrying visuals and text; their repeated uptakes are unpredictable in range and endurance. A meme's interdiscursivity is defined by uptake after uptake (via sharing, liking, reposting), tweak after tweak (as words, names, or phrases but also faces and other elements of the image are swapped out) across time and space. Seemingly mundane, memes can galvanize people into social movements (Bentahar 2021). Or, consider slurs: New slurs may be built from old ones because "through interdiscursive repetition. . .slurs gain their social power to wound" (Bax 2018, p. 119), even as in-group speakers may take up slurs differently, at times reappropriating the wounding token to recalibrate the interdiscursive connections that make them wound (Croom 2013).

Linguistic anthropological research and analytical methods are always acutely interdiscursive and, therefore, open to renegade interdiscursive practices to uncover what and who are left out or pushed into the gaps. For example, transcription practices are a site of knowledge production, shaping analytical possibilities (Duranti 2006, Ochs 1979, Riley 2009, Vigouroux 2009). But transcription practices are also shaped by ideologies of expertise and conditions of social inequality that connect the transcribed text to structures outside the text itself (Bucholtz 2000, Cavanaugh 2021, Park & Bucholtz 2009). For example, Preston (1982) and others demonstrated the negative impacts of “eye dialect” on perceptions of marginalized groups who speak nonstandard language varieties. Thus, uncovering gaps in transcription can lay the groundwork for radically rethinking linguistic anthropological praxis, such as unsettling the presupposition that scholars stand in authoritative positions as they attend to and represent what other people say through transcription. Productive renegade potentials—and the ever-present risk of leaving certain things out—also exist beyond transcription. As Wortham & Reyes (2015, p. 17) emphasize, analysts should trace the “pathways of linked events” to reveal [but may also (re)produce] racialized and marginalized positionings for those whose speech they entextualize (cf. Fabian 1991).

Deliberately renegade and revisionist interdiscursivities are fundamental for addressing “the citation wars” (Bolles 2013), perhaps especially if they prioritize and enact “collective knowledge production” (Smith et al. 2021, p. 13). For example, Reno & Halvorson (2023) show that anthropological theory-making around ontology and semiotics has significant and patterned intertextual gaps, producing a masculinist mode of knowledge production that values individuals over relatedness and innovation and discovery over emergence. Redrawing intellectual genealogies grounded in feminist and other nonmasculinist voices presents ways of doing scholarship that “[envision] theory as radically relational, as always bearing the traces of its making” (p. 487). Kramer (2024) urges linguistic anthropologists to consider how a top-and-center circulation model has characterized our own scholarship, showing that circulatory paths may exclude but also that “circulatory alienation” (being present but not registered as an interlocutor) produces gaps in whose scholarship is registered as such and whose is not. As Kramer, echoing Bolles (2013), Shankar (2023), Smith et al. (2021), and many others, reminds us, scholarly circulations tend to elevate white male scholars at the expense of those who are not.

Interdiscursivity is not just about connections between discourse but, more fundamentally, about connections “between the people who produced the discourses” (Dick 2018, p. 43). Since “citation is a social and communicative tool, and as such, it can promulgate inequality” (Kramer 2023, p. 491), reflecting on the metapragmatics of citation can disrupt those power structures. Citation and all interdiscursive activity are dialogic and consequential, they reach into the future while shaping the present, and they are designed to recognize but also shape a field of inquiry. Each citation counts and signals what and who matter (and what and who do not), and all scholarly citation practices, including syllabi, bibliographies, and talks, are potential sites for renegade interdiscursivity. For instance, Das (2021) directs us to the study by McElhinny et al. (2003) that focuses on five linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistic journals, which found that including more women on editorial boards correlated with more women publishing in those journals. Intellectual genealogies do similar work on a historical scale, grouping scholarly moments into intellectual or historical periods (Duranti 2003) and unearthing political landscapes and possibilities that shaped how and whose research and publications could proceed (Heller & McElhinny 2017, Shankar 2023). Renegade interdiscursivity reorganizes connections to people and sources previously forced into the gaps, making interdiscursivity a potentially liberatory practice. Stolte (2024), for instance, reorients fieldworkers toward “the transformative potential of bibliographic work as a dynamic and ongoing anticolonial practice.” For Stolte, bibliographies are central to “a dynamic and intertextual approach to locating, assembling, and critically attending to constellations of Indigenous

Eye dialect: depicting nonstandard speech “as it sounds”; shaped by ideologies of race/class, reproducing prejudicial views about speakers of nonstandard varieties

voice.” Building scholarly bibliographies, then, can be a deliberate practice that attunes to teachers, elders, ancestors, martyrs, (grand)parents, and others who guide people through interdiscursive connections.

What are linguistic anthropology’s gaps, erasures, and circulatory alienations, but also its potentials for transformation, collaboration, and new interdiscursive models? How do patterns of uptake evidence what is deemed worthy of attending and connecting to, and what future configurations can scholarly interdiscursivity work to build? Epistemic disruptions (Shankar 2023), collective citations (Smith et al. 2021), and relational theory production (Reno & Halvorson 2023) all suggest ways to remake what scholarship is and could be, especially in key spheres of knowledge production practices such as course planning and syllabus production and in how undergraduate and graduate students are trained in canon (Bolles 2013), citational practice, and cohort building.

LOOKING AHEAD

From before a person utters their first words, language links them with the dead and the not yet born. It brings them into a social world that is always in the state of becoming, where meaning-making is inherently underdetermined, unfinished, tenuous, and therefore mutable. This is the radically social and historical nature of language, where utterances are hailed into a world—remade, destroyed, reinvented, but always present—of words, sounds, and ideas that have already circulated through the mouths, minds, and material traces of others (Bakhtin 1981). To partake in discourse, then, is to necessarily enter into a complex web of interdiscursive links between the here-and-now of discourse and a potentially infinite horizon of signs, contexts, and speakers stretching across social space and disparate temporalities. Analyzing interdiscursivity clearly reveals different configurations of relatedness across time and space, none of them natural, neutral, or the only way. Attention to the particularities of interdiscursive configurations uncovers, for example, textual originality and individual authorship as ideologies that pervade Western academia and reward a mode of knowledge production that often selectively seems to hear, cite, and reproduce white, male voices, even as these are deeply indebted to countless unnamed predecessors and contemporaries.

Attention to interdiscursivity seems necessary in a political moment when accusations of plagiarism have been politically wielded and when scholarly activity is increasingly oriented toward public engagement and community action. Juxtaposing power-laden conventional connections with radical, renegade potentials reveals people, things, and events that have been marginalized or pushed into the gaps of interdiscursivity. Such is the dynamic consequentiality of interdiscursivity whereby material linguistic forms are evidence and manifestations of power and authority at work but may also be pressed into new configurations, offering myriad ways for people to contest and remake the structures that confine them.

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