Journal of
Higher Education Policy
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JHEPALS (E-ISSN: 2717-1426)

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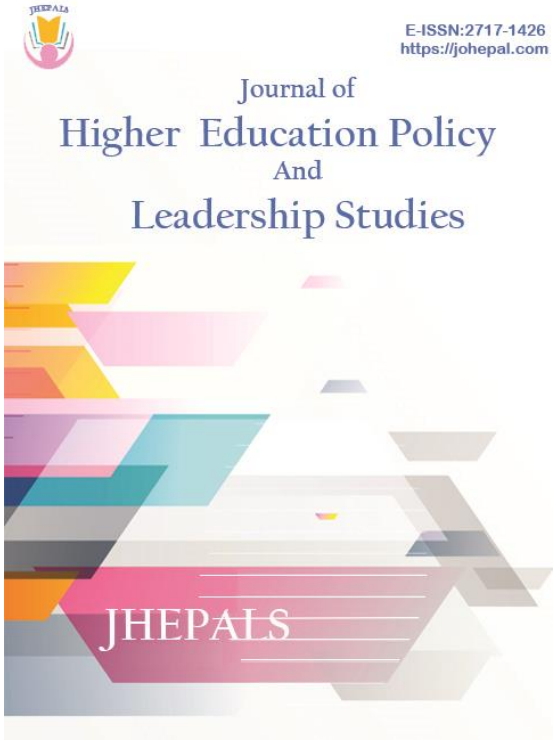

Book Review: **Analysing Talk in Educational Research**

Emily Rochette

The University of Melbourne, AUSTRALIA

Email: erochette@unimelb.edu.au
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6769-1211

Book Review Received **2020/12/22** | Book Review Accepted **2021/01/10** | Published Online **2021/01/21**

Cite book review as:

Rochette, E. (2020). [Review of the book *Analyzing talk in educational research*, by S. Rodrigues]. *Journal of Higher Education Policy And Leadership Studies*, *1*(3), 83-85. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.29252/johepal.1.3.83

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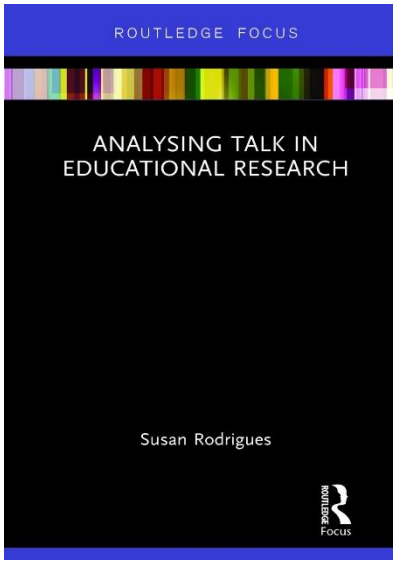
[DOI: 10.29252/johepal.1.3.83]

Analyzing Talk in Educational Research

Journal of Higher Education Policy And Leadership Studies (JHEPALS)

E-ISSN: 2717-1426
Volume: 1 Issue: 3
pp. 83-85
DOI:
10.29252/johepal.1.3.83

Author: Susan Rodrigues
Publisher: Routledge
Country of Publication: USA
Year of Publication: 2018
ISBN: 9780367487911
Pages: VII-86



Emily Rochette *

Keywords: Systemic Functional Analysis; Positioning Theory; Interpersonal Behaviour Theory; Analysing Talk

When invited to review the book *Analysing Talk in Educational Research,* I was intrigued because the invitation came at a time when I aimed to expand my own understanding of approaches to analysing teachers' talk. I am an early-career researcher using Positioning Theory as a methodology, therefore exploring other scholars' insights into how the positioning triad can be utilized to better understand participants' discursive practices encourages me to reflect on my coding procedures and ways to represent this to readers. At the same time, this book has done more than help me to reflect on an approach to data analysis with which I am already familiar. *Analysing Talk in Educational Research* has introduced me to Systemic Functional Linguistics and Interpersonal Behaviour Theory while prompting me to reflect on many of the methodological questions that must be revisited while planning research endeavours.

*Corresponding author's email: erochette@unimelb.edu.au

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Book Review

Rodrigues begins the book by highlighting that the analysis of talk is often situated within qualitative research where the analysis serves to describe situations or phenomena. With its focus on three analytical approaches, she explains that the purpose of *Analysing Talk in Educational Research* is to enable readers to make decisions about collecting and analysing talk beyond the descriptive. This clarification is especially pertinent as the fine-grained analyses researchers perform on talk data require a robust methodological defence to demonstrate that they are as rigorous as other approaches.

Prior to unpacking three approaches, Rodrigues introduces the reader to some of the methods for collecting talk and includes discussions of ethical implications and considerations for transcribing and coding data. Three chapters are then devoted to providing snapshots of Systemic Functional Linguistics, Positioning Theory and Interpersonal Behaviour Theory.

Drawing on the work of Halliday (1975) and Hasan (1984), Systemic Functional Linguistics and the concept of cohesion are introduced to explain how data are coded to understand the system and function of the language used. In the following chapter, seminal texts from Positioning Theory (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999) are then drawn on to demonstrate how the same data coded through the lens of Systemic Functional Linguistics can be analysed with attention to participants' perceptions of their rights and duties. A positioning analysis enables readers to better understand participants' sense of agency. Next, the work of Wiggins (1979) and Leary (1957) is used to invite the reader to explore Interpersonal Behaviour Theory through the role of agency and communication. The reader is introduced to state space grids and offered a complementary software to examine the approach.

Analysing Talk in Educational Research concludes by explaining that naturalistic research studies are not evaluated using the same criteria as those adopting a positivist epistemological stance. The reader is introduced to the terms trust and credibility while signposting seminal methodological texts for further reading. The final chapter offers provocations to enable readers to gauge their readiness to conduct projects that may involve the analysis of talk.

Notably, Rodrigues does not claim that Systemic Functional Linguistics, Positioning Theory and Interpersonal Behaviour Theory are representative of all approaches to analysing talk. She cautions that the snapshots illustrate one aspect of each approach, yet readers are well-supported to critically engage with and reflect on the approaches. Each chapter offers provocations and a list of references for further reading. Additionally, complementary podcasts, accessed through YouTube, feature scholars who are currently working with the approaches as they demonstrate and explain how each has informed their research.

Overall, *Analysing Talk in Educational Research* is aimed at graduate students and academic researchers who may be new to analysing talk or who may want to explore alternative approaches to talk analysis in their work. The approaches are concisely introduced and the data analysis procedures are clearly exemplified. Although Rodrigues does not seek to interrogate the approaches offered, throughout the book she invites readers to further explore whether these approaches are appropriate for intended research projects. Readers are well-supported to begin their own methodological interrogations by referring to the supporting literature. As such, this book would make an excellent addition to a reading list for postgraduate subjects in research methodology.

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[DOI: 10.29252/johepal.1.3.83]

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Ms. Emily Rochette is a lecturer in science and chemistry education at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education (MGSE). She spent over 10 years as a junior science and senior chemistry classroom teacher prior to working full-time at MGSE. Her research involves using positioning theory as a methodology to understand the experiences of science teachers utilizing digital technologies in their classrooms. Of particular interest are teachers' reflections as they teach areas of science out-of-field. Findings grounded in these teachers' reflections can serve to inform policy at state and school level and professional learning opportunities for pre- and in-service teachers as they negotiate their professional duties and personal capacity to enact them.

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