Framing selves in interactional practice

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Abstract: In this paper, we analyze the mutual constitution of frames and selves in interactional practice. We consider two examples, one taken from an Israeli radio call-in program and the other an American tutoring session. Both interactions follow a similar pattern with the caller and student encountering what appears to be a negative construal of their self, to which both respond with unusual interactional moves. In the radio call-in, during a discussion of the corruption of the government, the caller turns the conversation to the notion of “buying a wife.” In the tutoring session, during the tutor’s mini-lecture on the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the student takes out her mathematics notebook and starts working on math problems. In the discussion of these peculiar interactional moves, we consider the motivations, justifications, and consequences of these interactional moves. In so doing, we suggest how a theory of discursive and interactional framing could augment theories about the social construction of self, including face-work theory. In addition, we describe how a theory of power and agency in interaction rely on and constitute moral worlds.

In a recent contribution to Galanes and Leed-Hurwitz’ 2009 book Socially Constructing Communication, Bartesaghi and Castor describe a program for the study of communication as social construction (Bartesaghi & Castor, 2009). In their essay, they note that many foundational approaches to social construction (e.g., Berger & Luckmann, 1966) have approached social construction as an epistemological concern that pits social construction and reality as opposing terms such that the social construction of reality seems to suggest that reality is somehow less than it otherwise was. This move has led social constructionism to get bogged down in what has been called the realism-relativism debate. This debate turns on questions such as whether social constructionism can account for the fact that there is a “really” real or, as some like to say, that “there is a there there.”

Instead, Bartesaghi and Castor (2009), building on work by Burr (2003), Pearce (1994), and Schegloff (2006), argue that a communication social construction perspective could be much more productive if it were to sidestep the realism-relativism debate entirely and focus instead on how social construction actually works as people interact one with another. Indeed, they suggest that social constructionism
uniquely privileges a notion of communication as practical conversation, and that it is this sense of communication as practical conversation that should be at the center of a communication social construction perspective. Following from this, Bartesaghi and Castor (2009) thus propose that rather than engaging with the epistemological question posed by the realism-relativism debate, communication social construction researchers would be better served by engaging the constitutive and consequential nature of social construction in actual practice (see also Thomas & Thomas, 1928). In this view, the communication social construction perspective considers how communication constitutes subjects and objects, persons and contexts, morality and discourses, and even how it constitutes itself in the act of considering these other constitutive acts.

In this paper, we follow the lead of Bartesaghi and Castor and consider the communicative constitution of selves, discourses, and contexts. We focus on the pragmatic effect of these constitutive moments in practice. In addition, we consider how this constitution via communication is consequential for the interactional participants and for others as well. In doing so, we also imply a theory of discourse as social action (cf. Potter, 2003), which builds from the theories of social action that appear to be working among the interactional participants. We thus consider how talk-in-practice is more than mere discourse. Rather, we show how talk-in-practice is an important form of agentive and powerful (if modest) social action that has consequences that extend well beyond the interactions themselves. We take as our entrée into these questions the constitution of selves in and through interaction. In particular, we consider how selves are constituted through interactional frames which are themselves constituted through interaction by the selves of the very participants that are taking part in the interaction.

To this end we turn to framing theory and introduce a distinction between two types of frame: interactional frame and discursive frame. Whereas interactional frame refers to the doing that is happening in the here and now of the interaction, discursive frame refers to the meaning that we might say is locatable in the words exchanged in the interaction. We then employ this distinction in order to show how the negotiation of interactional and discursive framings is consequential for self-making in human interaction. We point to two ways in which these framing processes become consequential for the behavior of participants in interaction. First, we consider how these framing processes function to motivate participants to appear to prefer certain framings, particularly those that frame their selves in a more positive light. Second, we consider how framings can also be used to justify participants’ behaviors that might otherwise have been viewed as problematic.

In this work, we look at how framings function in two vastly different interactions, an Israeli phone-in program and an American tutoring session. We seek to move beyond merely presenting a reading of what participants’ discourse might mean, and instead consider the pragmatic effects that these framings appear to have had on the parties to the interaction, based on their subsequent actions. In the Israeli phone-in program, in the context of a discussion of the corruption of Israel’s state gambling system, the caller raises the issue of “buying a wife.” Similarly, in the American tutoring session, just as the tutor is in the middle of a mini-lecture discussing the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, the student takes out her math notebook and starts working in it. In both cases, we employ the concept of frame as a way of suggesting possible intentions behind these strange interactional moves, even if the participants themselves might not have been fully aware of them (Silverstein, 2001).

In constructing these accounts, we lean heavily on Erving Goffman’s (1974, 1976) work on frames and framing, and more generally on a leitmotif of his work, namely, that the distinction between figure and ground, or here between self and frame, is merely an analytic one and that in practice each is mutually constituted by the other. Thus in Goffman’s writing about self (Goffman, 1959), we see the apparent impossibility of isolating a “self” from interpretive frames. Similarly, in Goffman’s writings about frame (Goffman, 1974), we see the apparent impossibility of isolating a “frame” outside of the persons that people the frame.

Our focus here is upon the interdependencies of the constitution of self and frame, and how participants’ behaviors construct the frames that then serve to help make up the selves of the individuals whose behaviors, of course, made up the frame in the first place. This snake-swallowing-its-tail quality of human social life captures the reflexive and ongoing quality of communication as social construction. But rather
than engage with the knotty philosophical and ontological questions posed by this problem, we have humbler ambitions here, namely, to offer two examples in which we can observe snake and tail and swallowing, and to suggest some of the consequences that follow.

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But before considering these examples, and to put a finer point on this observation about snake, tail, and swallowing, we pause for a moment to ask: What is it that we are doing here?

The question may be somewhat confusing in the context of an academic paper where “we” typically refers to the authors alone – and in which case, the answer might be something like “trying to convince an audience.” Yet, we (the authors) intend the “we” in this question to extend out from the text and to include “you” the reader. From a mere representational view of language, this “we” is problematic. At the time of writing, the audience that this “we” refers to is not yet final (or so we, the authors, would hope!). Nor is it final upon “your” reading of it (ditto).[1] But this “here” and this “we” are nonetheless really there – or here, as it were. So here we have a problem in which the very meaning of the words in the text are unfinished but still real, where their meaning and real-ness is (continually) constituted by the relation between text and context. Thus, through our discourse we have marked out a shared social space that really appears to us to exist even as it is nowhere to be seen and even as it is unfinished. And, we might add, that this constituted social real is consequential.

Yet the consequences of “this here” interactional doing are not something that can be presupposed in advance of any actual reading. Whether you will read this paper in its entirety, cite the paper in your own writing, mention it to a colleague, muse a bit about it, be convinced (or not) by it, look up the authors, call a radio program (see below), become a tutor (ditto), or even set it aside and go for a walk – whether or not you engage in any of these actions depends equally on the nature of the text and the nature of the context in which the text is being read, or, more accurately, on the relation between text-so-constituted and context-so-constituted. The relevant questions to be asked here are: what is it about the nature of this relation between text and context that will pull you into it, convince you of something, or possibly even motivate you to do something?

And, how does this very moment of deconstructing the constructedness of the social reality in which we are engaged (and that you might have otherwise taken for granted had we not said anything!) – how does this moment of deconstruction also function as a construction of a different sort – as a kind of reflexive distanciation from the text (even while you are still “here” in the text) that constitutes a particularly characterized “we” – a “we” of “deconstructionists,” or, perhaps, a “we” of “communication social construction” scholars? Thus even though we may have thought to have escaped from an interactional doing by deconstructing that doing – we find ourselves lodged in another doing – the doing of deconstruction, or of asserting a reflexive awareness of the doing that we are doing. This particular constructedness of the moment of deconstruction will become evident as soon as your partner asks “What are you reading?” or, perhaps, “Why don’t you stop reading that ridiculous drivel and come for a walk?” And then off to another doing with selves and contexts to be constituted.

We (the authors) believe that this reflexivity captures the power and possibility of a communication social construction perspective in a very practical sense. But although it may be particularly powerful as an example because it is felt first-hand by the reader, it is somewhat difficult to analyze this demonstration of social construction by way of the “this here” interaction between us and you, precisely because it is one sided. For an example where we can better “see” both sides of a social doing, we turn to our data, but not before first introducing some analytical tools for understanding local interactional contexts (some of which you have already felt!).

The frame’s the thing: Interactional and discursive frames

The distinction we are introducing between discursive and interactional frames can best be introduced through the everyday distinction between saying and doing. It is loosely motivated by Silverstein’s (1998)
distinction between the plane of denotation and the plane of interaction. [2] Whereas the plane of denotation refers to “pieces of information or conceptual content [that] are brought out into the intersubjective field of communication” (Silverstein, 1998, p. 267), the plane of interaction refers to “the interpersonal achievement of a “doing” of something – an instance of some generically understood social act – to which more than one individual has contributed,” (Silverstein, 1998, pp. 268-269).

We introduce this distinction for two reasons. First, when these two are conflated under the broader category of “framing,” discursive framing is typically privileged while interactional framing is all but forgotten. This has left the realm of interactional framing understudied, particularly in comparison to studies of discursive framing. In elaborating these concepts below, we place particular emphasis in describing interactional framing. Second, this distinction points to an important pragmatic potential of framing, namely, that the meta-message entailed in each of the frames can be aligned or misaligned with one another. As we argue in this paper, when these framings are aligned with one another, this creates a particularly powerful message.

Interactional framing: Doing in interaction

My aim is to try isolate some of the basic frameworks of understanding available in our society for making sense out of events and to analyze the special vulnerabilities to which these frames of reference are subject. (Goffman, 1974, p. 10).

Although Erving Goffman’s Frame Analysis has been the inspiration for studies of what we are here calling discursive frame[3] (see below), it is our contention that Goffman was writing in particular about what we are here calling interactional frame. Goffman’s major work Frame Analysis (1974) grew out of a concern with the phenomenological writings of Edmund Husserl as developed by Alfred Schutz (e.g., 1970) and, later, Harold Garfinkel (e.g., Garfinkel, 1967). Frame Analysis was Goffman’s attempt to “limn out a framework that could be appealed to for the answer to the question: ‘What is it that’s going on here?’” (Goffman, 1974, p. 8). For Goffman, frame refers to “the principles of organization which govern events… and our subjective involvement in them” (Goffman, 1974, 10-11). Frame constitutes the definition of a situation that develops in accordance with these principles. Goffman’s notion of frame is fundamentally concerned with the here and now of a given interaction – the particular doings in which participants are taking part and which helps each participant understand how to “go on” (Wittgenstein 2001/[1953], nos. 151-155). Further elaboration of a few of Goffman’s points about frame will help to flesh out this concept.

First, an interactional frame is negotiated, often unwittingly,[4] by the participants in the interaction with respect to socially recognizable frames. On the first page of his text Goffman takes issue with W.I. Thomas’ theorem “if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences” (Thomas and Thomas, 1928, p. 572, cited in Goffman, 1974, p. 1).[5] Here Goffman writes: “Presumably, a ‘definition of the situation’ is almost always to be found, but those who are in the situation ordinarily do not create this definition, even though their society often can be said to do so; ordinarily, all they do is to assess correctly what the situation ought to be for them and then act accordingly” (Goffman, 1974, pp. 1-2, emphasis in original). Goffman goes on to note – and indeed much of Frame Analysis is dedicated to this point – that although participants do not normally create these definitions themselves, it is through their coordinated behavior they jointly indicate what frames are “in play” at any given moment in an interaction[6]. Importantly, participants can challenge, flood out, or otherwise transform the frame that they are in. But this comes with potential risks, not the least of which is the loss of a defined social reality, but which can include the loss of the selves of participants.

Thus, as Goffman notes, such frames are “vulnerable” and hence they can be transformed by participants on the fly. The most frequent transformation of interactional frames occurs when a frame is keyed as being more or less serious. Keying occurs when “one already meaningful [interactional frame] is transformed into something patterned on this activity but seen by the participants to be something quite else.” (Goffman, 1974, pp. 43-44). Thus, participants can cast activity into a playful key such that the question of what they are doing can be answered: “just kidding around.”
In addition to describing what they are, Goffman also describes what frames do. Frames organize participant involvement by allocating certain interactional roles to participants. Importantly, participants can choose to inhabit these roles in various ways. In doing so, they create certain role expectancies that provide rough guidelines for how participants should coordinate their actions in the event of speaking. These rough guidelines provide participants with guidance on how to appropriately participate in the interaction, including such things rules for turn-taking and interactional involvement. The participants can choose to break these rules, but typically such rule breaking comes with consequences for the self of the person who has broken the rules. In cases where the participant is not justified in breaking the rules of normal interaction, the individual will appear in a negative light, such as appearing “rude.” In other cases, circumstances may make it appear that the preceding speaker had broken the rules of the interactional frame and that the response was, given that initial insult, was justified. It is in this way that the interactional frame is consequential for the moral selves that are made up in interaction. In our analysis of framing and self-making in the two interactions considered in this paper, we consider how participants engage in out of frame behavior and how these out of frame behaviors appear to be justified or not.

**Discursive framing: Meaning in interaction**

To clarify what we mean by discursive framing, it will be helpful to clarify the relationship between our notion of discursive framing and other traditions in framing theory. To be sure, framing theory has come in many manifestations. Some of the first on the scene to recognize the importance of frames for interpreting meaning were cultural anthropologists forwarding theories of how language and culture makes events intelligible (e.g., Boas, 1921; Durkheim, 1995; Levi-Strauss, 1974; Sapir, 1921). Kenneth Burke’s notion of terministic screens – collections of symbols that become a kind of grid of intelligibility through which we make sense of the world – is similar to these anthropological ideas of framing (Burke, 1966, p. 50). Psychologists and computer scientists also developed theories of framing that consider framing in terms of how an individual mind comes to frame events in the world by using scripts or schemata to make those events intelligible (e.g., Malenka, Baron, Johansen, Wahrenberger, & Ross, 1993; Schank & Abelson, 1977; Tversky & Kahneman, 1981). Linguistic anthropologists have cast framing in terms of contextualization (Auer & Di Luzio, 1992; Duranti & Goodwin, 1992). Finally, communication theorists, especially in mass media, have looked at how people use discourse to affect others’ interpretations of what happened (e.g., Bryant & Miron, 2004; Kuypers, 2006; Lakoff, 2004; Van Gorp, 2007).

This last notion of framing is closest to what we are here defining as discursive framing and is akin to the common sense notion of “framing an issue or an argument.” The major difference here is that rather than looking at the wording of an advertisement or a press release, we are looking at the wordings of arguments as used in interactional practice. In their simplest sense, arguments as discursive frames contextualize some happening or putative fact such that one interpretation is favored over others. For example, referring to the events of 9/11/2001 as a “criminal act” or an “act of war” makes a significant difference in how we perceive those events. Importantly, either of these “descriptions” invokes not just a different understanding of what happened, but also of what can justifiably be done about it. Here we use discursive framing primarily to refer to things such as the way that an argument is framed such that a particular event or position is interpreted in a particular way. The critical distinction that we are introducing here is that whereas interactional frame refers to the interactional happenings that are “going on” in the interaction, discursive framing of the things that are being said in that particular going on.

Discursive framing may seem like a matter unrelated to the selves of participants (except for possibly with regard to who “wins” the argument). Yet as we will see shortly, discursive framings can, in fact, be very consequential for the definitions of the selves of the participants even when they appear to be solely about matters apparently unrelated to the participants.

**Analyzing framing and the construction of person-hood**

In what follows we analyze the deployment of and challenges to the deployment of interactional and discursive frames in two interactions. We further consider how these frames appear to be consequential
for self-making in each. Finally, we consider some of the potential consequences that these processes have for the participants' behaviors. In the first instance, we analyze an entire interaction, and in the second instance, we analyze the beginning of a longer interaction. In both instances, we analyze how the discursive and interactional framings of both participants are consequential for the selves of the participants involved. In the discussion that follows, we pay particular attention to questions of the motivation for and justification of the actions that the seemingly less powerful participant takes in an effort to disrupt the framing moves made by the seemingly more powerful participant.

**Take I: The unmaking of a good citizen and a man**

**Background for this interaction**

The interaction is taken from an Israeli political radio phone-in program, a program which usually receives high ratings and has many listeners. Barker and Knight define political talk radio as: “call-in shows that emphasize discussion of politicians, elections and public policy issues.” (2000, p.151). As Hutchby (2001) argues, radio phone-ins are important instances for the contemporary public sphere. Unlike the American scene, and much like the UK one (Hutchby, 1996), the Israeli programs are aired on the public radio station and the callers are at the center of the show, not the hosts. This influences their structure as the hosts are there to enable a citizen to establish his or her position to the best of their ability. Callers to political phone-ins in Israel know they need to talk about public concerns or political issues when they call such a program. Indeed the great majority of them raise political problems (Dori-Hacohen, 2009), such as the relations between Israelis and Palestinians or the increasing violent crime rates in Israel. Most of them use the form of an argument (Hacohen, 2007), and they propose a solution to the social problem they present.[9] Yet, when callers do not succeed in presenting a concern of public interest, hosts may try to shift the frame of the interaction to a less serious, more playful[10] one in order to keep the audience entertained and engaged.

Thus, the usual interactional frame of the phone-in is a serious interaction between two people who inhabit one of two roles, a host and a caller (Fitzgerald & Housley, 2002). The caller is ostensibly calling about a problematic issue concerning public life and it is further preferred that the caller offers a potential solution to the problem as part of the civic discourse of the public sphere. We can distinguish between this interactional frame, which includes a host and a caller, and the discursive framing, or content, that makes a particular caller’s concern a valid and interesting one that is worthy of public debated (not to mention airtime on the radio).

Being successful within this interactional frame involves successful discursive framing and conveys a certain amount of prestige on the caller who has put forward a concern that is valid. Following Goffman’s person-role formula, we might say that the successful caller has proved themselves to be a good citizen. On the other hand, failure within this interactional frame suggests the opposite and, depending on the nature of the discursive framing of the dismissal, can affect other aspects of the caller’s self. The case considered here is an instance of this troubling of the caller’s self.

The conversation can be read in its entirety in Appendix A. Our argument here is that the caller tries to build a political interaction: he presents a corrupt behavior of a government branch, the Sports Gambling Committee (SGC hence), and offers an action to protest this behavior. His discursive framing of these issues suggests that they are of serious public concern and hence worthy of radio time. The host, on the other hand, frames the caller’s discourse as not an important public concern – a move that is also a keying of the interactional frame as a non-serious call. The combination of challenging the discursive and interactional frames leads the caller to insert a topic, which can best be explained by an understanding of the frame-work challenges.

**Being a good citizen: The caller's discursive framing**
The call starts with the host's request for the caller's identification. The caller states his name and city of residence (Appendix A, lines 1-7, hence just lines numbers from Appendix A). In these moves he establishes his fit to the interactional frame of the phone-in. In his next turn, the caller continues this interactional frame by stating his topic: “and I talk about the arbitrary conduct of the Sports Gambling Committee” (ve::: ani medaber al shirut lev shel hatot::o lakaduregel.[11] (lines 8-9) The fact that the SGC is a government agency is the first explanation for the caller's view that this is a matter of public concern. Furthermore, this government branch acts, as the caller aims to illustrate, in an arbitrary manner that comes close to being corrupt.[12] Thus, from the caller’s perspective, the caller takes part in the interactional frame of a radio phone-in, in which a caller and a host discuss a public concern.

Then, the caller elaborates as he goes on to say that the corruption of the SGC is not new and has gone on for years (lines 10-11). This makes his grievance systematic and long lasting. The host then intervenes, and the caller rejects this intervention by stating he is talking about "the problem" (habe’aya. (line 15)). He describes the problem using a hypothetical state of affairs that could have happened this week (lines 20-25) and explains that the SGC decides to reduce the prize amounts arbitrarily (lines 30-32). The caller's grievance is about this unexplained arbitrary reduction of the prizes.

The caller uses a short story (lines 32-42) about the Basketball Lottery (another SGC game), and its conduct during the previous season. The crux of the complaint (lines 37-41) is present in the form of constructed dialogue (Tannen, 1988), which resembles the grievance described in the previous hypothetical section (compare lines 31-32 to lines 37-41). Moreover, at the height of his argument the caller says: "They do whatever they want with their public fund" (hem osim ma shehem rocim betox hakupa hacibor shelahem. (lines 42-43), the caller creates an oxymoron, ("their" versus "public") which emphasizes his critique – those are public funds yet the SGC oversees these funds as if they are private funds belonging to the SGC. This complaint builds a discursive frame that this is a political problem.

The caller, following a host’s question, concedes that the SGC might be in the right regarding the code (lines 72-74), and then changes his grievance from the arbitrary conduct of the SGC to the non-transparent and hypocritical conduct of the SGC (lines 77-89), keeping the political significance intact.

Following another intervention by the host, in which the caller raises his voice to continue having the floor, the caller suggests a protest against the SGC. He starts presenting this protest saying,"as a sign e small tribute to the Sport Betting Board" (le’ot e trum::a ktan::a la:toto kaduregel (lines 102-3)), presenting this protest ironically both calling it a contribution to the SGC, and by minimizing it calling it small. Then he describes the collective action he and his friends are taking against the SGC (lines103-104), before calling it what it is – a protest: “And this is as a protest sign” (veze ke’ot[13] mexa’a. (lines 110-1)). The caller then moves to reject a possible counter-argument from the host to explain he wants to protest. Thus he calls for action to recruit supporters for his social cause. Both the call for action and the recruit elements in it frame the conversation as public and political.

The caller closes the interaction by complying with both the interactional frame and his discursive frame. Keeping in mind the interactional frame, he wishes the audience all the best (lines 132-133). Then he stresses the discursive frame of his political talk by saying: “And maybe this Board will take it into account” (veshe’ulay hatoto etze- ikku et ze letshumet libam ((lines 135-136)). This appeal demonstrates that the caller thinks that there is a possibility the SGC or one of its representatives is listening to the program and shows he does not give up on his framing of the interaction as a serious public concern that deserves radio air time.

To summarize the caller's discursive framing in the conversation, from its beginning to its end the caller is talking about politics. He builds a political discursive frame by criticizing the SGC. As the SGC deceives the players in these games, and cons them out of their money, the caller organizes a public action to change this unruly conduct that seriously harms the Israeli polity.[14] This discursive frame is part of the caller's attempt to convincingly participate in the interactional frame of the phone-in.

The host's framing work
The turn that was analyzed above as the caller's initial framing (lines 8-9), presented the SGC as the topic of a political topic. Yet, the host responds to this turn with a conjecture, guessing the caller complains about: “Don’t {they} let you win?” (lo notenet lexalizkot? (line 12)). This guess illustrates the host's position and action regarding the interactional frame of this interaction. As he sees the topic of gambling, the host dismisses the caller's discursive framing and in doing so he implicitly proposes a keying of the interaction as non-serious. For him, gambling and sports gambling is not an important topic. Therefore, he tries to create an entertaining interaction, by keying the interaction into a non-serious one. The host works on the interactional frame by debasing the topic, and implicitly the caller.

This guess also works in the discursive framing. The host presents an alternative framing of the caller's concern, implying that the caller's real concern is with having lost money gambling. The host's position in the conjecture is that this call is not political but personal, since it is about winning money; is not meaningful but petty – complaining about not winning a gamble; is not a collective concern but an individual one, as winning a gamble is; is not regarding any systemic problem, but sporadic one; and is about self-interest and not the public good. Though he keeps the interactional role of the host, the host implicitly challenges the caller's status as a good citizen.

The host continues to periodically challenge the framing throughout the interaction. Though at first, the host accepts the caller discursive frame, and asks him questions regarding the topic and the SGC behavior, he learns the caller does not know the topic well enough (lines 47-76). After understanding the caller's lack of knowledge, the host makes a suggestion and then continues with an utterance that comes very close to being an insult: “unless you are an obsessive gambler” (im ata mehamer kfiyat. (line 96). Implicitly, the host argues that only an obsessive gambler can see the SGC and its conduct as a topic that warrants a public interest.

After the caller's second elaboration of the call for action (lines 110-117), the host returns to operate on the interactional frame as well as on the discursive frame. The host again tries keying the interaction as non-serious. First he uses laughter to create a non-serious atmosphere. The laughter also releases the host from responding to the caller's topic and call for action, thus dismisses the importance of the topic (line 118). Then the host request or asks the caller: “Tell me, Gideon, have you ever won anything?” (tagid li gidon, ata zaxita[15] pa'am bemashehu? (line 118)) The host returns to discussing "winnings" as he did in his conjecturing and invokes the non-serious keying of the interaction, with which he started the interaction. In this response the host ignores the caller's entire complaint. Moreover, it illustrates that from the host's perspective the caller was not successful in framing his discourse as worthy of public debate. Thus, in this turn, a pivotal turn in the interaction, the host keys the interactional frame as a non-serious one while dismissing the caller's discursive frame.

The consequence of the frame challenges

The participants use different discursive and interactional frames. Although they share the fundamental interactional frame of a phone-in, the host and caller each make a bid for a different keying of the interaction. The host tries to create a non-serious and playful interaction thereby trying to create an entertaining phone-in, whereas the caller tries to establish a serious phone-in. They also do not share the discursive frame. The caller tries to establish an important phone-in frame by arguing that the corrupt behavior of a governmental branch, the SGC, may be defrauding the public. The host, who also enjoys interactional power (Hutchby, 1999), challenges this frame and builds another frame. The host's framing functions simultaneously as a bid for a discursive framing in which the caller’s concerns are not viewed as worthy of being taken seriously and as a bid for an interactional framing of the radio call-in as not important. The different discursive framing each participant aspires to is summarize in Table 1 below.
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caller</th>
<th>Host</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful</td>
<td>Petty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laws/rules</td>
<td>Personal Experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>Particular</td>
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<tr>
<td>Systematic</td>
<td>Sporadic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collective good</td>
<td>Self-interest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political matter</td>
<td>Personal matter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valid complaint</td>
<td>Trivial complaint</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

As we will next see, this difference in discursive framing becomes particularly significant to the caller.

One thing that is striking about the difference in the discursive framings is that this difference turns on what scholars have noted as an overlay of a masculine/feminine distinction onto the public/private distinction, respectively (Elshtain, 1981; Fraser, 1985; Gilligan, 1982). Elshtain (1981), for example, notes that the public sphere has long been associated with men and masculinity while the private sphere is commonly associated with women and femininity.

Thus, with this in mind, it would appear that the host’s framing of the discourse is not simply a challenge to the caller as a good citizen but also is a challenge to his claims on masculinity. Although such a reading can be problematic if simply assumed by the analysts, in this case the caller’s response suggests that this may well have been salient for him.

Upon the dismissal of his call for action (line 117-118), after the host laughs at it (him) and reasserts winnings as the only topic to discuss about sports gambling, the caller accepts the host’s non-serious interactional frame by answering about his winnings – “pennies” (eh begrushim, (line 120)).

At this particular point in the interaction, the caller accepts the host’s interactional frame of a non-serious frame by speaking freely and in a playful manner about the reasons for participating in the gambling games. In his response, the caller takes up this joking and non-serious tone, quoting his father for the reason he gambles (lines 121-122). In doing so, the caller attempts to build on patriarchy, a keystone of masculinity (cf. Trujillo, 1991).

In addition to quoting his father, the caller, seriously or non-seriously, compares sports betting to the institution of marriage, in which a man “gambles” when he marries a woman. The caller says, “Everybody buys hope. When you buy a wife at the wedding, do you know how it will end? It just costs more. Believe me.” (kulam konim tikvot. kshe’ata kone isha mitaxat laxupa, ata yode’a ma iyiye basof? ze ole RAK YOTER YAKAR. ta’amin li. (lines 125-127)). In this response, the caller (ab)uses Hebrew, in which the words husband and owner are the same. Here again we see the caller seeking to build a discursive framing of his own experience (“Believe me,”) in highly manly terms that characterize him not just masculine but as a powerful agent in a relationship, i.e., it is he, the caller, who “bought” his wife.[16]

Moreover, the caller needs to raise his voice in order to finish this performance of masculinity, as the host started bidding for the floor after the first element of this performance – after the word “end.”

In an interesting twist, the host in his response re-keys the interaction to a serious one to reject the misogynistic talk of the caller “And when a woman buys a husband much much more as we hear recently” (vekse’isha] kona ba’al al axat kama ux- vexama kfi she’enanxnu shom’im la’a’xrone. (lines 129-130)). Thus, although the host initially offered a non-serious interactional frame, when the caller takes up this interactional framing, the host returns to a serious frame. Yet, the caller appears to either wittingly or unwittingly misunderstand the host’s point and appears to agree with him despite disagreeing: “Yes. So a Woman is more expensive” (ken. az isha ze yoter yakar (line 131)).
The “masculine” shift in the discursive frame, which goes hand in hand with the caller's presumably accepting the non-serious interactional frame, demonstrates the importance of interrelations between the discursive frame and the interactional frame in the constitution of the selves of interactional participants. The host’s queries about the caller’s winnings operate simultaneously as a challenge to the discursive framing and as a keying of the interactional frame as non-serious. In addition to casting the caller as someone who is inadequate to the role of a caller on this radio call-in, a distinctively public sphere activity, the caller appears to have also experienced this dis(missal) as an affront to his masculinity. The host’s challenge to this discursive framing thus undermines the caller's self as a man who is a competent participant in the phone-in interactional frame. The caller's response provides strong evidence that he was concerned that his masculinity was being called into question. Thus, the caller uses the non-serious interactional frame to insert a discursive frame which re-establishes his masculinity.

At the end of the call, the caller returns to his first discursive frame, of the political talk, which leaves the audience the possibility of accepting his frame in spite of the host's efforts to undermine it in his non-serious interactional frame.[17]

Take II: The unmaking of a student

In the next interaction we discuss the framing between a tutor and a student. The peculiar act that we seek to understand comes in the middle of the tutoring session (approximately 17 minutes in). Just as the tutor is reaching the climax of his mini-lecture about the beginning of World War II, namely, the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the student takes out a notebook with mathematics problems on it and begins working on them. This unusual behavior by the student, in which she blatantly disregards basic interactional norms of attention giving, constitutes the central problematic that we investigate in the following analysis. In our analysis, we treat three instances of framing troubles, the first discursive, the second interactional and the third a discursive one which coincides with the interactional one. In this analysis, and as noted at the outset, we tack back and forth between selves and framings in order to demonstrate how selves and framings mutually constitute one another in interactional practice. Finally, we suggest how these framings of selves might play a role in the student's withdrawal of attention we just described.

Background on the session

This tutoring session was part of a Saturday morning school supplementary program for low-income students. The student is an African-American high school junior who attends an especially low performing school in major mid-western city in the United States. The tutor, a second generation Mexican-American, is a fourth-year History major at an elite private university. Prior to this meeting, they have had two tutoring sessions together. At the first, they worked on the student’s History homework and things appeared to go fairly well. At the second, they worked on Spanish and it appeared to be a much more tense interaction, very similar in fact, to how this one turned out.

Our analysis focuses on a strip of talk that runs from three minutes and ten seconds (3:10) into the tutoring session to eight minutes and thirty seconds (8:30) into the tutoring session. During this time the tutor and the student disagree about why the Army does not recruit people who have not graduated from high school, including drop-outs and people who did not finish high school but who passed the high school equivalency test or GED exam (General Educational Development exam).

Discursive framing

At the beginning of the tutoring session there was some confusion when they were deciding what material to cover in this session – there was no pre-determined topic for the tutoring session. The tutor asked what she did last in History, and after insisting that she hadn’t been doing history lately, the student says that she has been doing “the pros and cons of the state” (1:32). Although she appears to be referring to an argument about the pros and cons of any governmental body (where “the state” refers to any governmental body), the tutor appears to think that she is speaking about a particular state within the United States, such as “Illinois.”
This confusion continues for a bit until the student mentions pros and cons of war, and more specifically the pros and cons of drafting citizens for war. Although the tutor wrongly assumes that the student is starting a new topic, at this point they are at least able to establish enough common ground (Clark, 1996) with regard to what a pros and cons argument would look like in order to know “how to go on” with the conversation (Wittgenstein, 2001/[1953], nos. 151-155). As a matter of discursive framing, this introduction is important because even though the student does not to appear particularly excited about discussing History, the tutor nonetheless proceeds with it as the topic.[18]

Although the student appeared reticent to discuss History, in what follows, the student takes up a position with regard to the pros and cons of the war (3:14 - 3:55, Appendix B lines 5-33, hence just line numbers in Appendix B). In taking up a position on the issue, the student says that she is opposed to the war because “they take people that’s just now graduatin’ out a’ high school / and puttin’ them / takin’ them straight from high school / and puttin’ them in the war” (lines 8-17). As the conversation proceeds and the tutor queries her about why the Army does not recruit non-high school graduates. In her response, the student proceeds to flesh out her discursive framing of why the Army does not want high school drop outs. She describes a number of characteristics of the people who drop out of high school. These include the following:

- a lack of motivation (“the bad people that’s / ain’t doin’ nothing with they lives,”(lines 24-25));
- a lack of knowledge/education (“ain’t learned that much.” (line 98), “they don’t know what they doin’ / they ain’t get no education I don’t think.”(lines 112-114));
- a bad background (“because they got a bad background” (line137)); and
- a tendency to engage in illicit activity (“because / they choose to drop out of school and be on the corner selling drugs.”(lines 145-147), and “they probably don’t even go to they sites / they probably just be sellin’ drugs down there” (lines 154-156)).

Her responses define the boundary line between the good (recruitable) and the bad (non-recruitable). This boundary distinguishes between college-aspiring people who are in high school and are doing something with their lives and the people who drop out of school and lack motivation, knowledge, competence, and ethics.

Yet, in the tutor’s response, he challenges the student’s way of marking the boundary between the good (recruitable) and bad (non-recruitable). In contrast to the student’s categorization scheme, the tutor draws the boundary differently. At the most basic level of argumentation, the tutor rejects the student’s argument. He does this with a long sequence of no less than 10 instances of “yes, but” sequences in which he appears to affirm her response but then indicates that it is inadequate (Pomerantz, 1994). Following this sequence of repeated rejections in the form of “yes, but,” the tutor identifies what he sees as “the real problem” (line 164). The tutor says that high school drop outs are undesirable to the Army is because these people are unable to follow the directions of their superiors. For the tutor, the critical boundary that defines who the Army finds desirable and who they find undesirable is drawn between those who follow rules and those who do not follow rules. The tutor suggests that the latter persons have the following characteristics (lines 184-214):

- They won’t “march twenty miles” (lines 180-181) when told to do so;
- they are “lazy” (line 189);
- they will just do “whatever” (line 191);
- they won’t “dress nicely” (195); won’t “carry [their] gun” (line 198);
- they won’t “shoot at people” (line 201) when ordered to do so; and
- they are generally “bad for discipline” (line 205).[19]

Thus, the tutor has drawn the boundaries of recruitable (good) and non-recruitable (bad) persons in terms of people’s ability to follow the rules. The recruitable and good people are the ones who can follow the rules and do what they are told. The non-recruitable and bad people are those who are lazy and unable (or unwilling) to follow the rules.
These two categorization schemes break up the moral and social world in significantly different ways. The difference between these two ways of categorizing persons becomes particularly important when one considers the student herself in light of these categorizations. On the one hand, if we were to categorize the student using her categorization scheme, the student would fit into the category of good people that are trying to do something with their lives and who are taken by the military when they graduate from high school.[20] Using the student’s categorization scheme, one would presume that the student, who is a college-aspiring high school student[21] who is a relatively regularly attending participant in this Saturday school supplemental program would thus be defined as being in the territory of the recruitable and good person.

On the other hand, if we consider the student’s position in light of the tutor’s categorization scheme, the student appears to be locatable on the non-recruitable and bad side of this boundary. The principle that organizes good and bad persons in the tutor’s categorization scheme is whether or not they are able to follow the rules laid down by authority figures. Considering that one week prior to this tutoring session the tutor and the student had a troubled tutoring session in which the student would not follow the tutor’s directions, and based on her behavior thus far in this interaction, the student would be located on the side of the disorderly, non-direction following, persons who do are not willing or able to follow the rules laid down by authority figures, and who according to the tutor’s categorization scheme, is a non-recruitable and bad person.

Thus in the act of arguing over the discursive framing of a simple “fact,” they are simultaneously creating a morally evaluative framework against which the student can or cannot be characterized as recruitable, militarily desirable, and, quite possibly, “good.” Importantly, this is a conversation that is ostensibly about Army recruitment in an abstract sense, and none of these consequences for the student’s self-hood are made explicit in the conversation. Nonetheless, the tutor’s discursive construction of a framework that bounds the category of “desirable Army recruit” leads to the implicit framing of the student herself as an undesirable and non-recruitable person.

As we see next, this framing of the student is reinforced by the troubles in interactional framing which similarly frame the student as a problematic participant in the tutoring interaction.

**Interactional framing**

The interactional frame that appears to be presupposable in this case is that of a teaching interaction. Yet, as any student who has been in lectures and tutorials and discussions, there is considerable variation within this broadly defined interactional frame. We propose that there are three different keyings of the interactional frame of the teaching interaction that are in play in this particular tutoring session. These framings are: “pros and cons debate,” “guess what I’m thinking/IRE,” and “mini-lecture.”

The interactional frame of the pros and cons debate, described in part above, involves both the teacher and the student taking a position on some issue. In this frame, the student commits herself to the role of arguing her position. Evidence of her commitment to her utterance can be seen in the student’s use of a modal phrase “I think that…” (line 20),[22] which can be opposed to the use of “I think” as a hedge, e.g., later when the tutor asks the student who can declare war, the student replies “the president, I think”). Importantly, she does not simply give an example of a pros and cons argument, she inhabits the role of someone who is arguing a position (line 5 and lines 35-46). This commitment to her role is further suggested by the fact that these are her longest turns at talk in this entire tutoring session.

Yet in the tutor’s turns which follow, the tutor is unclear whether or not he is taking a role in the pros and cons frame, but soon makes clear that he has something different in mind., He redirects the talk by asking a question about the Army today (lines 38-41). As noted above, when the student appears to have not provided the right answer to the tutor’s question, the tutor continually repeats his question using a structure of “yes, but” (Pomerantz, 1984). For example, in response to the student’s comment that they got a bad background, the tutor says ‘well- / yeah / they do / but / why is that background bad,” lines 139-144). In doing so, he not only rejects her argument as already noted, he also rejects the pros and cons frame that the student had proposed and instead instantiates a new “guess what I’m thinking” frame – an
interactional form that closely resembles what Mehan (1979) refers to as an Initiation-Reply-Evaluation (IRE) sequence. The tutor engages in no less than ten variants of the utterance “yes, but.” (line 60; lines: 67-71; 92-93; 101-106; 115-116; 124-126; 134; 140-142; 149-151; 159-164) Here the “yes” is an affirmation, but the “but” along with a repetition of the question functions to evaluate the answer as wrong, that is, not the right answer, according to the tutor.

That the previous discourse was evidence of this type of framing becomes patently obvious in the tutor’s final “yes, but” (lines 159-163) when he follows with “the real problem is” (line 164) and then gives “the real” answer to the question, namely that non-high school graduates will not follow directions (discussed earlier). By identifying “the real problem,” the tutor makes it clear that the preceding string of discourse was not a debate but rather was a search for the “right” answer (according to the tutor), thus retroactively casting the previous discourse as an instance of a “guess what I’m thinking” interactional frame.[23]

Following the tutor’s identification of what he sees as “the real problem,” the tutor launches into a mini-lecture (lines 171-235) about the draft during World War I in which he uses lots of arcane language and phrases like: “sortie,” “garrison,” “dough boys,” “Wilson,” “the fourteen points,” and “sued for peace,” which high-schoolers like the student might not recognize. The tutor eventually transitions to World War II and the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, and it is at this point that the student takes out her math notebook, thus launching her own (successful) sneak attack on the tutor’s definition of the frame.

**Interational consequences**

In addition to functioning as a dismissal of the student from the ranks of persons worthy of being recruited by the Army, the tutor’s conversational turns also enacts a dismissal of the student’s argument by not treating it as an argument at all. The tutor does not engage with the student’s contributions as an argument. Rather, after a token acknowledgment of what she said, the tutor gives her the “right” answer and then proceeds to explain more, thus firmly establishing his role as someone who has knowledge and thus authority to determine right and wrong answers while simultaneously locating the student as a passive recipient of knowledge (and a bad one at that!). But importantly, at this point the student gives up on her argument and does not pursue it further, thus suggesting a tacit approval of this framing.

Yet this approval is temporary and incomplete because it is during the tutor’s mini-lecture about the WWI draft that the student first puts her head down on her arm thus demonstrating a waning interest in the interaction. Shortly following this, the student almost completely withdraws her attention from the interaction by working on her math homework. Yet she does so in a way that asserts her own self as a diligent and hard-working student. Rather than taking a nap, texting, or even asking to go on an extended trip to the bathroom, she chooses to take out her math homework and work on it.[24] Here we are arguing that this move was influenced, in part, by how the student’s self was being positioned by the interactional and discursive frames as a passive or possibly as a failed participant in the teaching interaction. The student’s move can be seen as a way of asserting herself as one who is a valid, even active, member in what we might call “the community of the educated,” or what she has termed (lines 5-8) “the good people / people that’s just now graduating / out a high school.”

Importantly, within the tutor’s discursive framing of things, the student’s move to take out her math homework has demonstrated that she is unable to follow directions and is thus a bad and non-recruitable person.[25] From the perspective of her discursive framing, her move to open her math notebook demonstrates that she is diligent and hard working and is thus a good candidate to be recruited by the Army.[26]

**Discussion: Framing power and agency in interactional self-making**

**Parallel patterns in both interactions**
Both interactions considered in this paper, although half a world away from each other, have some striking similarities when looked at from the perspective of the overall structure of the interaction. First, both interactions have presumably unequal power relations with the host and the tutor being presumed to be more powerful. The host in the phone-in appears to enjoy a more powerful social position (Hutchby, 1999), as he manages the radio phone-in interaction and program, and as he is a known media persona. Similarly, the tutor has more knowledge and more social capital than the student. Second, in each situation, the ostensibly weaker social actor, the caller and the student, finds that their preferred interactional and discursive framing is challenged by the ostensibly more powerful actor, and that the more powerful actor’s framing casts their self in a negative light. Third, in both interactions, the less powerful person attempts to challenge the framing being forwarded by the more powerful person. It is at this point that the interactions diverge. Whereas the host manages to thwart the caller’s attempts at reframing, the tutor accepts the shift in discursive framing (to mathematics) initiated by the student.

As a way of understanding the structural similarities, as well as the differences, between these two interactions, we consider three aspects of discourse as social action. First, a motivation is needed to propel an agent into action; for this we extend the insights of face-work theory with the notion of discursive and interactional frame. Second, a justification or account is needed for a social action to be seen as “appropriate,” the determination of which will tell us what the consequences are for the interaction and beyond. Third, we consider the consequences of moments in this interaction for the interaction themselves, for the participants, and for us as viewers/readers of these interactions.

**Discourse and motivation: Doing things in interaction**

Starting first with the motivation to action, we present an account that accords well with self psychology (e.g., Kohut, 1987) as well as face-work theory (Arundale, 2006; Goffman, 1967). Following this work we argue that interactional participants are motivated by a desire to project a valued and valuable self, and that face is the social reality of one’s self. Yet, as we can see in both examples, our approach to frame extends face-work theory in at least three ways.

First, because the constitution of self in interactional practice depends on the constitution of discursive and interactional frames, so too does face-work depend upon these frames. Frames function as the ground upon which the figure of self can be built and without which no self can be formed. As described in detail above, the talk of participants is not just about the denotational content of the talk. Rather, the talk of participants, whether ostensibly about governmental corruption or Army recruitment, can also function to constitute the discursive and interactional frames which, in turn, constitute participants’ selves. As participants explicitly negotiate the discursive and interactional frames constituted by their talk, they are also implicitly negotiating the frame which is the ground upon which the figure of a self can be built. Thus face-work, as the desire to project a self that is recognized as valuable, critically depends upon frame-work.

The distinction between discursive and interactional framing provides the basis for a second point. As we turn to the interactions, it is not simply the case that the caller has been effeminized by his location within a discourse of serious and masculine/public sphere concerns. He has simultaneously been effeminized by his location within the interaction and in which his turns at talk are treated as subordinate by the host. Similarly, it is not just that the student has been located by the tutor’s discourse as being non-recruitable, but that she simultaneously has been located as unworthy to participate in the “this here” educational interaction by the tutor’s moves to frame the interaction in such a way that she can no longer participate.

These moments suggest an important point about the poetics of framing. In both interactions the interactional moves that apparently motivated participants to take the peculiar actions that they did (to speak of “buying a wife” or to take out a math notebook) both involved framing alignments. Thus it appears that when the implied figure of self in the discursive and interactional planes are aligned, these moments become the most interactionally consequential moves.[27] These moves could be said to align meanings and doings such that the meanings are not simply understood but are experienced by the interactional participants as something that has been done to them in the interaction itself. Their self has
been cast in a negative light in both instances, and it further appears that the precise nature of this casting matters for the consequences it will have for the interaction.

Second, as further evidence of the pragmatic force of the particular moments of poetic alignment that were just described, in both interactions the reaction by the individual being “framed” directly addresses the dimension upon with their selves are being framed negatively. When the caller is framed as non-masculine in both discursive and interactional frames, he responds by attempting to establish the interaction as a shared “masculine” space by referring to the gamble of “buying a wife.” Similarly, when the student is framed as a non-recruitable, non-serious student in discursive and interactional frames, she responds not only by checking out of the interaction but by getting to work on her mathematics homework. These responses suggest that these moments of poetic alignment of discursive and interactional framings provide actors with a strong motivation to try to change things in precisely the domain in which their self has been cast in a negative light.

In addition to pointing to the poetics of framing, a theory of framing also suggests a third way in which framing theory can augment face-work theory, as well as providing an important solution to the pragmatic problem that interactional participants are commonly faced with, namely, face conflict. As Goffman noted in his original formulation of face-work (Goffman, 1959), selves are the sacred object of the interaction ritual. As such, interactional participants are enjoined to treat the selves of participants with proper respect. The pragmatic problem presented to participants in interaction involves the occasional need to profane the self of another in order to maintain a positive face oneself.

From the perspective of the analyst of talk, we need to account for the fact that selves are so often profaned in interactions that we observe. Whether due to constraints of the setting or to conflicting face needs, there are often times when one of the participants’ selves will be denigrated—an act that reflects back on the denigrator as much as the denigrated (Goffman, 1967, p. 82). The ability to manipulate the discursive and interactional frames provides an important means by which negative face-work can be undertaken without appearing to have broken the norms of polite talk. Thus, in the Israeli phone-in, the host manages to manufacture a context in which it appears as if the host is simply doing his job as a good host thus giving the appearance that it is the caller who is denigrating his own self. Similarly, the tutor has, however unwittingly, managed to accomplish precisely the same act of making it appear as if the student has denigrated herself.

**Discourse and justification: Doing things right in interaction**

Understanding the consequences of each of these moments involves turning to questions of justification. Turning now from the question of motivation to the question of justification, as noted at the outset, in addition to the similarities in the structure of these two interactions, there is also at least one important difference—in each of their responses, the caller and the student react differently to the denigration of their self. The student fights back and takes bolder action than the caller. She does not accept the tutor’s interactional frame and stops engaging in the interaction, thus leaving the tutor’s mini-lecture audience-less. By effectively “checking out” of the interaction while remaining engaged within a larger framing of the event as an event of “education,” the student demonstrates that although she is in a less powerful position, the tutor does not have unilateral control over the frame. He needs her compliance if he is going to be successful in his role as teacher. The caller, on the other hand, does not succeed in taking control over the framing. Although the host initially entertains the possibility of the caller’s discursive and interactional framing of his concern as important and serious, the host challenges his discursive framing and repeatedly makes a bid to key the frame as non-serious. In describing his winnings, the caller seeks to construct an interactional frame of masculine conversation that will constitute him as having a masculine self. This abrupt change in the discursive framing from gambling to “buying a wife” which had little relevance to the prior elements of his talk demonstrates that the caller has some minimal ability to raise novel concerns. Yet, this move also fails, when the host returns to a more serious keying of the interactional frame. Thus, though the caller tries to adapt to the host’s interactional frame while creating his own discursive framing of masculinity, he fails in this latter attempt. We propose that this difference in outcomes in the two interactions is the result of a difference in the framing proficiencies of the two ostensibly more powerful actors, and that this framing proficiency is critical for their ability to provide a
justification for their power in a way that will allow them to maintain their position of power vis-à-vis the less powerful actor.

By framing proficiency, we refer to an individual’s skill and competence in manipulating the discursive and interactional framing of the encounter in such a way as to be able to engage in the desired face-work without appearing to have intentionally done so. In the call-in, the host was more proficient at managing the framing of the interaction. The host, a professional entertainer who is familiar with performing interactions on stage, does not insist on his alternative framing of the interaction. Rather, he repeatedly invites the caller into this alternative framing. Along the way he even temporarily accepts the caller’s more serious interactional frame only to discursively frame the caller’s concern as one without foundation. These moves create the appearance that the host has been fair and reasonable even if he does, at times, appear insistent. In other words, he is just doing his job as a radio host. The host’s framing proficiency thus involves his sensitivity to the expectations of a frame and its interactional norms[28] along with discursive skills of argumentation.

In the tutoring case, the tutor appears not to be quite as proficient with the interactional framing, thus resulting in what appears to be an undesirable result. In his talk, the tutor appears to be at least attempting to manage the interactional frame in an accommodating way. For example, he starts his evaluations of the student's contributions in the IRE sequence with a “yes, but” to mitigate his negative evaluation of her contribution. However, in a deeper sense, the tutor is not able to manage the interactional frame in a way that keeps the student involved in the interaction. The student's engagement is increasingly waning as the tutor moves away from the pros and cons debate frame and to the tutor’s own framing of the interaction as a “guess what I’m thinking” frame, and eventually to a mini-lecture frame, at which point the student “checks out” of the interaction.

In the call-in the host appeared to manage his authority without appearing to abuse that authority. By doing so, the host does not appear to have acted in a rude or overly domineering way and thus the host managed to justify his authority in the interaction without overstepping the bounds of that authority. As a result, when the caller attempts to change interactional and discursive framing, the host is able to use his (moral) authority to reject the caller’s attempts and, in a sense, put him in his place.

In contrast, in the tutoring session, the tutor appears to abuse his authority and appears rude and domineering. This opens space for the student to resist the apparently unjust use of power by the tutor.

This type of frame-work takes on a twice moral dimension for each participant, once as a person who can be framed by the discourse in which one is engaged, and once as a person who can be framed by the interaction in which one is engaged. In the discursive framings of self, selves are being defined as the participants argue about some putative fact or happening in the world. With regard to the second moral dimension of interactional framing, as noted above, proficiency demands a sensitivity to the way in which one’s actions in interaction are in accord with interactional norms of what constitutes appropriate interactional moves (Goffman, 1967; Hymes, 2001). Failure to follow these norms can create a moment where an individual will be viewed as “rude” or “mean” or otherwise as interactionally immoral. When a speaker engages in such interactional transgressions, the transgression is sure to have an effect on the willingness of others to consider the speaker’s authority to be justified or not. The policing of interactional immorality is likely to be particularly strong in the radio call-in, but it, no doubt, also plays a role in the student’s calculations about whether or not to exit the interaction – something that itself could be considered an interactional transgression if it were not justified. One could argue that the student was justified to exit the interaction because she had been treated poorly, arguably even disrespectfully.

Discourse and its consequences: Doing things for what?

When considering the consequences of interaction, we must ask “consequences for whom?” and “consequences for what?” Here we consider this question across three levels – the interaction itself, the participants themselves, and beyond.
We have already pointed to some of the consequences that the discursive and interactional framings of the conversation apparently had upon the interaction itself. We noted the pragmatic power of poetic alignments of framing selves and how these appear to motivate the subsequent actions taken by the participants.

With regard to the consequences for the participants themselves, each of the interactions analyzed above has a different type of consequentiality. Initially it would seem that the radio call-in is relatively inconsequential because it merely involves the pride and shame of the host and caller, respectively. Yet, because the radio call-in involves a listening audience in addition to the host and caller, there is a heightened consequentiality of the sense of pride and shame that each feels. For the caller, the consequences for this may be as simple as having a bad opinion of the host. For the host, the pride at having managed an “entertaining" interaction will be likely to lead listeners to be more likely to stay tuned it. It should also be noted that there is a political dimension to this in as much as the host’s rejection of the caller’s comment about “buying a wife" indicates a “progressive” or “liberal” political stance.[29] In doing this, the host marks out the public space of this radio call-in as having a particular “progressive” or “liberal” political character. In this sense, for a more politically conservative audience, the host’s rejection of the caller’s comment may appear to be evidence of the host showing his true character as a liberal, and thus may actually be reason to tune out. This too serves an important role of creating a listenership or a “we” of different political parties.

In the case of the tutoring session, the consequences for the participants have an equal sense of having unequal consequences. For the tutor, the experience of having his student “check out” at the height of his mini-lecture about WWII is, no doubt, discomforting for the tutor. Yet, he is able to recover his sense of self by casting the student in a discourse of deficit, in particular a deficit of attention. At later interview, the tutor indicated that he had found out that the student had a learning disability that had something to do with an attention deficit. From this perspective, the student’s act of checking out appears to be inevitable due to her (perhaps biological) deficit of attention. Thus, the tutor is able to save not just his own face, but also the student’s face by presenting an explanation that makes this appear not so much to be the student’s conscious and intentional fault, but that it was a, perhaps biological, inevitability.

But as communication social construction scholars, there is another level at which we should consider the consequences of this communication. And here we return to the here and now of this interaction in which we are now engaged. If the social constructions of events of communication are indeed consequential, then, “this here” communication (i.e., the one that we are in right now!) should have consequences as well. Here we (the authors) can only pose questions. How does this paper lead us to consider the possibilities of interaction? With the Israeli call-in example, how does this paper help us to understand the role of radio programs to constitute the “we” of a listening public, and, perhaps, the “we” of political parties? With regard to the tutoring session, how does this presentation of the event lead us to not only see this student in a new light, but how does it help us to find new ways to understand and relate to other individuals who might appear to be like this student? These are questions that only you can answer.

Conclusions: Power and agency in interaction

In this paper we have outlined a communication social construction perspective that began with the ontological question of constitution, both of selves and of frames. In the two examples presented, we analyzed the role that the various activities of conversation played in the constitution of selves and frames. We further pointed to the ways in which social construction has real consequences when considered from the perspectives of interactional participants (and we remind you here that you are currently implicated as interactional participants along with our host, caller, tutor, and student). We have also seen how these consequences flow from the motivations and justifications for the moves that participants take in interaction as they go about engaging in conversation.

In concluding, we gesture towards an understanding of power and agency that is bound up in a particular type of practical knowledge – namely, an implicit and felt knowledge of how to do interactions right. Doing interaction right means doing it in such a way so as to come off as having the proper “authority” to do
whatever one is doing. This kind of moral authority is needed whether one is taking control of the conversational topic (as the tutor does), helping one’s interlocutor to make a fool of themselves (as the host does), holding the floor for an extended turn (as we, the authors, are currently doing), or whatever other moves one might undertake in interaction. Abuses of power in the realm of interaction are just as intolerable as abuses of power in the realm of politics. And, as with politics, what constitutes an abuse of power hinges on the moral imaginings of the relevant audience/public.

When we consider the tutor’s attempt to recover the student’s move into a discourse of deficit (literally “attention deficit” see note 25), or the host’s attempt to recover the caller’s move as a “regressive” comment by placing it in a “progressive” discourse of gender equality; in both of these cases, determining the success of these attempts depends upon an audience’s interpretation of their attempts. Whether or not the student was “justified” in checking out in the first place is a matter that depends on how her act of checking out will be interpreted by an audience – which could be her tutor, her teachers, her counselors, or even the “us” that this paper constructs. Similarly, whether or not the caller was justified in his move to re-frame the interactional happening as a kind of “guy talk” will depend upon how this discursive move is interpreted by various audience/publics.

The effectiveness of the radio call-in host and the teacher turns on a practical knowledge of how to manage, through talk, the constitution of self, other, and contexts. But lest we too easily condemn the tutor or the caller (or, perhaps, the student or host) for their failure to manage these constitutive moments of talk and their consequences, it is worth noting the remarkable complexity of these acts of constitution via talk. Although the metaphor of snake-eating-its-tail begins to capture the paradox and complexity of human social interaction, it should be noted that things are still messier because of the numerous other processes that are being managed simultaneously. This work of constituting self, other(s), and contexts occurs in the course of other more explicitly acknowledged goals of activity, e.g., to teach or to learn, to argue or to entertain. These other goals also involve shorter timescale processes such as the maintenance of topic (Chafe, 1987), turn organization (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974), and the development of a practical intersubjectivity (Matusov, 1996; Schegloff, 1992). Thus, successful teachers and radio show hosts might better be thought of as conversational impresarios, capable of the remarkably complex task of pulling together many different resources in order to construct an event that has no certainty of success and which depends, in the end, on the frivolities of multiple shifting audiences. This is a kind of knowledge/power that can only come from the repeated engagement with others in practice.

Appendix A. Transcript of the Israeli call-in radio program:
Yesh Im Mi Ledaber (There is someone to talk to/with)

Host (H): Dalik Volinitz (an actor and media person).

Caller (C): Gideon (a citizen of a small Israeli city).

Date: 4/10/1999

Length: 3 minutes.

First a translation from Hebrew into English, numbered and simplified according to the analysis above. The original Hebrew, transliterated into Latin letters, follows the English translation with detailed transcription notations (following Hamo et al., 2004; Jefferson, 2004).

1. H: With whom am I now?
2. C: Hello.
4. C: My name is Gideon.
6. C: And I am from Nes Ziona.
8. C: And I talk about the arbitrary
9. conduct of the Sports Betting Board
10. that have done it for several years.
11. But every time a new
12. H: Don’t {they} let you win?
14. H: So?
15. C: The problem is that when there is a
16. big price,
17. H: Yes.
18. C: They {the Betting Board} say, this
19. week, there aren’t any games. Say,
20. there are 11 millions like this week.
21. So they say, {it reached} 11
22. millions? People spent money, it
23. didn’t reach 11 millions just like
24. that. It reached because people, you
25. know, gave their money week after
26. week and it adds up when no one
27. guesses {the correct results of the
28. games.}
29. H: Yes.
30. C: This week they say: "this week it
31. doesn’t worth it. Let's reduce the
32. amount to 5 million." Now, they did
33. it last year, for example in the
34. Basketball Lottery, at the end of
35. last season the amount added up to
36. 750,000 NIS, it is not a high
37. amount, but the Basketball Lottery
38. decided, it is the end {of the
39. season, therefore} we do not give
40. away all the money. "Whatever {amount}
41. stays, it stays." It avoids any
42. logic. They do whatever they want
43. with their public fund. There are no
44. rules. I don't know how their rules
45. work. They arrange their own rules.
46. Like,
47. H: Yes? Wait a second, you, did you read
48. the code of the State's Lottery? Are
49. they allowed {doing so}?
50. C: Only in
51. H: {Are they allowed} to decide
52. arbitrarily about the prize?
53. C: Very well. Very well. I'll get to
54. that. You know what? There are, how
many, a million people sending, you
know, for example,
H: Yes.
C: The one thousandth, one thousandth do
not know the rules, what the code is.
Nowhere in the world such a thing
happens. I've lived abroad for a long
while. Nowhere in the world they
reduce the prizes. There is no
such thing. Nada {no in Russian}. The
concept of "reducing" does not
exist. {If} it goes up, it goes up.
{If} it does not go up, it is your
problem, that of the {Lottery}
H: Tell me, I ask you again. Did you
check the code if they are allowed to
do so?
C: No. I did not. They might be right.
Look, I will say it like this. They
may be right from the code
perspective.
H: I yes.
C: But from the fair play {in English}
perspective: On the one hand they
say, we are in favor of fair play in
the game, at the play field, you
know, don’t hit no one, no throwing
stones, don’t throw oranges at the
referee, don’t curse. But with their
fair play {in English}, in their
little play field called the Betting
Board, they do whatever they want. No
one knows what is going on there, who
put forth the code, who raise hands
{vote}, who lowers hands {arm
wrestle}.
H: You know what Gideon, you have an
apparent, obvious, clear-cut option,
C: Not to send. {shouts} Not to send.
H: Yes. Or to s
C: Right. So now, I'm telling you,
H: Unless you are an obsessive gambler
C: Then yes, yes.
H: Then send a Lottery ticket, or go to
the Casino in Jericho.
C: Wait, wait, wait, wait. I would like
to comment on that. So now, as a
small tribute to the Sport Betting
Board, at least all the guys I know
104. We've decided to send a single column this week.
106. H: Yes.
107. C: A single column. Only. And there are people who send two thousand columns.
110. C: A single column only. And this is as a protest sign. Against the Betting Board.
112. You might say: "Gideon, you'd be better off not sending." No! I want them to have the work on this single column. Because the work on two thousand columns and on a single column is the same work.\(^1\)
118. H: {Laughing}. Tell me, Gideon, have you ever won anything?
120. C: Eh, Pennies. You know what, as my father used to say, it is the cheapest illusion there is.
125. C: Yes. Everybody buy hope. When you buy a wife at the wedding, do you know how it will end? It just costs more.
132. Believe me.
129. H: And when a woman buys a husband much more as we hear recently.
131. C: Yes. So a woman is more expensive. So may we all have a nice day. And may we all feel well.
134. H: bye bye.
135. C: And maybe the Sport Betting Board will take it into account.
137. H: Thank you Gideon.
138. C: It was my pleasure. All the best.

H: im mi ani axshav?
C: (0.7) shalom.
H: shalom adoni.
C: shmi gid'on.
H: (0.5) ken gidon.
C: ve'ani mines ciyon.
H: (0.5) ken.
C: (0.6) va::: >ani medaber al shirut lc lv shel hatot::o lakaduregcl.
H: (0.6) ken.
C: she'hu asa et ze kvar bemeshex (...) lama shanim aval kol pa'am [ mexadash
H: [ lo notenet ] lexa lizkot? ze pashut me =
C: = lo:: labri'ut. azov tazxiyot
H: fela
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C: [habeaya] hi sheyesh lemaschal pras gadol.
H: (0.3) ken.
C: vechi omeret hashavu'a, (0.8) ah en missakim ma? ca-nagid yesh axatsre milyon kmo hashavu'a.(0.3) az hi omeret eh axatsre milyon? (0.3) halo anashim bizbezu kesez ze lo higi'a lexetser milyon stam.(0.4) ze higi' aki anashim (.) ex omrim? samu mikaspam kol shav'u' a kol shav'u'a veze mictaber kshe'en menaxashim.
H: ken.
C: hashavu'a hi omeret ah hashavu'a lo kiday li. ani orid et ze lexamisha milyon.(0.9) axshav hi asta et ze beshana she'avr:a, haya lemaschal tot sal besof ha'ona hictaber shvame'ot xamishim elef shekel, (0.7) sheze sxum omnam canu'a:.(0.4) aval hatoto sal hexlit ah (.) hasof ani lo mexalek et kol hakge'ef, yisha' er ma sckyisha' er.(1.0) en leze shum higayon. hem osim ma shechem rocin betoxo: ha:kupa hacborit shelahem. (0.8) en shum xok.(0.6) ani lo yode'a ex hazukim shelahem. hem mesadrkim le'aremam taxukim, kmo- =
H: = ken? rega ata,(.) ata karata et eh takanon mif'al hapayis ha'imm mutar lahem =
C: (0.4) [ rak be- ]
H: [ lehaxlit ] be'ofen shirruti al hapras?
C: vafn, vafe, leze ani ag'i::a. (0.8) ta yode'a ma? yesh. (.) kama milyon ish (.) sholxim stam ledugma.
H: (0.6) ken.
C: (0.9) ha- promil. (0.5) promil lo yode'a me'haxok ma hatakanon beshum makom ba'olam lo osim et ze(.) ani gart'i harbe bexu'la'arec'. (0.3) beshum makom ba'olam, (0.3) lo moridim prasim. (0.5) en davor kaze. nada. (0.3) lo kayam hamushag lehorid. (0.6) ole, ole. (0.5) lo ol:ec. (0.5) ze be'aya shelaxem shel [ hazeh-
H: [ tagid li ani sho'el otxa shuv. badakta batakanon im [ mutar lahem?]
C: [ lo, lo bad]akti.
yaxol lihiyot shehem codkikim.
tere [ani] omer et ze yaxol lihiyot shehem codkikim mibxinat hatakanon.
H: [ an-]
C: aval mibxinat hafer play. (..) micad exad hem omrim anaxnu ba'ad fer play bamissak bamigursh ex omrim lo leharbie makot, lo lishlo- k- avanim, lo lizrok tapuzim al hashofet, lo lekalel. (0.4) aval eclahem bafer play, bamigrash shelahem hakatan sheshno hadoto kaduregel, (0.3) hem osim ma shehem rocin. (0.6) af exad lo yode'a ma kore shama. mi sam tataknon mi marim yadayim. mi morid yadayim.
H: (0.5) ata yode'a gidon, yesh lexa haref efsharut axat [ brura ] muxletet
H: [ LO LISHLO'AX. ] lo lishloax.
H: ke::in. o [ lish- o im ata]
C: [ naxon. az ] AXSHAV ani [ omer lexa
H: [ im ata mehamer] kfiyati
C: = az ken =
H: = az tishlax e; loto o [ tisa lakazino beyerixo.]
C: [ rega rega rega rega,]
= al ze ani roce lehagid. (0.5) az axshav le'ot e trum::a ktn::a la:toto kaduregel, (0.5) ko:::1 haxevre she'ani makir lcfxoit, (0.3) anaxnu nishlax tur exad hashav'u,a.
H: (0.7) [ ken. ]
C: [ tur ] exad. (0.4) hilvad. veyesh anashim shesholxim alpayim tur.
H: (0.5) ken.
C: tur exad bilvad. (1.0) veze ke'ot mexa'a(0.8) al ze shehatut- >yaxol lihiyot she'ata tagid gidon yoter tov al tishlax.< lo (..) ani roce sheyiye lahem ta'avoda al hatur ha'exad haze.
ki ha'avoda [ al alpayim ] tur ve'al tur exa::d, (0.5) hi ota avoda.
H: [ hehe ]
H: tagid li gidon, ata zaxita pa'am bemashehu?
C: eh begrushim. ata yode'a ma? e ex aba shelu ome- haya omer (..) ze ha'iluzya haxi zola sheyesh.
H: (0.5) hevanti. ata kone tikva kol shav'u,a.
C: = ke::in, kulam konim tikvot. kshe'ata kone isha mitaxat laxupa, ata yode'a ma ihiye basof?
H: (0.4) [ vekse'ata kon-]
C: [ ze ole RAK ] YOTER YAKAR. [ ta'amin li.
H: [ vekse'isha] kona ba'äl al axat kama ux-
Appendix B: Transcript of the American tutoring session

S = Student

T = Tutor

Times given to the left of each participant’s turn refer to the amount of time that has passed since the beginning of the interaction. Total length of the interaction: 42 minutes. Length of portion presented here: 5:20. Date: 02/23/2008.[32]

1. T: Do you like the war?
2. 3:10 S: No
3. I'm against it
4. 3:13 T: Why
5. 3:14 S: Because
6. they
7. they take the
8. good people
9. like
10. like they take people that’s just now graduating
11. out a high school
12. and puttin’ them
13. takin them straight from high school
14. and puttin’ them in the war
15. I think that-
16. 3:29 T: are they even graduating high school?
17. 3:30 S: yeah they graduate
18. like
19. they graduate out ‘a high school
20. and go straight to the war
21. I think that
22. they should take
23. the bad people that’s
24. ain’t doin’ nothing with they lives
25. standin’ out on the corner
26. ‘cuz
27. most eh-
28. most children
29. or most people
30. wanna go to college after they get done
31. with high school so
32. I take
33. (that side ((softly)))
34. 3:56 T:  For example-
35. I have a question for you
36. the
37. do you know anything about the Army
38. today?
39. 4:01 S:  no I don’t really think about the Army
40. 4:03 T:  how they recruit
41. 4:05 S:  eh
42. 4:05 T:  like if I graduate from high school
43. could I join the Army?
44. 4:08 S:  yea:
45. ((1 sec)) they started-
46. 4:11 T:  if I get a GRE ((GED))
47. can I get in
48. 4:13 S:  a what?
49. 4:14 T:  if I drop out of high school
50. and get a GRE instead?
51. 4:17 S:  no
52. 4:17 T:  I ‘on’t think
53. 4:19 T:  no
54. you can’t
55. join the Army
56. why?
57. 4:22 S:  ‘cuz
58. you gotta have a high school diploma
59. ((0.0)) and-
60. 4:26 T:  but isn’t a GRE supposed to be the same as a high
61. school diploma?
62. ((1.1))
63. S:  but they gotta
64. see
65. ((1.0)) did you actually go to college high school
66. ((0.8))
67. 4:35 T:  [yeah
68. 4:35 S:  [but
69. ((0.6)) but um
70. a recruiter g-
71. 4:38 T:  [why
72. 4:38 S:  [I got R O ("Junior ROTC") ((0.5))
73. and recruiters be comin’ down to our school ‘times
74. ‘n we can
75. ((0.6)) like
76. ((0.4)) since I’m a junior
77. they like
78. we can
79. ((1.0)) um sign up for the war now
80. ((1.2)) [and
81. 4:47 T:  he [yeah
82. like-
83. well you could jus’ sign up for the Army now
84. you can’t sign up for the war but you sign up for
85. the [Army
86. 4:53 S:  [for the army
87. ((0.8))
88. 4:53 T: these days
89. ((1.6))
90. 4:54 S: and like the Navy and stuff
91. ((0.3))
92. 4:57 T: mm
93. ((1.4)) but the-
94. ((0.5) the question I’m asking you is
95. ((0.9)) why would the Army not want GRE people
96. but only want people who did high school
97. 5:08 S: Because you don’t
98. you ain’t learned that much
99. ((1.0)) I guess
100. I 'on’t know
101. 5:14 T: that’s part of the answer
102. ((0.5)) it’s also part of the answer
103. ((0.7)) as to-
104. ((0.6)) what was going on in World War I
105. ((3 sec))
106. why they didn’t just pick anyone and throw them
107. into battle
108. why they didn’t pick people who were off the
109. streets
110. ((0.7)) why would the Army not want someone off the
111. streets
112. 5:32 S: ‘cuz they
113. they don’t know what they doin’
114. ((0.8)) they ain’t get no education I don’t think
115. 5:40 T: yeah
116. but
117. ((1.5)) if you’re trying to shoot someone
118. does education matter?
119. ((1.4))
120. 5:46 S: yeah ((up and down pitch)) cuz you gotta
121. know what
122. what bullets to put in there and stuff
123. ((0.5))
124. 5:51 T: We:il ((high pitch, some creak)) okay
125. a little bit
126. but
127. I mean
128. the people on the corners
129. they know bullets well too right
130. sort of
131. ((5 sec)) what else is missing?
132. ((2.3))
133. 6:05 S: ((yawns)) they uh
134. 6:08 T: why
135. why don’t gang members join the army
136. ((1.0)) for example
137. 6:12 S: because they got a bad background
138. ((1.1))
139. 6:14 T: well-
140.  ((0.9)) yeah
141.  ((1.1)) they do
142.  ((0.7)) but
143.  ((2.0)) why is that background bad
144.  ((1.6))
145.  6:23 S: because
146.  ((0.7)) they choose to drop out of school
147.  and be on the corner and sell drugs
148.  ((raising pitch ending high))
149.  ((0.5))
150.  6:29 T: yeah
151.  ((0.8)) so why would that make them bad for the
152.  Army?
153.  ((1.4))
154.  6:33 S: because they can jus’
155.  ((0.4)) they probably don’t even go
156.  go to they sites
157.  they probably just be sellin’ drugs down there
158.  ((0.6))
159.  6:40 T: ((Laughing)) @@@
160.  okay
161.  that’s one problem
162.  they could be selling drugs down there
163.  ((inhales)) um
164.  ((inhales again)) ((2.1))
165.  the real problem is
166.  ((2.0)) ((inhales))
167.  can you really te::ll them what to do?
168.  ((1.0))
169.  6:55 S: No
170.  ((1.0))
171.  ((yawns)) ((3 seconds))
172.  ((overlapping the tutor’s turn, leans her chin
173.  on her left hand. Her left elbow is resting on her
174.  backpack which is in her lap))
175.  6:56 T: I mean if you’re-
176.  that’s sort of a problem isn’t it
177.  that-
178.  ((1.3)) if you’re an Army general
179.  you depend a lot abo-
180.  on telling them to d-
181.  on being able to tell a person to do something
182.  and they do it
183.  my um-
184.  march twenty miles
185.  and they march twenty miles
186.  right?
187.  ((a single very slight down-up nod))
188.  except-
189.  ((1.0)) the people off the street
190.  won’t do that
191.  they’ll say
192.  no:
or they’ll be lazy
or they’ll be like
whatever
er-
I won’t
you know
dress nicely
er
or
carry my gun
they’re more the type of people
who
rather than you getting them to shoot at people
they’re more the kind of people who
you know
would just do whatever
they’re very bad for discipline
that’s why the Army doesn’t pick anybody off the streets
cuz people off the streets ((ends high pitch))
you know
they often won’t do
they often won’t be the best
people for the Army
so they want at least high school graduates
((7:55 The student takes her chin off her hand and leans her elbow on the table and then leans her chin back on her hand so that she is leaning more on her hand, and so that she is closer to lying down on her arm than before))
that’s what they were doing in World War I
they were picking a lot of people
they drafted millions and millions of people
but they didn’t draft anyone
they— you could get a lot of exemptions
if you worked
if you were a worker in an industry
if you make tanks for example
you were more valuable than a person with a gun right?
((The student does 2 micro-nods Looking around))
also
if you had a college degree
((The student puts her head down on her arm which is resting on her backpack which is on her lap))
you’re more valuable because
they need you
to do other stuff
((The student with her head on her arm here gives a slight nod here))
so that the people who were expendable were those
with high school graduations
((3 sec))
Endnotes

[1] This same point could be noted with regard to the “here” of the question.

[2] This distinction can be seen as a re-articulation of Austin’s (1962) distinction between performatives and constatives, with constatives being locatable in the plane of denotation and performatives being locatable in the plane of interaction. Silverstein’s major intervention here is this: whereas Austin presupposed the power of the performatives, Silverstein provides an account of how performatives become powerful in practice (see also Keane, 2003; Lee, 1997).

[3] Tannen and Wallat (1987) make a similar distinction – between “interactive frames” and “knowledge schemas.” Yet whereas their distinction treats frames as psychological phenomena locatable in the heads of individual participants, we treat frames as sociological and emergent phenomena locatable in the interaction (Sawyer, 2003, 2005).

[4] Although it is typically the case that the interactional doings emerge from participant’s moves, there are times where these are more explicitly negotiated, such as when a group, coming together for the first time, lays down ground rules of communication (e.g., Occupy Wall Street).

[5] LeBaron and Streeck (1997) point to how frames are built with regard to the physical settings of the interaction. In our analysis here, we focus on the role that discourse plays in building a frame. An adequate consideration of the physical setting would require another paper altogether.

[6] Goffman’s notion of frame has been frequently misinterpreted as referring to the cognitive representation that a person (or group) has of the situation in which they find themselves (e.g., Frickel & Gross, 2005, p. 221; Snow, Rochford, Worden, & Benford, 1986, p. 464). These authors cite Goffman while employing a notion of frame that does not follow Goffman’s interactionist sense of frame. These authors use “frame” to refer to the ways that groups share an understanding of a past event, what we are calling “discursive framing,” rather than an understanding of the present interaction in which they are participating, “interactional framing.” As argued in this paper, both aspects of framing are needed for the analysis of talk, but this conceptual confusion obfuscates the essential and consequential role of interactional framing.

[7] For a more detailed analysis, see Goffman’s essay “Role Distance” (Goffman, 1961), and his later work on “footing” (Goffman, 1981).

[8] In the interests of focusing on what we see as the core matters of this paper, framing and self-making, we ask the reader’s indulgence to (politely) sidestep a major literature that should is highly relevant here, namely, politeness theory. Relatedly, for the same reason, we have avoided taking a line in relation to Goffman’s notion of “face” (cf. Arundale, 2006).

[9] For example, one caller presents what is known in Israel as the demographic problem – the futuristic situation in which Jews and non-Jews reach equal numbers within the Jewish state – which seems by many as the demise of the Jewish state (Dori-Hacohen, 2011). When the caller stops after presenting the problem, the host urges him repeatedly to offer his solution to this problem (Maschler & Dori-Hacohen, in press), thus suggesting that there are two expected elements to a call: a problem of concern to the Israeli public, and a proposed solution to the problem.

[10] Indeed, some callers start their interaction in half-joking manner, as they know hosts like the interactions to be entertaining.

[11] We provide the original Hebrew in parentheses followed by line numbers (see Appendix A).
The caller’s position that this topic relates to the general public resonates with Habermas’ (1989) view of the public sphere as a realm where citizens criticize the government for its wrong doings.

There is an interesting repetition on the word “ke’ot” as a sign in Hebrew. Whereas “ot mekha’a” sign of protest is an acceptable collocation in Hebrew, “le’ot e trum::a” is not a valid collocation in Hebrew. The self-repair (marked by the e) in the vicinity of “le’ot e trum::a”, suggests the word contribution (truma) replaced the word protest, as it appears later on.

This framing corresponds with many social thinkers (cf. Arendt, 1998; Aristotle, 1981; Bickford, 1996; Habermas, 1989; Mansbridge, 1999; Rousseau, 1947), and their perceptions of politics.

In this request-question the host uses a summons followed by the double pronominal form (ata zaxita you won-you), which is redundant in Hebrew. Hacohen and Schegloff (2006) have shown the double pronominal form to achieve more than the minimal reference. Thus, the more than minimal thing that the double pronominal form might achieve here is changing frames or challenging the other participant.

The agency of men and the passivity of women is an important aspect of Western tropes of masculinity and femininity, as noted by Martin (1991) and Longino (1990).

Indeed, the two alternative frames, of political and non-political frames can be taken from this interaction, as some listeners may side with the caller and other may side with the host, as was found when one of us let students listen to the interaction.

There are at least two possible motivations here. First, the tutor is a History major and has a solid grasp of History. Second, in their first session together, they covered History and it was fairly uneventful.

Compare with the moral distinction employed by Anderson’s (1999) informants that distinguishes between “decent” and “street.” Similarly, Rosa (2010) found that teachers in high-school in Chicago's inner-city tend to categorize anyone who does graffiti as a gangbanger. In contrast, the students at the school make more subtle distinctions between graffiti artists and gang bangers, with graffiti artists being seen as decent and gang bangers as bad.

In one of her most enthusiastic contributions (line 72) (notable for the fact that she cuts the tutor off in order to make her contribution), the student says “I got RO,” meaning that she participates in Jr. ROTC at her school.

As a follow-up note, the student has since graduated high school and is actively looking for a college to attend.

This phrase, when used pre-positionally, indicates an epistemic commitment on the part of the speaker (Kaltenböck, 2008).

This is not to say that the tutor simply determined what the frame would be by his turn above. The tutor has not made it an easy thing to do but the student could have called the tutor’s framing (discursive and interactional) into question by disagreeing with what he proposes as “the real problem.” Doing this would have kept the interactional frame of the pros and cons debate alive. Yet in this interaction, the student does not take this approach.

The overall effectiveness of this move is somewhat ambiguous because by redirecting her attention elsewhere, the student runs the risk of fitting neatly into the category of “learning disabled,” and more specifically as a student with an “attention deficit” – something that the student has been identified by her school as having and which she appears to confirm by withdrawing her attention from the tutor.

In a follow up interview, the tutor mentioned that it was just the week prior that he had been told by the program’s director that the student had a learning disability that had something to do with an “attention deficit.”
As an added twist of irony, it turns out that the student was, in fact, an active participant in the Army’s Junior ROTC program at her high school.

It is worth noting that this finding accords with what others have argued in terms of the importance of moments of poetic alignment across different semiotic modalities (cf. McNeill, 1998; Silverstein, 1998; Wortham, 2001).

As has been noted in many ways over the past half century and beyond in the social sciences, interactional norms vary with cultural groups. This means that one must have communicative competence (Hymes, 2001) with regard to the cultural norms of one’s audience.

A U.S. audience should be alerted to the fact that Israeli phone-in programs tend to be seen as more “liberal” or “progressive” than their American counterparts, which are generally seen as precisely the opposite.

The program is aired Sun-Wednesday between 3-4 PM, with a different host every day, in a weekly schedule. The transcript is translated from Hebrew. It is presented in a simple transcription for readability. Our remarks are added in (parenthesis) to assist the easy reading of the text. We tried to keep some of the caller’s colloquial language and mistakes.

Every Game form has many columns. Thus, a participant can fill out one or many columns on each form. The payment goes by the column, yet the work goes by the form. The caller intends on sending a single form, to make the Betting Board work, yet with only one column to decrease its income.

This transcript was created using the Du Bois method of transcribing intonation units (Du Bois, 1992). The intonations are marked in the transcript by a hard return and by a forward slash when quoted in the text.

References


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