

Institutional talk is defined as interactions between participants that are shaped and influenced by their respective institutional roles and identities in society. This type of talk often occurs in classrooms, court trials, and doctor-patient interactions. Moreover, institutional talk consists of many distinct features such as special turn-taking systems, interactional asymmetries, and so on. These distinguishable characteristics were exhibited in CNN's "Larry King Live." In observing Larry King's interview with movie star, Tom Cruise, it was evident that the television show "Larry King Live" follows the guidelines implicit in institutional talk.

Just like most forms of institutional talk, CNN's "Larry King Live" places restrictions and consequences on the types of actions that are permissible during its interactions. This is emphasized in Heritage's article "Conversation Analysis and Institutional Talk," in which Heritage maintains that "institutional talk generally involves special punishments on what will be treated as allowable contributions to the business at hand" (Silverman, 1997: 163). In his article, Heritage uses examples from classroom situations whereby students who talk while their teacher is speaking are punished through detention after school. These types of examples however, focus exclusively on explicit consequences for speaking out of order. This is not the case for Larry King's talk show, in which talking out of place leads to more implicit consequences rather than explicit ones. Using Larry King's interview with Tom Cruise as an example, it is evident that Cruise's freedom of speech is restricted not only by the questions that are posed to him, but by the image that he is presenting to the audience. Regardless of the nature of King's questions, Cruise must conduct himself in a manner that is both professional and personal. He must be able to discuss his family situation somewhat objectively, while projecting a warm and compassionate image to the public. His frequent pauses within sentences demonstrates his desire to shape what he wants to say in a very particular way. This is observed in turn #6, in which numerous pauses occur while Cruise attempts to talk about his ex-wife, Nicole Kidman. Since this is a very publicized topic, Tom Cruise carefully takes his time so that he does not say the wrong things. Hence, it is obvious that Tom Cruise is constrained to speaking in a certain manner because he has an image and a reputation to maintain. If he does speak out of place, this might ruin his public image and thus, he will face consequences like less movie deals and money. Likewise, Larry King must also face special consequences for speaking out of context. Firstly, Larry King must make sure that the questions he puts forth are of relevance. This is seen in turn #3, in which Larry King brings up important topics about Tom Cruise, such as his new movie and his recent divorce. So this means that King must regulate his questions to those that are applicable, newsworthy, and appealing to the public audience. If he does not, King will face consequences such as decline in ratings, less money, and negative criticism. Moreover, CNN executives also in a sense control King's contributions to the interview. Obviously, Larry King is not allowed to use profanity during his interview. Doing so would anger his bosses in CNN, which could result in his job termination. Therefore, it is evident that both Larry King and Tom Cruise must restrict their speech in a particular manner or else they too must face special consequences.

In addition, like most institutional interactions, CNN's "Larry King Live" adheres to a pre-allocated system of turn-taking. In speech exchange systems such as debates,

court trials, religious ceremonies, and press conferences, the turn-taking organization is pre-allocated or partially pre-allocated. In Duranti's article "Conversational Exchanges," Duranti defines pre-allocation as a "system of turn-taking in which the order of speakers and the length of each party's contribution is decided in advance" (Duranti, 1997: 248). This type of turn-taking system is evident in Larry King's interview with Tom Cruise. Although Larry King does not explicitly control how long Tom Cruise speaks, King knows that his show is limited to only one hour's worth of television airtime. Thus, Larry King must decide in advance which questions to ask and which ones to leave out. In addition, King must also make sure that he is able to ask all of the questions within the fixed TV time slot. One such example is in turn #3, where King tells Cruise that first he will talk about his divorce with Nicole Kidman, and then he will subsequently discuss Cruise's new movie, "Vanilla Sky." The host, Larry King, clearly shows that he has decided in advance which question he will ask first and which he will ask next. Moreover, because King knows that he is constrained to a fixed amount of airtime, he will limit his comments to one-liners in order to give his guest, Tom Cruise, more room to speak. Turns #7, #9, #13, #17, #25, #27, and #39, are all examples of King giving one-liners in order to allow Tom Cruise to continue on talking so that they can finish within the given TV time slot. In addition, as the host, King will also eventually interrupt his guests when it is time for commercial breaks or when time has run out. Hence, this shows that there is a predetermined amount of time that the participants are allowed to speak, which results in constraints to their opportunities to talk. This is stressed in Heritage's article "Conversation Analysis and Institutional Talk," where Heritage declares that pre-allocation "can be very important in studying institutional interaction because they have the potential to alter the parties' chances for action" (Silverman, 1997: 164). Furthermore, the order of speakers generally starts with Larry King asking a question, which is then followed by an answer from Tom Cruise. This pattern, where King asks the questions while Cruise answers them, continues throughout the rest of the interview. In turn #5, Larry King starts first by asking Cruise how he deals with his private life constantly being put forth in the public eye. This is then followed by turn #6, in which Cruise replies with his comments. In a sense, this means that the order of speakership is fixed in advance. As the host, King will always be the one to initiate the conversation and the one to ask the questions. In contrast, Tom Cruise, as the guest, will always follow King's lead and he will be the one answering the questions. Hence, it is clear that Larry King's talk show follows a pre-allocated system of turn-taking that is commonly present in institutional talk.

Furthermore, with respect to institutional talk, "Larry King Live" involves two or more people engaging in discourse for the purpose of achieving an objective that is linked to their institutional status. This is emphasized in Heritage's article "Conversation Analysis and Institutional Talk," in which Heritage states that "institutional interaction normally involves the participants in specific goal orientations which are tied to their institution relevant identities" (Silverman, 1997: 163). In Larry King's interview with Tom Cruise, Larry King has the role of the host and interviewer while Tom Cruise has the role of the guest and interviewee. The goal of the interview is determined, largely, by Larry King's role as a news talk show host. As the host, Larry King's goal is to increase the ratings of his talk show. To do so, Larry King must bring in interesting guests, such

as Tom Cruise. Furthermore, King must put forth questions that are of interest to the public audience. Larry King must also try to elicit newsworthy responses from his guests in order to keep his overhearing audience fascinated. This can be seen in turn #12 and turn #13. In turn #12, Tom Cruise mentions a movie that he produced with Paula Wagner, called "The Others." This is then followed by King's comments in turn #13, where he mentions that the movie Cruise had produced also starred his ex-wife, Nicole Kidman. Obviously, Larry King is bringing up Kidman's name in order to bring up the topic of Cruise's much-publicized divorce. Since the story of Tom Cruise's recent divorce with Nicole Kidman, and his subsequent, alleged, involvement with his latest co-star, Penelope Cruz, is on the receiving end of much media attention, King is trying to get Tom Cruise to discuss it with him. The public demand for information is enormous, and Larry King's responsibility is to satiate that desire so that his rating may increase. On the other hand, Tom Cruise also has specific goals tied to his institutional role. Firstly, with his new movie, "Vanilla Sky," set to be released in the coming weeks, Cruise will want to converse about his new film in order to advertise it to the watching public. In turn #12 and turn #20, Cruise purposely mentions his upcoming movie so that the public is aware of its existence. Secondly, as a media figure, a national interview basically means publicity for Tom Cruise. Cruise may want to give himself a good public image especially with all the talk surrounding his divorce and his involvement with his co-star from "Vanilla Sky." Tom Cruise may want to give his side of the story and doing this interview will allow him to do that. In turn #36, Cruise talks about how difficult the divorce has been for him but that regardless, he will always love his ex-wife, Nicole Kidman. Hence, both Cruise and Larry King have specific goals that are related to their institutional identities. While King is determined to extract the facts surrounding Cruise's break-up, Cruise is concerned about the attendance for his upcoming film. Although each party brings their own agenda into the discussion, a common ground must be present in order for the interaction to be mutually beneficial to both parties. Tom Cruise is a powerful media figure, and a one-on-one interview on King's show can only boost ratings. Similarly, Cruise's willingness to speak about a very personal and trying period of his life offers him the opportunity to introduce Vanilla Sky to a large audience. Therefore, CNN's "Larry King Live" consists of participants that have exclusive goals that are interconnected with their specific institutional roles.

Likewise, in regards to institutional interaction, "Larry King Live" is also talk that is context shaped. In Heritage's article "Conversation Analysis and Institutional Talk," Heritage articulates that "institutional interaction is associated with inferential frameworks and procedures that are particular to specific institutional contexts" (Silverman, 1997: 164). In Larry King's interview with Tom Cruise, Larry King stays in context by talking about Tom Cruise and not himself. As the host, Larry King must remain on topic and focus the conversation on Cruise, allowing the actor to tell his story. King may supply words or briefly reiterate what Cruise is trying to say, such as in turn #9, in order to keep the flow of the interview moving smoothly. However, Larry King never attempts to focus the conversation on himself. Similarly, Tom Cruise also stays in context by realizing that he is the focus of the interview. Tom Cruise then uses this opportunity to promote his upcoming film, "Vanilla Sky," and to talk about other

personal matters. In turn #24 and turn #26, Cruise goes on about how he is dealing with his problems, while King allows him to speak his mind without any major interruptions. This agreement enables both participants to converse smoothly and successfully. Therefore, it is clear that both participants converse in specific contexts related to their institutional statuses.

Moreover, the talk show “Larry King Live” exhibits asymmetrical interactions that are common to other forms of institutional talk. During Larry King’s interview with Tom Cruise, this interactional imbalance is clearly portrayed when King is the one controlling the direction of talk. As the host, Larry King asks all the questions while Tom Cruise, the guest, attempts to answer them all. Furthermore, King also initiates which topics are to be discussed during their interview. This can be seen in the transcript during turn #3 and turn #5. In turn #3, King introduces which issues he will discuss by telling Cruise that they will first start out by talking about Cruise’s divorce with Kidman, followed by Cruise’s new movie, “Vanilla Sky.” Moreover, turn #5 as well as turns #19, #23, #31, and #35, are all examples of Larry King asking questions, which reiterates the fact that as the host, King is the one asking all of the questions. In addition, the subject of interactional asymmetry is further examined by Sue Fisher’s article and John Heritage’s article. In Heritage’s article called “Conversational Analysis and Institutional Talk,” Heritage states that “asymmetries of participation in institutional interactions is due to one party taking and retaining the initiative in these interactions” (Silverman, 1997: 175). From Larry King’s interview with Tom Cruise, Larry King is obviously the one taking the initiative in their interaction. Similarly, in Fisher’s article “Institutional Authority and the Structure of Discourse,” Fisher asserts that “in institutional contexts, control resides with the institutional authority” (Fisher, 1984: 202). As stated before, King is the one establishing the topics to be explored and as well as the one putting forth all the questions asked. Hence, this shows that Larry King has more authority over his interviewees, such as Tom Cruise. After all, it is Larry King’s show so it is only fitting that he has the authority over his guests. As the guest, Tom Cruise realizes that his role is to answer King’s questions, and thus, he does not attempt to challenge King’s authority as the host. This is apparent in turn #6 of the transcript. In turn #5, King brings up the subject of Cruise’s divorce with Kidman and how it is being publicized in the media. This is followed by turn #6, where Cruise is clearly uncomfortable with talking about his divorce with Nicole Kidman. This is obvious when Cruise takes a deep breath while Larry King puts forth the question, which is then followed by multiple pauses during Cruise’s reply. Nevertheless, Tom Cruise still attempts to answer the question despite being uneasy about the subject. This is a sign of Tom Cruise not challenging King’s power, which results in an asymmetrical relationship. Therefore, it is apparent that CNN’s “Larry King Live” possesses the interactional asymmetry found in institutional talk.

Hence, this proves that Larry King’s talk show is a form of institutional talk. The show clearly contains the characteristics that are found in institutional interactions.

Other arguments:

- Simultaneous speech .. interruptions are a sign of asymmetrical interaction
- Turn design ...
- Sequence organization ... “is very institutional in the sense of being task-focused” (Silverman, 1997: 166).by Heritage

- ➔ features of institutional interaction ...

- “the topics, contributions, and order of speakership is organized from the outset in an explicit and predictable way” (Silverman, 1997: 165) In Heritage’s article “Conversation Analysis and Institutional Talk,”

- “many of these turn-taking organization work by specifically restricting one party to asking questions and another to answering them.” (p.60) In Heritage’s article “Conversation Analysis and Institutional Talk,”
... “ the imbalance between the two parties is normally a product of the task the parties are engaged in “ (p.60)

- overhearing audience

King is the authority – he is well acquainted with the business he is in ... although he might not know personal, he knows the particulars
Eg. in transcript

Institutional talk defines interactions between participants that are shaped and influenced by their respective institutional roles and identities in society. This type of talk often occurs in classrooms, court trials, and doctor-patient interactions. Moreover, institutional talk consists of many distinct features such as special turn-taking systems, objectives that are linked to an individual's institutional role, and interactional asymmetries. In observing Larry King's interview with movie star, Tom Cruise, it is evident that the television talk show "Larry King Live" follows the guidelines implicit in institutional talk.

Similar to most forms of institutional talk, CNN's "Larry King Live" places restrictions and consequences on the types of actions that are permissible during its interactions. This is emphasized in Heritage's article "Conversation Analysis and Institutional Talk," in which Heritage maintains that "institutional talk generally involves special punishments on what will be treated as allowable contributions to the business at hand" (Silverman, 1997: 163). In his article, Heritage uses the example of a classroom situation, in which students who speak during the teacher's lesson are punished with a bout of detention after school.

The previous example focuses exclusively on explicit consequences for speaking out of order. This is not the case for Larry King's talk show, in which talking out of place leads to more implicit consequences rather than explicit ones. Using Larry King's interview with Tom Cruise, it is evident that Cruise's freedom of speech is restricted not only by the questions that are posed to him, but by the image that he is presenting to the audience. Regardless of the nature of King's questions, Cruise must conduct himself in a

manner that is both professional and personal. He must be able to discuss his family situation somewhat objectively, while projecting a warm and compassionate image to the public. His frequent pauses, within sentences, demonstrate his desire to shape what he wants to say in a very particular way. This is observed in turn #6, in which numerous pauses appear while Cruise attempts to talk about his ex-wife, Nicole Kidman. The former couple's divorce has been publicized extensively, and Tom Cruise takes his time in order to provide the best explanation for what happened. It is apparent that Tom Cruise is obligated to speak in a certain manner because he has an image and a reputation to uphold. If he does speak out of place, his public image will be adversely affected, and he may incur further consequences, such as receiving fewer movie deals and less money.

Likewise, Larry King is also subject to special consequences for speaking out of context. As the host, he must ensure that the questions he puts forth are of some relevance to the topic at hand. This is seen in turn #3, in which Larry King introduces the subjects of Tom Cruise's new movie and his recent divorce. Following this opening are a series of questions, from King, that explore, in some detail, both topics. The freedom of inquiry is restricted, somewhat, to only those questions that are relevant, newsworthy, and appealing to the viewing audience. However, if King chooses to deviate from the appropriate line of questioning, he will face very real consequences, such as a decline in ratings, less money, and negative criticism. Therefore, it is evident that Larry King and Tom Cruise must shape their respective discourses in a manner that is appropriate to the talk show context, in order to avoid potential consequences.

Another defining feature of institutional talk is a pre-allocated system of turn-taking. In speech exchange systems such as debates, court trials, religious ceremonies,

and press conferences, the turn-taking organization is pre-allocated or partially pre-allocated. In Duranti's article "Conversational Exchanges," Duranti defines pre-allocation as a "system of turn-taking in which the order of speakers and the length of each party's contribution is decided in advance" (Duranti, 1997: 248). This pattern of turn-taking is present in Larry King's interview with Tom Cruise. While Larry King does not explicitly control how long Tom Cruise speaks, the show is limited to one hour of television air-time, and the length of Cruise's contribution is, partly, determined by the question that is presented to him. King has to decide, beforehand, which questions to ask and which ones to leave out. It is also his responsibility to make sure that he can finish his interview during the allotted time slot. One such example is in turn #3, in which King tells Cruise that they will first discuss his divorce with Kidman, and then subsequently, Cruise's latest film, "Vanilla Sky." The host, Larry King, clearly demonstrates that he has decided, in advance, the order that the interview will take.

Due to the time constraint that is imposed on a television interview, King chooses to limit his contributions, beyond the actual questions, solely to very brief comments. He does this to allow Tom Cruise to finish his story during the given time slot. Turns #7, #9, #13, #17, #25, #27, and #39, are all examples of King's brevity. In addition, King will also eventually interrupt his guests for commercial breaks or when time has run out. Hence, this shows that there is a predetermined amount of time that the participants are allowed to speak, which results in constraints on their opportunities to talk. This concept is stressed in Heritage's article "Conversation Analysis and Institutional Talk," where Heritage declares that pre-allocation "can be very important in studying institutional

interaction because they have the potential to alter the parties' chances for action" (Silverman, 1997: 164).

Furthermore, the order of speakers generally starts with Larry King asking a question, which is then followed by an answer from Tom Cruise. This pattern continues throughout the rest of the interview. In turn #5, Larry King begins by asking Cruise how he handles the fact that his private life is constantly being put forth in the public's eye. This is then followed by turn #6, in which Cruise replies with his comments. This pattern suggests that the order of speakership is fixed in advance. As the host, King will always be the one to initiate the conversation and the one to ask the questions. In contrast, Tom Cruise, as the guest, will always follow King's lead and be the one to answer the questions. Thus, it is clear that Larry King's talk show follows the pre-allocated system of turn-taking that is commonly found in institutional talk.

Furthermore, with respect to institutional talk, "Larry King Live" involves two or more persons engaging in discourse for the purpose of achieving an objective that is linked to their institutional status. This is emphasized in Heritage's article "Conversation Analysis and Institutional Talk," in which Heritage states that "institutional interaction normally involves the participants in specific goal orientations which are tied to their institution relevant identities" (Silverman, 1997: 163). In Larry King's interview with Tom Cruise, Larry King has the role of the host and interviewer while Tom Cruise has the role of the guest and interviewee. The goal of the interview is determined, largely, by Larry King's role as a news talk show host. As the host, Larry King's goal is to increase the ratings of his talk show. To do so, Larry King must bring in interesting guests, such

as Tom Cruise, and elicit newsworthy responses from his guests in order to keep his audience intrigued. This can be seen in turn #12 and turn #13. In turn #12, Tom Cruise mentions a movie that he produced with Paula Wagner, called “The Others.” This is then followed by King’s comments in turn #13, in which he mentions that the movie Cruise had produced also starred his ex-wife, Nicole Kidman. Larry King uses this fact to raise the topic of Cruise’s much-publicized divorce. The story of Tom Cruise’s recent divorce with Nicole Kidman, and his subsequent, alleged, involvement with his latest co-star, Penelope Cruz, is on the receiving end of much media attention, and King attempts to persuade Tom Cruise to discuss this incident with him. The public demand for information is enormous, and Larry King’s responsibility is to satiate that desire so that his rating may increase.

On the other hand, Tom Cruise also has specific goals tied to his institutional role. With a new movie, “Vanilla Sky,” set to be released in the coming weeks, Cruise wants to discuss his new film, in order to advertise it to the watching public. In turn #12 and turn #20, Cruise purposely mentions his upcoming movie so that the public is aware of its existence. As well, a national interview offers Tom Cruise the opportunity to garner some positive publicity. Cruise may want to give himself a good public image, especially with all the talk surrounding his divorce and his involvement with his co-star from “Vanilla Sky.” Tom Cruise may want to tell his side of the story and this interview will allow him to do so. In turn #36, Cruise talks about how difficult the divorce has been for him but that regardless, he will always love his ex-wife, Nicole Kidman. Therefore, both Cruise and Larry King have specific goals that are related to their institutional identities. While King is determined to extract the facts surrounding Cruise’s break-up, Cruise is

concerned about the attendance for his upcoming film. Tom Cruise is a powerful media figure, and a one-on-one interview on King's show can only boost ratings. Similarly, Cruise's willingness to speak about a very personal and trying period of his life offers him an occasion to introduce *Vanilla Sky* to a large audience. Therefore, CNN's "Larry King Live" consists of participants that have exclusive goals that are interconnected with their specific institutional roles.

Another facet of institutional talk concerns the use of subject matter that is shaped by the context of the situation. In Heritage's article "Conversation Analysis and Institutional Talk," Heritage articulates that "institutional interaction is associated with inferential frameworks and procedures that are particular to specific institutional contexts" (Silverman, 1997: 164). In Larry King's interview with Tom Cruise, King must remain on topic and focus the conversation on Cruise, allowing the actor to tell his story. King may supply words or briefly reiterate what Cruise is trying to say, such as in turn #9, in order to keep the flow of the interview moving smoothly. However, Larry King never attempts to focus the conversation on himself. Similarly, Tom Cruise also stays in context by restricting his speech to his recent divorce, and his upcoming film, "*Vanilla Sky*." At no point, does Cruise choose to talk about his golf game. In turn #24 and turn #26, Cruise discusses how he is working through his problems, and King allows him to speak freely on this matter without any major interruptions. The agreement to stay in context enables both participants to converse smoothly and successfully. It is clear that both participants converse in specific contexts related to their institutional statuses.

Moreover, the talk show “Larry King Live” exhibits asymmetrical interactions that are common to other forms of institutional talk. During Larry King’s interview with Tom Cruise, this interactional imbalance is clearly portrayed because King is the one controlling the direction of talk. As the host, Larry King asks all the questions while Tom Cruise, the guest, attempts to answer them all. Furthermore, King also initiates which topics are to be discussed during their interview. This can be seen in the transcript during turn #3 and turn #5. In turn #3, King introduces which issues they will be discussing by telling Cruise that they will begin with Cruise’s divorce with Kidman, and then move into Cruise’s new movie, “Vanilla Sky.” Turn #5 as well as turns #19, #23, #31, and #35 exemplify the role of the host as the person who is asking all of the questions. The concept of interactional asymmetry is further examined by Sue Fisher’s article and John Heritage’s article. In Heritage’s article called “Conversational Analysis and Institutional Talk,” Heritage states that “asymmetries of participation in institutional interactions is due to one party taking and retaining the initiative in these interactions” (Silverman, 1997: 175). From Larry King’s interview with Tom Cruise, Larry King is obviously the one taking the initiative in their interaction. Similarly, in Fisher’s article “Institutional Authority and the Structure of Discourse,” Fisher asserts that “in institutional contexts, control resides with the institutional authority” (Fisher, 1984: 202). As stated before, King is the one establishing the topics to be explored and as well as the one putting forth all the questions asked. Hence, this shows that Larry King has more authority over his interviewee. As it is Larry King’s show, it is only fitting that he should have the authority over his guests. As the guest, Tom Cruise realizes that his role is to answer King’s questions, and thus, he does not attempt to challenge King’s authority as

the host. This is apparent in turn #6 of the transcript. In turn #5, King brings up the subject of Cruise's divorce with Kidman and how it is being publicized in the media. This is followed by turn #6, where Cruise is clearly uncomfortable with talking about his divorce with Nicole Kidman. This is obvious when Cruise takes a deep breath while Larry King puts forth the question, which is then followed by multiple pauses during Cruise's reply. Nevertheless, Tom Cruise still attempts to answer the question despite being uneasy about the subject. Tom Cruise's decision not to challenge King's power results in an asymmetrical relationship. Therefore, it is apparent that CNN's "Larry King Live" possesses the interactional asymmetry found in institutional talk.

"Larry King Live" exemplifies several aspects of institutional talk that are essential to this speech form. The restrictions that are imposed on allowable contributions, and the potential consequences for disobeying these rules confines the speakers to the matter at hand. The objectives that each person has for the interview can only be realized if he chooses to remain in context. Many talk shows utilize a pre-allocated system of turn-taking in order to focus the guest throughout the course of the interview, and Larry King's questions guide Tom Cruise in the direction that their interaction should take. Thus, "Larry King Live" is structured in a manner that is truly definitive of institutional talk.

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LING 2430 MAJOR ASSIGNMENT

Name: John Lim
Student #: 204102067
Prof. Susan Ehrlich
TA: Sue Levesque
Tutorial Grp 8
Date: Dec.12/01
LING 2430.03

