

Race Matters in Talk in Inter-racial Interaction

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This thesis is dedicated to

the memory of my lovely grandmother, Bessie Ellen Riley,
who always keeps me safe,

and

to my mother and father,
who taught me what it means to work hard.

Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the work contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Catherine M. Demosthenous

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Abstract

Contemporary research indicates that Indigenous people are under-represented in the Australian higher education sector and that on-campus university relations and communications between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons may be a problem. However, actual talk in interaction between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians in university settings has not been examined. Drawing on Ethnomethodology (EM) and its analytic methods, Conversation Analysis (CA) and Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA), this study examines interaction between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons, who are participating in a focus group activity discussing experiences of university in a university setting in Australia.

Data are audio-recordings of non-contrived focus group interaction between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons. These are transcribed using the Jeffersonian transcription system.

This study's examination of linguistic, conversational and categorial resources shows that race *matters* to experiences of university. Application of the inclusive/exclusive distinction to an examination of 'we' in retrospective accounts distinguishes the categories of person that participants include in their experiences of university. Primarily it shows that these Indigenous participants report sharing university experiences with racial co-members, that is, with other Indigenous persons. On rare occasions when Indigenous participants did include Non-Indigenous persons as co-members in shared experiences, they did so to emphasise their isolation within racial cross-member tutorial-classes.

In contrast, these Non-Indigenous participants report sharing university experiences with persons from a range of categories. Non-Indigenous participants were found shifting the talk from race matters to non-race matters. This allowed Non-Indigenous participants a turn-at-talk, and was found to diffuse potentially adverse consequences resulting from using race as a category in recounting experiences. Further, the study shows Non-Indigenous participants distance and disalign themselves from *the problem of Non-Indigenous people*, and therefore from assuming responsibility for racist actions reportedly perpetrated by members of their own racial groups.

As these Indigenous and Non-Indigenous participants discuss sensitive race matters, they manage to align and agree with each other. They accomplish this by organising their talk with a preference for agreement; all the while, assembling a social world in which race *matters* in significant and sundry ways.

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Chapter 1

Introducing the Study

1.1 Introduction

This study is about race matters in talk in inter-racial interaction. It explores interaction in which Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians are engaged in a focus group activity, ‘discussing experiences of university’, in a university setting. The study is informed by Ethnomethodology (EM) and its methods, Conversation Analysis (CA) and Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA). The analysis uses CA to examine the sequential organisations and MCA to examine the categorial organisations that are created and re-created in and through the interaction. Examination of these organisations provides insights into the relevant memberships that participants invoke and the nature of the relations being established between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous participants, as they share retrospective accounts of university experiences in the focus group event. The study provides an empirical account of race matters in talk in inter-racial interaction based on ordinary everyday interaction between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons in a focus group event in a university setting in Australia.

Note, in the Australian context, the racial category term ‘Indigenous’ is conventionally used to refer to persons of ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander’ descent. While I understand that use of the term ‘Indigenous’ conflates the linguistic, cultural, experiential and spiritual differences of ‘Aboriginals’ and ‘Torres Strait Islanders’, the current study uses the term ‘Indigenous’ in line with common usage in Indigenous higher education. Further, my study uses the racial category terms that the participants themselves make relevant in giving their accounts of university experience and in interacting with one another. Finally, the

racial category term ‘Non-Indigenous’ is used to refer to Australian persons who do not identify as Indigenous (NHMRC, 2003/2007, p. 18).

This chapter introduces the study. It is presented in six sections. Section 1.2 introduces the statement to the problem, and provides background on the Australian Indigenous higher education context. Section 1.3 introduces Ethnomethodology, which is the theoretical and conceptual framework applied in this study. Section 1.4 presents the research question that guides the study. Section 1.5 outlines the potential contributions made by the study to policy, theory, research and practice. Section 1.6 provides an overview of the study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The vision of the recently established Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC) to the Minister for Education, Science and Training, is ‘for a higher education system in which Indigenous Australians share equally in the life and career opportunities that a university education can provide’ (IHEAC, 2006, p. 10). Achieving that vision will present challenges to the various key stakeholders, particularly given that Indigenous people are under-represented in higher education, and Indigenous access and participation rates in universities have steadily declined over the last few years (ABS, 2006). Further, despite claims by the former Minister of Education, Science and Training that the diversity on Australian university campuses promotes ‘understanding, prosperity and harmony’ (Bishop, 2006, p. 394), Michael Dodson (1994), a former Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice, has stated, ‘[a]t the simplest level’, Indigenous people do not enjoy the ‘right to equal access to education’. He added, ‘the mere granting of rights ... will not overcome the profound oppression we continue to experience, even when it appears that “we are participating”’ (Dodson, 1994).

In fact, much of the existing research on Indigenous higher education suggests that relations between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians on university campuses may be a problem (e.g., Anderson, Singh, Stehbens, & Ryerson, 1998; Anning, Robertson, & Thomas, 2002; Arbon, 2003; Arbon, 2006; Bin-Salik, 1990; Bourke, Burden, & Moore, 1996; Brady, 2005; C. M. Demosthenous, 2004a; Demosthenous, 2005b; Farrington, DiGregorio, & Page, 1999; Hughes, 1988; Lane, 1998; Malezer & Sim, 2002; Morgan, 2001; Robertson, Anning, Demosthenous, Thomas, & Langton, 2005a; Robertson & Demosthenous, 2005; Walker, 2000; Williams, 2004). For instance, a study conducted on behalf of the National Indigenous Higher Education Network (NIHEN)¹ found that Australian university campuses had been subjected to episodes of racist graffiti, slurs and other offensive acts targeting Indigenous Australians (Anning, Robertson, Thomas, & Demosthenous, 2005). The NIHEN study, which examined the work of Indigenous higher education support centres across Australia,² also reported that some Indigenous students experience the university as a ‘hostile and racist place’ (Anning et al., 2005, p. 49). Similar findings were also reported in Anderson, Singh, Stehbens and Ryerson’s (1998) earlier, pioneering investigation into the structure of Australian universities and their inclusions of Indigenous people and their rights. That study concluded that ‘the university is still predominately an institution for the white person’ (Anderson et al., 1998).

These findings echo the sentiment expressed by Nakata more than fifteen years ago, that ‘patronising, condescending and racist interactions can still be considered to be constituted at the intersection of ongoing dominant practices in the mainstream’ university setting (Nakata, 1993). In more recent years, Collard and Palmer (2006, p. 4) have stated that there are ‘enormous difficulties associated with communication between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people’. They commented,

¹ NIHEN is a national representative peak body committee of the Indigenous higher education sector.

² According to the DEST (2005), Indigenous higher education support centres ‘provide support to Indigenous students, further Indigenous academic studies, create a network of Indigenous students and academics and provide an Indigenous presence on university campuses’. Within Australia, there are thirty-seven mainstream universities in receipt of Commonwealth funding for Indigenous higher education support centres. See, Anning, Robertson, Thomas and Demosthenous, 2005, for an in-depth examination of the work of Indigenous higher education support centres.

[n]ot only is it difficult because of language and cultural differences, but also because of the history of forced separation from each other and the mistrust that people hold (Collard & Palmer, 2006, p. 6).

Actual inter-racial interaction between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians in higher education settings needs to be investigated. Apart from my own preliminary work (C. M. Demosthenous, 2004a, 2004b) no previous studies of which I am aware have examined the actual accomplishment of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous interaction in Australia. There appears to be a lack of empirical research involving analysis of the details of race matters in talk in inter-racial interaction, centering on the memberships that participants invoke and the actual relations being established between participants, as they share retrospective accounts of university experiences. This exploratory study aims to fill that gap.

1.2.1 Early Australian Indigenous Higher Education Context

Corresponding with the development of European imperialism, the Australian university population of the late 1800s reflected the concentration of Anglo-Europeans to Australia. Though the first university in Australia opened in the mid-1800s,³ it was not until the advent of mass higher education in the 1970s that Indigenous Australians gained access to Australian higher education institutions. This massification, which grew out of the social progressive ‘Australian discourse of the “fair go”’ (Augoustinos, Tuffin, & Rapley, 1999, p. 353), saw groups that were previously excluded from and/or significantly under-represented in higher education given access to tertiary studies (e.g., women studying in non-traditional fields, those with disabilities, mature-aged persons, second language learners, and Indigenous Australians).

In the three decades since Indigenous Australians were first given the right to attend universities, a number of mechanisms have been set in place to aid successful educational outcomes and achievements. Legislative (e.g., AEP),

³ The University of Sydney opened in 1850 followed by the University of Melbourne in 1853, see Gascoigne (1996) for further detail.

financial (e.g., ABSTUDY), academic (e.g., ITAS) and other support mechanisms (e.g., the NICP) were implemented to aid Indigenous success at the tertiary level (see, Appendix A: Abbreviations and Acronyms). For instance, in 1989, the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) implemented twenty-one national goals under the Aboriginal Education Policy (AEP).⁴

The AEP is contained under four inter-related sub-goals.

1. To ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander involvement in educational decision-making;
2. To provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders equality of access to education services;
3. To achieve equity of educational participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders commensurate with other Australians; and
4. To achieve equitable and appropriate educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Involvement in educational decision-making, equality of access, equity of participation, and equitable and appropriate outcomes are identified as key goals for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander success in higher education, and continue to underpin policy.

A few years later, in 1995, the Minister's Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) implemented a National Strategy for the Education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples for the period 1996-2002 (Anning et al., 2005; MCEETYA, 1995). The National Strategy identified eight key areas for priority.

1. To establish effective arrangements for the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in educational decision-making;
2. To increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples employed in education and training;

⁴ Note, the Policy (AEP) is still referred to as 'AEP'. However, it is now known as the 'National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy'.

3. To ensure equitable access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to education and training;
4. To ensure participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in education and training;
5. To ensure equitable and appropriate educational achievement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students;
6. To promote, maintain and support the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, cultures and languages to all Indigenous and non-Indigenous students;
7. To provide community development and training services including proficiency in English literacy and numeracy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults; and
8. To improve NATSIEP (i.e., National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy, AEP) implementation, evaluation and resourcing arrangements.

In more recent years, the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) (DEST, 2007) have recognised the ongoing ‘educational disadvantage currently experienced by Indigenous Australians’. DEST (2007) have come up with seven strategic goals that they believe will serve to close the gap between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians.

1. Strengthen national systems;
2. Raise the quality of outcomes;
3. Strengthen equity;
4. Extend international influence;
5. Build capacity in our workforce;
6. Engage with stakeholders; and
7. Strengthen our business practices.

While DEST’s (2007) strategic goals aim to overturn the current low rates of Indigenous people in higher education, their focus is at the ‘macro’ level and not at the ‘micro’ level of actual, moment-by-moment interaction. In other words, DEST’s (2007) strategic goals do not consider the potential significance of

Indigenous and Non-Indigenous interactional experiences in those settings (Demosthenous, 2005a). Nor do they consider the possible significance of Indigenous people's everyday experiences and interaction with Non-Indigenous people in Australian universities, who, according to Collard and Palmer (2006), have experienced a history of forced separation from each other (see, Hamilton, under review).

Acknowledging Australia's historic past, on Wednesday 13 February, 2008, the newly-elected Labor Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, offered a formal apology to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians: for the 'laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments' that 'inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss'; for 'the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country'; for 'the pain, suffering and hurt of these stolen generations, their descendants and for their families left behind' and 'for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture' (News.com, 2008).

Commenting on the Prime Minister's apology, the Minister for Indigenous Education, Julia Gillard (2008) said,

[t]he historic act of saying sorry after decades of division and despair heralds the opportunity for a new beginning for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians to reconcile and move forward as one nation.

1.2.2 Current Australian Indigenous Higher Education Context

According to the Australian national census figures for 2006, the total population of Australia consisted of 21,017,200 citizens; 20,500,000 or 97.5% persons of Non-Indigenous origin and 517,200 or 2.5% persons of Indigenous origin (ABS, 2008). Further, the figures show the Indigenous Australian population under three racial groups, (i) Aboriginal only, (ii) Torres Strait Islander only, and (iii) both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (see, Table 1, below).

Table 1: Indigenous Australian Population Statistics as of June 2006

| | <i>Population Totals</i> |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Aboriginals | 463, 900 |
| Torres Strait Islanders | 33, 100 |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander | 20, 200 |
| Total Indigenous Population | 517, 200 |

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 (ABS).

Table 2 (below) shows the higher education national performance indicators for the period 2001 to 2006. These performance indicators (i.e., access, participation, retention and success rates) are determined by DEST, and are considered in relation to the indicator of equality between Indigenous and domestic students within Australia. These are 2.5% for the access and participation rates and 1.0% for the retention and success rates (see, Appendix B: Glossary of Terms). The following rates refer to the ratio between Indigenous and all domestic students.

Table 2: Higher Education Performance Indicators, 2001-2006

| <i>Performance Indicator</i> | <i>2001</i> | <i>2002</i> | <i>2003</i> | <i>2004</i> | <i>2005</i> | <i>2006</i> |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Access rate | 1.60 | 1.61 | 1.60 | 1.54 | 1.49 | 1.49 |
| Participation rate | 1.27 | 1.26 | 1.26 | 1.26 | 1.20 | 1.25 |
| Retention rate | 0.77 | 0.76 | 0.78 | 0.78 | 0.81 | - |
| Success rate | 0.73 | 0.75 | 0.75 | 0.76 | 0.76 | 0.77 |

Note: Statistics prior to 2002 are based on students undertaking units of study in semester 1 of each year, calculated at 31 March. Post 2001, these statistics were based on students undertaking units of study over a full academic year (DEST, 2005, p. 83).

Within Table 3, it can be noticed that the period 2001 to 2006 saw a decline in both the access and participation rates of Indigenous students. However, during the period 2001 to 2005, there was a slight increase in the retention rates for Indigenous students. There was also a slight increase in the success rate for

Indigenous students over the period 2001 and 2006, which is good news for Indigenous higher education. However, Arbon (2006, p. 3) has acknowledged that,

[t]he impact of oppression is very visible within Indigenous higher education where despite an appearance of change and improvement the reality revealed in statistics is one of a downward slide on actual outcomes as against population growth.

A recent international study on the health and well-being of Indigenous populations in Canada, the United States, New Zealand and Australia, reported that whereas the gap between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people had closed in other countries, 'Australia stands out for a relative lack of progress' (Cooke, Mitrou, Lawrence, Guimond, & Beavon, 2007). Further, the authors of the study, Cooke, Mitrou, Lawrence, Guimond and Beavon (2007), called for more qualitative research to be conducted on matters to do with participation. In commenting on these findings for the Australian national context, Marszalek (2007) called for qualitative research capable of identifying what actually fosters continuing engagement in education by Indigenous people (see also, Robertson, Royale, & Demosthenous, 2005d; Van Issum & Demosthenous, 2004).

In fact, understanding whether the higher education system is currently one in which Indigenous Australians 'share equally' (IHEAC, 2006, p. 10) in the everyday life and rewards of a university education lends itself to a social inquiry into how it is that Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians experience university. There are no *Indigenous-only* or *Non-Indigenous-only* universities in Australia. In fact, Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians attend the same universities, share membership in those same universities and share experiences in those universities. Further, Langton (1993) has maintained that interaction between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people is one of the key domains in which Indigenous experience is negotiated.

The current study is interested in race matters in interaction. It is interested in the details of the social accomplishment of the organisation of inter-racial interaction, and particularly the relevant memberships that participants invoke in their

retrospective accounts of university experiences. It is also interested in the actual relations being established amongst Indigenous and Non-Indigenous participants in the focus group interaction, as they go about sharing their retrospective accounts of university experience in the focus group event.

1.3 Ethnomethodology

EM is interested in understanding *how* ordinary members of a culture mutually construct a shared sense of order and intelligibility in everyday social life (Garfinkel, 1967/1984). Originating out of Garfinkel's (1967/1984) interest in *how* social order is produced by people as they go about *doing* their daily lives, EM provides understanding of social action, the nature of intersubjectivity and the social constitution of knowledge. In other words, EM provides a sociological means of investigating peoples' everyday 'commonsense' (Schegloff, 1992, p. xxxv) activities. Its analytical framework permits the documentation and examination of the

commonsense knowledge and the range of procedures and consideration by means of which the ordinary members of society make sense of, find their way about in, and act on the circumstance in which they find themselves' (Heritage, 1984, p. 4).

While Garfinkel and other ethnomethodologists (e.g., Bilmes, 1993; Boden & Zimmerman, 1991; Briggs & Moerman, 1989; Crapanzano & Moerman, 1990; Freebody, 2003; Heritage, 1984; Jalbert, 1999; Lynch, 2000; Mehan & Wood, 1975; Nelson, 1994; Silverman, 1993; Silverman, Boden, & Zimmerman, 1992) have shown that the means by which members analyse their circumstances is crucial to an understanding of social order and intelligibility in social settings, this study draws on EM's analytic methods, CA and MCA, to explore race matters in talk in inter-racial interaction. Sequential organisational analysis will apply CA techniques to the data, drawing on the works of Sacks (1992a, 1992b), Heritage,

(1984), Jefferson (1990), Lerner (1994), Pomerantz (1992a), and Schegloff (1999, 2007a). Categorical analysis will apply MCA techniques to the data, drawing on the works of Sacks (1992a, 1992b), Schegloff (2007b), Baker (1997), Jayyusi (1984), and Hester and Eglin (1997). Hence, this EM study adopts EM's analytic methods, CA and MCA, to examine and document race matters in talk in inter-racial interaction between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons in the focus group event.

1.4 Research Question

My study is interested in race matters in talk in inter-racial interaction. One central research question is proposed:

1. How is *inter-racial* interaction socially accomplished among a group of people engaged in the activity 'discussing experiences of university' in a university setting?

1.5 Contributions of the Study

1.5.1 Contribution to Policy

Since its original inception, the Australian higher education sector has undergone radical transformation resulting in significant policy development and reform (DEEWR, 2008). The result has been the creation of a mass higher education system in which all Australians have been extended the right to access and participate. Australia's current legislative position on higher education is to support a system that:

- is characterised by quality, diversity and equity of access;
- contributes to the development of cultural and intellectual life;

- is appropriate to meet Australia's social and economic needs for a highly educated and skilled population;
- strengthens Australia's knowledge base for the betterment of its communities; and
- supports its students (refer to *Higher Education Support Act 2003*).

Since its original inception, the Indigenous higher education sector has also undergone reform. For instance, a number of amendments to policy have been made, including those that call for greater involvement and participation of Indigenous Australians in curriculum, teaching and research (MCEETYA, 1995). Though attention has been given to increasing the numbers of Indigenous Australians accessing and participating in Australian universities, current rates have failed to meet the numbers envisaged by the AEP more than ten years ago (DEST, 2002), and *failure to succeed* remains a key concern of IHEAC (2006, p. 11). While the ways in which Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians interact in higher education settings might not be on the policy agenda, bringing Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons together in the focus group event to explore their experiences of university can contribute to understandings on current low rates. As Nakata (2001, p. 41) stated, the 'difficult dialogue ... between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people ... has to go on for what is the common goal of improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educational outcomes'.

1.5.2 Contribution to Theory

Informed by EM, this study is interested in race matters in talk in inter-racial interaction, that is, how the talk is socially organised and accomplished. EM studies permit a method of social inquiry that examines the production of social order which arises out of the common knowledge that people 'as members of society' produce in their everyday 'commonsense' activities and reasoning practices (Schegloff, 1992, p. xxxv). Premised on the understanding that members recognise 'the settings' in which they operate, EM maintains that it is members' accounts, descriptions and practices that reflexively 'serve as measures to bring

particular features of those settings to recognisable account' (Garfinkel, 1967/1984, p. 8). EM investigates 'the rational properties of indexical expressions and other practical actions as contingent ongoing accomplishments of organized artful practices of everyday life' (Garfinkel, 1967/1984, p. 11). EM's approach departs radically from more traditional views of sociological relevance, which would see inter-racial interaction as a fixed, taken-for-granted, pre-existing object. Hence, this study takes inter-racial interaction to be a 'situated' (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974, p. 699), socially constructed phenomenon and not a pre-theorised, fixed phenomenon, as is often the case in non-ethnomethodological studies in Indigenous higher education research.

As mentioned earlier, the study draws on both CA and MCA in its examination. It uses CA to examine the local and extended sequential features of the interaction and MCA to examine the locally used, invoked and organised categorial membership aspects in the interaction (e.g., Fitzgerald & Housley, 2002; Hellstén, 1999; Silverman, 1998; Watson, 1978). In drawing on CA and MCA, this study examines the indexical and reflexive treatment of the data (i.e., transcribed audio-recordings of focus group interaction between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people) and permits analysis of inter-racial interaction as a phenomenon accomplished in interaction (see, Appendix C: Ethical Package).

While EM has been used to provide sociological understanding across a range of areas, including that of racial phenomena (e.g., Burkhalter, 2006; Buttny & Williams, 2000; Day, 1998; Pollock, 2004; Stokoe & Edwards, 2007; Whitehead, 2007), it has not been applied to an analysis of racial categories in the university setting. No study of which I am aware has adopted the perspective of 'ethnomethodological indifference' (Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970, p. 345) to examine and document the activities through which members manage organised, everyday affairs associated with the accomplishing of race matters in talk in inter-racial interaction between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians in university settings. Hence, the study contributes to theory by providing an empirical basis for testing the premise on which dominant theorisations about race matters in inter-racial interaction in the university setting are based, within a framework that is true to the data.

1.5.3 Contribution to EM Research

The study contributes to EM research in different ways. First, the study uses the focus group technique. While a number of research projects have used the focus group method to collect information (e.g., Cameron, 2005; McIlwain, 2005; Myers & Macnaghten, 1999; Pope, 2002; Sprenkle & Moon, 1996; Wilkinson, 2006), the technique is also increasingly being used to conduct Indigenous Australian research (e.g., Collard & Palmer, 2006; Demosthenous, Robertson, Cabraal, & Singh, 2006; Oxenham, Cameron, Collard, Dudgeon, Garvey, Kickett, Kickett, Roberts, & Whiteway, 1999; Robertson & Demosthenous, 2004; Robertson, Demosthenous, & Demosthenous, 2005b; Singh, Cabraal, Demosthenous, Astbrink, & Furlong, 2006).⁵

Second, the study contributes to EM research through exploration of a single case analysis. Single case analysis technique is said to offer ‘a key starting point in research’, as it allows the researcher to see ‘significant interactional detail in the ongoing production’ of the interaction (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998, p. 121). The analysis of a single case of interaction has been found to be ‘sufficient to attract attention and analytic interest because the instance is an event whose features and structures can be examined to discover how it is organised’ (Psathas, 1995b, p. 50) and ‘orderly for its participants’ (Schegloff, 1968). Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998, p. 121) have stated,

[i]n order to explicate such features, the analyst needs to develop sensitivity to very close levels of details in the talk, and analysing single cases is a very good way of accomplishing that.

In other words, single case analysis is not aimed at ‘generalizability’, but at stimulating ‘critical reflection and analytic wonder without a recourse to

⁵ Some researchers (e.g., Krueger, 1988; Puchta & Potter, 2004) have identified difficulties that are inherent in work that studies focus group interaction. These include the topic becoming sidetracked or dominated by some of the focus group members. However, studies that are informed by EM (as this is) do not consider such features as difficulties or weaknesses of the focus group methodology. Instead, EM studies consider these features as features to be explored, rather than weaknesses to be overcome (see, Chapter 4, Section 4.2.1).

generalist claims as part and parcel of an ongoing process of enquiry within a cumulative form of social research' (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 1). This is because single case analysis permits 'tracking in detail the production of some extract of talk' to document and examine the ways in which its interactional devices 'inform and drive its production' (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998, p. 121).

In contrast to existing studies in the research area, this single case analysis of a focus group event offers a key starting point in research that is interested in gathering data from Indigenous and Non-Indigenous in higher education settings about what it is that they feel is relevant to the activity, discussing experiences at university (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998, p. 121). In keeping with EM's approach, the study refrains from extensive theoretical and methodological discussion, does not formulate hypotheses and gives few details about the research situation and/or subjects researched, unless made relevant by the participants in their accounts of university experience. This single case analysis of a focus group event permits an appropriate basis for conducting research with Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians. Further, this study adopts an *applied* ethnomethodological approach. Unlike a 'straight' approach, which 'makes no claims to be capturing wider sociological concerns' (Heap, 1990), the applied approach,

may deliver news about structure of the phenomena, and especially about the consequences of those structures for realizing ends and objectives regarded as important outside ethnomethodology's analytic interests (Heap, 1990, p. 11).

Hence, the study contributes to EM research by introducing a line of inquiry that explores naturally-occurring interaction in a focus group meeting between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people in a focus group event in a university setting. It contributes to an evolving understanding of the context, setting and phenomenon under investigation and, through adoption of an applied methodological approach, is able to provide some insights into a social order that exists beyond the confines of the university setting, without interference, bias or prejudice on the part of the researcher.

1.5.4 Contribution to Indigenous Framework

This study makes a contribution to Indigenous frameworks in at least three key ways: (i) by adherence to recommended frameworks for conducting Indigenous research, (ii) through its use of CA/MCA methodologies and its applied approach, and (iii) through its applied approach.

In terms of adherence to recommended frameworks for conducting Indigenous research the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) (2003/2007) and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) (AIATSIS, 2000) have acknowledged that approval from Indigenous Australian communities is an essential prerequisite to conducting Indigenous research, particularly if the study is to be received by the broader Indigenous communities. This study adheres to Indigenous frameworks, as it is underpinned by the ethics, values, principles and themes recommended for conducting ethically-appropriate research on Indigenous matters. Those practices have informed the design, ethical review, working partnerships and conduct of the research, and display a respect for working within the guidelines of an Indigenous research framework (e.g., Demosthenous, 2005a; NHMRC, 2003/2007, p. 2).

The study also contributes to Indigenous frameworks through its applied EM approach. CA data consists of tape recordings of naturally occurring interactions, which are transcribed according to a set of conventions, and following repeated listening to the original tape. The procedure for transcribing the talk follows the system developed by Gail Jefferson (1989). It is a system that allows the researcher to detail the sequential order of how people take turns at talking, including where they pause when they talk, where and how they interrupt each other's talk, how they emphasise their talk, by speaking loudly or softly, slowly or quickly, and so forth (see, Appendix D: Transcription Conventions).

In other words, the methodology allows the researcher to capture what it is the persons say and to examine and document that in a way that is true to the data. It does not pre-judge or pre-scribe Indigenous Australians experiences or Non-Indigenous Australians experiences. It does not pre-empt or take-for-granted the

nature of the phenomenon. It examines in fine detail the features of the ongoing production of the interaction to explore inter-racial interaction as a local, situated, socially constructed phenomenon (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 699). It fits with Butler-Mellwraith's (2006, pp. 376-377) call for 'a new sociological tradition in Australia' in which 'face-to-face interaction' is 'given primacy', and can contribute important insights at a micro and detailed level, while also providing important insights outside ethnomethodology's analytic interests.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner and Race Discrimination Commissioner, Tom Calma, has stated '[i]t is essential then that Indigenous communities have a real say in how they are designed, delivered, monitored and evaluated' (Calma, 2006). Using the methodology proposed here allows Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people to have a 'real say' in how it is they experience university. Having a 'real say' means giving participants a voice without interference, bias or prejudice. Hence, the study contributes to Indigenous frameworks by providing an empirical understanding of inter-racial interaction between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians.

1.5.5 Contribution to Practice

Indigenous and Non-Indigenous relations continue to prove problematic in the Australian context. Racism and institutionalism have been found to have consequenced apprehension and reluctance on the part of many Indigenous persons in dealing and interacting with mainstream institutions and Non-Indigenous people (e.g., AIATSIS, 2000; Collard & Palmer, 2006; Nakata, 1993; NHMRC, 2003/2007; Robertson, Demosthenous, Dillon, Van Issum, & Power, 2005c; Williams, 2004). There also remains confusion on the part of many Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people about how to develop the types of relationships needed to partner and engage the other in respectful, trusting ways (S. Demosthenous, 2004). It is essential that Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people in higher education settings interact with each other in ethically-sensitive, professional and culturally-respectful ways if we are to achieve IHEAC's vision; 'for a higher education system in which Indigenous Australians share equally in

the life and career opportunities that a university education can provide' (IHEAC, 2006, p. 10).

The significance for this study is that it can contribute to current practice in a variety of ways. For example, it can contribute to current understandings of working with Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people in higher education settings and have implications for achieving improved administrative, academic and interactional practices in higher education, and perhaps, other settings. Improved practice may result in greater success in Indigenous higher education. The project will also provide actual insight into the factors that impact students' decision-making with regard to higher education, which is said to positively contribute to quality of life, social and economic productivity and higher levels of well-being for the individual, the individual's family and community and the Australian community in general (Junankar, 2003).

1.6 Overview of the Study

The following six chapters in this study are:

Chapter 2: Review of Literature on Race Matters presents a review of the broader literature on race matters. The review presents research that indicates that not only are race matters or race affairs central to people's sense-making practices, but that race is relevant to people in interaction and, therefore, that race *matters* in talk-in-interaction.

Chapter 3: Empirical and Conceptual Framework presents the empirical and conceptual framework for conducting investigation in this study. The chapter presents the main principles and concepts of EM and its analytic methods, CA and MCA. The chapter also elaborates on the distinction between theoretical and applied CA to support this study's interest in wider sociological concerns. The chapter also introduces the interactional features that are applied in this study.

Chapter 4: Research Design reports on the research design of the study. The chapter introduces the research method for collecting data; presents the sites and participants; discusses ethical clearance; outlines transcription procedures; discusses reliability and validity; and outlines stages of analysis.

Chapter 5: Partitioning the Population is the first of two analysis chapters in this study. Chapter 5 explores linguistic, conversational and categorial resources of the interaction, with a focus on personal pronouns, and particularly the non-singular first person pronoun 'we'. Further, 'we' is examined using the inclusive/exclusive dual/plural linguistic distinction that is found in many Australian Indigenous Languages. Investigating 'we' shows how the participants in the focus group talk-into-being disparate membership categories, while revealing who is being included in, and who is being excluded from, those groups, thereby providing insights into how it is the participants partition the population.

Chapter 6: Aligning the Population is the second of two analysis chapters in this thesis. Chapter 6 explores the preference organisation in operation through an examination of adjacency pairs, the (ostensibly) disagreeing token 'no' and list construction and production to examine the actual relations being established by Indigenous and Non-Indigenous participants. Examination of how these features operate in the data under analysis not only provides understanding of the preference system at work, but also provides understanding of the actual relations that are being interactionally formed between participants, particularly with regard to aligning the population.

Chapter 7: Conclusion brings the study to a close. The chapter presents a summary of the overall findings of the study, outlines the study's contributions to policy, theory, research and practice, and concludes with some directions for further research.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature on Race Matters

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature relevant to this study on race matters in talk in inter-racial interaction between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons in a focus group event in a university setting in Australia. There is a large body of research that has been conducted on race matters, some of which were discussed in the introduction to the current study (see, Chapter 1). This chapter continues that discussion by providing a review of literature relevant to race matters. While the literature presented is not exhaustive of race matters, it indicates that race matters or race affairs are central to people's understanding and sense-making of the social world. Further, the literature not only presents matters *about* race, but presents on *how* race *matters*. The review of literature presented below is of relevance to this study because it provides a background that indicates that race *matters* in *talk* in inter-racial interaction.

This chapter is presented in three sections. Section 2.2 'talking *about* others' reviews literature on *how* people, as ordinary members of society, talk about others in orienting to race matters, and particularly how they orient to their own and others' racial category memberships when discussing race matters. Section 2.3 reviews the 'talking *with* others' literature to understand how members of diverse racial groups talk *with* each other, that is, how members of one racial group talk *with* or *to* members of a different racial group and 'do' interaction to understand how race *matters*. Section 2.4 concludes with a summary of the chapter.

2.2 Talking *About* Others

In this review of literature on race matters, the works presented under the ‘talking *about* others’ heading presents research relevant to the current study because they provide an understanding of race matters. The literature provides insights into the centrality of race to people’s understanding and sense-making of the social world.

2.2.1 Distancing Others

In what is an influential work on race matters, van Dijk (1987, pp. 7-11) conducted a series of interviews in Amsterdam and California in which he examined ‘the everyday reproduction of racism within the White majority group’. Van Dijk (1987, pp. 7-11) was interested in ‘how White people think and talk about ethnic minority groups, and how they persuasively communicate their ethnic attitudes to other members of their own group’. Data for the research were gathered from white people, whose prejudices were viewed as ‘representative of white raced discourse’ and white ethnic prejudice in general.

Van Dijk (1997) made a number of findings. For instance, he found that,

[e]ach time in-group members are confronted with (information about) new, salient out-groups, they need not figure out again what properties of such a group are relevant and about which characteristics opinions should be formed. They have acquired an abstract group evaluation schema, which only needs to be specified with new data for a new group. With a minimum of information, group members are thus able to form relevant and effective belief and opinion systems about the out-group (van Dijk, 1987, p. 203).

So, ethnic prejudice was not ‘purely personal or individual’, but found to be ‘essentially social and group oriented’; that is, it is held, shared and expressed in common by members of the same racial group about other racial groups (van Dijk, 1987, p. 195). Further, much of the participants’ speech style revealed a double strategy of negative other-presentation and positive self-presentation. Positive

self-presentation or ‘face keeping’ (Goffman, 1955) was a strategy for presenting oneself in a favourable ways, so as not to appear too racist in giving ideas and opinions (e.g., van Dijk, 1992). Most talk about the other focused on the social-cultural differences of minority groups, which were typically viewed as negative characteristics or traits of those groups (van Dijk, 1987, p. 11). Participants distanced themselves from others through various ‘expressions of attitudinal distance’ (van Dijk, 1987, p. 105), thereby orienting to an ‘us/them’ separation that identified them as members of the *white in-group/us* in opposition to members of the *ethnic out-group/them*.

Van Dijk’s (1987) work is of relevance to the current study because it shows that race matters are important to people’s understanding, sense-making and construction of the social world. It highlights a relationship between one’s individual attitudes to ethnic persons and one’s racial group membership’s attitudes to ethnic prejudice. It shows that matters such as *everyday racism* and *ethnic prejudice* are determined by important social dimensions of groups. Further, it shows that participants make relevant an us/them opposition that is determined along the lines of racial group membership, which is something that Augoustinos, Tuffin and Rapley (1999) have also investigated in a *rare* Australian study.

2.2.2 The Notion of ‘Fit’

In what is a rare work in the Australian literature, Augoustinos, Tuffin and Rapley (1999) examined race matters in terms of the ‘nature of everyday informal talk on race and ethnicity in Australia’. They examined data ‘drawn from two discussion groups on “race relations in Australia” in which eight undergraduate psychology students took part’ (Augoustinos et al., 1999, pp. 351-354). Their work aimed to understand ‘how talk about Aboriginal people and talk about Australian racism was organized, and to examine the ways in which participants constructed Aboriginal people during their discussions’ (Augoustinos et al., 1999, p. 353).

In talking about a range of race matters, the Non-Indigenous participants in the research constitute Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons as ‘highly distinct and

internally homogenous social categories and by so doing, differentiated them as oppositional contrasts' (Augoustinos et al., 1999, p. 371). Non-Indigenous participants talked about Indigenous/Aboriginal⁶ persons in social Darwinist terms, as they reported that Aboriginal people failed to 'fit' into and 'adapt' to a morally untroubled 'white settlement', and were thus criticised for having created contemporary problems (Augoustinos et al., 1999, p. 370). Non-Indigenous participants 'explained away and rationalized existing social relations and inequities', as they talked about 'mutual misunderstanding' of each of the other's culture and 'the clash of cultures' (Augoustinos et al., 1999, pp. 353-370). In other words, accounts were designed to provide 'just the essentials to found a particular inference' (Edwards & Potter, 1992, p. 162).

Although Augoustinos, Tuffin and Rapley (1999, p. 371) found that '[n]egative construction and problematization of Aboriginality and Aboriginal people' was 'the most pervasive feature of the talk', they also found that participants presented themselves in a positive light, much like van Dijk's (1987) participants. In a positive self-presentation, one participant reported, "my generation" is not tolerant of overt racism while the "older generation" grew up with the notion of black inferiority (Augoustinos et al., 1999, p. 366). The participant then goes on to qualify complaints of discrimination by Aboriginal, women and minority people as simply 'crying wolf'. Augoustinos, Tuffin and Rapley's (1999, p. 353, emphasis in original) research states,

the subtle and complex patterns of both modern and "old-fashioned" racist talk seen here are so strikingly evident among a group of supposedly "more enlightened" members suggests that not only is a concern with the "discursive deracialization" of their talk apparently not necessarily relevant for young Australians, but that the continuing oppression of Indigenous Australians continues to enjoy a disturbing high level of political legitimacy.

Further, Augoustinos, Tuffin and Rapley (1999, p. 363) found that the Non-Indigenous participants were categorising the Indigenous/Aboriginal population

⁶ Note, Augoustinos et al. (1999) use the terms *Indigenous* and *Aboriginal* interchangeably. Note further that their use of the term *Indigenous* does not include *Torres Strait Islander Australians*.

into two camps: the ‘achievers’ and the ‘non-achievers’. Whereas *achievers* were found to fit and have adapted to the thinking/values/norms of a *settled white Australia*, *non-achievers* were found to have failed to fit and adapt (and adopt) the thinking/values/norms of the dominant group. Augoustinos, Tuffin and Rapley’s (1999, p. 363) finding of an ‘achiever/non-achiever’ split shows the Non-Indigenous participants orienting to race matters that blame Aboriginals for supposed *non-achieving*; which simultaneously releases Non-Indigenous persons from assuming responsibility for racist actions, attitudes, and experiences perpetrated against Indigenous people. In fact, Non-Indigenous participants drew on four related race matters in their discussions of Aboriginal people.

These were: an imperialist narrative of Australian history exculpatory of colonialism; an economic-rationalist/neo-liberal discourse of “productivity” and entitlement managing accountability for a contemporary Aboriginal “plight”; a local discourse of balance and even-handedness which discounted the seriousness of discrimination and racism in Australia; and a nationalist discourse stressing the necessity of all members collectively identifying as “Australian” (Augoustinos et al., 1999, pp. 351, emphasis in original).

So, while there was this us/them separation of Non-Indigenous and Indigenous people and a further separation for Indigenous people that was determined in line with participants notions of ‘achievement’, there is also this, almost contradictory, call for ‘all members [to] collectively identify as Australian’. However, *collectively identifying as Australian* not only calls upon persons to identify with one racial group membership (i.e., Australian), it also calls upon them *not* to identify with another (i.e., in this instant, Indigenous or Aboriginal).

What is striking is that these findings are from ‘a group which might reasonably be expected to be particularly aware of, and sensitive to, the issues of anti-racism’ – a group of undergraduate psychology students. While Augoustinos, Tuffin and Rapley (1999, p. 353) feel that the *discursive deracialization* of their talk is not relevant for *these* young Australians, their research shows the main thrust of the talk was to ‘construct minority group members negatively by the deployment of

discursive moves and interactional strategies which enhance positive self-presentation' (Augoustinos et al., 1999, p. 371). The Non-Indigenous participants were reporting *unenlightened*, narrow-minded and prejudiced perspectives about Indigenous/Aboriginal people.

Recall that the current study is premised on the Indigenous higher education research finding that suggests that relations between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians on university campuses are problematic. In some senses, Augoustinos, Tuffin and Rapley's (1999) research provides a rationale for conducting the current study, as they show that the race matters of *everyday informal talk on race and ethnicity* are relevant to and impacted by the historical narrative of Australia's colonial history for understanding, sense-making and construction of social life in Australian university settings.

2.2.3 Blurring the Boundaries of Us/Them

In his research, Buttny (2003, p. 107) examined how *white/Non-Indigenous New Zealanders* (i.e., 'Pakeha') 'notions of race, and related constructs' about *black/Indigenous New Zealanders* (i.e., 'Maoris') were 'oriented to and used in context'. Simply put, Buttny (2003, p. 107) examined how Pakeha (racial) constructions about Maoris were made relevant in context. Like Augoustinos, Tuffin and Rapley (1999), Buttny's research was based on 'the premise that "the racial other" is a discursive object socially constructed through talk' (2003, p. 103, emphasis in original). The data for his research were based on transcribed interviews between Pakeha interviewers and Pakeha interviewees, and aimed to examine 'what reported speech can tell us about race as well as reported speech as a conversational practice' (Buttny, 2003, p. 107).⁷

A key finding was that Pakeha produced 'reported speech' (Buttny, 2003, pp. 107-109) to talk about race matters, and is so doing, undermined Maori worth. Buttny

⁷ For a discourse analytic examination of how social categories and concepts are deployed by Non-Indigenous New Zealanders around the historical context of relations of power, refer to Wetherell and Potter's (1992) study.

found that ‘the voice of Pakeha authority’ (2003, pp. 107-109) was established using two distinct types of reported speech (i) direct reported speech and (ii) prototypical reported speech. Direct reported speech was produced to reproduce ‘the speech of the original speaker’ in a way that mocked and belittled the Maori person’s accent, culture, and so on. Prototypical reported speech was used in a similar way, but it quoted ‘a prototypical group member’, thereby portray the Maori group in a stereotypically, negative way, e.g., ‘They go to school an’ suddenly they are confronted with English, “We can’t speak that language what’ll we do?”’ (Buttney, 2003, p. 101). Maoris were reported as having ‘certain characteristics or behaviours that are cast as not only different (from the presumed Pakeha norm), but also deficient’ (Buttney, 2003, p. 102), which supports van Dijk (1987) and Augoustinos, Tuffin and Rapley (1999) finding that white participants separate and partition the population into opposing racial categories. However, there are examples in Buttney’s (2003, p. 110) research that indicate that there are ‘congenial relations among the locals’, that is, Pakeha and Maori locals (i.e., Extracts 9, 10 & 11), which is of interest to the current study.

Pakeha interviewees were found to use both direct and prototypical reported speech to reproduce the reported speech of Maori ‘locals’ in a favourable light. Ascribing the Maori in an *approving* way, Pakeha discourse was shown to contrast ‘local’ Maoris to ‘outside’ Maoris. For instance, one interviewee reported ‘local Maori friends’ as holding similar views to the Pakeha participant on a race matter involving the location of a golf course on Maori burial grounds. The Pakeha participant can be seen to invoke the voice of ‘local Maori friends’, who ‘do not care about the golf course’s location’ (Buttney, 2003, p. 112), and therefore, reportedly, offer no objection to its location. Objections to the golf course’s location were reported as coming from Maori ‘outsiders’, whose opposition to the golf course earned them the reputation of holding ‘extreme political views’ and ‘unreasonable political positions’ (Buttney, 2003, p. 102).

Buttney’s (2003) research shows that while Pakeha typically separate the population in terms of racial category memberships, it further shows that race matters are not simply *black and white*, that is, there is this *grey* area that blurs the boundaries. In other words, differentiating members of the population can be

determined by the degree of similarity/dissimilarity of the thinking/attitudes and so forth of the non-majority member (i.e., Maori) to the thinking/attitudes and so forth of the dominant majority (i.e., Pakeha). When a member of an *out-group* displays traits and behaviours that fit with the norm, as determined by the dominant *in* group, the out-group member is accepted by the in-group. This suggests that the out-group member is therefore not partitioned from the in-group, but seen to be aligning with them, at least on the occasion of its use. So, the boundaries of the us/them opposition that white participants orient to in talking *about* others is not always articulated in terms of us/them, and who is included and who is excluded is not always clear, which is of interest to the current study.

Although Buttny's (2003) work presents a number of findings that are relevant to the current study's interest in race matters in talk in interaction, research that focuses on 'white' talk has attracted criticism for being one-sided (e.g., Judd, Park, Ryan, Brauer, & Kraus, 1995; Kinder & Sanders, 1995; Monteith & Spicer, 2000). For instance, Monteith and Spicer (2000, p. 126) have argued that,

[t]he unbalanced nature of research on racial attitudes, with the greater focus on Whites than Blacks, obviously results in an unbalanced understanding of the nature of group relations... achieving a valid and complete understanding of public opinion, racial tensions, or any other matter in which race is potentially relevant requires that we include not only Whites but also Blacks in our investigation.

This is an important point of departure for the current study, which is one that is taken up in an early American study conducted by Buttny (1997).

2.2.4 Social Contact

Buttny (1997) examined both 'majority' and 'minority' inter-racial attitudes in talking race on campus to understand 'whites', 'African Americans' and 'Latinos' use of reported speech. Data comprised 'post-viewing discussions of talk between students', who had been given the documentary video, Racism 101, to 'watch at

home with at least one other person whom they considered to be a member of their [racial] group' (Buttny, 1997, p. 482). Participants were asked to discuss the documentary 'in an informal and natural way' and comment on 'the quality and quantity of interracial communication' on campus (Buttny, 1997, p. 482). Discussions were audio-taped and used as data.

A common theme throughout the discussions was that of the 'virtual absence of social contact between Whites and African Americans outside of class' (Buttny, 1997, p.495). Buttny (1997, pp. 486-487) found that African American students viewed racism as 'a recurring feature of their lives on campus', while Whites did not [view racism as a feature of African American students' lives]. In some instances, Whites mentioned that claims of racism by African Americans were 'exaggerated', as African American students were said to be 'making something out of nothing'. Buttny (1997, p. 501, emphasis in original, insert added) found,

students' responses largely were to bemoan [problematic incidents] and to complain about the dire state of race relations, or to contest them through challenges, rebuttal, or humorous ridicule'. One way in which these incidents were contested was by *contrasting* opposing positions in order to implicitly undermine one of them: an incident as "racist" versus "stupid".

Buttny's (1999) research is relevant to the current study because it shows that race matters are central to black and white racial groups' sense-making of the social world. Buttny (1999) shows the black participants in his study, much like the white participants in his study, orient to an us/them racial divide in which both groups constitute the other in negative terms. Buttny's (1997) study further shows that a lack of social contact between racial groups creates inter-group distance, heightens misunderstandings, results in low communication satisfaction and, ultimately, avoidance of others, which is something that Warfield Rawls' (2000) examined in her American study.

2.2.5 Interactional Order

In her explanation of 'Interactional Order expectations', Warfield Rawls' (2000) shows that race matters with regard to communication practices. The study examines black and white American communicative practices and preferences, which are said to be embedded in particular expectations about the other. Some practices and preferences have been found to have resulted in 'serious misunderstandings' between black and white Americans (Warfield Rawls, 2000). For instance, Warfield Rawls (2000, p. 262) found that African Americans and White Americans have different appreciations of 'what honesty requires of them interactionally'.

In investigating language of African and White American employees with regard to accepting/rejecting work assignments, African American employees were found to say *no* as 'a right' and 'an obligation', and also as 'essential' to 'dignity' (Warfield Rawls, 2000, p. 264). White Americans are said to 'feel intimidated' by this type of action, as saying *no* is seen to be *not expected*. Saying *no* is something that a number of works have examined (see, Heritage, 1984; Pomerantz, 1992a; Sacks, 1987; Schegloff, 2001) and found to be a dispreferred action in White groups talk. The race matters that Warfield Rawls (2000) examine shows that African Americans say 'no' to provide an 'honest' response, while White Americans say 'yes' to provide a 'diplomatic' response. Warfield Rawls' (2000) research acknowledges that whether a person is 'African American' or 'White American', 'black' or 'white', affects how that person 'speaks, thinks, sees and feels' (Burkhalter, 2006, pp. 172-173) is an important race matter, and therefore of relevance to the current study.

In providing an examination of white and black talk about others, Warfield Rawls (2000) shows that the black participants, much like the white participants, have particular appreciations of what interaction requires of them. Warfield Rawls (2000) provides evidence for her 'expectations' that different racial groups' have different interactional expectations in the form of excerpts of 'two white women' talking (see, Two White Women 6/16/98 #3), 'two black women' talking (see, 'Two Black Women' 6/16/98 #7) and a range of other excerpts of single turns of

talk (see, ‘W1’, ‘W2’, ‘W3’, etc). While this work contributes to the current study’s interest in race matters, race matters are not an examination of *talk in inter-racial interaction* in the sense of being an examination of diverse racial groups talking *with* each other, that is, it does not examine actual relations *between* different racial groups, and therefore does not capture the social phenomena under investigation at the level of interaction, which is the aim in the current study and discussed further below.

2.3 Talking With Others

In this review of literature on race matters, the works presented under the ‘talking *with* others’ heading presents research relevant to the current study’s interest in race matters in talk in inter-racial interaction. Not only do the works presented below provide insights into race matters between different racial groups, they indicate that race *matters in talk in inter-racial interaction*; that is, that one’s race *matters* as when talking *with* others.

2.3.1 Racial Common-sense

Whitehead (2007, p. 1) examined ‘one mechanism by which racial categories, racial “common sense” and thus the social organization of race itself, are reproduced in interaction’. Whitehead (2007) examined how ‘White Group’ members and ‘People of Color Group’ members used, managed and reproduced racial common-sense to understand how they managed the ‘normative framework of accountability involved in talking about race, and using racial categories and racial common sense in interaction’. The data includes video recordings of a ‘race-training’ workshop, which was divided into a morning and afternoon session. The morning session separated participants into two focus groups, (i) a ‘White Group’ and a (ii) ‘People of Color Group’. The afternoon session combined both

‘White’ and ‘People of Color’ *racial* groups into one focus group, called, ‘Group Dialogue’.

Whitehead (2007) investigated how participants explicitly and implicitly used racial categories to describe and interpret actions through an examination of ‘list constructions in formulations of race’, ‘distancing practices’ and ‘allusions to race’. He found that while participants were interactionally demonstrating the relevance of race for a particular occasion, they could also be seen to ‘distance themselves from the authorship of the formulations they produced in doing so’ (Whitehead, 2007, p. 23). While participants were found to ‘resist racial common sense in accounting for their own actions and those of others’, they displayed a ‘delicacy’ when using racial categories.

They must balance the task of speaking openly about their experiences and views with respect to race against the risk of being negatively evaluated or sanctioned should they be heard as inappropriately using or endorsing race as an account for action’ (Whitehead, 2007, p. 16).⁸

Whitehead’s (2007) research is of interest to the current study. His finding that people orient to common-sense as a framework for understanding and interpreting actions shows that race *matters* for social action, that is, that race *matters* in locally-relevant ways.

⁸ Stokoe and Edwards (2007) examined reported racial insults in two interactional settings; telephone calls to UK neighbour mediation centres and police interrogations with suspects in neighbourhood crime. Although racial insults were reported as one of a list of complainable items, the authors found that ‘neighbour disputes’ and those ‘resulting in arrests’ were ‘not commonly formulated in terms of race’ (Stokoe & Edwards, 2007, p. 343). In other words, they denied the racism. Further, where speakers’ racial insults oriented to ‘two-worded’ racial insults’, e.g., ‘Paki bastard’, ‘bitch Somali’, the speaker treated ‘Paki’ and ‘Somali’ as words to deny, leaving ‘bastard’ and ‘bitch’ not denied and not addressed (Stokoe & Edwards, 2007, p. 349). Stokoe and Edwards (2007, p.349, insert in original) have stated,

[t]hese denials display suspects’ understanding of what makes a crime of harassment more serious in English law (i.e., when “racially aggravated”), whereas there is no specific legal prohibition against swearing or calling someone a “whore” or “bitch”.

2.3.2 Complex Causes of Action

Burkhalter's (2006, p. 171) 'interests are in "racial interactions"' and particularly, how people in inter-racial relations 'use race - and more generally how does race matter - when people talk with one another in everyday life'. In other words, in examining race matters, Burkhalter (2006) does not 'assume that racial identities are *necessarily* relevant for every aspect of people's behaviour' (2006, p. 175). Rather, Burkhalter (2006, p. 175) invokes and examines

the racial identities (and other racial phenomena) of this study's participants on those occasions in which it is observably relevant for them. Further, once I establish the relevance of race in some bit of talk or other conduct my aim has not been to connect the phenomena they indicate to taken-for-granted notions of culture and social structure; rather, I have sought to understand what the interviewees might have been doing by managing race on that occasion, and in this way I have attempted to understand how race matters for them.

Burkhalter (2006, p. 188) found that interviewees display interactional methods that enable them to manage racial matters pertaining to their intimate relationships in ways that 'demonstrate, in an observable way, the non-racial motives for coupling'. For instance, Andy, a black male, explains that his fiancée's father is not attending the upcoming wedding of his daughter because he does not like weddings, and not because his daughter is marrying a black man, Andy. Although Andy acknowledges the inference 'one would typically make about a father's refusal to attend his daughter's marriage to a black man', Burkhalter (2006, p. 186) found that 'in claiming intimate knowledge' of his fiancée's father, Andy can disregard racial motives as the sole cause of his actions. So, Andy can treat his fiancée's father's motives as arising out of a more complex set of matters of which Andy has intimate knowledge. This 'de-racing' strategy, as Burkhalter (2006, p. 186) terms it, is found to be 'a method for sustaining long-term relationships where finding racial motives might be disruptive of them'.

Burkhalter's (2006, p. 171) work is of interest to the current study because it shows that people in interaction use race to make sense of occurrences in the social world. With regard to *how* race *matters* for inter-racial couples, Burkhalter found

at times they highlight it, at times they hide it or dismiss it; for some purposes they may positively affirm their racial identities while in other cases they may distance themselves from them (2006, p. 175).

Also, not only does Burkhalter's (2006) work provide insights into race matters that inter-racial couples come up against in everyday life, it provides insights into the intimate world of inter-racial couples for whom race is shown to *matter* in sensitive and delicate ways. Though the current study does not examine interaction between *intimate* racial persons, it is interested in exploring the nature of relations that are being interactionally accomplished by Indigenous and Non-Indigenous participants, as co-partners in the focus group activity 'discussing experiences of university'.⁹

2.3.3 Race Matters

Day's (1998) investigation into how race *matters* for interaction between workers at two factories in Sweden, showed people being ascribed and resisting membership in particular ethnic groups. Day (1998, p. 151) conducted research at two Swedish factories, both of which comprise a large immigrant population, to show how workers' problems were 'communicative in nature'. In line with top management personnel at the factory speculating that problems in the workplace 'were a result of workers having built ethnic "cliques"', Day was interested to show how 'communication between different ethnic groups had led to misunderstandings which, in their turn, had led to a breakdown in group relations' (1998, p. 154). Day (1998, p. 161) examined 'linguistic ethnic group categorizations' or 'descriptions of people as members of a social group', and observed that categorisations such as Chinese group and Polish group and so forth

⁹ For an interesting commentary on inter-racial relationships between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons in Australia, see Hagan's (2008, p. 21) comment in the *Koori Mail*.

were often inappropriate and even contested categorizations' (Day, 1998, p. 154). These observations led him 'to reconsider the notion of interethnic communication taking the following question as a point of departure; how does one go about identifying communication as interethnic from an interlocutor's perspective?' (Day, 1998, p. 154).

Like Day (1998), Pollock (2004), found that race categories were relevant to students at from a racially diverse American school in California. Pollock (2004, p. 6) examined the importance of 'race categories' to students. Pollock's (2004) research at Columbus High School found that although students sometimes categorised themselves into six 'simple' racial groups, Black, Latino, Filipino, Chinese, Other non-whites and Whites, 'were neither throwing race categories away, nor accepting them wholesale'. Instead, students were found to challenge 'such simple categories' ability to describe complex people', and were 'keeping race labels strategically available to describe and analyse social orders and inequalities in resources' (Pollock, 2004, p. 6). Pollock (2004, p. 15) reports that they,

wanted to be treated as race group members in curricula recognizing students' heritages, or for the purposes of distributing curricular attention; students did not want to be treated as race group members at moments when deans were considering who to suspend, or when teachers were distributing personal attention.

So, students were reluctant to be pigeonholed into fixed, one-dimensional categories because they associated one's racial groups with receiving particular types of treatment. Although Pollock (2004) provided a number of interesting findings that show that 'race talk can paradoxically contribute to the racial inequities educators seek to eliminate' (Santoro, 2005), her work offers research *about* racial categories; and not research about racial categories *as interactional accomplishments of* Columbus students, which is of concern in the current study.

In contrast, Day's (1998) research examined racial persons talking *with* others. His analysis examined practices relevant to how 'linguistic ethnic group

categorizations' 'ascribe people to a particular sort of social group, namely an ethnic group' and how making that relevance is something that the person being ascribed may 'resist' (Day, 1998, p. 155). These practices are constituted in interaction between different persons, as mutually constituted, meaningful practices. Day (1998, p. 151) said,

[s]ometimes people around you can pick out your membership in an ethnic group in contrast to theirs and that may, so to speak, be used against you, casting doubt on your capacities to be a member of the social group pursuing the activity at hand.

Among other things, Day (1998) found that individuals tend to dismiss the relevance of racial categories in talk by denying their relevance to the ethnic category to which one feels that s/he is being ascribed. Day (1998) further found that certain racial persons attempted to 'minimise' 'differences', where differences were different to the 'in-linguistic ethnic group'. Persons from certain groups were concerned that a speaker's making relevant their racial group membership made relevant their position with regard to the 'in-group'; and so people tended to downplay the relevance of their ethnicity being made relevant to the task at hand, as race was something that could reveal whether one was 'in' or 'out' and 'included' or 'excluded' from particular social groups.

Day's (1998) research has found that race *matters* to 'live interaction'. He (Day, 1998, p. 170) explained,

I took it that such a thing was not to be found in people's retrospective reports, nor in formal complaints, and in secondary data generally; or, at least, not with the same immediacy as in the very acts of speech that took place in live interaction.

Day's (1998) examination of live interaction or 'talk-in-interaction' showed that persons tended to resist the relevance of racial references, particularly where those racial references had the 'power' to 'disqualify' that person from membership in a particular 'social group'. Day (1998, p. 170) found that people resisted

categorisation in racial groups that positioned them as ‘outside’ a desired group in ‘quiet’ and ‘subtle’ ways.

Day’s (2006) work show that race *matters* when talking *with* others, which is of interest to the current study. The current study is interested in the categorial organisations created and re-created in and through the interaction to understand the relevant memberships that participants invoke in producing their retrospective accounts of university experience to understand how and if race *matters*. Further, it will be interesting to examine the nature of relations being established between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous focus group participants, particularly given the findings that report that these racially diverse groups do not get along.

2.4 Summary

This chapter presented research that is relevant to the current study on race matters in talk in inter-racial interaction. The review presented research relevant to ‘talking about others’. That review found that both ‘white and black’ people talk *about* each other in racially-negative ways that stereotype the other, as other. It was further found that ethnic prejudices and racist assumptions are shared and held in common with members of one’s racial group against particular other groups. The review also presented research relevant to ‘talking with others’. The literature reviewed as constituted and made meaningful by persons in actual, live, local interaction. It showed that race *matters* in ‘quiet’ and ‘subtle’ ways. Hence, the review of literature showed that race matters *matter* in interaction.

The next chapter, *Chapter 3: Empirical and Conceptual Framework*, presents the ethnomethodological principles of Conversation Analysis (CA) and Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA) that will be applied in this study.

Chapter 3

Empirical and Conceptual Framework

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents Ethnomethodology (EM) as a suitable empirical and conceptual framework for this study. Chapter 2 provided a review of the literature to draw out conceptualisations of significance to this study. This chapter provides an overview of EM and its analytic methods, Conversation Analysis (CA) and Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA), both of which are applied in this study. The chapter identifies this analytic framework as one that permits the researcher to document and examine the organisation of naturally-occurring inter-racial interaction between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians in a focus group event in a university setting. Hence, this chapter explicates the framework that will be applied in this study.

The chapter is presented in five sections. Section 3.2 provides an overview of EM. Section 3.3 explicates EM's analytic method of CA, and the aspects of sequential organisation that will be applied in this study. Section 3.4 explicates EM's analytic method of MCA, and the aspects of categorial organisation that will be applied in this study. Section 3.5 presents an overview of three interactional features that will be examined in the study: (i) personal pronouns, including the inclusive/exclusive dual/plural distinction available in some languages; (ii) strategic/sequential forms of action and preference organisation; and (iii) list production and construction. Section 3.6 provides a summary of the chapter.

3.2 Ethnomethodology

EM is oriented towards understanding *how* ordinary members of a culture mutually construct a shared sense of order and intelligibility in everyday social life. This form of social inquiry developed as a result of Garfinkel's (1967/1984) critique of traditional sociologists, who took descriptions of social settings and social order for granted. Garfinkel said,

In doing sociology, lay and professional, every reference to the "real world", even where the reference is to physical or biological events, is a reference to the organized activities of everyday life (1964, p. vii).

Hence, Garfinkel (1967/1984) was interested in the theory of social action, the nature of intersubjectivity and the social constitution of knowledge; an interest in *how* social order is produced by people as they go about *doing* their daily lives. Further, Garfinkel and other ethnomethodologists (e.g., Bilmes, 1993; Boden & Zimmerman, 1991; Briggs & Moerman, 1989; Crapanzano & Moerman, 1990; Freebody, 2003; Heritage, 1984; Jalbert, 1999; Lynch, 2000; Mehan & Wood, 1975; Nelson, 1994; Silverman, 1993; Silverman et al., 1992) have shown that the means by which members analyse their circumstances is crucial to an understanding of social order and intelligibility in social settings, such as the higher education setting.

3.2.1 Ethnomethodology's Aims and Propositions

EM's main aims and propositions are:

1. to document the details of daily social life as mutually constructed cultural events;
2. to analyse detailed features of the interactions through which people encounter and construct social order in domestic and situational sites such as [higher] educational settings; and

3. to show the various ways in which certain understandings about social life come to be imparted, understood and co-ordinated (Freebody, 2003, p. 64).

It is members' productions of everyday common-sense reasoning practices that contribute to and constitute the situated order. For Garfinkel and Sacks (1970, p. 342), a person is a member by virtue of their aptitude for language and sense-making of social action that assigns persons membership. As members engage in social activities, they provide each other with accounts or descriptions of those actual events (e.g., Boden & Zimmerman, 1991; Button & Lee, 1987; Hester & Eglin, 1997; Jayyusi, 1984). Members' accounts are contingent primarily in the local interactional practices themselves. Silverman (1995, p. 125) maintained 'that it is illegitimate and unnecessary to explain that organisation by appealing to the presumed psychology or other characteristics of particular speakers'. Social order needs to be discovered 'from within' the actual settings (Schegloff, 1991a) and through members' *in situ* (situated and occasioned) common-sense reasoning practices.

These 'commonsense' (Garfinkel, 1967/1984) reasoning practices are underpinned by the expectation that members will be able to understand the meaning and rationality of their actions, as well as the action of others. In such a scenario, social order is not a fixed, pre-determined, constant, pre-existing social fact, but a phenomenon produced in and through members' everyday practical activities and choices (Schegloff, 1992, p. xxxv). Hence, social order and therefore, social organisation, social orderliness and the social are taken to be 'accomplishments' of ordinary persons as members of society (McHoul, 1978).

Consider how Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons deal with one another as they coordinate their actions to accomplish inter-racial interaction, and how these actions are 'account-able' (Garfinkel, 1967/1984, p. 1) in terms of the expectations that they hold in common with each other. When Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons act socially they look for logic in the 'here and now' of the situated activity. What this means is that the accomplishment of inter-racial interaction cannot be understood by invoking generalised rules from out there *in*

the ether. Instead, it is the local invocation in the talk of race and relevant references that Indigenous and Non-Indigenous inter-racial interaction is accomplished.

3.2.2 Four Dimensions of Social Organisation

EM's methods enabled Garfinkel (1967/1984) to observe that the rational properties of socially recognised 'familiar scenes' of everyday activities are constituted in and through a process of selecting from 'dimensions of social organization' (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 36). As detailed in Freiberg (2003, p. 59) and reproduced, below, the four dimensions of social organisation are:

1. *local sequential organisation*: that is, as one turn within a sequence of turns that "occur as a 'serial unit'" (Jefferson, 1972, p. 304);
2. *extended sequential organisation*: that is, "the unit, a single conversation" (Sacks & Schegloff, 1979) or "extended sequence" (Psathas, 1992):
3. *categorial organisation*: that is, the incumbency of the speaker as a member of a category, the relevance of which is determined by consulting the "institutionalized features of the collectivity as a scheme of interpretation" (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 92), and
4. *topical organisation*: each action must be accountably adequate given the task it performs for the development and preservation [... (Sacks, 1995)] of the current topic of talk:

The production of local actions display members' accountability for orientating to these dimensions of social organisation. This process of continual collaborative decision-making and interpretation of meaning constitutes order in social life.

Further, this constitutive process can involve concurrent selections from any of the four dimensions of social organisation. Members may form decisions and make sense of each other's actions and activities via their ability to choose from more than one type of organisation at the same time. Sacks (1992b, p. 562) explained that some types of organisation are '*serially linked on the surface*',

while others are ‘*layered* onto each other’. As Sacks’ (1992b, p. 562) explained, ‘having found it orderly in one way doesn’t mean that you’ve done all there is’ to make sense of the activity under investigation.

Therefore, the current study understands not only that Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons primarily make sense of their own and each other’s actions at a local, moment-by-moment level of organisation, but also that each action is thick with the different concurrent meanings it glosses. Making reasonable sense of multiple meanings of actions and utterances in accomplishing race matters in talk in inter-racial interaction is, therefore, likely to require reference to these dimensions of social organisation. The current study is interested in providing an adequate account of the relationships that exist between the various types of organisation that operate in members’ methods for producing and recognising formal structures of activities by examining the practices of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons as they engage in the focus group task at hand.

3.2.3 Documentary Method of Interpretation

Drawing on Mannheim, Garfinkel’s interest in discovering and providing evidence of how people make sense of their own and each others actions resulted in his conceptualisation of ‘the documentary method of interpretation’ (1964). As Garfinkel (Mannheim, 1952 cited in Garfinkel, 1964, p. 78) puts it,

the method consists of treating an actual appearance as “the document of,” as “pointing to,” as “standing on behalf of” a presupposed underlying pattern. Not only is the underlying pattern derived from its individual documentary evidences, but the individual documentary evidences, in their turn, are interpreted on the basis of “what is known” about the underlying pattern. Each is used to elaborate the other.

This definition of the documentary process provides for the view that members of society do *not* make sense of actual actions in daily social life by simply perceiving them as they currently appear. Instead, it assumes that particular

actions can only be interpreted as recognisable by reflexively drawing on past and future ‘appearances-of-familiar-events’ (Garfinkel, 1964, p. 78).

Garfinkel (1967/1984, p. 36) designed an experimental demonstration ‘to exaggerate the features of this method in use and to catch the work of “fact production” in flight’. This demonstration involved one experimenter and ten students. Students were informed that research was being conducted to explore alternative methods of ‘giving persons advice about their personal problems’ (Garfinkel, 1967/1984). Students were intentionally incorrectly informed that the experimenter was a ‘student counsellor’. Students were individually told to present their problem to the counsellor (who was in an adjacent room) and then to ask the counsellor a series of at least ten questions, which could be answered with a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer. Students were blind to the fact that an even number of ‘yes’ and ‘no’ answers had been randomly preselected as part of the experimental design.

The examination found that:

- ‘Answers were perceived as “answers-to-questions”’ (Garfinkel, 1964, p. 79);
- ‘There were no preprogrammed questions; the next question was motivated by the retrospective-prospective possibilities of the present situation that were altered by each actual exchange’ (p. 89);
- Where answers were incomplete, inappropriate, or contradictory, questioners considered them so ‘for ‘a reason’ (p. 89);
- Students ‘were surprised to find that they contributed so actively and so heavily to the advice that they had received’ (pp. 90-91);
- Students’ worked at making ‘reasonable’ each of the experimenter’s answers, and by this means constituted the ‘yes’ and ‘no’ answers as genuine counselling advice for their personal problems (p. 92); and
- Through documentary procedures, such as perceiving answers as answers-to-questions, ‘the documentary method developed the advice so as to be continually “membershopping” it’ (pp. 92-94).

The combined findings suggest that it is the ‘taken for granted’ social practices and accounting procedures, which constitute the deepest layers of the moral and factual orders (Garfinkel, 1964, p. 79). For EM, the significance of the reflexive aspects of the documentary method are fully altered when the actors become engaged in activities. This is because ‘the actors find that willy-nilly, their actions reflexively contribute to the sense of the scene which is undergoing development as a temporal sequence of actions’ (Heritage, 1984, p. 231).

Building on Garfinkel’s (1964) conceptualisation of the documentary method, Sacks (1992a, 1992b) provided a description of the formal features of sequential and categorial organisation. These paved the way for developing rigorous, empirical and formal methods of documenting and examining naturally occurring talk as social action. These methods of analysis have become known as conversation analysis, or CA (e.g., Drew & Heritage, 1995; Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970; Liddicoat, 2007; Psathas, 1995a; Sacks et al., 1974), and membership categorisation analysis, or MCA (e.g., Baker, 1997; Eglin & Hester, 1992; Hester & Eglin, 1997; Housley & Fitzgerald, 2003; Jayyusi, 1984; Psathas, 1998; Schegloff, 2007b). The current study applies EM’s methods of CA and MCA to document and examine the situated inter-racial interaction in the focus group event. These are presented in Sections 3.3 and 3.4, respectively.

3.3 Conversation Analysis

CA emerged in the late 1960s out of the collaborative work of Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (e.g., Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970; Sacks et al., 1974), and especially Sacks’ *Lectures in Conversation* (see, 1992a, 1992b). In a lecture to his students on conversation, Sacks explained,

The kind of phenomena we are dealing with are always transcriptions of actual occurrences, in their actual settings (1992a, p. 113).

The kind of phenomena that CA is interested in is that of the social organisation of conversation or ‘talk-in-interaction’ (Schegloff, 1987b) as detailed inspections of the transcriptions of actual recordings of interactions between people (Psathas & Anderson, 1990). It is interested in how sequences of action are organised and situated in particular utterances and the instances of those activities. Goodwin and Heritage (1990, p. 283) said that CA,

seeks to describe the underlying social organization—conceived as an institutionalized stratum of interactional rules, procedures and conventions—through which orderly and intelligible social interaction is made possible.

Hence, the main goal of CA is to describe and explicate the competences that ordinary speakers use and rely on when participating in intelligible socially organised interaction.

Since its original conception, CA’s analytic methods and techniques have been applied to a growing range of everyday activities, including: hypnotic sessions (e.g., H.T. Demosthenous, 2006), second language use (e.g., Gardner & Wagner, 2004), telephone conversations in Samoa (e.g., So’o, & Liddicoat, 2000), Aboriginal conversation (e.g., Gardner & Mushin, 2007; Vinson, 2008), Non-Indigenous Australian interaction (Augoustinos et al., 1999) and so on. It provides a methodological approach to the study of order, orderliness and organisation of social action, that is, everyday, mundane conversation, or talk-in-interaction.

So, in this study, the focus

is not on language as tool to allow something else to occur, but on language as action, where the language used is itself the something that is occurring. It is through detailed analysis of the moment-to-moment talk that it is possible to see this something, to focus on language as the reality, as the social action underway (Neville & Rendle-Short, 2007, p. 30.31).

3.3.1 Conversation Analysis' Fundamental Principles

According to Heritage (1984), CA's aims and propositions are underpinned by three fundamental principles:¹⁰

1. Interaction is structurally organised;
2. Interaction is doubly contextualised; and
3. No order of detail in interaction can be dismissed, a priori, as disorderly, accidental or irrelevant.

These principles are explicated below.

3.3.1.1 Interaction is Structurally Organised

Following on from Garfinkel (1967/1984) and Sacks' (1984) claim that there is order at all points in interaction, Heritage (1984) maintained that 'the most fundamental assumption of conversation is that all aspects of social action and interaction can be found to exhibit organized patterns of stable, recurrent structural features'. What this means is that (i) interaction exhibits organised patterns, (ii) that these organised patterns are to be treated as structures in their own right, and as social in nature, and (iii) that these organised patterns are independent of the particular characteristics of any given speaker. Common-sense knowledge of these organisations is a key aspect of the competence that speakers bring to their communicative activities. Further, that common-sense knowledge influences their conduct and the interpretation of the conduct of others. Hence, it is the structural organisation of the interaction that informs the production of those organisations.

3.3.1.2 Interaction is Doubly Contextualised

Interaction is doubly contextualised as it is both context-shaped and context-renewing (Heritage, 1984, p. 241). Interaction is context-shaped because it is to be

¹⁰ Note, in a later publication on current developments in CA, Heritage (1989, p. 94) identified a fourth fundamental assumption, that 'the study of social interaction in its details is best approached through the analysis of naturally occurring data'. That assumption is dealt with in Chapter 4, Section 4.5.

understood by reference to the context in which it operates, that is, largely the talk out of which it comes. It is context-renewing because each utterance produces the context for the production of some next action, in a sequence. This doubly contextualised nature means that interaction can only be adequately understood in context, and that this action contributes to the contextual framework in terms of which a next action will be understood. Hence, CA recognises the importance of context to an interaction, showing how interaction is shaped by context and how context is shaped by interaction.

3.3.1.3 Orderliness in the Details in Interaction

The structural organisation and doubly contextual properties inhere in the details of interaction so that no order of detail in conversational interaction can be dismissed a priori as disorderly, accidental or interactionally irrelevant (Heritage, 1984). As Psathas (1995b, pp. 2-3) explained, it is ‘the interest of discovering, describing, and analysing the structures, the machinery, the organised practices, the formal procedures, the ways in which order is produced’ that should drive the analyst. The discovery, description, and analysis of that produced orderliness is the task of the analyst.

These basic principles are assumed in this study. The data is structurally coherent. Each action/utterance will be analysed within the context in which it occurs. Further, the study will not dismiss fine detail a priori, as irrelevant.

The key CA concepts used in this EM study are presented later in the chapter (see Section 3.5).

3.4 Membership Categorisation Analysis

Like CA, MCA also emerged in the late 1960s out of Sacks’ (1964-1972) *Lectures in Conversation*. MCA provides a means of grouping persons, objects and places in order to make sense of them. Sacks’ (1992a, 1992b) explained that

in interaction persons, as members of society, orient to membership categories to which they, and others, belong. At any given time, a person belongs to a range of membership categories. For example, a person in a higher education setting could orient to the following: student, male, Aboriginal, single-parent, soccer player, community representative, and so forth. Such categories occur as collections of like categories within membership category devices, henceforth MCD's, and are discussed below.

3.4.1 Membership Categorisation Devices

In a lecture to his students, Sacks explained that the *MIR Membership Categorization Device* (MCD) was 'central machinery of social organization' (Sacks, 1992a, 1992b). The device, the membership, inference-rich representative, is one in which 'vast amounts of stuff is handled by members in terms of those categories' (Sacks, 1992a, pp. 40-41). Schegloff (2007b, p. 463) explained, one way of understanding the MCD is analytically, and simply, as; 'a set of practices for referring to sets of persons'. Sacks (1992a, 1992b) first introduced the MCD in his paper, 'the baby cried; the mommy picked it up'. In that lecture, Sacks (1992a, 1992b) explained that people use and orient to membership categories as a basis for action. Understanding that 'the mommy' that picked up the baby is 'the mommy of *this* baby', Sacks (1992a, 1992b) aimed to show his students how the categories 'mommy' and 'baby' could be seen to be, according to Schegloff (2007b, p. 463), 'articulated embodiments of "anyman's" vernacular or common-sense understandings'. Anyone hearing the utterance would common-sensically (i.e., by virtue of being members of shared cultural understanding) interpret that the mother who picked up the baby was the mother of that baby.

3.4.1.1 Collections of Categories, and Categories

Sacks (1992a, p. 218) explained that any collection of membership categories contains at least a category that can be applied to some population containing at least a member. Categories are not a simple, single aggregate of categories but are organised into collections of categories because they 'go together' (Schegloff,

2007b, p. 467). For example, the categories ‘student’ and ‘tutor’ form the collection ‘members of university’ in the localised occasioned settings of their occurrence because they go-together as paired-categories or standardized-relational-pairs (SRP) (Sacks, 1992a, p. 218). While the categories ‘student’ and ‘tutor’ are ‘to be heard from the same collection’ (Hester & Eglin, 1997, p. 4), categorization followed from Sack’s (1992a, p. 239) interest in practical reasoning and was not essentially bound up with materials as interactional.

3.4.1.2 Rules of Application

Sacks (1992a) further explained that any collection of membership categories contains at least a category that can be applied to some population containing at least a member, and that that single membership category is adequate for describing a member, as the economy rule maintains. This means, for example, that if a person has been categorised as a ‘student’, providing an extended list of the membership category is unnecessary. Further, in terms of Sacks’ (1992a, p. 218) consistency rule, where a category from some device’s collection has been used to categorise a first member of the population, additional members of that population may be categorised under ‘that category or other categories of the same collection’ (Sacks, 1992a).

The consistency rule tells us that if a first person has been categorised as “baby” the further persons may be referred to by categories from either the device “family” and to the device “stage of life” (Sacks, 1992a, p. 247, emphasis in original).

In terms of Pn-adequate categories, Sacks (Sacks, 1986:134) identified ‘a class of category sets’ - ‘which-type sets’, which are made up of a set or a group of two or more categories ‘where each set can classify any member of the population’. The class of category sets are said to be Pn-adequate. Pn-adequate category sets include ‘sex, age, race, religion, perhaps occupation’ (1992a, p. 40). Schegloff (2007b, p. 468, emphasis in original) explained

it is a fact of major importance that there are at least two Pn-adequate devices in every language/culture we know ... because anyone who can be categorised by some category from one device – say female [from the MCD sex] – can be categorised by a different category – say “45-year old” from the MCD age.

3.4.1.3 Category-Bound Activities

While one can allude to a category (e.g., ‘mommy’) by mentioning the doing of an action (e.g., ‘picking up one’s crying baby’) that is category bound, the doing of a category-bound action can introduce into an occasion the relevance of the category to which that action is bound. What that means is, the doing of a category bound action such makes relevant the category to which the action is bound, and therefore other categories that may be relevant to understanding the scene. Mention of the category ‘baby’ makes relevant the MCDs age and stage-of-life, which makes relevant other categories from the same collection (e.g., ‘mommy’).

Common-sense knowledge about the category can be heard and seen to be a representative of that category for the purpose or use of whatever knowledge is stored by reference to that category (Schegloff, 2007b, p. 468). Sacks’ (1992a) production of the categorical reference ‘mommy’ makes available common-sense knowledge about that category; for instance, that mother’s pick up their babies when they cry. Category sets are inference-rich because they contained a ‘great deal of knowledge that members of a society have. Categories can be thought of as ‘store house[s]’ or ‘filing system[s]’ (Sacks, 1992a, pp. 40-41) for the common-sense knowledge that ordinary people have about what people are like, how they behave and so forth, and any member of any category is heard or seen to be a representative of that category for the purpose or use of whatever knowledge is stored by reference to that category (Schegloff, 2007b, p. 469).

In an analysis of a story between two friends, Sacks showed how a story-teller’s account provides for the inference that a ‘colored lady wanted to go in the main entrance there where the silver is and all the (gifts and things)’ (1992b, p. 179) in

an attempt to rob the store. It is the story-teller's categorial formulation of 'race', produced in the utterance the 'colored lady', that is, *colored*, and not, for instance, in the categorial formulation of 'gender', that is, *lady*, that make available the inferences being made; in fact, using *lady* as the categorial formulation to produce an account that *a lady wanted to go in the main entrance there where the silver is and all the (gifts and things)* would provide for a very different account, possibly one involving an expensive purchase. Reference to categorisations naturally arise out of the work of members in putting 'in information relevant to seeing what was happening' on the scene (Jayyusi, 1984, p. 24) and rising or characterising themselves and others as members of particular categories. Therefore, it is not a knowledge of individual or specific persons that generates a projection common to members but 'the features of a perceived *class* of persons that is relevant' to the incumbents of the category (Jayyusi, 1984, p. 23).

3.4.1.4 Co-Membership and Cross-Membership

Further, in terms of collections of membership categories Sacks (1992a, p. 590) explained that the treatment of categories of some collection to a population 'as "partitioning" a population into various categories'. Sacks (1992a, p. 590) explained,

The application of the categories of some collection to a population, is an operation that can be talked of as "partitioning" a population into various categories. One consequence of that operation – in the first instance for analysts, but then perfectly obviously as a matter that's oriented to – is that we get a population that can be considered to be composed either of co-members or cross-members of some category, or of all co-members or all-cross members.

So, for example, in terms of my study, application of the categories of the collection 'race' to any population can give the partitions 'black/white' or 'Indigenous/Non-Indigenous' (or a range of other racial categorial partitionings depending on the context of the interaction, e.g., 'Asian/Non-Asian'). Then, there might be three people, two Indigenous persons, who are co-member to each other,

and cross-member to one Non-Indigenous. There might be two people one Indigenous and one Non-Indigenous, giving all cross-members; or two people both Indigenous, giving all co-members. Further, Sacks found that persons do not simply talk about being co-members in a category, for example, Indigenous; they may talk about being co-members by reference to other collections' categories, such as 'tutor' or 'student' from the collection, 'university'. Co-membership and cross-membership can be relevant for all sorts of activities. In fact, as Sacks (1992a, p. 590) has explained, '[s]ome things are not appropriately done unless persons are cross-members, other things are not properly done unless persons are co-members'.

Sacks (1992a, p. 591) explained that in reading the literature on 'child training in various cultures' he discovered that the literature regularly considered the notion of 'when it is' that cultures begin training members - that is persons - 'for various future memberships that culture might have'. This meant that there were 'systematic relations' that were found to exist between various collections of categories.

Such that, given one collection and now considering a second, the relevance of which will arise later, you can say what a members of a category of the first might be eligible for with respect to the second. If there's a perfect relationship between membership in a category of the first and membership in a category of the second, then persons could begin to be trained for that second, however soon you wanted to start. (Sacks, 1992a)

So, there were found to be 'eligibilities' between the kinds of relationships that various collections have to each other (Sacks, 1992a, p. 590).

These basic principles are assumed in this study. This study documents and examines co-membership and cross-membership to understand whether it is relevant for the task at hand, 'discussing experiences at university'. While expectable categories in this study relate to 'Indigenous' and 'Non-Indigenous' persons, it will be interesting to examine the types of collections that participants

orient to and what those might look like in terms of co-memberships and cross-memberships. Hence, co-memberships and cross-memberships are taken to be accomplishments of the participants as members of society; who are the collective meaning-makers and ‘sense-makers or interpreters of the[ir] world[s]’ (Hester, Francis, & Watson, 2000, p. 2).

Drawing on a range of EM studies (e.g., Fitzgerald & Housley, 2002; Hellstén, 1999; Housley & Fitzgerald, 2001; Silverman, 1998; Watson, 1997), this EM study uses CA to examine the sequential organisation and MCA to examine the categorial organisation created and re-created in and through inter-racial interaction.

3.5 Interactional Features

This section introduces three key features of talk that are examined in this study: (i) personal pronouns; (ii) strategic/sequential forms of action and preference organisation; and (iii) list production and construction. Research on these interactional features, some of which is presented below, indicates that an examination of their usage in interaction can provide insights into the relevant memberships that focus group participants invoke and the actual relations being established among participants on a moment-by-moment basis. For instance, pronouns have been found to be capable of revealing varying sorts of solidarity and differentiation amongst persons, while strategic/sequential forms of action and preference organisation in operation can reveal how participants are (dis)aligning and (dis)agreeing in the focus group event. Finally, list production and construction provides insights into how focus group participants align with one another. Hence, examination of these features ‘serve as tools for explicating the *action and interactional* import of particular episodes of conduct’ (Schegloff, 1999, p. 418, emphasis in original), and particularly with regard to partitioning and aligning the population.

3.5.1 Personal Pronouns

One of the features examined in this study is personal pronouns. The English paradigm of personal pronouns has grammatical divisions of first, second and third person, which contain seven personal pronouns: first-person singular ('I'), first-person plural ('we'), second-person singular and plural ('you'), third-person singular masculine ('he'), third-person singular feminine ('she'), third-person singular neuter ('it'), and third-person plural ('they') (Hurford, 1994, p. 202). Pronouns 'stand in place of a noun phrase' (Fromkin, Rodman, Collins, & Blair, 1996; Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973). They are 'used in the grammatical classification of words, referring to the closed sets of items which can be used to substitute for a noun phrase' (Crystal, 1985, p. 248). They refer back (anaphoric reference) to a prior noun phrase, forward (cataphoric reference) to a yet-to-be-produced noun phrase, or externally (exophoric reference) to some object, event or person in the spatio-temporal situation. They provide 'textual cohesion' (Halliday & Hasan, 1985) in spoken language and written text. A number of studies that have explored pronouns have found though that 'they are not merely substitutes for nouns' (e.g., Bramley, 2001; Elias, 1978; Errington, 1998; Fox, 1987; Nevile, 2001b; Sacks, 1992a, p. 333; Silverstein, 1976).

In his work on 'we', Sacks (1992a, 1992b) distinguished between two very distinct varieties, the summative 'we' and the categorised or 'premitive' 'we'. The summative 'we' refers to a finite and specific list of persons; say Peter, Paul and Mary. With the summative 'we', for example, it would be a contradiction to say 'we enjoy reading', but 'I don't enjoy reading'. Sentically, each person included in the summative 'we' has to do the thing (i.e., enjoy reading). In contrast, the categorised or premitive 'we' refers to an infinite list of persons, say students, or tutors, or Aboriginal persons, and so forth.

Type 2 (categorized "we") is interesting because it provides for exceptions, and talk of and around those exceptions can lead to all sorts of moral work. It can lead to talk of who's exceptional and who's not. So if we get "Men are bastards, but my husband's not a bastard", there's a claim to positive moral status for the particular person in question. Likewise, if we get "Lawyers are

rich, but my lawyer husband is poor”, there’s a claim about the person’s moral failing’ (McHoul, 1997, p. 317).

Further, in his discussion of ‘tying techniques/rules’, Sacks (1992a, p. 333) found that not only do pronouns tie some ‘current piece of talk to some past piece of talk, but ‘comprise an orderly technique which is at least as important as are the sequencing pairs for ordering parts of a conversation’ (Sacks, 1992a, p. 333). According to Sacks (1992a) tying one’s talk to another’s prior talk is a motivation to listen, and tying properly shows that one has understood. While Sacks found that pronouns serve as a ‘reference preserve’ through their tying together technique (1992a, p. 333), he further found that ‘[d]eployment of the pronouns ‘we’, ‘you’, ‘they’ and the like can serve to express varying sorts of solidarity and differentiation, and different ways of “partitioning the population”’ (1992a, p. 716).

Pronouns support interactional management (Fox, 1987). They produce and maintain particular relations and relationships. For instance, in an early study, Brown and Gilman (1960, pp. 253-254) examined ‘a connection between social structure, group ideology, and the semantics of the pronoun’ (Brown & Gilman, 1960, pp. 253-254) to understand how the use of personal pronouns is influenced by the characteristics of the speaker, and the relationship between speaker and hearer, as well as other aspects that constitute relations of power. Although they did not use data from naturally occurring interaction, their work identified that speakers have a consistent pronoun style, and that pronoun style can reveal matters to do with speakers’ social class status and political thinking (Brown & Gilman, 1960, pp. 253-254), as well as serving to build solidarity between interactants.

In the Amsterdam/California study that van Dijk (1987, pp. 7-11) conducted, his investigation found that white participants were using pronouns to separate and distance themselves from other ethnic groups. White participants used the third person plural pronouns ‘they’ (as ‘subject’) and ‘them’ (as ‘object’) to distance themselves from Turkish, Surinamese and Moroccan ethnic groups as displayed in comments such as, ‘*They* look different’, ‘*They* cause the decay of Amsterdam/the

neighbourhood’, and ‘I have had contacts with *them* in the shop/market’ (van Dijk, 1987, pp. 105, emphasis added). In other words, pronouns were found to be demonstrative of ‘expressions of attitudinal distance, and, hence, as signals of prejudice’ (van Dijk, 1987, p. 105). Van Dijk’s (1987) work suggests that white racial groups orient to an ‘us/them’ dichotomy in which they establish themselves as members of the *white in-group/us* in opposition to members of the *ethnic out-group/them*.

Following Sacks, a number of other studies have adopted an interactional approach to pronouns. For instance, Watson (1987, p. 262) found that ‘choosing between pronouns’ means ‘choosing between mutually-exclusive linguistic alternatives’, which means that interactants actively select pronouns to exploit pronominal references and, in doing so, partition one person and number reference (i.e., first, second or third) from the other person and number references, at least for that moment and space in time.

Nevile’s (2001a, p. 245) thesis examined pronominal use in the cockpit to investigate what it means to be ‘accountably and recognisably an airline pilot’. In examining pilots’ routine talk-in-interaction, Nevile found that pilots use pronouns as a resource to make clear ‘their continuously evolving understandings of the distribution of these cockpit roles’ (Nevile, 2001a, p. 248), which is relevant to successfully completing the task at hand. For instance, the choice of ‘we’ in a communication makes salient the pilots’ shared conduct and responsibility for starting the engines’ as ‘something which occupies the attention of both pilots and in which both pilots participate’ (Nevile, 2001a, p. 75).

By shifting moment-to-moment between pronoun forms pilots are able to shift between available cockpit roles as their flight progresses, and so make salient who they are ‘talking and listening as’.

Hence, Nevile’s (2001b) work provided an understanding of ‘who’s who’ in the cockpit by showing that cockpit roles are interactionally created on a moment-by-moment basis. It showed that roles in the cockpit are not ‘given’, fixed or ‘officially assigned’, but are ‘repeatedly invoked and understood throughout the

flight' through the pronominal choices made by persons in the cockpit (Nevile, 2001a, p. 119).

A similar finding was identified in Keogh's (1999) research. Keogh's (1999) work examines a school principal's use of pronouns in a speech that he is delivering to potential parents and children of the school community. Keogh (1999, p. 191) shows that the principal's pronominal usage sets up or establishes 'an ever changing and dynamic audience of parents and/or students who might or might not have received his words as directives for themselves or for each other'. The principal's production of 'we', for example, was found to reveal some particular institutional positioning practices. For instance, the principal was found to produce 'we' in order to discursively shift the composition of teams to include and/or exclude different members to achieve different effects.

Bramley's (2001) investigation into the use of pronouns in political interviews found that politicians 'actively exploit the flexibility of pronominal reference' to 'show affiliation or create distance between people'. Bramley's (2001, p. 260) examination of the first person pronoun, 'we', showed it was 'central in the construction of identities of politicians as group members'. Pronoun selection was shown to enable politicians to talk-into-being 'alignment with and boundaries between different identities' (Bramley, 2001, p. v), which allowed them to construct multiple selves and others. They were shown to do this to 'deflect individual attention or simply to present issues as collective rather than individual ones' (Bramley, 2001, p. 260). According to Bramley (2001, p. 260), 'it is not the referent of 'we' that is important so much as the effect that is achieved by presenting "self" as part of a collective identity'.

The notion of collective identity has also been taken up by McHoul (1997, p. 317) in his investigation on the production of 'we' in sport. The focus of McHoul's (1997, p. 315) work is with Laurie Lawrence; the Australian swim coach at the 1988 Summer Olympics, who 'leaps to his feet and shouts "We won! We won!"' after Australia's only gold medal winner, Duncan Armstrong, won the two hundred meter race. McHoul (1997) found that 'we' 'can do the work of hooking

up the game and the ceremony, the sports event and the broader everyday. McHoul (1997, p. 319) further found that ‘in the case of sports’ there are ‘peculiar instances’ that may indeed ‘be unique to sports as a particular domain of everyday life’. In the case of swimmers, McHoul explains that while swimmers mostly compete alone, they also compete in teams. What that means is that non-swimmers such as the coach, swim crew and even family can be included in a particular projection of ‘we’. In other words, the ‘we’ can be summative and therefore made up of a finite list (including, say, the coach and members of the swim/relay team). However, there can also be a categorial or premitive ‘we’, that is an infinite group of people that includes spectators, the audience, fans, or virtually any person, including persons of the same nationality, particularly in the case of international sporting events. Hence, he argues that

[w]ith respect to sports (and in a few other instances), “we” does both listed and categorial work at the same time; though it may not (McHoul 1997, p. 319).

There is a growing number of studies which adopt an interactional, rather than a social structural approach to pronouns.¹¹ These studies have gone beyond the traditional concerns with grammatical divisions and anaphora and deixis and showed that participants’ shared orientation to personal pronouns and how they are used is one of the ways in which orderly and mutually intelligible talk is produced (e.g., Watson, 1987). However, few of these EM and interactional studies have gone beyond examination of the pronouns in English to an examination of the pronouns in the inclusive/exclusive system for distinguishing pronouns, which is the aim of my study.

¹¹ A number of authors have written on person pronouns in interactional terms, refer to the writings of Brown and Gilman (1960), Jakobson (1957/1971), Benveniste (1971), Silverstein (1976).

3.5.1.1 Inclusive/Exclusive Dual/Plural Distinction

In English, there is only one non-singular first person plural pronoun, ‘we’, to refer to collective or group membership.¹² However, over half the Indigenous languages of Australia (e.g., Torres Strait Island Kriol, Roper River Kriol)¹³ and many languages of the world (e.g., Vietnamese, Chechen) make a distinction between the ‘inclusive’ and ‘exclusive’ varieties of ‘we’ (Dixon, 1980). Dixon explained,

[t]here will be two separate duals – inclusive ‘you and I’ and exclusive ‘I and someone other than you’ – and plurals – inclusive ‘you and I and one or more others’ and exclusive ‘I and two or more others, not including you’ (1980, p. 277).

This inclusive form refers to the inclusion of the addressee in the collection being established, whereas the ‘exclusive’ form refers to the exclusion of the addressee from the collection being established.

Table 3: First-Person Inclusive/Exclusive Dual/Plural Distinction

| <i>First-person</i> | <i>Inclusive</i> | <i>Exclusive</i> |
|---------------------|--|--|
| Duals | You and I | I and someone other than you |
| Plurals | You and I and one or more others | I and two or more others, not including you |

Source: Dixon (1980)

¹² English makes a marginal distinction through the inclusive, ‘let’s’. The directive, ‘let’s eat’ can include the person addressed, and therefore be an invitation to the addressee to eat (i.e., ‘let you and I eat’). Alternatively, ‘let us eat’ - formal usage - can exclude the person addressed, and be a request to leave the speaker alone, (i.e., ‘go away so that I – and one or more unnamed others – can eat’).

¹³ Roper River Kriol, which originated from the Roper River Mission, is now in usage over a large section of the Northern Territory and adjacent regions of Western Australia and Queensland (Dixon, 1980, p. 73).

Dixon (1980) has shown that many languages also make a distinction between ‘dual’ and ‘plural’ varieties of ‘we’. The dual system includes a maximum of two persons in the collective (i.e., the speaker and one other person), while the plural system includes more than two persons in a collective (i.e., the speaker and two or more persons).¹⁴

Although there is no grammatical category of this system in English, Skelton, Wearn and Hobbs (2002) have examined ‘a standard distinction between doctor and patients’ productions of inclusive ‘we’ (‘you and I’) and exclusive ‘we’ (‘we doctors, but not ‘you patients’) in English language primary care consultations. Their aim was to measure aspects of doctor-patient interaction through the deployment of first person pronouns, ‘I’, ‘me’, ‘we’ and ‘us’, in general consultations, and to contribute to advice to doctors on how to communicate with patients in a patient-centred atmosphere’ (Skelton, Wearn, & Hobbs, 2002, p. 484). The authors found that ‘doctors are very much more likely than patients or companions to use ‘we’ and, on many occasions on which they do, an inclusive interpretation is possible’ as shown in the examples from their study below.

Example, Skelton, Wearn & Hobbs’ (2002, p.487) work

D: ... we’ll talk about it again in a few days times <write>

P: Thank you ever so much indeed doctor.

D: [if your mood] starts getting low again

P: right

D: then we can start you back on them

P: OK

The study further found that patients and companions do not include doctors in their use of ‘we’. The authors argue that this indicates that ‘they do not perceive doctors as *participants* in care, but as conduits or co-ordinators of care’ (Skelton et al., 2002, p. 488). The authors conclude that ‘the fact that patients and companions never included the doctor when they said “we” is particularly

¹⁴ Some Australian languages have an even more complex system. For instance, Lardil, which is spoken in the Gulf of Carpentaria, makes distinctions of form that depend on the relationship between the people referred to in a given production of ‘we’ (Dixon, 1980). One type of non-singular pronoun is used when the people referred to are in the same generation level or are two levels apart, while a different type of pronoun is used if they are one or three generations apart.

interesting, and from the point of view of partnership – disappointing’ (Skelton et al., 2002, p. 488).

The current study presumes that ‘we’ is a resource for examining (i) who is being included and who is being excluded, as well as (ii) the number of individuals being referred to in a particular collection being established through the production (Dixon, 1980). Whereas ‘we’ has been shown to be ‘a socially deployable resource that makes available group-identities or memberships’ (Sacks, 1992a, p. 334), and a ‘powerful resource’ for interpreting ‘who “we” are at any moment’ (Malone, 1997, p. 67), this study presumes that the application of this more complex repertoire can provide understanding into the phenomenon of inter-racial interaction, particularly with regard to ‘partitioning the population’ (e.g., Sacks, 1992a, p. xi; Skelton et al., 2002). Hence, these distinctions from Indigenous Australian languages provide a tool for distinguishing different uses of ‘we’ are of relevance to this study of inter-racial interaction because these distinctions exist in the first languages of some of the participants in the focus group event (Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander languages and Kriol), so the distinctions are more salient to them.

3.5.2 Strategic/Sequential Forms of Action

Another feature documented and examined in this study is that of preference organisation. Preference organisation is a key organisational feature of talk through which persons reduce threats to ‘face’ (e.g., Brown & Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1955), align and develop social solidarity (e.g., Atkinson & Heritage, 1992; Bilmes, 1988; Boyle, 2000; Goodwin & Heritage, 1990; Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; Jefferson, 1992; Koshik, 2005; Kotthof, 1998; Lerner, 1996; Liddicoat, 2007; Pomerantz, 1992a; Sacks, 1987; Schegloff, 2001, 2007a). In examining naturally occurring conduct, there developed an alternative emphasis on the ‘strategic/sequential forms of an action’ (Schegloff, 1989). This approach focused on the ways alternate forms of an action shape the possibilities for different types of responses, and on how these various forms can be manipulated to achieve specific outcomes.

3.5.2.1 Preference Organisation

A way in which alternative forms of an action shape responses is shown in Schegloff and Sacks' (1973) seminal work on 'adjacency pairs', which are made up of 'a two-unit sequence in which the units are positioned adjacently to each other (Sacks, 1992b, p. 556).¹⁵ In such pairings, the production of a first turn or first pair part (FPP), such as a question, has been shown to require the production of a second turn or a second pair part (SPP), such as an answer. Further, a wide range of responses are available for any given FPP (e.g., question, offer, invitation, request, and so on), as Sacks (1987, p. 56) explained,

For any given first pair part, there may be a bunch or more second pair parts that can be introduced.

Further, the responding SPP can be produced as 'preferred' or 'dispreferred'. Elaborating on this point, Sacks (1987, p. 58) wrote:

You know perfectly well that zillions of things work that way – a next turn (e.g. answer) is in "agreement" with the "preference" of the prior (e.g. question). What we wanted then to do, was to see if we could investigate what might be a general principle – a "preference for agreement", perhaps.

A number of studies have found that there is a general preference for agreement, whereby the designs of SPPs tend to be 'type-connected' to the prior FPPs to which they respond (e.g., Atkinson & Drew, 1979; Bilmes, 1988; Frankel, 1990; Goodwin & Heritage, 1990; Greatbatch, 1993; Kotthof, 1998; Liddicoat, 2007; Peräkylä, 2004; Pomerantz, 1992b; Schegloff, 2007a). In characterising the relationship of the SPP to its relevant FPP, studies have found that the FPP proffering the initial action may be structured in such a way that it provides for the relevance of the production of one action over another, thereby orienting to a preferred next action or, to use Sacks (1987) terms, a general principle of a preference for agreement. The 'concept of preference deals with the possible ways

¹⁵ See Schegloff and Sacks (1973) and Schegloff (2007a) for a fuller description of adjacency pairs.

in which some conversational action may be accomplished', and not with 'the personal desires of the speakers' (Liddicoat, 2007, p. 110).

However, a number of studies have pointed out agreement with a prior FPP is not always and necessarily a preferred next action. For instance, in their early work in judicial settings, Atkinson and Drew (1979) found denials to accusations are preferred next actions. Pomerantz's (1992a, p. 64) studies into features of dispreferred/preferred turn shapes found that 'subsequent to a self-deprecation, the usual preference for agreement is nonoperative: An agreement with a prior self-deprecation is dispreferred'. Similarly, Kotthoff's (1998) study into disagreement disputes found that student disagreement with professors can be a preferred action. Jefferson's (2002) study into American and British uses of 'the response-token "no"' found that 'no following a negatively-framed utterance affiliated with it, could be understood as "I feel the same way", "I'd do the same thing", etc, i.e., "I'm with you"'. Hence, this study understands that the preference organisation in any interaction is constituted in and through the co-joint actions of interactants, from within the circumstances in which the particular action is constituted, on a moment-by-moment (or turn-by-turn) basis.

In terms of the structure of preferred and dispreferred actions, Levinson (1983, p. 307, emphasis in original) said,

Preferred seconds are **unmarked** – they occur as structurally simpler turns: in contrast dispreferred seconds are **marked** by various kinds of structural complexity. Thus dispreferred turns are typically delivered: (a) after some significant delay; (b) with some preface marking their dispreferred status, often the particle *well*; (c) with some account of why the preferred second cannot be performed.

Simply put,

Actions which are characteristically performed straightforwardly and without delay are termed "preferred" actions, while those which are delayed,

qualified and accounted for are termed “dispreferred” (Heritage, 1984, p. 267).

Goodwin and Heritage (1990, p. 297) explained, ‘dispreferred actions often incorporated accounts that offered some explanation for the action’, but ‘preferred actions did not’. The dispreferred action is noticeable and accountable (e.g., Goodwin & Heritage, 1990; Lee, 1987; Schegloff, 1968). Further, Boyle (2000, p. 590) has argued that the noticeable and accountable SPP can be distinguished as either sanctioned or not sanctioned; a distinction made relevant in the subsequent actions of recipients.

Finally, Heritage’s (1984, p. 246) examination of the shared orientations and expectations of speakers illustrated some of the ways in which the designs of actions can be seen to contribute to the maintenance of social solidarity. Referring to the work of Pomerantz on self-deprecations, Heritage (1984, pp. 268-269) explained, ‘where agreement would constitute criticism of the other, it is disagreement which is packaged in the preferred response’. While Heritage acknowledged the role of accounts in dispreferreds is complex, his work found that ‘preferred format actions are normally affiliative in character while dispreferred format actions are disaffiliative. Similarly, whereas preferred actions are generally said to be supportive of social solidarity, dispreferred actions are said to be destructive of it. Hence, Goodwin and Heritage (1990, p. 297), Pomerantz (1992a) and others (Heritage, 1988) have found that the preference organisation has a systematic bias for affiliative actions (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990, p. 297).

Examination of preference in my study, therefore, can make available for analysis the ways in which the Indigenous and Non-Indigenous participants co-jointly constitute actions to either promote or undermine social solidarity. As Peräkylä (2004, p. 8) put it, ‘[f]or CA, the heart of solidarity resides in the organization of action, not in relations between persons *per se*’.

3.5.2.2 Agreement and Disagreement

A number of studies have examined the preference organisation in operation through examination of agreements and disagreements. According to Pomerantz (1992a, p. 63), '[a]greement/disagreement names alternative actions that become relevant upon the profferings of initial assessments'. In other words, agreement and disagreement are differentiated on sequential grounds. That is, agreement-SPPs and disagreement-SPPs are different responsive actions and are produced in different way. These can be considered two basic organising principles for sequences; agreement is expressed early in an answer and disagreement is expressed much later in an answer, as shown in the example from Sacks (1987) studies into question-answer adjacency pairs work. CA/MCA concepts used in this thesis are explained in Chapters 5 and 6, which are both analytic chapters in this study.

Example, Sack's (1987) work

- 1 A: And it- apparently left her quite permanently damaged (I suppose).
B: Apparently. Uh he is still hopeful.

- 2 A: Yuh coming down early?
B: Well, I got a lot of things to do before gettin cleared up tomorrow.
I don't know. I w- probably won't be too early.

Sacks (1987, p. 58) explained, 'agreeing' answers normally get a 'preferred' format, and 'disagreeing' answers normally get a 'dispreferred' format, which is what we see in the examples above. In example 1, agreement is expressed early in the answer, with a minimisation of gap between the prior turn's completion, 'Apparently' (Speaker B, SPP-speaker). In example 2 (above), disagreement is delayed. Possible disagreement is signalled by the recipient's production of the contrast conjunction, 'Well' (Speaker B, SPP-speaker), which prefaces the speaker's explanation of why the agreement cannot be performed, 'I got a lot of things to do before ... I w- probably won't be too early'; a weak form of disagreement, but disagreement nonetheless.

M.H. Goodwin's (1983) study of disagreement between urban children showed that disagreement could be thought of as existing along a continuum; from a weak

form of mitigated disagreement to a strong form of aggravated disagreement. Petraki's (2002, p. 207) study of relationships and identities between three-generations of Greek-Australian women showed that disagreement was produced in both weak and strong forms in 'differences and disagreements' talk. 'Weak/mitigated' disagreement were generally prefaced by dispreference markers (e.g., 'well', 'but'), delayed and followed up with an explanation of the absent agreement; whereas 'strong' or 'aggravated' disagreement were found to 'take the form of questions initiated with "what + a partial repetition" of the opponent's words, indicating rejection of the opponent's argument and a strong form of dissent' (Petraki, 2002, pp. 232-233).

Pomerantz (1992a, p. 65) identified the following overall features of agreement/disagreement turn and sequence shapes as follows:

1. Agreements have agreement components occupying the entire agreement turns; disagreements are often prefaced.
2. Agreements are accomplished with stated agreement components; disagreements may be accomplished with a variety of forms, ranging from unstated to stated disagreements. Frequently disagreements, when stated, are formed as partial agreements/partial disagreements; they are weak forms of disagreement.
3. In general, agreements are performed with a minimization of gap between the prior turn's completion and the agreement turn's initiation; disagreement components are frequently delayed within a turn or over a series of turns.
4. Absences of forthcoming agreements or disagreements by recipients with gaps, requests for clarification, and the like are interpretable as instances of unstated, or as-yet-unstated, disagreements.

This study aims to provide an adequate account of the preference organisation being established in my data, and to describe how Indigenous and Non-Indigenous participants co-jointly constitute preferred and dispreferred actions to understand the phenomenon of agreement and disagreement in this inter-racial event.

3.5.2.3 List Production and Construction

One way in which the preference organisation can be examined is through lists. A list is a sequential feature or resource that speakers can use to provide accounts. Jefferson's (1990, p. 63) work on list construction as a task and resource found that in interaction 'many lists occur as three-part units': as, for example,

- a simple three-part list (e.g., 'adultery, and murder, and-and-thievery') (p. 63),
- a triple single format (e.g., 'blah, blah, blah') (p. 67); and
- a more elaborate format (e.g., 'five pounds of bacon? oo a choice of- or ten pounds of bacon? or y'know a whole range of things') (p. 67).

Jefferson (1990, p. 63) and others (e.g., Lerner, 1994) have found that completed lists in natural conversations constitute a turn at talk and that the hearer can monitor the third component as a turn at talk to accomplish particular interactional work, such as topic-shifting and offense avoiding. Further, Whitehead (2007, pp. 2-11) found that speakers use lists to formulate race in a general way, reducing the need for speakers to formulate specific racial categories.

One aspect of lists is that they can be built through concerted co-selection of items. In her work on categorisation and the moral order, Jayyusi (1984, p. 75) showed that items on a list share an internal relationship with other items on that list. As Jayyusi (1984, p. 75) put it, 'roughly speaking' they seem to 'have something to tie them together'. Jefferson's lists (above) demonstrate Jayyusi's (1984, p. 75) point; that is, that list items can be internally tied and coherent (e.g., adultery, murder and thievery). While list items can be tied together in a variety of ways (e.g., through like-items and/or contrast-items), Lerner (1994, p. 20) has explained that lists can be used 'to formulate a class of objects through an inductive procedure by moving from the particular to the general'.

Lists quite often contain 'generalized list completers' (Jefferson, 1990, p. 67) in the final slot. The 'generalising list completer' as Lerner (Lerner, 1994) has referred to it, provides a relevant item to properly complete the list (Sacks, 1992a) that is not a specific item. While the generalising list completer is not a specific

item, it tends to be one referencing the general class of items to which those other items on the list belong. For instance, in his work on ‘racial common sense in interaction’, Whitehead (2007, p. 23) found that ‘generalised list completers operate (both separately and together) to constitute an exhaustive list of racial categories’. Whitehead (2007, pp. 2-11) further found that lists are a resource through which speakers can formulate *race in general*, allowing list-producers to manage the ‘categorizing the categorizer’ effect by ‘referring explicitly to race, while implicating race in general, rather than any specific racial category’.

Further, Jefferson (1990) identified a phenomenon associated with list construction, list assimilation or additive assimilation. List/additive assimilation refers to instances where a non-speaker of a list-in-progress becomes a party to that listing by adding to the list-in-progress.

Example, from Jefferson’s (1990) work

Linda: You c’d alms (.) y-I don’even think you’d haftih use
the Jello that jis kinda gives it a l[ittle bit/v:::]
Joan: [gives it color]
Linda: =flavor:
Joan: [yea:ah
Linda: [too,=
=jist a teeny bit [more fla]vor en=
Joan: [Ye:::ah]
Linda: =hhhhhh But I though oo tha’ rilly sounded goo:d.

In the example (above), Joan overlaps Linda’s turn-at-talk to offer an item that could possibly complete Linda’s turn, ‘[gives it color]’. However, in a kind of dispreferred action, Linda does not explicitly take up Joan’s list item, as evidenced in her production of a different list item, ‘=flavor’. In fact, Linda’s utterance, ‘=flavor:’ appears to be a correction action to Joan’s prior turn. However, Linda’s production of ‘too’ in her next turn-at-talk indicates the acceptability of Joan’s list item (‘color’) as one item, with another item ‘flavor’, as traits of Jello. Hence, while a list is a sequential resource that speakers can use to provide accounts, it is also a resource through which participants can co-produce accounts and provide different ways of describing aspects of the social world – descriptions that do more than describe (Jayyusi, 1984).

This study documents and examines some of the ways in which ‘a non-speaker of a list-in-progress becomes a party to that listing’ by adding to the list-in-progress (Jefferson, 1990, p. 82). Further, the study aims to provide an account of how Indigenous and Non-Indigenous participants co-jointly construct and produce lists, and how those collaborative co-constructions contribute to the phenomenon of inter-racial interaction because jointly constructing a list is an aligning action, and producing a subsequent list after a person is also aligning. Conversely, not completing a list may be viewed as an act of non-aligning.

Other EM/CA/MCA concepts used in this thesis are presented ‘in text’ when examining a given piece of talk (see, Chapters 5 & 6).

3.6 Summary

This chapter provided an overview of EM and its analytic methods, CA and MCA. The chapter explicated aspects of sequential and categorial organisation that will be applied in this study. Further, the chapter provided an overview of three interactional features that are closely examined in the study: personal pronouns, including the inclusive/exclusive dual/plural distinction available in some languages; strategic/sequential forms of action and preference organisation; and list production and construction. Hence, the chapter presented the framework applied in this study as a suitable empirical and conceptual framework for examining race matters in talk in inter-racial interaction as a social accomplishment of the organisation of naturally-occurring talk in a focus group event in a university setting.

The next chapter, *Chapter 4: Research Design*, introduces the research design and analytic methods of the study.

Chapter 4

Research Design

4.1 Introduction

Recall that this study explores a naturally-occurring inter-racial interaction in which Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons are engaged in the focus group activity *discussing experiences of university* in a university setting. Chapter 3 presented the ethnomethodological character of conversation analysis (CA) and membership categorisation analysis (MCA), and also presented the three main interactional features that are examined in this study; personal pronouns, preference organisation and lists. This chapter provides an overview of the research design adopted in this study, and identifies it as a design framework that is particularly suited to documenting and examining race matters in talk in inter-racial interaction.

This chapter is presented in seven sections. Section 4.2 introduces the focus group method and single case analysis, which provide for the collecting of data. Section 4.3 presents information on the selection of sites and the selection of participants for the study. Section 4.4 discusses ethical clearance for Indigenous projects and the university. Section 4.5 outlines transcription procedures, and presents information on recording interaction and Wave Pad. Section 4.6 discusses reliability and validity and Section 4.7 presents stages of analysis. A summary of the research design is provided at Section 4.8.

4.2 Research Method for Collecting Data

4.2.1 Focus Group Method

This study adopts the focus group method to explore how participants socially accomplish inter-racial interaction. A number of researchers have used the focus group technique to conduct their investigations (e.g., Augoustinos et al., 1999; Cameron, 2005; Demosthenous et al., 2006; Kitzinger, 1994; McIlwain, 2005; Myers & Macnaghten, 1999; Pope, 2002; Singh et al., 2006; Sprenkle & Moon, 1996; Warfield Rawls, 2000; Wilkinson, 2006), and there is a growing body of Indigenous research in Australia that is also using the method (e.g., Collard & Palmer, 2006; Oxenham et al., 1999; Robertson & Demosthenous, 2004; Robertson et al., 2005b).

Augoustinos, Tuffin and Rapley (1999) use ‘discussion groups’ to examine ‘race relations in Australia’. Robertson and Demosthenous (2004, p. 16) used the focus group’ method to collect ‘sensitive’ data from ‘families, friends and community members’ about the loss of their loved ones in investigations into young Aboriginal females reported missing to police. Oxenham and colleagues (Oxenham et al., 1999) used what they referred to as a ‘meeting-style dialogue’ to conduct their research, entitled, *‘A Dialogue on Indigenous identity: Warts ‘n’ All’*. While numerous terms are used to refer to the method, what is clear is that the focus group method continues to grow in popularity as researchers find it makes a ‘significant’ contribution to research investigations because it allows researchers to ‘learn that something we hadn’t noticed before is a significant issue’ (Agar & McDonald, cf., Wilkinson, 2006),

In the focus group method, a small number of people are gathered together in ‘an informal group discussion “focused” around a particular topic or set of issues’ (Wilkinson, 2006, p. 50). The method elicits peoples feelings, attitudes and perceptions about a particular issue through conversations (Puchta & Potter, 2004). The nature of focus groups is such that, in interacting with one another,

[p]articipants do not just agree with each other. They also misunderstand one another, question one another, try to persuade each other of the justice of their own point of view and sometimes they vehemently disagree' (Kitzinger, 1994, p. 113).

Kitzinger (1994) maintains that some participants in focus group discussions may vehemently disagree with each other. Puchta and Potter (2004) and others (e.g., Krueger, 1988) have cautioned that some participants in focus groups may dominate the discussion, which has the effect of silencing other participants. This can result in the focus group becoming sidetracked and departing from the topic/theme of the focus group (Krueger, 1988; Puchta & Potter, 2004). However, whereas *dominating the group*, *silencing others* and *becoming sidetracked/going off-topic* are typically seen as difficulties or weaknesses in focus group studies, in EM studies this is not the case.

Recall that the current study is interested in inter-racial interaction as a phenomenon constructed in focus group interaction, as produced by ordinary members in and through the production of their talk (and silence). The approach taken in the current study departs radically from more traditional views of focus group relevance to examine what it is that these participants (whoever they may be), say and how they say it; in this moment in time and place. Hence, the current study is not concerned with the amount of time that each of the participants are allocated to present their opinions and ideas, nor is it concerned with the notion of the discussion becoming sidetracked and moving away from the original focus group question, 'what are your experiences of university'?

Further, it needs to be made clear that the current focus group was conducted solely on the basis of a general invitation to discuss 'experiences of university'. Recall that the current study is interested in how inter-racial interaction is socially accomplished among a group of people engaged in the activity 'discussing experiences of university' in a university setting. As such, the current study is interested in how inter-racial interaction is socially accomplished by participants in, and through, their talk, and not in the participants' experiences of university, per se, which is in keeping with EM's analytic approach (see Chapter 3).

While the ‘dynamic quality of group interaction’ arises out of participants discussions and debates, it is the focus group’s interactional nature that is of central significance (Cameron, 2005, p. 159). Cameron (2005) explained that ‘the multiple meanings that people attribute to places, relationships, processes and events are expressed and negotiated, thereby providing important insights into the practice of knowledge production’. Given that the goal in the current study is to gather ‘data which give an authentic insight into people’s experiences’ (Silverman, 1993, p. 91), the current study adopts the focus group method to gather data.

The data source for this study consists of two hours of a naturally-occurring, audio-recorded interaction in which participants responded to the focus group activity, ‘discussing experiences at university?’. The data from the focus group event were collected from a single site in Brisbane, Australia – an Indigenous Higher Education Support Centre in a university setting. Hence, this study explores the data collected from a single focus group event, and therefore offers a single case analysis.

4.2.2 Single Case Analysis

Single case analysis is an important ‘key starting point’ in research, and particularly exploratory research. A single case analysis is ‘sufficient to attract attention and analytic interest because the instance is an event whose features and structures can be examined to discover how it is organised’ (Psathas, 1995b, p. 50) and ‘orderly for its participants’ (Schegloff, 1968). It enables the researcher to ‘develop sensitivity to very close levels of details in the talk’ (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998, p. 121) so as to engage in a ‘meticulous examination’ (Peräkylä, 2004, p. 2) of the actual interaction itself, and to explicate its features. It involves looking at an interaction, or segments of the interaction, to track in detail the various resources and devices used by participants to accomplish an action, such as talking-into-being identity or membership categories. It has been argued that whether the particular social action does or does not occur again is irrelevant for showing how this single occurrence is organised and the machinery of its production (e.g., Czislowski-McKenna, 2001; Gale, 1990; Housley & Fitzgerald,

2003; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; Lerner, 1994; Psathas, 1995a) because ‘actual single events are studiable’ (Sacks, 1992c, p. 26). Hence, my study documents and examines how a single occurrence of inter-racial interaction is organised and the machinery of its production to ‘inform a reflective consideration of related theoretical/analytic matters’ (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 1).

4.3 Sites and Participants

4.3.1 Selection of Sites

The focus group event was conducted on one site; an Indigenous Higher Education Support Centre. Indigenous Higher Education Support Centres or enclaves, as they were known, were initially established in universities across Australia to provide equitable access and participation of Indigenous Australians at the tertiary level (Anning et al., 2005). At the current time, there are thirty-six Indigenous Higher Education Support Centres in universities across Australia. These Centres provide ‘support to Indigenous students [and staff], further Indigenous academic studies, create a network of Indigenous students and academics and provide an Indigenous presence on university campuses’ (DEST, 2005). They act as official offices of the university and deal with matters regarding Indigenous students. In some senses, the Centres also offer immunity in terms of what can be talked about. In that sense, these Centres can be seen to share some of the traits of consulates, as the nature of the setting permits and/or sanctions talk, which might not be permitted (or produced) in other parts of the university.

However, recall that in EM/CA/MCA studies, a site is an interactional accomplishment of the participants. It is therefore a consequence of its being talked-into-being and made relevant to the social activities in which participants are engaged (Drew & Heritage, 1992). In this study, sites are taken to be single interactional achievements of the practical actions of co-participants.

4.3.2 Selection of Participants

Six people voluntarily participated in this project. Three relevant criteria for participants required that they were over 18-years of age, were/had an affiliation with an Australian university, and self-identified as either an Indigenous Australian and/or a Non-Indigenous Australian. Note, the Non-Indigenous participants in this study disclosed that they had undergone Indigenous cultural awareness training in line with past/current employment in the ITAS program (see, Appendix B: Glossary of Terms).

While most research provides a snapshot of participants in terms of macro-sociological variables (e.g., educational background, income) and personal background, the researcher has elected not to provide such a snapshot. Further, the research does not include any indication of the number of speakers of Kriol and/or other Indigenous languages. Participants' 'missing data' (ten Have, 2000, p. 55) is provided only when made relevant by a participant in their talk and only where their local procedural relevance is demonstrated.

The logic here is that if such a categorisation is not demonstrably relevant for the members, than any analysis involving categories must be seen as, at best, well-informed speculation (Rapley & Pretty, 1999, p. 700).

In other words, it is the aim of this research that '[t]he existence and relevance of such identities are, strictly speaking, to be discovered in the analysis, as products of the local practices of participants' (ten Have, 2000, p. 55).

4.4 Ethical Clearance

4.4.1 Research Ethics for Indigenous community

In keeping with protocols for ethical research with Indigenous communities, prior to seeking ethical approval from the University to conduct the study, the

researcher met with Indigenous staff of the University to gain their support for the project. After gaining the support of the Indigenous community, the researcher sought the approval of the Brisbane Council of Elders; a formal body of custodians and traditional landowners with the requisite authority for approving such projects. Gaining approvals from the traditional owners of the land on which the study is conducted is necessary if the study is to be received by the broader Indigenous community. This study is underpinned by the ethics, values, principles and themes recommended for ethically-appropriate research practices with Indigenous people. These values inform the design, ethical review, working partnerships and conduct of the research, as set down by the National Health and Medical Research Council for Indigenous people (NHMRC, 2003/2007).

4.4.2 Research Ethics for the University

An application for ethical clearance was submitted to, and approved by, Griffith University's Human Research Ethics Committee (GUHREC) (EPS/08/03) (see Appendix C: Ethical Package). This project has satisfied the requirements of the principles of ethical research as set down by the University's Ethics Committee.

The researcher obtained initial consent from people using the space for the researcher to approach them to explain the nature of the research project for which the data was being collected that day. Persons who gave their consent were assured of anonymity and confidentiality and were told that they could withdraw their participation at any stage. Each person was provided with an Information Sheet and a Consent Form (see Appendix C: Ethical Package). Those choosing to participate were required to sign the Consent Form prior to taking part in the activity.

There are no potential risks to any person involved with this project. Informed consent has been obtained from all participants and participants have been made aware that they retain the right to withdraw their consent at their discretion and that their participation remains voluntary and confidentiality assured. This ensures the principles of ethical research as set down by Griffith University.

4.5 Transcription Procedures

4.5.1 Recording Interaction

Recording interaction is a fundamental aspect for CA/MCA studies. Sacks (1984), Heritage and Atkinson (1984, p. 4) and others (e.g., ten Have, 2002) have maintained that tape recordings: (i) allow the researcher to listen repeatedly to the recording, permitting discovery of phenomenon; and (ii) are records that others can use to check the analytic claims made by the researcher. For example, Heritage and Atkinson (1984, p. 4) have found that,

recorded data serves as a control on the limitations and fallibilities of intuition and recollection; it exposes the observer to a wide range of interactional materials and circumstances and also provides some guarantee that analytic conclusions will not arise as artifacts of intuitive idiosyncrasy, selective attention or recollection or experimental design. The availability of a taped record enables repeated and detailed examination of particular events in interaction and hence greatly enhances the range and precision of the observations that can be made. The use of such materials has the additional advantage of providing hearers and, to a lesser extent, readers of research reports with direct access to the data about which analytic claims are being made, thereby making them available for public scrutiny in a way that further minimizes the influence of individual preconception.

While the tape recording of data is of central importance to CA/MCA studies, researchers have the option of gathering audio recordings, visual recordings, or both. Despite the fact that visual recordings may provide additional insights into the phenomenon under investigation (Atkinson & Heritage, 1992), there are complex protocols governing the use of visual recording of Indigenous Australians. Visual recordings involving Indigenous persons would seriously restrict the continued use of data, especially in circumstances where a participant passed away (NHMRC, 2003/2007). Hence, a decision was made to use only audio taped recordings, which Sacks (1992a, p. 165) acknowledges as ‘sufficient

data for analysis ... because they constitute a 'good enough' record of what happened'.

4.5.2 Transcriptions

According to Peräkylä (1997, p. 207), '[a] rich transcript is a resource of analysis'. Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998, p. 73) have stated,

[f]irst, transcription is a necessary initial step in making possible the analysis of recorded interaction in a way that CA requires. Secondly, the practice of transcription and production of a transcript represents a distinctive stage in the process of data analysis itself.

'[A]t the time of transcribing, the researcher cannot know which of the details will turn out to be important for the analysis' (Peräkylä, 1997, p. 207). The starting point for analysis is to engage with the data in an unmotivated way; that is without pre-conceived notions or ideas of what one might find, because it is the features of the interaction itself that is of relevance to the analysis. Noticings and discoveries for how people take turns talking, how they emphasise their talk, what they say when they talk, how they talk, and other features are made possible through the close and repeated listening to the recorded data and in the process transcribing (e.g., Jefferson, 1989; Sacks, 1987). Transcribing goes through a series of phases, beginning with a simple capturing of words and then onto a finer process of transcribing using special notations developed for conversation analysts.

4.5.3 Transcription Conventions

The transcription conventions for representing details of talk that were used in this study were devised by Gail Jefferson and are used in many CA/MCA publications, with minor variations. The symbols and explanations used in this study are based on, and simplified from, those provided in Jefferson (1989). Liddicoat (2007, p. 14) explained,

[t]his transcription system is well suited to detailed analysis of talk and it has proved to be both a robust and useful tool for understanding the ways in which language is used in social interaction.

This system of transcription allows the researcher to detail the sequential order of how turns at talk are interactionally designed. For example, the system enables the research to detail: how people self-nominate to take a turn at talk; how people hold onto their turn and/or pass it up; how people emphasise their talk, by speaking loudly or softly, slowly or quickly; where people pause or interrupt each other in their talk; and the responses provided to the speaker by the listener, and so forth. Further, the system for transcribing talk will be presented alongside results to demonstrate the particular meaning of a particular feature of the talk. A complete set of CA transcription conventions is re-presented at Appendix D: Transcription Conventions.

4.5.4 Wave Pad

The unique core activity of CA work requires the development of accurate transcriptions that are based on the audio-recording of naturally-occurring interaction. In EM/CA/MCA studies, ‘timing’ has traditionally been measured through use of a stop-watch and/or the ‘one one thousand, two one thousand’ (Jefferson, 1989, p. 166) counting method. While the authors maintain that ‘the methodological maxim operative in the timing of these phenomena is that the transcriptionist strives to be internally consistent rather than to arrive at a standardized (clock time) demarcation’ (Psathas & Anderson, 1990, p. 87), Wave Pad, a computer software program, offers a technology for measurement that promotes a greater accuracy in timing which supports increased internal consistency.

Wave Pad is an audio editing computer software program that was used to aid in transcribing the data. Wave Pad technology can produce a visual display of digitalised sounds on a computer screen, which allows the transcriber to see when sound is ‘low’ or ‘high’. The transcriber can also use horizontal time axis to

measure for example, the lengths of pause, sound stretches, and other sound-timing details. Using Wave Pad has helped to eliminate the inaccuracies that can result from transcriber error associated with the timing of these phenomena. It is also very good for accurately identifying the start and finish of simultaneous talk, which is something that it is of relevance in this study.

4.6 Reliability and Validity

4.6.1 Reliability

According to Peräkylä (1997, p. 216), ‘the reliability of tape recordings remain an inherent strength of CA’. Reliability is a key issue for research because reliability establishes consistency and truth and objectivity of the findings (Peräkylä, 1997). Reliability requires reliable tapes and reliable transcripts that can be relied upon for re-examination at a later date. With regard to the advantages of using tape-recordings, Sacks (1984, p. 26) said:

I could get my hands on it and I could study it again and again, and also, consequentially, because others could look at what I had studied and make of it what they could, if, for example, they wanted to be able to disagree with me.

In other words, audio-recordings allow for ‘public scrutiny’, which promotes the objectivity of the research and allows for reliability (Heritage, 1984, p. 238).

4.6.2 Validity

The validity of the data was ensured through the gathering of authentic, naturally occurring (that is, not-experimental and not co-produced with the researcher), which were audio-recorded and later accurately transcribed to represent the social

phenomena to which it refers. Heritage and Atkinson (1984, p. 4) have explained that,

the use of recorded data serves as a control on the limitations and fallibilities of intuition and recollection [...] providing hearers and, to a lesser extent, readers of research reports with direct access to the data about which analytic claims are being made, thereby making them available for public scrutiny.

In EM/CA/MCA studies the validity of the interactions is not a problem of the research design because the validity of the talk and actions, as trustworthy, are determined by the participants themselves (e.g., Garfinkel, 1967/1984; Sacks et al., 1974). Every instance of talk warrants its own analysis and ‘the truthfulness of the analytic claims that are being made about those recordings’ (Peräkylä, 1997, p. 201) are determined by, and through, the participants’ utterances of the claims.

The participants’ procedures for deciding the validity of each others talk as appropriate to the interaction are displayed through their own actions (Sacks, 1992b). Simply, it is in the very nature of how participants talk to one another that a speaker displays their understanding of the other prior turns’ talk. In addition,

[s]ince it is the parties’ understandings of prior turns’ talk that is relevant to their construction of next turns, it is THEIR understandings that are wanted for analysis. The display of those understandings in the talk of subsequent turns affords both a resource for the analysis of prior turns and a proof procedure for professional analyses of prior turns – resources intrinsic to the data themselves (Sacks et al., 1974).

4.7 Stages of Analysis

Recall that, this study is interested in examining race matters in talk in inter-racial interaction. Further, one main research question is proposed:

1. How is *inter-racial* interaction socially accomplished among a group of people engaged in the activity ‘discussing experiences of university’ in a university setting?

Analysis will proceed through the following stages:

1. ‘Unmotivated looking’ (Psathas, 1995b) at the data. This refers to the spontaneity of the researcher, who is not motivated to a looking for a pre-theorised phenomenon but is unmotivated to a noticing and discovering of what is happening in the data or of what *it* is that is happening in the data. Recall that the participants in this study are engaged in an open-ended activity, ‘discussing experiences at university’.
2. Selection of sequences, which Pomerantz and Fehr (1997, p. 71) have proposed depends on the interests of the researcher. The study is interested in the use of pronouns, the preference organisation and lists. Hence, sequences or fragments of talk have been selected for analysis in line with the researcher’s discovering of those phenomena.
3. Analysis of sequences in this study is presented in two chapters, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6; both of which apply EM/CA/MCA to ‘elucidate and describe’ (Schegloff, 1987a, p. 101) the phenomenon of interest. A number of stages are followed.
 - (i) Introduce an excerpt of talk;
 - (ii) Present the action;
 - (iii) Describe the ‘technical machinery’ (Lerner, 1994, p. 21) or interactional features of the action, through examination of the local, sequential organisation and categorial organisation (and, to a lesser extent, the topical organisation); and
 - (iv) Return to the initial excerpt to show how the explicated features

interactionally accomplish the proposed action.

Further, this study adopts an applied approach. Unlike a ‘straight’ approach, which ‘makes no claims to be capturing wider sociological concerns’ (Heap, 1990), the applied approach will add a fifth stage in the analysis of sequences, that is,

- (v) Consider how the explicated features’ interactional accomplishment of the proposed action may deliver news about the consequences of the structure of the phenomenon beyond the immediacy of the interactional context.

4.8 Summary

This chapter has provided details of the research design for the project. Section 4.2 introduced the data, including issues to do with the ‘focus group’ research method for collecting data and single cases analysis. Section 4.3 presented information on the selection of sites and selection of participants. Section 4.4 discussed ethical clearance, including research ethics for the University and for Indigenous projects. Section 4.5 outlined transcription procedures relevant to recording interaction, transcriptions, transcription conventions and Wave Pad. Section 4.6 discussed reliability and validity, including the documentary method of interpretation. Section 4.7 presented stages of analysis.

The next chapter, *Chapter 5: Partitioning the Population*, begins the analysis.

Chapter 5

Partitioning the Population

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is the first of two analytic chapters in this study on race matters in talk in inter-racial interaction. Chapter 4 detailed the research design for the study. This analytic chapter explores linguistic, conversational and categorial resources of the interaction, with a focus on personal pronouns, and particularly the non-singular first person pronoun ‘we’. Recall that ‘we’ has been found to be a socially deployable resource that makes available group-identities or memberships (Sacks, 1992a, p. 334) (see, Chapter 3, Section 3.5). Examination of how ‘we’ operates in the data under analysis invokes the relevant memberships that focus group participants’ talk-into-being in producing accounts of university experience. Further, exploration of the *categories of person* each participant is including and excluding from these memberships can be seen to segment the focus group population into disparate membership categories (see, Section 5.2). The analytic focus provides insights into the situation and phenomenon under investigation, particularly with regard to positioning, and thereby ‘partitioning the population’ (Sacks, 1992a, p. xi).

This analytic chapter (and the next) applies EM’s Conversation Analysis (CA) and Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA) to examine the focus group event. It is presented in two sections. Section 5.2 examines the use of pronouns to make visible the diverse groups that participants include themselves in and exclude themselves from in their accounts of university experience. In particular, the section focuses on the production of ‘we’, to gain insight into some of the ways in which members of the focus group differentiate themselves into identity sets or categories of members that compose the collections of categories. Section 5.3 presents a summary of the analyses.

Further, this chapter, and the next, provide documentary evidence in the form of extracts which exemplify the features of the talk described. In this chapter, ‘we’ components under investigation are placed in curly brackets (i.e., ‘{we}’) to aid in quick identification. In addition, to understand who ‘we’ refers to, the local context of the detail surrounding the talk is included in the extract. In some instances, the broader Australian context in which the talk is located is also provided to aid in the interpretation of the data. Finally, excerpts used in this thesis are categorised, for example, as Table 1: Lines 11-17. ‘Lines’ refers to the lines of talk presented in the excerpt, while ‘11-17’ identifies the line numbers from where the excerpt of data is located in terms of the hour-long interaction. This provides the reader with an understanding of where it is that a particular excerpt of data is located in the extended interaction.

5.2 Linguistic, Conversational and Categorical Resources

In the English language, the non-singular first person pronoun, ‘we’, is used inclusively and exclusively for duals and plurals, which is what is displayed in the data under analysis here (see, Chapter 2, Section 3.5). Although there is no grammatical category of this system in English, recall that Indigenous Australian languages, as well as Kriol, make distinctions of inclusive/exclusive, and many also make distinctions of dual/plural (Dixon, 1980). These distinctions from Indigenous Australian languages provide (i) a tool for distinguishing different uses of ‘we’ that are otherwise hidden in English, and (ii) are of relevance because these distinctions exist in the first languages of the group (Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander languages and Kriol), so the distinctions are likely to be more salient to them.

Application of this more complex linguistic repertoire here extends to the analyst a way into the data that distinguishes persons and complements of persons as

members, into categories of members.¹⁶ It can distinguish between (i) who is being included and who is being excluded, and/or (ii) the number of individuals being referred to in a particular collection being established through a speaker's production of 'we' (Dixon, 1980). The following is presented under the following four sections. Section 5.2.1 institutionally-relevant identity-sets, examines (i) settinged-relevant identities, and (ii) omni-relevant identities. Section 5.2.2 other-available identity-sets, examines (i) all persons in a tutorial-class, and (ii) two persons in a tutorial-class. Section 5.2.3 racially-relevant identity-sets, examines (i) all Aboriginal persons in a tutorial-class, and (ii) all persons from Thursday Island. Section 5.2.4 alternate ways of marking Indigeneity, examines (i) shifting memberships, and (ii) shifting participation.

Each of these collections are made up of a set of categories that 'go together' (Schegloff, 2007b, p. 467) as ongoing accomplishments of the parties. Further, in examining the application of the categories established through the production of 'we', focus group participants produce a variety of co-member and cross-member groups that partition the population (Sacks, 1992a, p. 590). Thus, the identity sets or categories that participants make evident and the membership categorisation devices (MCDs) to which they orient are only discoverable from within the actual setting in which the talk occurs as interactional achievements of the focus group participants, and through examination of 'we' on many levels of organisation.

5.2.1 Institutionally-Relevant Identity-Sets

This section examines instances in the data of 'we' being used to establish institutionally relevant identity-sets; settinged-relevant identities and omni-relevant identities.

5.2.1.1 Settinged Identities

There are two instances in the data of 'we' being used to establish settinged identities. Recall that 'settinged identities' (Sacks, 1992a, p. 516) refers to

¹⁶ Note, this study is not suggesting that these distinctions (i.e., inclusive/exclusive or dual/plural) exist in English grammar, but are a useful tool to uncover the various referents of we/our/us.

person's doing of activities that display the setting, without specific reference to it. In the data in Extract 1, two of the participants in the focus group event can be seen attending to and doing activities that invoke the relevance of the setting, that is, the focus group setting.

Immediately prior to the production of data displayed in Extract 1, the moderator, Ronnie, has been informing the parties of their rights and responsibilities in the focus group event. However, in her opening, she neglects to state the topic that participants have been brought together to discuss. Celeste, one of the focus group participants, can be seen to initiate a sequence of action in which she takes up the floor and uses a question design to clarify the task at hand, '↑O(hh)kka: whada we- whada we doin'=' (line 11)¹⁷ (see Appendix D: Transcription Conventions).

Extract 1: Lines 11-17

- 11→ Celeste: ↑O(hh)kka: whadya {we}- whadya {we} doin'=
12 Ronnie: =Oh, the the question 'What are your experiences at
13 university?'
14 (.)
15 °Thank you°
16 Celeste: Uh: (.) like any sorta experiences?
17 Ronnie: Ye::s (.) as a student (.) as a tutor, anything at all.

Celeste's production of 'we' (line 11) indicates she is speaking on behalf of certain others in asking about the task at hand. Had Celeste selected the singular first person pronoun, 'I', to ask her question, the implication would have been that she was representing herself as an individual and speaking on her own behalf to ask her question, and not on anyone else's behalf. Her production of 'we' indicates that the question that Celeste is asking is not something that she alone is interested to know, but is something that she and others are interested to know, that is, all those present who are members of the focus group.

Although in the design of her turn Celeste does not name a particular person as next speaker by name or via the referent term *you*, Ronnie is quick to take up the floor, and respond to Celeste's question (line 12), as marked by the latching ('=')

¹⁷ Note, the researcher has conducted preliminary investigations of some of the lines of data that appear in Extract 1. Those investigations are presented in Demosthenous (2004a).

of turns at talk (lines 11 & 12). With absolute adjacency (Jefferson, 1990), Ronnie responds, '=Oh, the the question, what are your experiences at university' (lines 12-13). Ronnie uses the possessive form of the referent 'you' (i.e., 'your') (lines 12) to respond to Celeste's question, however the 'you' is not in her own voice, but in the voice of an animator (Goodwin, 1981), as she can be seen reproducing the research question that focus group participants have been gathered together to discuss. The point here is that Ronnie is not excluding herself from the collection being established through Celeste's production of 'we'.

Further, the 'actual appearance' of 'we' can be seen to point to or stand on behalf of a 'presupposed underlying pattern', which, in turn, can be interpreted on the basis of 'what is known' about the underlying pattern of focus group events (Garfinkel, 1964, p. 78). In other words, the participants can be seen to reflexively draw on past 'appearances-of-familiar-events' (Garfinkel, 1967/1984, p. 36) to interpret actions. Celeste's speaking on behalf of all persons participating in the focus group to ask about the task-at-hand is a 'perfectly legitimate' (Sacks, 1992a, p. 334) action in a focus group setting, as is Ronnie's answering action, which invokes the relevance of her role as 'moderator' in the focus group event.

Whereas Celeste's 'we' can be seen to display the setting without specific reference to it, her production of 'we' can be seen to act like that of the inclusive plural variety from the inclusive/exclusive dual/plural system. In its context, Celeste's 'we' projects a membership that includes, Ronnie (i.e., the addressee), Celeste (i.e., the speaker) and all other persons in the focus group event (i.e., Gerard, Lorna, Frank and Sissi). The category of persons that 'go together' (Schegloff, 2007b, p. 467) here establishes a set that is composed of focus group participants as an all co-member, including, 'you and I and one or more others' (Dixon, 1980, p. 276). Hence, this inclusive-like 'we' brings together all persons participating in the focus group event and unites them as all co-members into a category (Schegloff, 1999, p. 406) that invokes the relevance of the focus group setting.

Extract 2 provides another instance of 'we' invoking the relevance of the focus group setting, thereby making available settinged identities. The data follows on

from an experience that Frank, a participant in the discussion, has been recounting in which a student received a grade on a university assignment that did not accurately reflect the quality of the work. The excerpt opens with Gerard, producing a disagreeing action.

Extract 2: Lines 1148-1155

1148 Gerard: But if you know you put the work in↑
1149→ Sissi: That's what {we}'re saying, it doesn't matter if you put the
1150 work in.
1151 Gerard: I know with some of my marks I've gone, I've gone one-
1152 one mark off a high distinction and I've tossed up
1153 whether to um, go and protest about that one mark, I mean
1154 thirty-eight or thirty-nine or ah or y'know it's only one
1155 I got the distinction and that was alright but a high distinction↑

Following Gerard's turn, Sissi self-nominates a turn-at-talk in which she corrects Gerard's claim, 'That's what we're saying, it doesn't matter if you put the work in' (lines 1149-1150). The design of the talk makes explicit that the claim that Gerard has uttered (line 1148) has already been rejected by Sissi and Frank; that is, Gerard's claim is contrary to 'what we're saying' (line 1149), what Frank and Sissi have previously said. What this suggests is that Sissi's projection of 'we' acts like the exclusive dual as it includes, 'I and someone other than you' (Dixon, 1980, p. 276). In other words, Sissi's 'we' includes herself and Frank, but excludes Gerard, the person she is addressing her disagreeing comment to. Sissi's 'we' adds weight to her correction of Gerard's wrong understanding, as it highlights that it is something that Sissi and Frank know in common. Hence, the exclusive 'we' brings together Sissi and Frank in an all co-member category (Schegloff, 1999, p. 406) that excludes the addressee, again invoking the relevance of the focus group setting, albeit with a different composition and a partitioning of the focus group population.

5.2.1.2 Omni-Relevant Identities

Recall that the task-at-hand calls on participants to discuss their experiences at university, 'as a student (.) as a tutor, anything at all.' (line 17, Extract 1). So, each person involved in the focus group event can be categorised through the categories 'student' and 'tutor' (and related forms, 'lecturer/convenor'), which are

expectable categories of the membership categorisation device (MCD) ‘university’. They can also be categorised using categories from any MCD given the moderator’s utterance of the open-ended category, ‘anything at all.’. The following instance of ‘we’ makes available the category ‘student’ as an ‘omni-relevant identity’ (Sacks, 1992a, p. 317) to the current setting for the task-at-hand. Here, ‘the phenomenon of omni-relevant identities’ refers to identities or categories that are ‘adequate to the environment’ in the sense that ‘each person’ ‘can be categorised by those categories’ (Sacks, 1992a, p. 316). In other words, omni-relevance does not mean that ‘any given person carries with them, at all times, incumbency in that device’, but rather that a ‘classification of persons that can be invoked, depended on, and hearably mentioned or implied under pretty much any circumstance during such sessions’ (McHoul & Rapley, 2002, p. 74). Hence, omni-relevance is locally occasioned.

In Extract 3, the talk follows an experience that Frank has been sharing about a lecturer that reportedly delivered wrong information to a tutorial-class in which he was a student. Frank’s ‘we’ is produced later in the sequence (at line 645), following an earlier production in its objective form, ‘us’ (line 641), which he produces to refer to the omni-relevant category ‘student’.

Extract 3: Lines 637-648

| | | |
|------|----------|---|
| 637 | Frank: | The fact that she didn’t want to seehhh me for the |
| 638 | | rest o- [the rest of |
| 639 | Celeste: | [(laughs)) |
| 640 | Frank: | the period while the exams were on which was quite |
| 641 | | funny actually ‘cause there was about half a dozen of us |
| 642 | | and she, every time she saw us, she ran (.) literally. |
| 643 | | So (.) yihknow [(laughs)) |
| 644 | Celeste: | [(laughs)) |
| 645→ | Frank: | Cause {we} brought in text book and readings and all |
| 646 | | sorts of things to back up our case and she was like what’s |
| 647 | | all this? What’s all this? Y’know, I can’t take |
| 648 | | this ((laughs)) >Ran off< ((laughs)) |

Frank’s production of ‘us’ (line 641) repairs his immediately prior talk, in which he reports, the lecturer ‘didn’t want to seehhh me for the rest o- [the rest of the period while the exams were on’ (lines 637-638, 640). In that utterance, Frank’s

selection of ‘us’ serves as a resource that he uses to correct his prior talk to inform co-participants that it was not him alone that the lecturer (i.e., ‘she’, line 637) did not want to see during the exam period, but, rather, ‘about half a dozen of us’ (line 641). This pronominal shift from ‘me’ (line 637) to ‘us’ (line 641) not only provides a means by which Frank can be seen to be one of a number of other students (i.e., about ‘six’) to have disputed the lecturer’s knowledge on the particular subject matter, but one that implies that it was commonly understood that the lecturer was incorrectly informed, at least by ‘about half a dozen’ (line 641) students in the tutorial-class.

Frank’s production of ‘we’ here resembles the exclusive variety of ‘we’, as it includes the speaker, Frank, and some of the co-students in a tutorial-class, but excludes the addressee/s of the talk. Frank’s projection of the category ‘student’ is a standard relational pair (SRP) in the collection ‘university’ (Sacks, 1992a; Schegloff, 2007b), and is therefore an expectable category of that device. Frank does not include ‘tutors’ in his production of ‘we’, which renders this category one made up of all co-members, an all student category. Hence, Frank’s ‘we’ refers to ‘I and two or more others, not including you’ (Dixon, 1980, p. 276), which establishes an all co-member tutorial-class set, which is an omni-relevant device of the collection, ‘university’.

5.2.2 Other-Available Identity-Sets

This section examines instances in the data of ‘we’ being used to establish a range of other-available identity-sets. Other-available identity-sets refers to categories composed of persons from different categories of some collection to a population (Sacks, 1992a, p. 590). In this section, ‘we’ can be seen to be establishing two different identity sets or categories, (i) all persons in a tutorial-class, and (ii) two persons in a tutorial-class.

5.2.2.1 All Persons in a Tutorial-Class

In Extract 4, Celeste's production of 'we' mobilises an all persons in a tutorial-class category that is made up of omni-relevant and other-available identities from alternate MCDs.

Extract 4: Lines 71-109

72→ Celeste: Um, when {we} were in this class (.) I was tutoring a class and um
73 (.) in the class there were there were two Indigenous students↑
74 both female.
75 And then there were a group of (.) ↑ th- the res- (.) >the remainder
76 of the group were *also* females and they were Non-Indigenous
77 students.
78→ Ah:: ↑oddly enough, {we} didn't have any males in the class at'll.
79 And I remember in the *beginning* (.) there was: (.) > a little
80 bit of friction<
81 y'know the- they were all sitting in line↑ and there
82 was a bit of friction between ↑some of the students (.)
83 that were non- Indigenous↑ and the Indigenous ones.
84 One of the Indigenous students was older and mature↑
85 >then there was °a young girl° who w'z >in the class<.
86 An' ah, at first they had a problem (0.2) but as thur thuh
87→ whole semester wore on, {we} did'a lodda talking↑
88 abou' (.) life and experiences, and one of the
89 Indigenous student's started to tell a story where
90 (0.4) she said they went to a parkk,
(16 lines omitted)
106 So that sort of started a good discussion in the class
107 (0.2)
108 an:: helped people to see things from another
109 perspective =like why was it okay to drink from a glass

It is right up front at the start of her turn that Celeste projects 'we', to produce her forthcoming experience, 'Um, when we were in this class' (line 72). The production of 'we' in her yet-to-be-produced account suggests that the experience that Celeste is reporting is one that she shared with others. However, following a short pause in the talk (i.e., '(.)' at line 72), Celeste selects the singular first person pronoun to correct or clarify her participation status in the projection of 'we', 'I was tutoring a class and um' (line 72). The production of the omni-relevant identity 'tutor' here makes explicit that Celeste participated in 'the class' (line 73) as a tutor and not as a student, and that the topic she will be speaking on comes out of her experiences of tutoring 'the class'.

It is Celeste's second 'we' in the utterance, 'Ah:: ↑oddly enough, we didn't have any males in the class at'll' (line 78) establishes the 'we' as conforming to the exclusive plural variety. It is in the description of 'the class' (line 73) that Celeste projects a variety of 'we' that makes available a range of cross-categories from a range of MCDs. 'The class' (line 73) includes, 'two Indigenous students↑, both female' (lines 73-74), one who was 'older' (line 84) and 'a group of' (line 75) 'Non-Indigenous students' (lines 76-77), who were 'also females' (line 76) and 'a young girl' (line 85), but excludes all focus group recipients (i.e., addressee/s) of the talk. Further, the description suggests that Celeste is recounting a specific episode of an occurrence in a class, as displayed through her production of the 'precise number' (Sacks, 1992a, p. 739) of Indigenous students in the tutorial-class (i.e., 'two') and her precise gender references, as well as her spate of sudden remembering, 'we didn't have any males in the class at'll.' (line 78).

So, in terms of the application of the categories, persons are cross-members in terms of race (i.e., 'Indigenous/Non-Indigenous'), and university status (i.e., 'student/tutor', and with regard to age (i.e., 'young/old'). However, in Celeste's description, persons are co-members in terms of gender (i.e., 'females/girl'). This cross-member and co-member category, from the collections, 'race', 'university', 'age' and 'gender', can be read as a listing of category-relevant terms for producing an experience that alludes to a distinction between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people, which has been designed as part of the background information in Celeste's elaborate account. Further, making available the category, 'female', from the collection, 'gender', while a sub-set of the categories, 'Indigenous students' and 'Non-Indigenous students' in its local context, partitions the population along 'gender' lines. Invoking 'female' in the way she does is relevant for the experience, and possibly a resource that Celeste uses to downplay or diminish the implications of 'race', and to maintain a more agreeable state of relations among focus group participants in which 'gender' was made relevant to the topic.

Celeste's recounting of an Indigenous student's 'story' (line 89) may be a resource that she is using to cast or position co-participants as equals. Celeste's action produces a common-sense knowledge and one that constitutes how co-

participants should view her (Silverman, 1993); as someone who is the neutral and impartial teller of an instance where there was '>a little bit of friction<' (lines 79-80) between two Indigenous females and Non-Indigenous females in 'the class', which she managed to resolve, successfully. It co-implicates everyone in the tutorial-class as being interested in the 'Indigenous student's ... story' (line 89), an interest that is reported to have promoted a 'good discussion in the class' (line 106) 'an::: helped people to see things from another perspective' (lines 108-109). It is at least a way in which she talks-into-being a shared membership in a collective that comprises not only tutor and student, but Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons, whose shared participation is reported to be 'a problem' (line 86).

Although Celeste's 'we' excludes all co-participants in the focus group event, she does not use 'we' to orient to the racial group to which she belongs. Celeste's non-use of an available category implies that she is doing a membership categorisation description of herself as not Indigenous, which 'is achieved by virtue of the contrastive work done' (Jayyusi, 1984, p. 23) over the extended sequence. Further, Celeste's account may have been produced on the basis of having identifiable Indigenous participants in the group, rather than a result of her own routine practices for responding to the activity in which co-participants are invited to discuss (their) experiences of university; an open question. It is one that privileges the statement of experience of the modified category, Indigenous student, as the experience of university.

In Extract 5, Sissi's production of 'we' can also be seen to mobilise an all persons in a tutorial-class that includes cross-members in an all persons 'in one class' (line 935) category. Unlike Celeste's 'we' which appeared to co-implicate members to create a sense of everyone being involved, Sissi's 'we' seems to have been established to co-implicate members to create a sense of her separateness as an individual. The account unfolds as a complaint against the law lecturers.

Extract 5: Lines 934-948

934 Sissi: The law lecturers (2.0) I don't know whether I should say
935→ *actively* encourage racism because in one class {we }

936 were discussing constitutional (.) law and the lecturer
 937 actually asked ‘Why do you think Indigenous people
 938 weren’t concerned with sovereignty?’ and one student,
 939 a male=young male actually got up and said it’s
 940 because they’re Indigenous and Indigenous students don’t
 941 actually have an understanding of sovereignty.
 942 and she said, the lecturer actually said, good point.
 943 And the next student said maybe Indigenous people can’t
 944 understand concepts y’know because they can know
 945 what they can only see and touch they’ve got no
 946 idea of theory and concepts.
 947 Celeste: ((laughing)) Oh god↑
 948 Sissi: And the lecturer still saying ‘good point’.

Sissi’s pronominal shift from the singular ‘I’ to the collective ‘we’ (line 935) has been established to provide evidence in the form of a shared experience of an occurrence of racism in a law tutorial-class. Sissi’s ‘we’ is projected to rationalise or justify whether or not to upgrade a charge of racism against ‘the law lecturers’ (line 934). Her projection of ‘we’ includes, the entire ‘class’ (line 935), ‘the lecturer’ (line 936) and ‘one student’ (line 938), who Sissi adds is ‘a male’ (line 939), which she hastily repairs, ‘=young male’ (lines 939), and one other ‘student’ (line 943), who she refers to as ‘the next student’ (line 943). In other words, Sissi is selecting categories from the MCDs ‘university’ (lecturer/student), ‘gender’ (female/male) and ‘age’ (young/old). This produces cross-memberships of university, gender, age and possibly stage-of-life. In other words, this is a Pn-adequate collection. Pn-adequacy suggests that where a person can be categorised by some category from one device that person can also be categorised by a different category from a different device. So, ‘student/young/male’ are categories from collections that can categorise ‘any member of an uncharacterized, unrestricted, undefined population’ (Schegloff, 2007b, p. 467).

While ‘young male’ is a departure from the relevancies already produced, the point here is that Sissi can be seen to produce the category in the way she does with regard to what she figures will be common-sensically presumed about the student by virtue of the student being ‘a young male’ (Schegloff, 2007b). Recall that,

category-based common-sense knowledge are kinds of activities or actions or forms of conduct taken by the common-sense or vernacular culture to be specifically characteristic of a category's members (Schegloff, 2007b, p. 470).

What this means here is, the 'young male' category is a presumptive representative of the category 'young male'. Whatever common-sense knowledge is known about 'young males', is presumed to be known about *this* 'young male'. By reporting the 'young male's' response to be, 'Indigenous students don't actually have an understanding of sovereignty' (lines 940-941), Sissi can be seen to be activating the MCD, stage-of-life. Identifying the 'student' (line 938) as someone in the 'young' or early stages of life, Sissi is hinting at the immaturity of the 'young male', as a feature of relevance in the all persons in a tutorial-class category being established, which includes the speaker 'and two or more others, not including you' (Dixon, 1980, p. 276). Invoking the sub-category, 'young', also appears to 'categorise the categorizer' (Schegloff, 2007b, p. 467), Sissi, as not-young, and possibly even 'old'. These categories have different properties, with 'young' connoting someone unknowledgeable and unwise on the one side, and 'old' connoting someone knowledgeable and wise, on the other.

Further, Sissi identifies another student as producing a response to the lecturer's question, which is similar to that produced by the 'young male', 'maybe Indigenous people can't understand concepts y'know because they can know what they can only see and touch they've got no idea of theory and concepts' (lines 943-946). Prefacing 'student' with the phrase 'the next' (line 943), gives a sense that there is a procession of students that hold this wrong understanding just standing by and waiting for their turn/s at answering the question. '[T]he next student' (line 943) contributes to the warrant for the complaint.

These co-selected categories under the MCDs 'age/gender/stage-of-life' invite recipients to make inferences about the occasion and to arrive at similar conclusions to those reached by the speaker; possibly, that an upgraded charge against 'the law lecturers' (line 934) is warranted, given *this lecturer's* positive assessment, 'good point' (lines 942 & 948), to the ill-informed comments

produced by the ‘young male’ and ‘the next student’. Although Sissi’s ‘we’ co-implicates all persons ‘in one class’ (line 935), it implies that she is separate from members of the class, and that her production of ‘we’ has been produced to portray the racist attitudes in the tutorial-class’.

5.2.2.2 Two Persons in a Tutorial-Class

The data in Extract 6 is one of two instances in the focus group event of ‘we’ being projected to establish a collection that includes only two persons in a tutorial-class, the speaker and one other. The ‘we’ established in those instances connotes a type of ‘us’ against ‘them’ dichotomy, in which ‘us’ can be seen to create a favourable image of members included in its production, while ‘them’ can be seen to create an unfavourable image of those excluded from the dual collective being established.

Extract 6: Lines 858-897

- 858 Sissi: In commerce what I got was racism from the students,
 859 *especially* the young girls.
 860 For some reason it was just the ones lately out of school↑, and
 861 I walk into a classroom and they say (.) you shouldn’t be here.
 862 Celeste: Uh↑
 863 Sissi: I think it’s ‘cause I’m mature aged I’m black and maybe I-
 864 Celeste: ((laughs))
 865 Sissi: I actually asked do I have a sign on my head that actually
 866 says stupid or idiot or dumb or does it say I can’t read?
 ((21 lines of talk omitted))
 887 I started mid- semester that time and she kept telling me to
 888 write, and I just thought, I just thought well that’s not that
 889 important so I didn’t really want to make a note of it, and she
 890 got very offended, y’know, *when I tell you to write you*
 891 *write*.
 892 Celeste: Good god ((laughs))
 893 Sissi: And I said, look its fine, no it’s not fine you just write it down.
 894 I said, oh okay, y’know, so the Indonesian boy looked
 895→ at me and {we} both looked at each other and {we} thought okay
 896→ {we}’ll just write, you know {we}’ve got Hitler here
 897 Celeste: ((laughs)) God can’t believe it

The ‘we’ in Extract 6 comprises a collection that includes the speaker and ‘the Indonesian boy’ (line 894). The category establishes a collection comprising sets from the device ‘race’, ‘gender’ and ‘age’ to categorise the persons that Sissi shared those experiences with. Further, the ‘we’ produced here can be seen to act

like that of the exclusive dual as it refers to a collective that comprises, ‘I and someone other than you’ (Dixon, 1980, p. 276). While Sissi’s production of the exclusive dual variety of ‘we’ establishes a collection built of race, gender, age and stage-of-life discriminations, at no point in her account-giving does she categorise ‘the Indonesian boy’ as either a student or tutor, despite the activity purpose, which was to gather data on the participants’ experiences of university (see, Section 5.2.1.1). Further, Sissi’s ‘we’ can be seen to co-implicate a member of a racial group that is different to that of Sissi’s (see, Section 5.2.4.2, where Sissi names her racial group membership, Torres Strait Islander/Indigenous), which marks it a cross-member category. The category that Sissi establishes through the production of ‘we’ is of all cross-member category in terms of ‘race’ (i.e., ‘Torres Strait Islander/Indonesian), ‘gender’ (i.e., ‘female/male’) and ‘age’ (‘boy/older’). It also serves to create a sense of shared separateness in terms of race, albeit with a person from a minority racial-group in the Australian context.

An additional point of interest here is that it is not the actual talk that Sissi shared with ‘the Indonesian boy’ that she reports on, but what she and ‘the Indonesian boy’ ‘thought’ (line 895) that she reports, ‘we both looked at each other and we thought okay we’ll just write, you know we’ve got Hitler here’ (lines 895-896). Sissi is reporting what she thought at the time of the incident, which is also what ‘the Indonesian boy’ thought. ‘We thought’ can be said to reveal or make known what was unspoken at that time. It describes what they (i.e., ‘Sissi’ and ‘the Indonesian boy’) were doing in their silent reaction to the student’s reportedly dictatorial behaviour, ‘*when I tell you to write you write*’ (lines 890-891). While reported thinking offers ‘a way of showing that they had a problem but were wise enough not to voice it’ (cf., Stokoe & Edwards, 2007, p. 399), the exclusive dual variety of ‘we’ here shows strong alignment or affiliation between Sissi and ‘the Indonesian boy’, as ‘pair of students in a tutorial-class’, both of whom share racial group memberships to non-dominant groups in Australia and both of whom were subjected to racist treatment by a young girl, who Sissi refers to as ‘Hitler’ (line 896).

Sissi’s production of the reference to ‘Hitler’ in the utterance, ‘we’ve got Hitler here’ (line 896) upgrades and intensifies the complaint against the student.

Equating the student to ‘Hitler’, whose totalitarian rule resulted in the genocide of six million Jews and many others, exaggerates the student’s actions and confirms that the root of the complaint lies in the other party, and not in this party, that is Sissi and ‘the Indonesian boy’. Further, it is a rhetorical device that serves to make a moral point and one with implications and connotations of race.

5.2.3 Racially-Relevant Identity-Sets

This section examines instances in the data of ‘we’ being used to establish racially-relevant identity-sets. Racially-relevant identity-sets refers to categories that are made up of sets of persons from the collection ‘race’ (Sacks, 1992a, p. 590). In this section, ‘we’ can be seen to be establishing two different identity-sets, (i) all Aboriginal persons in a tutorial-class, and (ii) all persons from Thursday Island.

5.2.3.1 All Aboriginal Persons in a Tutorial-Class

In Extract 7, Ronnie takes up the floor to give an account of an ‘unbelievable’ (line 399) experience of discrimination that she shared with ‘all Aboriginal persons in a tutorial-class’. The talk is produced as an upgrading of the accusation made by other members of the focus group event, who have complaining about biased treatment of persons who are Indigenous.

Extract 7: Lines 397-408

| | | |
|------|---------|---|
| 397 | Ronnie: | [as I wen’ through university my↓sel↑f=fair while ago now, |
| 398 | | >I graduated in ninety-nine<, when I first started .hhh over at |
| 399→ | | ((university)) (.) it w’z unbelievable what {we} ‘ad to put up |
| 400 | | ↑with. |
| 401→ | | We were sitting there in one one section and ah >all the |
| 402 | | Aboriginals were sittin’ in the fron’ row<, ‘nd this |
| 403 | | bloke (.) would of’en say to us in sociology yihknow, ‘bout |
| 404 | | the Aboriginals dyin’ out and everything, |
| 405→ | | en’ ‘e’d look straigh’- at us an’ I’d go, ‘↑woo↓oo ↑{we} |
| 406 | | still [‘ere:! |
| 407 | Gerard: | [(laugh)] |
| 408 | Frank: | [(laugh)] |

The talk begins in overlap, with Ronnie producing an action that informs co-participants that she will be sharing a personal experience, '[as I went through university my↓sel↑f' (line 397). Without pausing, Ronnie adds, '>fair while ago now<' (line 397) and '>I graduated in ninety-nine<' (line 398), which she hurriedly produces (perhaps in an attempt to secure her position as speaker, given her interruption to the current speaker's turn). Ronnie then produces an assessment of the yet-to-be-told experience, 'it w'z unbelievable what we 'ad to put up ↑with.' (lines 399-400). The utterance not only informs co-participants to listen out for something assessable as 'unbelievable' (lines 399), it makes explicit that the treatment that she was subjected to was something she endured with others.

What is hearably 'unbelievable', as self-assessed by Ronnie in her initial formulation, might not be attributable to the speaker's claim of having had such an experience, but to the fact that '↑we still 'ere:!' (line 405), that is that Aboriginal people did not die out. In prefacing the next bit of her utterance, '‘bout the Aboriginals dyin' out and everything' (lines 403-404) with the phrase, 'yihknow' (line 403), Ronnie 'appeals to [the] intersubjectivity' of her co-participants and does not have to 'spell things out' (Edwards, 2003, p. 36) for them. Following a brief pause, Ronnie provides some background to her story by way of a scenic description, 'We were sitting there in one one section and ah >all the Aboriginals were sittin' in the fron' row' (lines 288-289). The utterances, 'we were sitting there in one section' (line 288) and 'sittin' in the fron' row' (line 289), include a contrast class term, 'sitting', that signals a shift in the scenic background of Ronnie's story; from the more general place 'university' to that of the place of 'sitting' in a 'class room' or 'lecture hall'. The utterances, then, can be thought of as 'place-indexical terms' that lend topical coherence to the account (Sacks, 1986, p. 131).

As place-indexical terms, they make relevant specific places and their connection to the place named in the initial formulation, that is, 'university'. Mobilising this series of place-indexical terms is a method that Ronnie is hearably using to bind together her experience and connect the topical events of the experience as a unit. Selecting place connectors promotes the internal organisation of the account, and

provides for co-participants a 'recognition-type description' (Sacks, 1986, p. 133) related to the topic. Sacks (1986, p. 133) has explained that a recognition-type description enables the speaker 'to put in information that has as its heard motivation that it enables recognition to take place, but where you can also put in information that you want to convey for the story'. That said, it appears that Ronnie's specification, 'fron' row', is significant because of 'who it is' that is said to conventionally sit in the front row of an educational classroom: conventionally, those in the front row are normatively positioned as 'A-students' or 'bright students' and not their SRPs, 'D-students' or 'under-performing students', who are taken to conventionally occupy the 'back row'. Hence, Ronnie's selection of the recognition-type description is a method that allows her to display and challenge a particular institutional understanding that normatively downgrades the scholastic aptitude of incumbents of the modified category, Aboriginal-student.

Further, Ronnie's selection of a recognition-type description, 'this bloke ... in sociology' (lines 402-403) suggests someone ordinary – 'bloke' as an (informal) category for all males, rather than a subset of 'lecturer/tutor', which would be the requisite expertise associated with the more appropriate descriptor, 'tutor/lecturer/convenor'. Ronnie can be seen to 'downgrade members' (Sacks, 1992a, p. 249) of the category, 'tutor/lecturer/convenor', which explicitly calls into question the category-bound knowledges that members of that category 'requiredly possess' (Hester & Eglin, 1997, p. 7).

Ronnie's productions of 'we' are of the exclusive variety. They include 'all the Aboriginals' (lines 401- 402) 'over at' another university 'in sociology' (line 403), but not the Aboriginals from focus group event. This all co-member set includes 'all Aboriginals persons in a tutorial-class, but excludes all Aboriginals persons from this university here and addressee/s' category under the tutorial-group collection. Further, the 'time references' (Sacks, 1986, p. 130) that are sprinkled throughout Ronnie's talk imply the treatment that she tolerated as a member of that collective at that time was worse than other Aboriginals suffer at this time, now, hence 'it w'z unbelievable what we 'ad to put up ↑with' (lines 399-400). The production of the exclusive-like 'we' provides a resource through which Ronnie identifies her incumbency in the category 'Aboriginal', as she

explicitly states, that ‘we’, Aboriginals, have not died out and are still here. Further, it is one that alludes to that socio-historic form of organisation in which the extinction of the Aboriginal race was promoted as a part of the normative racial discourse in Australia (e.g., Schegloff, 1996; Whitehead, 2007), that is without having said it in so many words.

5.2.3.2 All Persons from Thursday Island

Another example of the exclusive-like ‘we’ is presented in Extract 8 below. In the fragment below, Lorna has self-nominated to take a turn at talk, which is her first turn at talk in the focus group interaction. In first taking up the floor, Lorna momentarily holds the floor with the utterance ‘My um’ (line 695), which she repeats, and which is followed by a brief silence. With a high pitch onset, Lorna starts to produce a personal experience about her first year at university, which she informs ‘has been ve:ry different to everyone here’ya↑’ (line 695-696).

Extract 8: Lines 695-706

| | | |
|------|--------|--|
| 695 | Lorna: | My um, my um (.)↑I suppose my time at uni has been ve:ry |
| 696 | | different to everyone here’ya↑ ‘cause I do journalism and pr. |
| 697 | | An:d=um, first year w’z a bit rocky because I come from |
| 698 | | Thursday Island and I’ve never been to like Brisbane |
| 699 | | beforehand um >living life< so it w’z a big it w’z a |
| 700 | | big jump fa me= an’ although, like, although I’m not dark in, |
| 701 | | like, my colour of my skin it’s still inside (.) |
| 702→ | | like (1.0) the way {we} live back home is very diff’reent to the |
| 703→ | | way {we} live down here, and I just foun’ thad I stuck to |
| 704 | | Islanders and Aboriginals down here because (.) other |
| 705 | | people outside our culture didn’t respect like thuh |
| 706→ | | morals that {we} had and I didn’t find them to↑. |

Lorna reports that her experience is very different to ‘everyone’ in the focus group interaction because she (i) studies ‘journalism and pr’ (line 696), (ii) comes from ‘Thursday Island’ (line 698), and (iii) had never been to Brisbane, ‘living life’ (lines 698-699). In other words, Lorna begins her turn-at-talk by informing co-participants that what she is reporting is not something she shared with others, but something that she experienced alone, as indicated by her production of the singular forms of the first person pronouns, ‘My’ (line 695) and ‘I’ (lines 695, 696, 697, 698, 700). However, as the telling unfolds, Lorna can be seen to be making

different pronominal choices, as she selects ‘we’ to give a background to her experience.

In the sequence, the first ‘we’ (line 702), second ‘we’ (line 703) and third ‘we’ (line 706) all refer to the racial group ‘Thursday Island’ (line 698). In all three utterances – (i) ‘the way we live back home’ (line 702), (ii) ‘the way we live down here’ (lines 702-703), and (iii) ‘thuh morals that we had’ (lines 705-706) – ‘we’ makes explicit all Thursday Island people. Here, an all co-members ‘all persons from Thursday Island, but excluding all Non-Thursday Island persons’ category is being produced under the racial-group collection. This category can be seen to be of the exclusive variety because there are no other persons in the focus group event that are from Thursday Island.

In her production of the pronoun in the possessive case, ‘our’ (line 705), in the phrase, ‘other people outside our culture’ (lines 704-705), Lorna alludes to, or hints at (Sacks, 1992a, p. 595), the relevance of ‘culture’ with regard to ‘we’. Lorna talks-into-being a set that makes a sharp distinction between members making up the category ‘Indigenous’, as it includes, ‘all Islanders and Aboriginals down here and all persons from Thursday Island’. In alluding to the category, ‘culture’, as a sub-set of the category, Thursday Island, and comprising all Thursday Island persons and ‘Islanders and Aboriginals down here’, Lorna is indicating that the categories ‘Islanders and Aboriginals’ shared greater membership possibilities with ‘Thursday Island’ people than people outside culture (line 704).

Although Lorna talks-into-being an ‘all persons from Thursday Island’ category that seems to exclude the addressee/s, her talk around the category ‘culture’ alludes to a category in which Islander and Aboriginal persons in the focus group event (i.e., Sissi and Ronnie, Gerard) can be seen as strongly aligning with those participants, as people *inside* our culture, that is, as members of ‘our culture’. Lorna’s understanding is not one that can be disputed because it is something that she, personally, experienced, as marked by her shift back to the first person singular in the utterance, ‘I didn’t find them to↑’ (line 706).

5.2.4 Alternate Ways of Marking Indigeneity

This section examines instances in the data that co-implicate ‘we’ to produce alternate ways of marking Indigeneity. Alternate ways of marking Indigeneity refers to categories that are made up of sets of persons from the collection ‘race’ (Sacks, 1992a, p. 590). In this section, ‘we’ can be seen to be establishing two different identity-sets, (i) shifting memberships, and (ii) shifting participation.

5.2.4.1 Shifting Memberships

In the data below, Gerard can be seen to be shift memberships mid-account, as he produces a first ‘we’ (line 119) that refers to all persons in a tutorial class, before going on to produce a second ‘we’ (line 133) that refers to the speaker and one other person. Further, this is the only instance of this type of alternate memberships being produced in the middle of an account, in the focus group event.

Extract 9: Lines 117-142

- 117 Gerard: Um. I did’a course called [leisure studies]↓
118 Celeste: [°yeah°
119→ Gerard: cultural, cultural, cultural mapping, en::↑ {we} ‘ad to do a
120 program (.) a fictashus program (.)
121 en’ my idea was=with Jack Grey (.) w’z to get some local
122 kids from (.) thee Indigenous school=‘roun’ the schools
123 involve the Elders (.)
124 of of Brisbane (.)
125 takin’ ‘em into the forest (.) en’ dividin’ the
126 girls ↑with the women, and the boys ↓with the [men
127 Celeste: [yeah
128 Gerard: to learn cultural (.) acceptability =>if you want to<, or,
129 cultural knowledge*↑ which is all done culturally (.)
130 outside the school areas any’ow
131 ‘n’ that’s the way the culture is↓
132 Celeste: [↑Yeah
133→ Gerard: [↑Thad > en’ {we} were in a class of forty people↑< (.) all
134 Europeans↑
135 (.)
136 Soon as I mentioned a di::vide between male ‘n’ fe[male
137 Celeste: [yeah
138 Gerard: that erupted into a debate for an hour ‘n’ a half↓
139 (0.2)
140 of Europeans not understanding Indigenous [culture
141 Celeste: [yeah
142 Gerard: en’ In- Indigenous [ways.

The first ‘we’ (line 119) can be understood as referring to members of the ‘leisure studies↓’ (line 117) ‘course’ (line 117). It can also be understood to orient forward to members of ‘a class of 40 people↑< (.) all Europeans↑’ (lines 133-134). This ‘we’ is projected in a form resembling the exclusive plural. It includes the speaker (i.e., ‘I’) and ‘two or more others’ (i.e., ‘a class of 40 people’), not including you’ (i.e., co-participants in the focus group event) (see, Dixon, 1980). Produced in the way it is in this multi-unit sequence, Gerard’s ‘we’ talks-into-being a category that includes all persons in a tutorial-class including the ‘set names’ (Sacks, 1992a, p. 334) ‘Jack Grey’ and ‘forty ... Europeans’, but excluding addressee/s in the category being established. Gerard is producing an all cross-member category in which ‘race’ (i.e., ‘Europeans’) and ‘gender’ (i.e., via person’s name, ‘Jack Grey’) are made relevant.

In contrast, the second ‘we’, produced in the informing action - ‘[↑Thad > en’ we were in a class of 40 people↑< (.) all Europeans↑’ - includes only two members in the category being established through its production. Gerard is producing ‘we’ to talk about the ‘cultural mapping’ (line 119) project that he worked on with ‘Jack Grey’ (line 133). So, there are two members making up the set that Gerard is establishing through his production of this second ‘we’; ‘I’ (line 117) (i.e., I, the speaker, Gerard) and ‘Jack Grey’. In this instance of its production, ‘we’ includes a set consisting of a list of members, Gerard and ‘Jack Grey’, and excludes all other persons in the leisure studies (line 117) tutorial-class as well as members of the focus group event.

The category being established makes available the MCD ‘race’ in the account through its production of the racial category, ‘Europeans’. Though nothing is explicitly stated, at least at this point in the interaction, there is this ‘hint’ (Sacks, 1992a, p. 592) that the speaker and ‘Jack Grey’ are not members of the category, ‘Europeans’. Gerard is not a member of the racial-group ‘Europeans’, and given that this is true for Gerard, who is a member of the set named, it can also be taken to be true for ‘Jack Grey’. To put it another way, ‘We are not X’, which means ‘Gerard is not X’ and ‘Jack Grey is not X’.

That is, if you're on the list of persons who do such and such a thing, then, logically and practically, you've got to be one who does it. If we can swim, where, "we" includes Al, Dave, and Roger, then it's false to say that "Al can't swim". (McHoul, 1997, p. 317)

Gerard's production of the second we, then, produces an all co-member set, based on 'race', (i.e., 'Aboriginal'). While 'race' was relevant to both of Gerard's productions of this 'summative' (McHoul, 1997; Sacks, 1992a) 'we', this shift in the middle of the experience from the category 'all person in a tutorial class' to the category 'speaker and someone other than you' in the context of its utterance connotes a sort of racialised 'us' and 'them' demarcation, that is, Gerard and Jack Grey against a class of 40 'a class of 40 people↑< (.) all Europeans↑' (lines 133-134).

5.2.4.2 Shifting Participation

The data in Extract 10 offers a different way in which Indigeneity is marked. The data follows on from a longer multi-unit sequence in which Sissi has been complaining to co-participants about a lecturer that she reports did not have a thorough understanding of a legal case that she was discussing. Sissi says that after she mentioned that the principles presented were not correct the lecturer took offence, subsequently humiliating her in the tutorial-class.

Extract 10: Lines 557-565

| | | |
|------|--------|--|
| 557→ | Sissi: | Because (.) ↓you know, we're (.) I'm Torres Strait Islander. |
| 558 | | >I really don't care<if you want to say that I I'm racist↓ |
| 559 | | (.) |
| 560 | | but when I'm discussing a point of la:w↑ then |
| 561 | | I will discuss a point of law=I'm not discussing |
| 562 | | racism. |
| 563 | | Don't try and belittle the fact that I'm correcting you or |
| 564 | | I'm asking you for correct information because ↑I'm |
| 565 | | Indigenous. |

In contrast to Ronnie's and Lorna's talk (see, Sections 5.2.3.1 & 5.2.3.2, respectively), in which Indigeneity is made available through the production of the exclusive plural, 'we', Sissi makes available Indigeneity through the singular

first person pronoun, 'I', and racial group membership, 'Torres Strait Islander', as displayed in the utterance, 'I'm Torres Strait Islander' (line 557). Although Sissi initially produces the non-singular first person pronoun, 'we', to preface her yet-to-be-produced complainable, there is a short pause in the production of her talk (i.e., ('. '), line 557) that shows Sissi correcting her pronominal choice and sees her make a new choice, 'I', which indicates that she is not speaking on behalf of anyone other than herself.

Formulated as a complainable item, rather than the reason for the dispute, the complainable is produced as direct speech, which gives authenticity to the account, and does not project a gloss of events. Sissi's reported speech provides an explicit account of the situation, and one that characterises and categorises the complainability of the action, 'Don't try and belittle the fact that I'm correcting you or asking you for correct information' (lines 563-564). It is also a way of invoking the other party's character as a particular type of person, namely one who has a disposition to prejudice against those who share membership in the category, Indigenous. Further, the talk here seems to share something with Sacks' (1992a, p. 590) work on 'systematic relations' between categories (see, Chapter 3, Section 3.4.1.4).

Recall that through his investigations into the literature on 'child training in various cultures', Sacks' (1992a, p. 591) considered the notion of 'when it is' that cultures begin training members - that is persons - 'for various future memberships that culture might have'. Applied here, a person may be member in a first category, Indigenous, and are eligible as members in a given second category. Where there is a 'perfect relationship' between memberships in one category with a second category, 'systematic relations' are said to exist between the various collections of categories (Sacks, 1992a, p. 590). Now, in the data at hand, Sissi's maintains that the lecturer belittled the fact that she was correcting her 'because' (line 564) she is 'Indigenous' (line 565), with the implication being that Sissi would not have been belittled if she were Non-Indigenous. In saying this, Sissi is implying that the lecturer's actions suggest that there is no 'eligibility' (Sacks, 1992a, p. 590) of relationships between the categories, 'Indigenous' and 'university student'. Sissi is highlighting a lack on the part of the lecturer to see

her 'eligibility' in a first category, 'Indigenous', and second category, 'students'. It is also a means by which Sissi mitigates her own agency in and accountability for the course of action taken and invites recipients to make inferences about the situation, thereby drawing a similar conclusion.

Whatever happens here, Sissi's experience is produced as hers alone, and offers a way in which Indigeneity can be seen to not be done explicitly through the plural pronoun but through the singular pronoun, 'I', and the racial group, 'Torres Strait Islander' (line 557), of which she makes explicit her membership. Although Sissi's initial production of 'we' (line 557) was self-repaired, she goes on to explicitly name her racial group membership as 'Indigenous', making it relevant to the account that she is reproducing. While Sissi is here making clear that she is not speaking on behalf of anyone other than herself, she is also making clear that the way in which she was treated by a lecturer was due to her sharing membership in the racial group, Indigenous.

5.3 Summary

This analytic chapter explored linguistic, conversational and categorial resources of the interaction, focusing on the non-singular first person pronoun 'we'. Overall, with regard to the inclusive/exclusive dual/plural pronominal distinction that was applied here, there were instances of 'we' being produced by participants in providing their retrospective accounts of university experience and these productions partitioned the population in different ways. What typically happened was that participants' productions of 'we' tended to align the persons included in the projection of 'we', and exclude those not included in its projection.

There was only one instance in the data of the inclusive-like 'we' being used to establish a category. This 'we' included all persons co-participating in this focus group event. It united all persons in the focus group event, bringing them together as members of the focus group, and thus partitioned them from all other persons

outside of the focus group event. Hence, the inclusive-plural ‘we’ was found to unite all persons in the focus group, while partitioning them from all other persons outside of the focus group event.

All other productions of ‘we’ were exclusive-like, which means that participants did not include the addressee(s) of the talk in their projections of ‘we’. There was another ‘we’ that also made relevant the focus group, however it was found to have partitioned the population in a different way. This ‘we’ was projected to include the speaker and one other person from the focus group event and to exclude the person to whom the speaker was directing the talk. So this exclusive dual-like ‘we’ partitioned members of the *focus group population*, with the speaker and one other included in the projection of ‘we’ and all other focus group participants excluded. While this production of ‘we’ partitioned some members of the focus group, it aligned others.

While all other productions of ‘we’ were exclusive-like, they not only excluded the addressee(s) of the talk but further excluded all participants in the focus group event. Participants’ productions of both the exclusive plural-like ‘we’ and the exclusive dual-like ‘we’ produced a variety of co-membership and cross-membership categories. Most of the categories established through participants’ productions of ‘we’ were found to be ‘all co-membership’ categories, that is, made up of members of the same particular categories. While the range of co-memberships produced partitioned the population in a variety of ways, Indigenous and Non-Indigenous participants differed in terms of the projection of persons making up categories.

The findings indicate that most of the ‘all co-membership’ categories were from Indigenous participants. Indigenous participants made the collection, ‘race’, relevant by orienting to racial group memberships. They reported sharing experiences with members of their own, particular racial groups, for example, ‘Aboriginals’, ‘Thursday Islanders’, ‘Torres Strait Islanders’ and ‘Indigenous’. In contrast, Non-Indigenous participants produced accounts of university experiences that they reported sharing with persons from various sets of categories, for example, ‘students/tutors’, ‘females’, ‘older/younger persons’ and

‘Indigenous/Non-Indigenous persons’. The findings show Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons partitioning and aligning the population in different ways, with Indigenous participants’ typically partitioning themselves from persons outside their racial groups.

However, there were two instances in which Indigenous participants’ project versions of ‘we’ that were found to have included Non-Indigenous persons. In both of those instances, Indigenous participants were found to have established those categories in the way they did to make available a type of ‘us/them’ distinction, which alluded to the Indigenous speakers’ isolation within those cross-memberships.

While Non-Indigenous persons were found to orient to racial categories in their accounts, they tended to resist the relevance of racial phenomena when it came to particularly sensitive matters. By attempting to shift the topic from problems that Indigenous participants had with Non-Indigenous people, Non-Indigenous participants appeared to diffuse that they are Non-Indigenous people talking with Indigenous people. Non-Indigenous participants may be attempting to disalign themselves with ‘the problem of Non-Indigenous people’; they make a distinction and ungroup themselves.

An interesting consequence of this is that it diverts attention away from the significance of the race matters in the talk being produced and onto other matters. Another consequence is that it enabled Non-Indigenous participants a turn-at-talk. Put it this way, if the only relevant category is ‘talk against Non-Indigenous persons’ then Non-Indigenous persons might not get a turn-at-talk; that is to say, Non-Indigenous persons would common-sensically be excluded from the topic by virtue of their membership in the ‘out’ category. To get a turn-at-talk, Non-Indigenous participants orient to the prior turn and shift the topic to some relatedly-relevant point, which was possibly in keeping with their routine practices for responding to an activity such as the one at hand in the setting in which the focus group event occurred (i.e., an ‘Indigenous higher education support centre’).

A couple of the accounts produced by Indigenous participants make explicit reference to the suitability of the relationship between the categories, 'Indigenous' and 'university student'. Ronnie alludes to this in her 'unbelievable' experience of discrimination that she shared with 'all Aboriginal persons in a tutorial-class'. Sissi's account about being belittled by a lecturer because she was Indigenous, made this point very clear. What appears to be happening is that there is this suggestion that members of the category, 'Indigenous', do not share 'eligible' relationships to the collection, 'university', and therefore in the category, 'student'. Both instances mentioned here (i.e., Ronnie's & Sissi's) refer to a lack on the part of university lecturers (including, 'this bloke in sociology') to see the 'eligibility' of a first category, 'Indigenous', to a second category, 'university students'.

Hence, application of the inclusive/exclusive dual/plural distinction to an examination of the non-singular first person pronoun, 'we', in the interaction, was found to be a useful tool for distinguishing different uses of 'we' that may have otherwise remained hidden in English. The findings indicate that the application of the inclusive/exclusive distinction to the data at hand means that 'we' can only be understood on a moment-by-moment basis, and that is a 'powerful resource' for interpreting 'who "we" are at any moment' (Malone, 1997, p. 67). Finally, the results point to the flexibility of 'we' as a resource by which participants could be seen partitioning the population (in this case, the focus group population and the broader population), but also as a resource by which participants could also be seen aligning the population, which suggested that race *matters*.

The next chapter, *Chapter 6: Aligning the Population*, is the second and final analytic chapter in this study.

Chapter 6

Aligning the Population

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is the second and final analytic chapter in this study of race matters in talk in inter-racial interaction. The analysis presented in this analytic chapter explores the preference organisation in operation between focus group participants through an examination of adjacency pairs, the disagreeing (or ostensibly disagreeing) token ‘no’ and list construction and production. Examination of how these resources operate in the data under analysis not only provides understanding of the preference system at work, but also provides understanding of the actual relations that are being interactionally formed between participants. This analytic chapter applies Ethnomethodology’s (EM) Conversation Analysis (CA) and Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA) to examine the actual relations that these focus group participants interactionally establish with regard to aligning the population. The previous chapter examined linguistic, conversational and categorial resources, which were shown to partition focus group members into contrasting or opposing membership categories, particularly through racial categories (see, Chapter 5). This analytic chapter documents and examines a range of interactional resources to understand matters relating to aligning the population with regard to focus group participants.

This chapter is presented in two sections. Section 6.2 examines ‘preferred’ and ‘dispreferred’ designs of turns to make visible the preference organisation in operation in the talk. It also explores the production of ‘disagreements’ to gain insight into some of the ways in which members of the focus group manage those activities. Finally, the section explores some of the ways in which participants’

produce lists, particularly collaboratively-produced lists. Section 6.3 presents a summary of the analyses.

The chapter provides documentary evidence in the form of extracts which exemplify the features of the talk described. To understand the piece of talk under analysis, the local context of the detail surrounding the talk is included in the extract. In some instances, the broader Australian context in which the talk is located is also provided to aid in the interpretation of the data.

6.2 Preference Organisation

Preference organisation is a key organisational feature of talk through which persons reduce threats to 'face' (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1955), align and develop social solidarity (e.g., Atkinson & Heritage, 1992; Bilmes, 1988; Boyle, 2000; Goodwin & Heritage, 1990; Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; Jefferson, 1992; Koshik, 2005; Kotthof, 1998; Lerner, 1996; Liddicoat, 2007; Pomerantz, 1992a; Sacks, 1987; Schegloff, 2001, 2007a) (see, Chapter 3, Section 3.5). One of the key principles of preference organisation in conversation is that agreeing answers normally get a 'preferred' format and disagreeing answers normally get a 'dispreferred' format (Sacks, 1987, p. 58; Schegloff, 2007a). What that means is, agreement tends to be expressed early in an answer and disagreement tends to be expressed much later in an answer. However, in focus groups (as is the case in interviews) the preferred response may be expanded, which is due to its institutionality. The consequence of these practices is 'to maximise the likelihood of affiliative, socially solidarity actions, and to minimise the consequences of disaffiliative socially divisive ones' (Heritage & Atkinson, 1984, pp. 265-280).

Application of these resources to this focus group study extends a way into the data. It provides a tool for examining the preference organisation in operation, and is of relevance because the relationships that are interactionally established in and

through the focus group event are of interest. Investigation of these resources is presented under three headings. Section 6.2.1 preferring agreement, examines (i) agreeing answers, (ii) dispreferred to preferred, and (iii) a ‘dressed up’ dispreferred. Section 6.2.2 managing and negotiating disagreement, examines (i) aggravated disagreement, (ii) mitigated disagreement, and (iii) disputing claims; and Section 6.2.3 affiliative list construction, examines (i) a three-part list, (ii) a generalised list, and (iii) an elaborate list.

6.2.1 Preferring Agreement

Preference organisation can examine how alternative forms of an action shape responses, with a focus on ‘adjacency pairs’. Adjacency pairs are made up of a two-unit sequence, which are positioned adjacently to each other (Sacks, 1992b, p. 556), such as a ‘an exchange of “hellos”’ (Sacks, 1987, p. 55) or a question followed by an answer. The production of a first turn or first pair part (FPP), such as a question, requires the production of a second turn or a second pair part (SPP), such as an answer, and one that is type related to the FPP. The absence of a projected SPP is accountable (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990; Lee, 1987; Schegloff, 1968). However, once the projected SPP is produced the adjacency pair is heard as a completed sequence.

This section examines the parties’ establishment of the preference organisation in operation under three sub-sections: agreeing answers, dispreferred to preferred, and preferred to dispreferred.

6.2.1.1 Agreeing Answers

Immediately prior to the production of data displayed in Extract 11 (below), Lorna, one of the focus group participants, was heard sharing an experience in which she talked-into-being her membership in an ‘all persons from Thursday Island’ category (see, Chapter 5, Section 5.2.3.2). The segment below opens with Celeste self-nominating a turn-at-talk to ask Lorna whether she finds it ‘nice to have the

Indigenous centre' (line 787) as a place to 'meet up' (line 788) and 'just go and be↑' (line 788).

Extract 11: Lines 787-798

787 Celeste: Do you find it nice to have the Indigenous centre so
788 y'can meet up, and a place where you just go and be↑
789 Lorna: Yeah. That's why the centre is my home and sometimes
790 I feel like I'm acting in class, like acting like
791 someone who I'm not [and
792 Gerard: [that's
793 the good thing about indigenous centre hey
794 Lorna: You can come here throw your shoes off, you know, do
795 what you want, nobody cares, as long as you hold your respect.
796 (2.0)
797 Gerard: It's pretty lonely up there at the university.
798 (2.0)

Celeste's question (lines 787-788) is designed in such a way that it projects a preferred response - a 'yes-like' response, which it receives from both Lorna and Gerard. Not only does Celeste ask Lorna whether she finds it 'nice to have the Indigenous centre' to 'meet up' but adds a further descriptor, 'a place where you just go and be' (line 788), which serves to strengthen the preference for a preferred agreeing answer. In other words, Celeste produces a question-FPP that requires an answer-SPP. Further, the design of the question-FPP reveals a preference for a 'yes' type answer-SPP, which is what it receives in a next adjacent action. Indeed, there is no delay in the production of the response as Lorna takes up the floor and offers the answer, 'yeah' (line 789). The 'yes-like' response claims agreement of the prior turn producing an answer-SPP that is 'type-connected' to the question-FPP.

Further, Lorna does not end her talk with the single-TCU answer (i.e., 'yeah'), but continues to hold the floor as she elaborates on why it is she finds it 'nice to have the Indigenous centre' (line 787). Expanding the agreeing across a multi-unit turn at talk, at least until Gerard interrupts with his own agreeing answer, possibly occurs here because of the institutional nature of the interactional setting, the Indigenous higher education setting in a focus group event. As Cameron (2005, p. 156) explained, the 'synergistic effect of focus groups' is such that 'one comment can trigger a chain of responses'.

Lorna's response or answer-SPP can be seen to be in agreement with the trajectory established by the question because it is designed to agree with the question-FPP to which it responds (Pomerantz, 1992b). Sacks (1987, p. 57, emphasis in original) said, 'if a question is built in such a way as to exhibit a preference as between "yes" or "no"', what tends to happen is that 'the answerers will tend to pick that choice, or a choice of that sort will be preferred by answerers', which is the case in the talk above. While there are many examples in the data of speakers designing their talk to project 'yes-like' preferences - contiguously, there are other examples that do not follow this simple preferred structure, as shown in the data examined below.

6.2.1.2 Dispreferred to Preferred

In opening the focus group interaction, recall that the moderator clarified the research question that participants had been brought together to discuss, 'what are your experiences at university' (see Chapter 5, Section 5.2.1.1). However, the moderator did not deal with the problem of securing a first speaker, that is, a participant to 'go-first' (Sacks, 1992b, p. 196). Sacks has explained,

If you can put off going first, it's not just a matter of your going second, it's just that you don't have to state your position or argument; instead you can criticise the prior party's.¹⁸

So, as Wilkinson (2006, p. 56) put it, 'going first means you have to put your opinion on the line'. Although earlier talk made clear that any of the participants could take up the floor and produce the *first experience* or give the first account,

¹⁸ Note, it was through his work on 'the fixed placing and adjacency pair status of greetings at the beginning of conversation' that Sacks (1992a) became interested in how it is that who-goes-first is determined. He found that,

It turns out that sort of a problem has a bunch of diagnostic interests, turning on that lots of cultures find that sort of problem a thing to play around with. And where you have a situation where there is some thing that involves an order as between the parties, and involves that they go one at a time or two at a time but behind each other, etc., you have that situation mobilized for other sorts of structural uses. You will widely find, cross-culturally, solutions that do not just somehow or another solve the one-at-a-time, who-goes-first problem, but solutions which allow other sorts of organizations to operate. (Sacks, 1992a, p. 197)

there is an unwillingness to take up the floor and speak about one's experiences at university and introduce a topic, that is, until Frank makes an offer to 'go-first'.

In Extract 12 (below), Frank initiates an offer-acceptance sequence and, self-selecting a next turn, goes about resolving the problem of who-goes-first.

Extract 12: Lines 11-27

- | | | |
|----|----------|---|
| 11 | Celeste: | ↑O(hh)kka: whadya we- whadya- we doin'=' |
| 12 | Ronnie: | =Oh, the the question 'What are your experiences at |
| 13 | | university?' |
| 14 | | (.) |
| 15 | | °Thank you° |
| 16 | Celeste: | Uh: (.) like any sorta experiences? |
| 17 | Ronnie: | Ye::s (.) as a student (.) as a tutor, anything at all. |
| 18 | Celeste: | ah yeah . . . [X__ |
| 19 | Gerard: | [↑Wha- I'm sitting an' listenin' to it |
| 20 | | (2.0) |
| 21 | Celeste: | Whada you lis(hh)ten to Gerard? |
| 22 | Gerard: | I'm waiting for everybody else, not for me= |
| 23 | Frank: | =Okay then (.) >anybody wanna start↑< |
| 24 | | (1.0) |
| 25 | Frank: | or shall I. |
| 26 | Gerard: | >You start |
| 27 | Frank: | °Okay.° ↑I suppose ((the experience)) |

Orientating to the earlier talk and upon hearing Gerard reject the offer of the floor, Frank quickly takes up the talk and produces a token that not only acknowledges Gerard's rejection of the floor ('I'm waiting for everybody else, not for me=', line 22), but one that indicates a 'change-of-activity' (Gardner, 2001, p. 24) is underway. In other words, Frank's production of '=Okay then' (line 23) proposes the activity of clarifying the question can be terminated and a new activity started, that is, participants' producing accounts of university experience (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1990). A brief one-tenth of a second pause ensues before Frank takes up the talk again, quickly asking, '>anybody wanna start↑<' (line 23), as indicated by the left and right single positioned carats ('> <'). Although Frank does not nominate anyone in particular as next speaker, as indicated by his selection of the indefinite pronoun 'anybody' (line 23) in the utterance, '>anybody wanna start↑<', it is interpretable as a question-FPP and as such warrants an answer-SPP that accepts the offer, such as, 'yes, I will' or 'okay, I'll go start', and so forth.

However, no response is forthcoming and a one second silence ensues (line 24). The silence projects a dispreferred, and the absence of a projected SPP is noticeable and accountable (e.g., Goodwin & Heritage, 1990; Lee, 1987; Schegloff, 1968). However, '[g]iven evidence that a disagreement is "in the works"' (Sacks, 1987, p. 65), Frank does not allow the silence to become disruptive and takes up the talk again.

Frank renders the silence an intra-turn one, as he reformulates his earlier question and re-produces his offer to go-first, 'or shall I.' (line 25). The question is designed in the direction of possible agreement, with a consequence that the disagreement is avoided and agreement ensues. Frank acknowledges the lack of offer by co-participants to take up the floor and go-first and is thereby offering to 'go first' (Sacks, 1992b, p. 197), to which Gerard hurriedly produces a preferred response, '>You start' (line 26). The production of the immediate 'yes-like' response ensues that Gerard's talk is in agreement with the trajectory established by Frank's talk. In other words, Frank's question requires a response that accepts his offer, 'yes, you go first', 'you start', and so forth.

The problem of getting started, that is securing a first teller, is resolved in the question-answer sequence, in which the speaker of the FPP, Frank, can be seen to be doing a good deal of interactional work to ensure smooth communication. Hence, the problem of eliciting agreement is resolved by the FPP-speaker's activities; taking up the floor again, rendering the silence an intra-turn one and a reformulation of the original question to ensure it receives its preferred 'yes-like' response.

6.2.1.3 Preferred to Dispreferred

The data presented in this sub-section offers an example of a preferred that is reformulated and reproduced in the same turn as a dispreferred. The data presented below follows on from an account that Gerard has been sharing about a time when he reported that he 'exploded' in a tutorial-class. In Extract 13 (below), Celeste can be seen producing a question-FPP in which she asks Gerard about the incident.

Extract 13: Lines 308-315

308 Gerard: Yeahhhh. I've already exploded once this year.
309 (2.0)
310 Celeste: To who?
311 Gerard: I'm not prepared to mention names.
312 Celeste: Was it abo-
313 Gerard: I'm not [prepared to na-
314 Celeste: [Was it about race?
315 Gerard: Yeah >it was about race< (.) little bit to do with race.

Following a lengthy intra-turn silence (line 309), Celeste takes a turn at talk to ask Gerard about the incident in which he reports he 'exploded', 'To who?' (line 310). Gerard takes up the floor to respond to Celeste's question, with an SPP that says *no comment*, 'I'm not prepared to mention names' (line 311). Celeste then produces another question to inquire about the topic of the incident, 'Was it abo-' (line 312), which Gerard cuts-off mid-way with what is hearably an almost repeat of his immediate prior *no comment* turn, 'I'm not [prepared to na-' (line 313). At this point, Celeste interrupts Gerard, asking, '[Was it about race?' (line 314), which is possibly a repeat of her earlier, interrupted question, 'Was it abo-' (line 312). Celeste's question is designed in such a way that it projects a 'yes-like' response as preferred. In a next immediate action, Gerard begins his talk by proffering a typical agreeing object, 'Yeah' (line 315), before hurriedly offering a reworking of the original question, '>it was about race<' (line 315). Following a short pause, Gerard reproduces his earlier utterance, and downgrades it slightly, 'little bit to do with race' (line 315), thus moving towards a dispreferred.

What appears to be happening here is that Celeste is doing a lot of interactional work to shape Gerard's turn with an orientation to agreeing, so much so that her continual questions into the reason for his having exploded are interrogative-like. Celeste asks one question after another until she receives an adequate response to her interest in Gerard's 'exploding' in a tutorial-class. Twice, Gerard indicates his unwillingness to answer. When Gerard does answer, he does so in classic dispreferred format; ending up with a very very mitigated agreement ('little bit'). Gerard could have just as easily designed his talk as an outright dispreferred (e.g., 'no', 'no, it wasn't about race', 'no, it was to do with X'), but did not (Hayashi, 1996). Gerard produces a 'yes-like' preferred response that he downgrades to

becoming a dispreferred response in the same turn at talk. What this suggests is that ‘race’ was not necessarily the topic matter or reason for Gerard’s having exploded, despite Celeste’s ascription of its relevance. Whatever the case may be, it appears that Gerard is keen to maintain the harmonious state of relations between the parties, which is possibly why he produces the ‘dressed up’ dispreferred in the way he did, to make race *matter*.

6.2.2 Managing Disagreement

This section examines the preference structure relevant to disagreement and agreement, with a particular look at focus group participants’ productions of the response token, ‘no’, which is typically found in disagreements (and agreements). ‘No’ is generally located later in turns and preceded by other interactional resources, such as ‘well’, silences in the talk, and so forth (see, Heritage, 1984; Pomerantz, 1992a; Sacks, 1987; Schegloff, 2001). These interactional resources delay the immediacy of the disagreement, which is in keeping with the preference structures relevant to agreement and disagreement. However, this is not what we see in the data under analysis.

This section examines how the parties manage disagreement under three sub-sections: aggravated disagreement, mitigated disagreement, and disputing claims.

6.2.2.1 Aggravated Disagreement

Prior to the production of talk below, some of the focus group participants have been complaining about the way in which marks are awarded on university projects. In Extract 14 (below), Gerard self-nominates a turn at talk, where he agrees with a prior comment before expressing his own understanding of the awarding of grades. The excerpt begins with Gerard stating that ‘most lecturers got it over you’ (lines 384-385) because they have the power to ‘pass’ (line 390) or ‘fail’ (line 391) students.

Extract 14: Lines 384-428

384 Gerard: Yeah=see that that's where the most most lecturers got it
 385 over you <because even if you don't do rebel > (.) you
 386 always got the fear.
 387 [They've
 388 Celeste: [hhhh
 389 Gerard: got they've got the final say.
 390 They >got the pen and paper to say< here we'll pass him
 391 or we'll fail him=
 392 Ronnie: =No >that's where you're wrong<! You've gotta choice (.)
 393 of putting your project to the senate.
 394 Right!
 395 Gerard: No, well you see I I don't know, I don't know
 396 [these angles
 397 Ronnie: [as I wen' through university my↓sel↑f=fair while ago now,
 398 >I graduated in ninety-nine<, when I first started .hhh over at
 399 ((university)) (.) it w'z unbelievable what we 'ad to put up
 400 ↑with.
 401 We were sitting there in one one section and ah >all the
 402 Aboriginals were sittin' in the fron' row<, 'nd this
 403 bloke (.) would of'en say to us in sociology yihknow, 'bout
 404 the Aboriginals dyin' out and everything,
 405 en' 'e'd look straigh'- at us an' I'd go, '↑woo↓oo ↑we
 406 still ['ere:!
 407 Gerard: [(laugh))
 408 Frank: [(laugh))
 409 Ronnie: And he'd change his mind, sooth the dying pillow, and say
 ((17 lines of talk omitted))
 426 There are processes in place um where we could
 427 challenge what lecturers were saying, specially the written
 428 work, if we didn't like what they wrote about us= I

Latching her talk onto the prior speaker's talk, Ronnie immediately produces a flat-out dispreferred answer, 'no' (line 392), in response to Gerard's comment. A first point here is that Ronnie's 'no' is located in the initial turn position. A second point is that there are no interactional resources that precede Ronnie's 'no', which would otherwise delay and/or mitigate the production of the disagreeing token (i.e., 'no'). Ronnie's production of 'no' in initial turn position is not in keeping with the preference structures relevant to agreement and disagreement, which show that 'no' tends to be produced later in disagreeing turns (e.g., Heritage, 1984; Pomerantz, 1992a; Sacks, 1987; Schegloff, 2001) Further, Ronnie's latching of her dispreferred onto Gerard's talk (marked by the equal signs, '=', between the speakers' turns) sees the response performed with no gap between the prior turn's

completion and the disagreement turn's initiation, and no 'techniques to de-emphasise opposition' (Makri Tsilipakou, 1991; Petraki, 2002, p. 202).

Further, as the talk unfolds, Ronnie can be heard upgrading her original disagreeing action, as she quickly adds, '>that's where you're wrong<!' (line 392). Although the talk at this point is complete and therefore a transition relevant place (TRP) or a place in the talk where a change in speakers might legitimately occur, it does not. Speaker change does not occur. Instead, Ronnie resumes the floor and produces another, even stronger disagreeing action that serves to intensify and aggravate the charge against Gerard, 'Right!' (line 394). Not only does Ronnie's production of 'right!' (line 394) upgrade the charge against Gerard, it summons a 'yes-like' response that makes Gerard accountable for producing an appropriate, preferred answer to Ronnie's aggravated disagreeing turn at talk (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1990).

With minimal delay, Gerard takes up the floor to produce a response in which he can be seen claiming insufficient knowledge, 'No well, you see I I don't know, I don't know' (line 395). While Gerard begins his turn-at-talk with the disagreeing token 'no', it is possibly the case that Gerard's production of 'no' is a response to Ronnie's earlier charge, '>that's where you're wrong<!' (line 392), and not a response to Ronnie's announcement that students have a 'choice (.) of putting ... projects to the senate' (lines 392-393). Further, Gerard's talk appears to be grammatically complete after the 'I don't know'. However, as the talk unfolds, it appears that Gerard has managed to produce only a partially complete turn at talk (i.e., 'No well, you see I I don't know, I don't know', line 395), before Ronnie interrupts and overlaps Gerard's talk (i.e., '[these angles', line 396) with a new topic; '[as I wen' through university my↓sel↑f' (line 397), which is self-assessed as an 'unbelievable' experience of discrimination that she shared with 'all Aboriginal persons in a tutorial-class' (see, Chapter 5, Section 5.2.3.1). While cutting-off Gerard mid-TCU can be seen to be a dispreferred act, it does not seem to phase Ronnie at all, as she goes about producing her unbelievable experience of discrimination in a rather light-hearted, 'poetic' (Jefferson, 1990) way.

Ronnie's utterance, 'and he'd look straight at us and I'd go, '↑woo↓oo ↑we still 'ere:!' (line 405), is projected in a melodious way (Sacks, 1992b). This bit of direct reported speech is produced through: upward ('↑') and downward ('↓') intonation contours, with a repetition of the consonant 'w' as a beginning sound of a series of short words and a closely occurring repetition of 'oo' sound'. While Sacks (1992b, p. 343) and others (e.g., Jefferson, 1990) have acknowledged that such textured fragments show the ways in which speaker 'may be doing being attentive to each other', they are here also a resource whereby Ronnie not only brings her experience into the present time, the reported speech is 'an effective and economical way of providing evidence' (Holt, 1996, p. 225). It is also one that suggests there are no 'hard feelings', which appears to be how Gerard sees it as well, as indicated by Gerard and Frank's laughter (lines 407 & 408, respectively). The melodious production of the account suggests that this is affiliative action, and recipients are able to align and affiliate through laughter.

Although Ronnie's initial production of 'no' was 'not delayed but prompt and even overlapping [the] interlocutor's talk', there is no sense here of 'arguing' or 'fighting' (Schegloff, 2007a, p. 73). Ronnie produces strong disagreement, as evidenced by disagreement components occupying the entire disagreeing turn, but, as noted earlier, her talk does not appear to disturb the state of relations between the parties. One reason for this might relate to the nature of focus groups. Focus groups encourage participants to 'discuss, debate, and (sometimes) disagree about key issues' (Wilkinson, 2006, p. 52), while the role of moderator as mediator, and intervening mediator, is such that participants talk can be kept on track, and in this case on the *right* track. In other words, it is highly likely that Ronnie hears Gerard's 'I don't know' formulation as Gerard's 'not knowing what he is talking about, of not having a sufficient factual or experiential basis for the contentious claims he is making' (2003, p. 44).

If this is so, Ronnie can be seen to be carrying out her role as 'moderator' and producing the disagreeing turn to correct Gerard's wrong understanding; as a type of an informing born out of obligation. That is to say, not to have provided the correct interpretation/knowledge may have been seen to be a dereliction of duty

and obligation on Ronnie's part, as moderator. What is also likely is that Ronnie, an Aboriginal person, is informing Gerard, another Aboriginal person, that he is incorrectly informed. There is this sense that Ronnie is announcing information as an obligation and that Ronnie is producing what Sacks (1992a, p. 702) has referred to as 'obligated utterances'. While it may be little more than speculation, it might be the case that this is a place where solidarity overrides preference, that is, the need to stand up for one's rights. Whatever is happening here, there is this sense that Ronnie's correcting of Gerard is obligated much like that between kin; to borrow from Sacks (1992a, p. 702), 'when such an event occurs, the kin-members should get it from each other, i.e., they should hear it from you'.

6.2.2.2 Mitigated Disagreement

Prior to the production of talk below, Lorna has been informing focus group participants that although a convenor in the journalism course encouraged her to write about a new cultural centre on Thursday Island for possible publication as a feature article in a major newspaper, she did not take up the offer. Extract 15 (below) begins with Celeste excitedly issuing Lorna a directive, 'You should publish↑' (line 731), which she immediately repeats, though in a somewhat less animated manner, 'You should publish' (line 732).

Extract 15: Lines 731-753

- 731 Celeste: You should publish↑
 732 You should publish.
 733 Lorna: No, bu' that's jes' me
 734 (.)
 735 Like, I mean=I'm sick of like reading about like Aboriginal
 736 and Torres Strait Islander people=like (.) suicide stuff 'n' crime.
 737 Y'know, like, like ↑the media mainstream, that's all you read about
 738 Celeste: Is that what yours was on?
 739 Lorna: No, like, mine was on the cultural centre that's being built
 740 next year↓
 741 back home.
 742 Celeste: Oh then you wanna publish it then so people can read
 743 something different.
 744 Lorna: I'm jus not that kinda person.
 745 I still got that shame in me.
 746 Celeste: How you gonna be a journalist then?
 747 You never gonna publish?
 748 Lorna: Ah, yeah, well I know what I'm capable of doing,
 749 and like, I don' think that was good enough↑

750 and that's jes' basically why I didn't= and plus I s'pose I
 751 got a lotta inside information from back home= confidential↓
 752 anyway, an' um yeah, basically that was probably why.
 753 an' um this is my second year in Brisbane.

In the multi-unit turns in the sequence above, there are two productions of 'no' by Lorna (lines 733 & 739), both of which are produced without delay and in turn initial positions. The first 'no' (line 733) is dispreferred, and followed by an elaborate explanation of why Lorna did not publish. Although Lorna produces this 'no' in an aggravated disagreeing-like way (i.e., immediately in the turn initial position, without devices to minimise its perlocutionary force), the explanation itself serves to weaken the force of the disagreement, 'bu' that's jes' me' (line 733). Lorna's second 'no' (line 739) is produced much in the same way as the first; as a dispreferred, disagreeing 'no', produced without delay and without devices that precede it, and followed up by further action. However, Lorna's response, although an adequate answer-SPP to Celeste's question-FPP, does not close the topic, as Celeste once again takes up the floor to continue to prod Lorna further into agreeing to publish, or at least into acknowledging that she should be agreeing to publish.

However, Lorna is adamant, and takes another turn-at-talk in which she stands-her-ground, 'I'm jus not that kinda person' (line 744), before going on to provide a cultural-reason for not having taken up the convenor's suggestion, 'I still got that shame in me' (lines 744-745). While Lorna's revelation about *having shame* could be seen to provide a convincing close due to its cultural significance,¹⁹ it does not. Celeste takes up the floor again and in a type of 'teasing' (Eckermann, 1977), asks, 'How you gonna be a journalist then? You never gonna publish?' (lines 746-745). After momentarily holding the floor with the token 'Ah' (line 748), Lorna produces an agreeing token almost robotically 'yeah' (line 748), then 'well' before going on produce a self-critical statement, 'I know what I'm capable of doing and like, I don' think that was good enough↑' (lines 748-749).

¹⁹ Morris (1994, p. 59) explained that, European contempt and prejudice were such that "doin' things in the open" was always likely to invite European hostility and public embarrassment through ridicule. This is the most significant aspect of shaming, that it is a public form of social coercion.

In terms of preference, this is a place in the talk where Celeste could legitimately take up the floor and produce a disagreeing response to Lorna's self-deprecating, 'I don't know' (e.g., Atkinson & Drew, 1979; Pomerantz, 1992a), thereby resolving the disagreement. In other words, the production of a disagreeing turn would have been a preferred next action. However, Celeste does not take up the floor. What happens is, Lorna goes on to produce another culturally-relevant reason that explains why the preferred response has not been forthcoming, 'plus I s'pose I got a lotta inside information from back home= confidential↓' (lines 750-751). Lorna continues to hold the floor, and with the production of 'anyway', reopens the early topic, 'an' um this is my second year in Brisbane' (line 753), which resolves the disagreement. Although Celeste has continually prodded Lorna to publish, there is an aspect of 'compliment' to what Celeste is saying is that Lorna's work is 'good enough' to publish. If this is the case, the preferred format for compliment responses is disagreement for the compliment recipient, which would suggest that Lorna had produced a preferred response.

6.2.2.3 Disputing Claims

Prior to the talk in Extract 16 (below) being produced, Sissi has been sharing an experience about a lecturer, who is reported to have stated that Indigenous students do not have an understanding of the concept of sovereignty. Sissi tells focus group participants that she disputed the lecturer's claim by asking when the Commonwealth actually acquired sovereignty of Australia, given the findings of the Mabo²⁰ case, which ruled that Indigenous people had sovereignty that predated the constitution. In Extract 16, the segment begins with Frank producing an action that he directs at Sissi, 'Sounds like you're >a bit of'a ↑stirrer< from time to time' (line 970).

Extract 16: Lines 970-981

| | | |
|-----|----------|---|
| 970 | Frank: | Sounds like you're a bit of a stirrer from time to time. |
| 971 | Sissi: | No I but I I waited for <u>fifteen</u> [<u>minutes</u> for her |
| 972 | Celeste: | [You stand [up |
| 973 | Frank: | [mm |
| 974 | Sissi: | [to say, y'know |

²⁰ The Mabo case established that Indigenous people had sovereignty before white settlement in Australia, see R.H. Bartlett (1993), *The Mabo Decision*, Butterworths, Australia.

975 Celeste: [for [your rights.
 976 Lorna: [Yeah she's standing up for her rights.
 977 If anybody was saying that in my class↑ I'd be standing
 978 [up straight away saying stuff
 979 Celeste: [Good on you. Good (.) on you↑.
 980 Lorna: because we shouldn't have to put up with it anymore.
 981 Sissi: Yeah, that's it.

Taking up the floor, Frank produces an action that invokes Sissi's character as trouble-making, 'Sounds like you're >a bit of'a ↑stirrer< from time to time' (line 970). Whereas the utterance, '>a bit of'a ↑stirrer<', refers to someone who agitates, or makes trouble, it is here designed in such a way that the accusatory intensity of the challenge is slightly downgraded. For instance, Sissi is characterised as '>a bit' (line 970) of'a ↑stirrer<' (line 970), so she is not a *complete* trouble-maker. Also, Sissi is assessed as being '>a bit of'a ↑stirrer<' (line 970) only 'from time to time' (line 970), which indicates that she is not a trouble-maker all of the time, but at intervals. Further, it is possible that Frank has produced this statement as a bit of good old Aussie joking, with the action projected in a weak or mitigated form and possibly designed to receive a preferred 'yes-like' response. However, it is not heard as such because it does not receive the preferred response, but a disagreeing one, 'No I but I I waited for fifteen [minutes for her to say' (line 971).

Sissi wastes no time in producing the disagreeing token, 'No', which is uttered without delay and in the initial turn position (e.g., Pomerantz, 1992a; Sacks, 1987; Schegloff, 2001). The disagreeing action is produced contiguously, to correct Frank's negative assessment of her. Given that Sissi does not interpret Frank's assessment of her as good old Aussie banter but as a charge against her character, 'denial' (Heritage, 1984, p. 269) of the accusing action appears to be the preferred format response in this action type, which means that Sissi's disagreeing 'no' is preferred. Further, Sissi's production of the time-reference, 'fifteen [minutes' (line 971), appears to stand in an 'historically sensitive' (Jefferson, 1990; Sacks, 1992b) relationship to Frank's just prior temporal phrase, 'from time to time' (line 970). The 'time reference' (Sacks, 1986, p. 130) is a method by which Sissi deflects the accusation, mitigating her own agency in, and accountability for, the course of action adopted.

There is no transition space displayed between the current and next speakers, as Celeste enters the talk early, that is, prior to the completion of Sissi's turn at talk (line 971). Beginning her turn in overlap, Celeste announces, '[You stand [up]' (line 972). She manages only to produce a partial TCU before Frank is heard in overlap proffering the minimal response token, '[mm' (line 973). Here, the token might be characterised as a 'moving on without comment' (Gardner, 2001, p. 100); that Frank is being non-committal. At line 975, Sissi continues her talk from her just prior turn (line 971), albeit in a somewhat ambiguous way. Celeste continues to produce her talk, which is produced in overlap with Sissi's, as both go about completing their turns at talk (lines 974, 975), simultaneously.

Further, although Celeste is directing her comment (i.e., '[You stand [up]', line 972) to Sissi, as indicated by her selection of the second person pronoun, 'you' and its related form, 'your', her production of talk in overlap with Sissi's talk is not intended to be problematic or silencing of Sissi. Rather, it is a means by which Celeste shows alignment with Sissi. It is a means by which Celeste does disagreeing with Frank's earlier accusation action (line 970), and does agreeing with Sissi's correction (line 971), '[You stand [up]' (line 972) '[for [your rights]' (line 975). Celeste can be heard to be showing understanding of Sissi's stance, as displayed in her quick taking up of the talk to produce an action that does agreeing and aligning.

Lorna also displays understanding of Sissi's position, as she too enters the talk early (i.e., prior to Celeste's completion, mid-TCU) (line 976). In so doing, she immediately agrees with Celeste's *take on things*, and, in what is almost a repeat of Celeste's utterance, confirms, '[Yeah she's standing up for her rights' (line 976). Not only does this display attentiveness to the earlier talk, it displays alignment with Celeste and Sissi. Lorna then goes on say what she would have done had she been in a similar position, which receives very strong praise from Celeste, '[Good on you. Good (.) on you↑' (line 979). There are very strong displays of alignment and support for Sissi displayed by both Celeste and Lorna during the telling (Stivers, 2008).

In fact, so much more can be made of this point. Here is an accusation, followed by some very supportive and interlocking (overlapping) talk from Celeste and Lorna.

6.2.3 Affiliative List Construction

This section examines the preference organisation in operation in the focus group event by examining some of the ways in which ‘lists’ are constructed and produced. ‘Lists’ are resources that speakers can use to produce accounts (Jefferson, 1990, p. 82). Their construction and production is a resource that can be used to perform a variety of interactional activities. For example, Jefferson (1990) found that speakers tend to orient to three-part lists and do so to accomplish particular interactional work, such as topic-shifting and offense avoiding. Further, Lerner (1994, p. 27) maintained that, one party, ‘on hearing the preliminary component of the compound turn-constructive unit’ can produce an anticipated final component, thus completing the turn. So, ‘a non-speaker of a list-in-progress becomes a party to that listing’ by adding to the list-in-progress (Jefferson, 1990, p. 82), which is what we see in the data under analysis.

This section examines how the parties affiliative list construction under three subsections: a three-part list, a generalised list, and an elaborate list.

6.2.3.1 A Three-Part List

The data below follows on from an experience that Celeste has been recounting, where an Aboriginal student reported that some students refused to work with her because she was ‘black’. Though Celeste’s recounting of the student’s story is produced to elicit some sort of preferred response from recipients, it does not. It receives a response, but the response is a disagreeing action, where Gerard takes up the floor, saying, ‘but then agen’ (line 292).

Extract 17: Lines 292-300

| | | |
|-----|---------|---|
| 292 | Gerard: | But then agen, I’ve gone into those groups and the groups |
| 293 | | =they’re white, and they are pouncing on my knowledge. |

294 they're pouncing on that knowledge,
 295 using me as a knowledge base
 296 Celeste: Yep, but you're a man↓
 297 and you're an older man↓=you've got maturity
 298 Gerard: Mm↑ I suppose that goes in my favour.
 299 I am a mature aged, old man.
 300 Celeste: That's it.

Beginning his turn with 'but' informs co-participants that his yet-to-be-produced talk will provide an alternative account to that recounted by Celeste. Celeste hears Gerard's alternative account and, following its completion, offers a preferred token, 'yep', before going on to give reasons for Gerard's alternative experience, 'but you're a man↓ and you're an older man↓=' (line 296). Celeste co-selects two Pn-adequate descriptive items to categorise Gerard; that is, 'older' and 'man', from the devices 'age' and 'sex', thereby making them relevant to understanding why Gerard might not have had similar experiences (Edwards, 1998). The category 'older' also makes relevant the device 'stage-of-life', which is made explicit in Celeste's next, immediate utterance, '=you've got maturity' (line 297). Being an older man means that one has 'maturity', and Gerard's 'being older' means that he has maturity. So, Celeste produces the increment in the way she does to make explicit that which can common-sensically be presumed about being an 'older man', that is, that one has maturity (Schegloff, 2007b), and that it is being done as a three-part list to follow Gerard's earlier *list-like* talk; 'I've gone into those groups and the groups', (i) '=they're white' (ii) 'pouncing on my knowledge', and (iii) 'using me as a knowledge base' (lines 292-295).

Invoking the relevance of Gerard's maturity has the effect of invoking and categorising the categoriser (i.e., the Aboriginal student, who told Celeste the story) in terms of co-class categories under the available devices, that is, 'age/stage-of-life' and 'sex', as 'younger' and 'immature' and 'woman'. Celeste's orientation to Gerard's immediate prior talk, where he informed focus group participants that he was 'knowledgeable'; so much so that 'white' 'groups' 'pounce' 'on that knowledge' (lines 292-294), suggests that Celeste is paying him a compliment. Gerard provides a 'weak' response, 'Mm↑' (line 298), which provides 'receipt of the prior turn', 'is completing the sequence' and 'preparing' for same speaker talk in the same turn (Gardner, 2001, pp. 136-137), 'I suppose

that goes in my favour' (line 298). In that same turn, Gerard neatly reworks and reformulates Celeste's into a single utterance, 'I am a mature aged, old man' (line 299).

At first glance, Gerard appears to be repeating Celeste's immediate prior utterance (i.e., 'but you're a man↓ and you're an older man↓=you've got maturity' (lines 296-297). However, an examination of the utterances in sequence shows that Gerard's utterance (line 299) is different to Celeste's. Celeste's utterance is constructed in three distinct parts - (i) 'but you're a man↓', (ii) 'you're an older man↓=', and (iii) 'you've got maturity' (lines 296-297), all of which are descriptive items that are internally tied to one another. Produced in the way it is, the descriptive listing seems to assemble an account that generates 'maturity' as a category entitlement of being 'older'.

In contrast, Gerard's account is produced as a two-item list – (i) 'mature aged', and (ii) 'old man' (line 299). The list featured the categories 'mature' and 'old' as co-class categories of the collection, 'age', and not the collection, 'stage-of-life', which seemed to be the case in Celeste's production. Gerard's utterance assembles an account that generates 'mature aged' as a co-class member of 'old', which has the effect of upgrading Celeste's description of him as someone with maturity to someone 'mature aged', 'old'; features held in reverence in Aboriginal culture. Whatever might be happening here, Celeste is not orienting to race, despite Gerard's earlier mention that it was 'white' groups that pounce on his knowledge. Gerard and Celeste are obviously closely orienting, aligning and affiliating with one another; they are on the same wavelength.

6.2.3.2 A Generalised List

In Extract 18 (below), Gerard and Frank can be seen closely aligning and collaborating. The data in that extract follows on from an experience that Gerard has been sharing with the focus group in which he has been complaining about a lecturer who had asked him to 'unpackage Indigenous people a certain way'. While Gerard has been explaining to the group his reasons for not wanting to unpackage Indigenous people a certain way, he appears to be having some

difficulty in completing his turn at talk, as marked by the rather lengthy two-second silence ((‘2.0’)) that ensues in the middle of the production of a TCU (line 248).

Extract 18: Lines 242-250

242 Gerard: I might look at it and depends wha- wha- what I perceive
243 and what perspective I give it.
244 I mean I did that without- being ‘n Indigenous person for
245 about 45 years en’ once I learnt to be Indigenous ↑now,
246 I want to be ↑Indigenous=‘en’ not to unpack ‘n’ be told
247 that I’m
248 (2.0)
249 Frank: This that or [the other
250 Gerard: [>this that< or the other.

There is much of interest to an analysis of list construction and production in the fragment above. For instance, Gerard’s talk about not wanting to unpackage Indigenous people a certain way is produced in a type of listing format. In other words, Gerard produces a list of clauses to rationalise his decision, ‘‘en’ once I learnt to be Indigenous ↑now, I want to be ↑Indigenous=‘en’ not to unpack ‘n’ be told that I’m’ (lines 245-247). While the partially complete talk does not contain distinct items (e.g., ‘ready, set and go’), the speaker’s production of a ‘link term’ (Jefferson, 1990, p. 82), ‘and’, ‘conjoins’ (Lerner, 1994, p. 23) the clauses, suggesting that a list may be underway. However, Gerard stops talking before he properly completes his a list item (line 247), as marked by the two second silence (line 248). His talk ends abruptly, right in the middle of a TCU and prior to the production of ‘an adequate complete utterance’ (Sacks, 1992b, p. 96), ‘‘n’ be told that I’m’ (lines 246-247).

Frank, who, up until this point, has been a recipient of Gerard’s talk, is closely orienting to and monitoring the talk, as evidenced in his next action. Frank appears to hear the silence as Gerard’s ‘having difficulty’ (Jefferson, 1990) in completing his talk. Despite the silence’s location in the middle of the TCU, which is not an appropriate place for speaker change to occur, Frank takes up the floor. At which point he renders the silence unproblematic, by properly and possibly, completing Gerard’s turn at talk, with the production of a general three-part utterance, (i) ‘this’, (ii) ‘that’ or (iii) ‘the other’ (line 249). Designed in this

way, the three-part utterance can be thought of as a generalised (Jefferson, 1990) or a generalising (Lerner, 1994, p. 29) list.

Although ‘this, that or the other’ can connote offhandedness (Whitehead, 2007), the recipient’s selection of ‘This that or [the other’ is not produced to indicate that Gerard’s being ‘told’ (line 249) that whatever (racial membership) he is or is not is irrelevant. Instead, Frank’s turn is designed in such a way that it covers the entire range of potentially relevant statements that could have been made following ‘‘n’ be told that I’m’ (lines 246-247), but need not be explicitly stated. In this way, the generalised list is a resource that Frank uses to display that Gerard’s claim, ‘I want to be ↑Indigenous=‘en’ not to unpack ‘n’ be told’ (lines 246-247) that whatever he is and is not, is relevant. Further, it is one that allows Frank to defuse the situation, rendering Gerard’s experience neutral and bland, rather than something that is racially sensitive.

What is more, perhaps, is that Frank’s anticipatory completion (Lerner, 1994), ‘This that or [the other’ (line 249) is accepted by Gerard, as evidenced in his production of exactly the same generalised list, ‘[>this that< or the other’ (line 250). In taking up the talk again, Gerard overlaps Frank’s talk in the middle of the TCU list, following the production of the first two list components, ‘this that or’ (line 249). Gerard recognises that a list is in progress prior to the production of the final item, and quickly reproduces the first two items, before producing the final component, ‘the other’ (line 250). It might be the case that Gerard designs his talk in this way to produce the completion to his experience, which he, in effect, does. Put another way, Gerard’s difficulty in searching for a way to complete his talk is resolved through Frank’s interactional efforts, and, having found a way to complete his talk, does so. The co-completion indicates that Gerard and Frank are collaboratively completing Gerard’s experience (Jefferson, 1990, p. 84). Completing someone else’s list is very aligning, as it shows the completer in tune with what the list initiator is thinking.

6.2.3.3 An Elaborate List

A further example of participants collaboratively producing three-part lists is offered in Extract 19 (below). The data presented follows on from an experience that Sissi has been sharing with focus group participants about an incident in a tutorial class in which a lecturer was reported to have expressed racist sentiment against Sissi.

Extract 19: Lines 1028-1041

- 1028 Sissi: So, I mean, they've become aware of that but they have
1029 instigated a program to address the racism but, you know, if
1030 they're not in the room they're not aware that's actually
1031 what's happening and the law school seems to say,
1032 'I don't think they would have said that. I don't think
1033 this person would have done that. I know this person'.
1034 Celeste: That's just like someone you know, say someone has
1035 been sexually abused and sexually perpetrated, who
1036 has, and they say, 'I don't believe that. I don't believe they
1037 would have done that'=
1038 Sissi: =Oh, I don't believe this person would have done that. I
1039 know that person very well. I don't believe they would've
1040 done that' and I feel like saying, 'are you saying I'm lying',
1041 you know.

Sissi's talk opens with an action in which she informs co-participants that despite the 'law school's' (line 1031) instigation of a program to 'address the racism' (line 1028), 'if they're not in the room, they're not aware that's actually what's happening' (lines 1029-1030). Following that, Sissi goes on to complain about what it is the 'law school seem to say' (line 1031), which implies that she is not reporting what the law school actually did (or did not) say, but what she expects they might have said, which can be seen to shift the complaint against the lecturer to a complaint against 'the law school'. Sissi produces, what Buttny (2003, p. 106) following on from Payne (n.d) calls, 'prototypical speech'; a summary of the talk that is produced in the form of a quote of a 'prototypical group member'. This appears to be a resource for portraying to co-participants the words that the law school might be expected to say under such circumstances, which is designed in the form of an elaborate three-part list-like description, '(i) 'I don't think they would have said that' (line 1032), (ii) 'I don't think this person would have done that' (lines 1032-1033), and (iii) 'I know this person' (line 1033). While

producing the elaborate three-part list-like description (lines 1032-1033) can be seen to talk-into-being a predisposition to prejudice on the part of the law school, it is also a means by which recipients are invited to make inferences and draw like conclusions, which is what Celeste does upon taking up the floor.

What happens in the fragment under analysis is that the list-like descriptions get traded back and forth in a form that runs A-B-A (Sacks, 1992b, p. 523) through repeats or rephrasing. Celeste produces a list-like description, which is a repeat or representing of the description that Sissi produced in her just-prior utterance. Celeste produces two items, 'I don't believe that' (line 1036) and 'I don't believe they would have done that=' (lines 1036-1037), before Sissi takes up the floor again, latching her talk onto Celeste's talk (lines 1037, 1038), latches, (i) '=Oh, I don't believe this person would have done that' (line 1038), '(ii) 'I know this person very well', (lines 1038-1039), and (iii) 'I don't believe they would've done that' (lines 1039-1040).

Further, the first two items produced by Sissi in her first three-part list both use the verb, 'think' (line 1032), which suggests that what Sissi is saying is produced as her expectation, reasoning and judgement of what the law school potentially said. In contrast, Celeste produces her two-item list using the verb, 'believe' (lines 1036), which suggests that Celeste accepts the truth value of the prototypical sentiment in Sissi's prior utterance. In that sense, Celeste's production of 'believe' appears to confirm Sissi's speculation of what the law school might be expected to have said on the matter to a believing that the law school would have said such a thing. What is more is that the first and third items in Sissi's second three-part list are also expressed using the mental verb, 'believe' (lines 1038-1039), which Celeste produced in her prior turn. Whereas trading the lists back and forth shows alignment and solidarity between the parties, Sissi's production of the same verbs that Celeste produces in her immediately prior list provides a very strong example of the interactional accomplishment of collaboration in the focus group interaction. Sacks (1992a, p. 147) said, 'so it's not only that they present themselves and demonstrate that they are organized, but by collaborating on the sentence they have this extremely powerful way of showing that they do agree'.

In so doing, Celeste can be seen to be downplaying the relevance of ‘race’ in the talk being produced. By talking as a female to another female, on what is really a very delicate matter, Celeste and Sissi co-organise their talk in topically coherent ways. For instance, in making relevant specific common-sense knowledge about *victims of abuse not being believed by those in positions of power*, Celeste and Sissi connect the action to the topic named in the initial formulation, that is, ‘race’. Celeste is strongly aligning, which is possibly made possible on the basis of Celeste and Sissi’s co-membership as females.

An interesting consequence of shifting the topic from *talk against Non-Indigenous persons* to some other non-racial relatedly-relevant topic such as ‘sexual abuse’ is that it possibly de-sensitises and diffuses potential adverse consequences of race talk by shifting the topic from problems that Indigenous participants had with Non-Indigenous people to other topics that while *non-racial* are *relatedly-relevant* to the action of the particular utterance (e.g., in the example here, *a complaint about failure to take responsibility and accountability*). What the comparison does achieve is to co-locate racism and sexual assault in a category of ‘abusive actions’ which also serves to downplay the significance of race. Hence, Celeste’s topic-shifting allows her to get a turn-at-talk as the result of the topic-shift, which also appears to distance her from *the problem of Non-Indigenous people*.

6.3 Summary

This analytic chapter explored the preference organisation in operation in the focus group itself through an examination of adjacency pairs, the disagreeing token ‘no’ and list construction and production. The analysis found that there were many examples in the data of focus group speakers designing their talk to project ‘yes-like’ preferences - contiguously, there were also examples that did not follow this simple preferred structure. For instance, the data found an example in which the speaker of the SPP appeared to be doing a lot of interactional work, while

another example was found in which the speaker of the FPP was doing a lot of interactional work. What appeared to be happening was that focus group participants were orienting to a preference for agreement, which is in keeping with the research.

However, the findings contrast markedly with existing research on disagreements in conversation. For instance, the findings contrast with the four overall features identified by Pomerantz's (1992a, p. 65) work on disagreement in conversation (see, Chapter 3, Section 3.5.2.2). In this focus group event, disagreement was found to be produced without delay, and not prefaced. Disagreement components were not delayed within a turn or over a series of turns, but were performed with a minimisation of gap between the prior turn's completion and the disagreement turn's initiation. While the findings support the research in terms of identifying that disagreements were of a variety of forms, ranging from mitigated to aggravated forms of disagreement, both mitigated and aggravated forms were produced with 'no' in the initial turn position, which is not something we see in other research (e.g., Petraki, 2002; Pomerantz, 1992a). While the mitigated disagreement was found to be weakened by the talk produced after the production of 'no', aggravated disagreement was found to be characterised by disagreement components occupying the entire disagreement turn.

The speaker (i.e., Ronnie) can be seen to be carrying out her role as 'moderator' and producing the disagreeing turn as a correcting action that was found to arise out of obligation: Ronnie, an Aboriginal person, is informing another Aboriginal person, who is a participant in a focus group that she is moderating, that he is incorrectly informed. Not to have provided the correction may have been seen as a shirking of duty and obligation. As stated above, it may be the case that this is a place where solidarity overrides preference.

Further, an examination of affiliative list construction in the focus group event showed that lists were constructed and produced by more than one person; as Jefferson (1990, p. 82) put it, 'a non-speaker of a list-in-progress becomes a party to that listing' by adding to the list-in-progress. In all of the instances in the data, it was the Non-Indigenous participants that became party-to-the-list. List items

were traded back and forth through repeating or rephrasing, with Indigenous speakers-of-the-list incorporating items contributed by Non-Indigenous parties-to-the-list into their own lists. Further, Indigenous speakers' accounts made race relevant, while Non-Indigenous parties-to-the-lists tended to resist its relevance to the topic of the list. For instance, Sissi's account of the racialised instance is defused as the party to the listing, Celeste, compares the incident to sexual abuse.

This acknowledges the severity of the reported incident, but serves to shift the focus off 'race' and onto 'sexual' matters. While participants were obviously closely orienting, aligning and affiliating with one another, Non-Indigenous participants oriented to the lists to topic-shift and avoid offense, which supports Jefferson's (1990) finding on lists. Finally, examination of how these resources operate in the data under analysis shows co-members of the focus group strongly aligning; which indicates a very good vibe with regard to the relations being established in the interaction between the Indigenous and Non-Indigenous participants.

The next chapter, *Chapter 7: Conclusion*, draws together the study. In particular, it highlights the significant contributions of this study by providing a summary of the main findings. In concluding, the chapter identifies directions for future research.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter is the final chapter in this study on race matters in talk in inter-racial interaction. The study documented and examined inter-racial interaction in which Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians were engaged in a focus group activity, ‘discussing experiences of university’, in a university setting. Chapters 5 and 6 applied CA and MCA to the focus group event data to examine the sequential organisations and the categorial organisations created and re-created in and through the interaction. This chapter reflects on the findings of those two analytic chapters to provide a summary of main findings and implications of those findings.

The chapter is presented in four sections. Section 7.2 presents a summary of the findings on partitioning the population and aligning the population. Section 7.3 discusses some contributions of the study for policy, theory, EM and Indigenous research, and practice. Section 7.4 provides directions for further research, and Section 7.5 provides a summary of the chapter.

7.2 Summary of Main Findings

The findings presented are based on the two analytic chapters in this study, *Chapter 5: Partitioning the Population* and *Chapter 6: Aligning the Population*.

7.2.1 Findings on Partitioning the Population

The analytic exploration into linguistic, conversational and categorial resources of the interaction identified that participants' productions of the non-singular first person pronoun 'we' partitioned the population in different ways. Overall, application of the inclusive/exclusive dual/plural distinction to the data identified that in producing their retrospective accounts of university experiences, Indigenous and Non-Indigenous participants' productions of 'we' operated in a similar manner. What tended to happen was that Indigenous and Non-Indigenous participants' productions of 'we' aligned the sets of persons included in a particular projection of 'we', with all other sets of persons not included in that projection excluded. Further, those excluded were generally negatively ascribed.

The analysis found that Indigenous persons typically included other Indigenous persons (i.e., Aboriginals, Thursday Islanders and/or Torres Strait Islanders) in their productions of 'we', but typically excluded Non-Indigenous persons from those productions. In other words, Indigenous persons typically reported sharing experiences in tutorial-classes and in lectures with other Indigenous persons, but not with Non-Indigenous persons; well, at least not on the majority of occasions reported on in the focus group event. This is similar to Skelton, Wearn and Hobbs' finding that 'patients and companions [in primary care consultations] do not include doctors in their use of "we"'. There, the authors argued that '[patients and companions] do not perceive doctors as *participants* in care, but as conduits or co-ordinators of care' (Skelton et al. 2002, p. 488, emphasis in original, insert added). It might be speculative to suggest that the finding that Indigenous participants do not include Non-Indigenous participants in their retrospective accounts of experiencing university indicates that *Indigenous persons do not perceive Non-Indigenous as participants in universities*. However, what is not speculative is that the most pervasive feature of the talk was that race *mattered*.

A primary finding was that of the negative constitution and problematisation of Non-Indigenous persons in university settings, by Indigenous persons. Indigenous persons produced retrospective accounts in which complaints were shown to lie in the other party, and not in those included in the speaker's projection of 'we'.

Many of the retrospective accounts of university experience can be seen to challenge claims about the promised benefits of diversity on campuses, particularly in tutorial-classes (Bishop, 2006, p. 394). A number of accounts called into question the expertise of Non-Indigenous lecturers/convenors to teach Indigenous students, while other accounts reported experiencing racist treatment from Non-Indigenous students in tutorial-classes. This is probably not surprising given Augoustinos, Tuffin and Rapley's (1999, p. 353, inserts added) finding that 'a [Non-Indigenous] group which might reasonably be expected to be particularly aware of, and sensitive to, the issues of anti-racism', were indeed racist. Recall that despite expectations that Augoustinos et al (1999) *Non-Indigenous university student* participants would not be racist because of the understanding/knowledge acquired through their universities studies, they expressed racist attitudes that blamed, criticised and problematised Indigenous people for failing to *fit* into a *settled white Australia*; and were found to be producing an inherently racist perspective. The Non-Indigenous participants in the current study projected very different attitudes and understandings than those projected by the Non-Indigenous participants in Augoustinos et al (1999) study.

In the current study, Non-Indigenous persons appear to champion the statement of experience of the modified category, Indigenous student, as the experience of university. What typically happened was that Non-Indigenous participants did not distance themselves from Indigenous persons, but from those Non-Indigenous participants being complained about by Indigenous participants as having perpetrated racist actions. Non-Indigenous participants responded to Indigenous complaint accounts against Non-Indigenous students/lecturers/convenors by distancing and disaligning themselves from *the problem of Non-Indigenous people*. In other words, Non-Indigenous participants were not assuming responsibility for racist actions perpetrated by members of their own racial groups.

One way in which Non-Indigenous participants distanced and disaligned themselves from *the problem of Non-Indigenous people* was through shifts in topic. For instance, in making available the category, 'female', from the collection, 'gender', the Non-Indigenous speaker downplayed and diminished the significance of 'race' in the talk being produced. An interesting consequence of

shifting the topic from *talk against Non-Indigenous persons* to some other non-racial relatedly-relevant topic was that Non-Indigenous persons were not being excluded from the talk because of their membership in the 'out' category, and were therefore able to take a turn in the talk. Hence, Non-Indigenous participants were found to de-sensitise and diffuse potential adverse consequences of race talk by shifting the topic from problems that Indigenous participants had with Non-Indigenous people to other *non-racial relatedly-relevant* topics that acknowledged the action of their utterances (e.g., *a complaint action about victims of abuse not being believed by those in positions of power*).

While Non-Indigenous participants oriented to the *us* and *them* partitioning being established in and through Indigenous participants' retrospective accounts of university experience, their local actions were shown to have partitioned the population differently to that of the Indigenous participants. Where Indigenous participants typically partitioned the population along Indigenous/Non-Indigenous and/or black/white racial lines, the Non-Indigenous participants alluded to a partitioning in their own population, at least in so far as they were found to disalign with *problem* members of their own racial group memberships, and to align with other participants or co-members of the focus group. In contrast to findings like Augoustinos et al (1999), where Non-Indigenous university students were found to denounce and dismiss the lived experiences of Indigenous persons, the current study shows that the Indigenous and Non-Indigenous co-members in the focus group event are strongly orienting to, monitoring and managing the talk in a way that shows them making moral points about the social world, that ensures that the point being made is not left to be understood from tellings alone. Hence, the results point to the flexibility of 'we' as a resource by which participants could be seen partitioning the population, but also as a resource by which participants could also be seen aligning the population.

Although Non-Indigenous participants report sharing university experiences with persons from a range of categories, including; students and tutors, females, older and younger persons, and Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons, the fact that Indigenous persons do not report sharing university experiences with Non-

Indigenous persons suggests that race *matters* in complex and controversial ways, and is a finding that is taken up in the recommendations made later in the study.

7.2.2 Findings on Aligning the Population

The analytic chapter on aligning the population explored the preference organisation in operation in the focus group itself through an examination of adjacency pairs, the disagreeing token ‘no’ and list construction and production. The analysis found that there were many examples in the data of focus group speakers designing their talk to project ‘yes-like’ preferences - contiguously, there were also examples that did not follow this simple preferred structure. For instance, the data found an example in which the speaker of the SPP appeared to be doing a lot of interactional work, while another example was found in which the speaker of the FPP was doing a lot of interactional work. What appeared to be happening was that focus group participants were orienting to a preference for agreement, which is in keeping with the research.

However, the findings contrast markedly with existing research on disagreements in conversation. For instance, the findings contrast with the four overall features identified by Pomerantz’s (1992a, p. 65) work on disagreement in conversation (see, Chapter 3, Section 3.5.2.2). In this focus group event, disagreement was found to be produced without delay, and not prefaced. Disagreement components were not delayed within a turn or over a series of turns, but were performed with a minimisation of gap between the prior turn’s completion and the disagreement turn’s initiation. While the findings support the research in terms of identifying that disagreements were of a variety of forms, ranging from mitigated to aggravated forms of disagreement, both mitigated and aggravated forms were produced with ‘no’ in the initial turn position, which is not something we see in other research (e.g., Petraki, 2002; Pomerantz, 1992a). While the mitigated disagreement was found to be weakened by the talk produced after the production of ‘no’, aggravated disagreement was found to be characterised by disagreement components occupying the entire disagreement turn.

The findings support the work of Warfield Rawls (2000, p. 262) with regard to her finding that ‘White Americans’ and ‘African Americans’ have different appreciations of ‘what honesty requires of them interactionally’. Her examination found African American employees say ‘no’ to work assignments as a ‘right’ and ‘an obligation’, and thus an ‘honest’ response (Warfield Rawls, 2000, p. 264). In the current study, an example of ‘no’ was provided that was found to be born out of ‘obligation’. Recall that Sacks’ (1992a, p. 702) work on ‘obligated utterances’ suggests that ‘kin-members’ have a responsibility to inform other *kin-members* about particular events, or occurrences. The production of the mitigated disagreeing turn appeared to be produced to inform and correct the wrong understanding on the part of a *kin-member* – which is a member of one’s ‘kin’ and therefore someone who shares co-membership in the racial category, Aboriginal. Whatever is happening here, whether this is preferred or dispreferred may not be at issue. It is possible that this occurrence provides an example of preference, or one in which solidarity can be seen to override preference.

Further, an examination of affiliative list construction in the focus group event itself showed that lists were constructed and produced by more than one person; as Jefferson (1990, p. 82) put it, ‘a non-speaker of a list-in-progress becomes a party to that listing’ by adding to the list-in-progress. Further, while Indigenous speakers’ accounts made race relevant, Non-Indigenous parties-to-the-lists tended to resist its relevance to the task at hand. In all of the instances in the data, it was the Non-Indigenous participants that became party-to-the-list. List items were traded back and forth through repeats or rephrasing, with Indigenous speakers-of-the-list incorporating non-racial items contributed by Non-Indigenous parties-to-the-list into their own lists. For instance, the sensitivity of an Indigenous speaker’s account of racist treatment was acknowledged by a Non-Indigenous party to the listing, through a topic shift to a non-racial, relatedly-relevant topic, sexual abuse. This acknowledges the severity of the reported incident, but serves to shift the focus off *race* and onto *abuse* or *discrimination*.

While participants were obviously closely orienting, aligning and affiliating with one another, Non-Indigenous participants oriented to the lists to topic-shift and avoided offense, which supports Jefferson’s (1990) finding on lists. Finally,

examination of how these resources operate in the data under analysis shows participants strongly agreeing; which indicates a very good vibe with regard to the relations being established in the interaction between the Indigenous and Non-Indigenous co-members of the focus group event.

In exploring interaction in which Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians are engaged in a focus group activity *discussing experiences of university* in a university setting, the combined findings of the study shows that race *matters* in talk in inter-racial interaction in significant and sundry ways.

7.3 Contributions of the Study

7.3.1 Contribution to Policy

The study's implications for policy, or possible points of interest, pertain to the conditions that need to be put in place to improve experiences for Indigenous persons in university settings in Australia. From Chapter 1 it will be recalled that despite considerable attention to increasing the numbers of Indigenous Australians accessing and participating in Australian universities, current rates are continually decreasing (ABS, 2006). Further, the study explored the linguistic, conversational and categorial resources and particularly the personal pronoun, 'we', and also examined the preference organisation in the interaction through an examination of adjacency pairs, the disagreeing (or ostensibly disagreeing) token 'no' and list construction and production. While the way in which these practices were used may not stand in all for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons, they may reflect wider experiences in the similar settings. If that is the case, then the study's findings have implications for policy in terms of increased access, participation, retention and success rates for Indigenous students.

In attempting to overturn current poor performance, a variety of legislative, financial, academic and other support strategies have been put in place. While

these mechanisms and strategies target the national system and the financial, academic and other support needs of Indigenous students, they do not consider the possible relevance of the student's mundane, routine, moment-by-moment experiences of everyday university life. Nor do they consider how interactions between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons in university settings such as the 'tutorial-class' impact on Indigenous student decision-making with regards to 'staying in' or 'pulling out of' university, which is a key matter of significance for policy-makers and the Australian community in general.

In fact, former Commissioner Dodson's claim that Indigenous people 'continue to experience' 'profound oppression' 'even when it appears that "we are participating"' (Dodson, 1994), was echoed by both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous participants. Recall, that Indigenous persons produced a number of accounts in which they complained about Non-Indigenous persons in university tutorial-classes, particularly both students and tutors/lecturers. Articulating their experiences in the way they did indicates that these Indigenous participants were not actually 'participating' (Dodson, 1994) with Non-Indigenous persons in tutorial-classes, but were partitioning themselves from Non-Indigenous persons and aligning only with members of their own race.

Further, this study's investigations into the relations being established in the actual interaction itself between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous co-members of the focus group event shows them aligning with one another. One reason for this may have been that Non-Indigenous participants had previous Indigenous cultural awareness training in line with positions that they had in the ITAS program (see, Appendix B: Glossary of Terms). It may prove beneficial to conduct research into the current status quo with regards to the current position on the provision of Indigenous cultural awareness training on offer to all members of universities, that is, staff and students, both Non-Indigenous and Indigenous. While the provision of cultural awareness training to all its members is in keeping with the role of universities as places of higher learning, its provision might see greater Indigenous higher education outcomes. Studying and partnering with one another would certainly place Australian universities better equipped to meet challenges.

7.3.2 Contribution to Theory

The study's implications for theory pertain to the notion that race matters in talk in inter-racial interaction. The theoretical implication of this study is in its radical departure from traditional views of sociological relevance, which examine race matters as fixed, taken-for-granted, pre-existing objects. This study examined race matters as a 'situated' (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 699), socially constituted, mutually-constructed phenomenon; as a social accomplishment of participants in interaction. It drew on both CA and MCA to examine the sequential features of the interaction and the locally used, invoked and organised categorial membership aspects in the interaction. Examination of participants' 'common-sense activities and reasoning practices' (Sacks, 1992a, p. xxxv) made evident that inter-racial interaction is an accomplishment of participants' turn-by-turn talk. While previous research in the area of Indigenous higher education employed analyst's categories to explore pre-existing phenomenon, the approach adopted in this study examined the ongoing accomplishment of the interaction in its locally occasioned context. In examining and documenting how Indigenous and Non-Indigenous produce and manage the settings of organised everyday affairs, this study contributes to theory by providing empirical evidence that race *matters* as a fundamental organising principle of everyday social action.

7.3.3 Contribution to EM Research

The study contributes to EM research in different ways.

The study can contribute to existing EM research that has used focus group techniques to collect data. As is typical with the technique, the current study's focus group comprised a small number of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people, who were gathered together in 'an informal' discussion 'focused' (Wilkinson, 2006, pp. 51-53) on the topic, *experiences in university*. The study found that the focus group method not only 'actively' encouraged participants to 'interact with *each other*' (Wilkinson, 2006, pp. 51-53, emphasis in original), but made it possible to do so.

Unlike interviews and surveying, the focus group technique gave Indigenous and Non-Indigenous participants the opportunity of sitting together and talking together, and sharing accounts that they saw as contingent upon, and relevant to, the actual moment-by-moment local talk and the task at hand. For instance, it was in the sequential co-construction of lists that revealed the complex ways in which Indigenous and Non-Indigenous focus group participants were displaying a strong preference for agreement, which is something that may have been missed in an interview, or questionnaire, or non-CA study.

The study contributes to EM research by introducing a line of inquiry that explored naturally-occurring interaction between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians in a focus group event in a university setting. Although the study examined only a single case analysis, this study showed that ‘actual single events are studiable’ (Sacks, 1992c, p. 26) ‘because the instance is an event whose features and structures can be examined to discover how it is organised’ (Psathas, 1995b, p. 50) and ‘orderly for its participants’ (Schegloff, 1968). For example, this study’s examination of ‘we’ looked in detail at how the pronoun was organised and orderly for participants, as the study ‘tracked in detail’ (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998, p. 121) its production across the entire interaction. The study showed that the single case analysis of a focus group interaction between a small group of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons was capable of providing deep insights into *how race matters* in everyday, ordinary, mundane, university life.

7.3.4 Contribution to Indigenous Framework

This study adhered to Indigenous frameworks recommended for conducting Indigenous research (e.g., AIATSIS, 2000; NHMRC, 2003/2007), and contributes to an Indigenous framework for research in different ways.

The study contributes to Indigenous frameworks through its CA approach. CA data consists of tape recordings of naturally occurring interactions, which are transcribed in accordance with a set of conventions, and following repeated listening to the original tape. CA procedures for transcribing the interaction enable

the researcher to examine the fine details of the interaction in a way that is true to the data. This gives participants ‘a real say’ (Calma, 2006) in what it is that they consider relevant to a discussion on university experiences; without interference, bias or prejudice.

The study provides insights into the lived experiences of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people in higher education settings, as a local, situated, socially constructed phenomenon of the talk itself (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 699), and not as a pre-given, pre-theorised, pre-judged, and pre-scribed matter. Further, EM and its analytic methods reveals that the everyday experiences of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons in tutorial-classes are important areas for future research. It also lends support to research that has called for Indigenous cultural awareness training to be delivered to all members of universities; staff and students, Non-Indigenous and Indigenous.

7.3.5 Contribution to Practice

To achieve IHEAC’s vision; ‘for a higher education system in which Indigenous Australians share equally in the life and career opportunities that a university education can provide’ (IHEAC, 2006, p. 10), we, which here means *Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons*, must be able to *share* experiences of the social worlds in which we interact, such as university settings. Though this study offers a ‘starting point in research’ (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998, p. 121), its detailed examination of the way in which Indigenous and Non-Indigenous participants were producing ‘we’ showed that Indigenous persons excluded Non-Indigenous persons from the experiences that they were reporting on in accounts being produced and that this constituted an us/them demarcation, thereby partitioning them. In responding to the focus group activity at hand, this study shows that the retrospective accounts being shared indicate that tutorial-class interactions may not always be conducive to shared experiences of learning.

It may be of benefit to conduct research into actual interactional experiences in university tutorial-classes to gain a deeper insight into the racial relations being

established in those regular learning environments, as interactional accomplishments of the persons in those settings. Clearly, the talk displayed here has implications for university administrators, Non-Indigenous teachers and students in tutorial-classes. It is essential to encourage the types of relations that are being interactionally established between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous co-members of the focus group; that is, agreeable interactions. Successful higher education outcomes are more likely to occur in settings where Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons manage talk with each other in agreeable ways, which, this study, shows is an actuality in social life, which augurs well in 2008; the year of the apology.

7.4 Directions for Further Research

Two main directions for further research can be suggested.

One, given the importance of the ‘tutorial-class’ as the engine-room of everyday university life, undertaking research into moment-by-moment occurrences of activities constituting those tutorial-classes might provide a better understanding into the relations being established between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons on a moment-by-moment, tutorial-by-tutorial basis. It could also shed light on the specific conditions that need to be put in place to improve experiences and interactions between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons in those settings. Establishing agreeable relations between persons who are studying and working together offers greater promise of success in those and other settings.

Two, given some of the matters raised in the study, it may prove beneficial to examine the current status quo with regards to universities’ provisions of Indigenous cultural awareness training to their members, that is, staff and students, both Non-Indigenous and Indigenous. While the provision of cultural awareness training is in keeping with the role of universities as places of higher learning, its provision would be opportune in 2008, some might say an historic act.

7.5 Summary

This chapter concluded this study's examination into inter-racial interaction in which Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons are engaged in a focus group activity *discussing experiences of university* in a university setting in Australia. The chapter presented a summary of the main findings from Chapters 5 and 6, which were the two analytic chapters in the study. Following that, the chapter discussed some of the contributions of the study for policy, theory, EM and Indigenous research, and practice. Finally, the chapter concluded with some directions for further research, which aim to ensure that agreeable inter-racial interaction between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons in university settings in Australia are an actuality in social life.

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List of Appendices

Appendix A: Abbreviations and Acronyms

| | |
|---------|--|
| ABSTUDY | Aboriginal Study Assistance Scheme |
| AEP | National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy |
| DEET | Department of Employment, Education and Training |
| DEETYA | Department of Employment, Education and Youth Affairs |
| DEST | Department of Education, Science and Training |
| DEWR | Department of Employment and Workplace Relations |
| IHEAC | Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council |
| ITAS | Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme, formerly ATAS |
| MCEETYA | Minister Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs |
| NAEP | National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy, now AEP |
| NATSIEP | National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy, now AEP |
| NICP | National Indigenous Cadetship Project |
| NIHEN | National Indigenous Higher Education Network |

Appendix B: Glossary of Terms

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Access | Access means commencing higher education students. The access rate for a particular group of students is that group's percentage share of all commencing domestic higher education students. |
| Communities | Groups of Indigenous peoples bound culturally, spiritually and, sometimes, linguistically to specific regions and one another through historical and biological kinship, and embodying a store of regionally specific knowledge and common practices. |
| Cultural protocols | Indigenous codes of behaviours and rules for appropriate, cultural practices and procedures. |
| Elders | Senior Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people held in esteem for their vision, wisdom and guidance on matters relating to Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders. Elders act on behalf, and in the best interests, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; providing understanding and advice on issues to the general community, industry and government. |
| Mainstream | Non-Indigenous structures, institutions and organisations, especially Anglo-European structures, institutions and organisations. |
| Participation | Participation means total higher education enrolments. The participation rate for a particular group of students is that group's percentage share of all domestic higher education enrolments. |
| Retention | Retention means the number of students who re-enrol at a higher education provider in a given year, less those who completed their course. It provides a broad measure of retention (i.e., An Apparent Retention Rate) as it does not count as retained those who defer study or transfer successfully to another institution. |
| Success | Success is defined as the student progress rate (SPR). Success means the proportion of units passed within a |

year compared with the total units enrolled. The Success indicator shows the ratio of the SPR for higher education students from a particular equity group to the SPR for all other domestic students. The Success indicator relates to the previous year.

Appendix C: Ethical Package

Information Sheet for Participants

My name is Catherine Demosthenous and I'm a student in the Doctor of Education at Griffith University. I'm currently conducting research to understand race matters in talk in inter-racial interaction between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people.

The research project requires that students and tutors attend a one-hour focus group session. The focus group should give you an opportunity of expressing your own experiences of being a student / tutor at university.

Participation is voluntary and a consent form, which asks you to agree that you can participate in the research, is attached.

If you have any concerns regarding the project, please contact:

- Me, Catherine Demosthenous, on (07) 373 55610 or at C.Demosthenous@griffith.edu.au, or
- My Supervisor at the School of Education & Professional Studies, Associate Professor Rod Gardner on (07) 373 53472 or at r.gardner@griffith.edu.au, or
- My Supervisor at the Office of the Provost, Indigenous Community Engagement, Policy and Partnership, Professor Boni Robertson on (07) 338 21109 or at B.Robertson@griffith.edu.au.

The University requires that all participants be informed that if they have any complaints concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred, either Griffith University's Research Ethics Officer, Office for Research, Bray Centre, Griffith University, Kessels Road, Nathan, QLD, 4111, telephone (07) 387 56618; or The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Administration), Bray Centre, Griffith University, Kessels Road, Nathan, QLD., 4111, telephone (07) 387 57343.

Thank you for your participation in the research project ☺ ☺

Consent Form

Project Title: Race Matters in Talk in Inter-racial Interaction

Supervisor: Associate Professor Rod Gardner
Contact Details: School of Education & Professional Studies
Mt Gravatt campus, Griffith University
Mt Gravatt, QLD 4111, Australia
Telephone: (07) 373 53472
E-mail: r.gardner@griffith.edu.au

Supervisor: Professor Boni Robertson
Contact Details: Office of the Provost, Indigenous Community Indigenous
Policy & Community Engagement
Logan campus, Griffith University
Meadowbrook, QLD 4131, Australia
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Researcher: Catherine M. Demosthenous
Contact Details: School of Education & Professional Studies
Mt Gravatt campus, Griffith University
Mt Gravatt, QLD, 4111
Telephone: (07) 373 55610
E-mail: C.Demosthenous@griffith.edu.au

I have read the information sheet on this research project. I agree to participate in the research and give my consent freely. I understand that the research will be carried out as described in the information sheet, a copy of which I have retained. I realise that whether or not I decide to participate in the research is my decision. I also realise that I can withdraw from the research at any time without penalty and that I do not have to give any reason for withdrawing. I have had all questions about the research answered to my satisfaction.

Signature:

.....
Participant

.....
Date

Thank you for your participation in the research project ☺ ☺

Appendix D: Transcription Conventions

The list of transcription symbols below explains the system for detailing talk-in-interaction. These symbols were developed by Gail Jefferson and are used in most CA publications, with minor variations. The explanations below are based on, and simplified from, Jefferson (1989), ten Have (1999) and Schegloff (Schegloff, 1991b).

Sequencing

- [*A single left bracket* indicates the point of overlap onset.
- = *Equal signs*, one at the end of one line and one at the beginning of a next, indicate no gap between the two lines.

Timed intervals

- (1.3) *Numbers in parentheses* indicate elapsed time in silence by tenths of seconds. For example (1.3) is one and three-tenths seconds.
- (.) *A dot in parentheses* indicates a tiny ‘gap’ within or between utterances. It is probably no more than one-tenth of a second.

Characteristics of speech production

- race *Underscoring* indicates some form of stress, via pitch and/or amplitude. A short underscore indicates lighter stress than does a long underscore.
- :: *Colons* indicate prolongation of the immediately prior sound. The length of the colon row indicates length of the prolongation.
- :: _ *Combinations of stress and prolongation markers* indicate intonation contours. If the underscore occurs on a letter before a colon, it ‘punches up’ the letter, i.e. indicates an ‘up down’ contour. If the underscore occurs on a colon after a letter, it ‘punches up’ the colon, i.e. indicates a ‘down up’ contour. In the following utterance there are two pitch-shifts, the first, in ‘veneer’, an ‘up down’ shift, the second, in ‘through’, a ‘down up’, ‘it’s only veneer through’.
- ↑ ↓ *Arrows* indicate shifts into higher or lower pitch than would be indicated by just the combined stress/prolongation markers.
- . *A full stop* indicates a stopping fall in tone, not necessarily the end of a sentence.
- , *A comma* indicates a continuing intonation, not necessarily between clauses of sentences.

- ? A *question mark* indicates a rising inflection, not necessarily a question.
- ? The *italicized question-mark/comma*, indicates a stronger rise than a comma but weaker than a question-mark.
- ! An *exclamation point* indicates an animated tone, not necessarily an exclamation.
- A single dash indicates a halting, abrupt cut-off, or, when multiple dashes hyphenate the symbols of a word or connect strings of words, the stream of talk so marked has a stammering quality.
- RACE *Upper case* indicates especially loud sounds relative to the surrounding talk.
- The *degree sign* is used as a ‘softener’. Utterances or utterance parts bracketed by degree signs are relatively quieter than the surrounding talk.
- race A *subscribed dot* is frequently used as a ‘hardener’. In this capacity it can indicate, e.g. an especially dentalised ‘t’. Usually when it occurs under a ‘d’ it indicates that the ‘d’ sounds more like a ‘t’. And for example, under a possible ambiguous ‘g’, it indicates a hard ‘g’. Under a possibly ambiguous ‘th’, it indicates a hard ‘th’.
- Another sense in which it works as a ‘hardener’ is to indicate that a sound which is implied in the spelling of a word but is not usually pronounced, is indeed pronounced. For ‘rent’ and ‘evening’, which are usually pronounced as example, in ‘diff^e ‘diff^rrent’ and ‘eevⁿning’.
- The subscribed dot is also frequently used as a ‘shortner’, for example, in ‘the’, which is pronounced as ‘thee’ or ‘thuh’; if ‘the^h uh:’ is shown, then it is being pronounced ‘thuh’.
- It can also indicate a trilled ‘r’.
- < A *pre-positioned left carat* indicates a ‘hurried start’; in effect, an utterance trying to start a bit sooner than it actually did. A common locus of this phenomenon is ‘self repair’.
- > A *post-positioned left carat* indicates a ‘sudden stop’.
- A *dash* indicates a cut-off.
- >< *Right/left carats* bracketing an utterance or utterance-part indicate speeding up.
- <> *Left/right carats* bracketing an utterance or utterance-part indicate slowing down

hhh A *dot-prefixed row of hs* indicates an inbreath. Without the dot the *hs* indicate an outbreath.

Rahhce A *row of hs within a word* indicates breathiness, as in laughter, crying, etc.(h) A *parenthesized 'h'* indicates plosiveness, which can be associated with laughter, crying, etc.

Transcriber's doubts and comments

() *Empty parentheses* indicate the transcriber's inability to hear what was said. The length of the parenthesised space indicates the length of the untranscribed talk. In the speaker-designation column, the empty parentheses indicate inability to identify a speaker.

(race) *Parenthesised words* are especially dubious hearings or speaker-identifications.

(()) *Doubled parentheses* contain transcriber's descriptions rather than, or in addition to, transcriptions.

thatt Double letters – clearly enunciated consonants