3

Feminist Communication Methodology

There is no such thing as *the* feminist communication method. So far, feminist communication scholars have simply not agreed that any single method is fundamentally feminist. Nor is there any single method that feminists agree is fundamentally antifeminist. Rather, feminist communication scholars engage in a range of methods. We have chosen to celebrate the diversity of methods that feminist communication scholars draw upon in their work. None of these methods is "inherently" feminist, yet each, in its own way, helps recover women's voices and uncover the gender issues at stake in communication.

Below and in each of the chapters to come, we highlight three different methodological approaches and loosely sketch a fourth. Our choices reflect the thesis that each feminist methodology in question *has been* and *can be* related to the feminist communication theories outlined in the previous chapter, on one hand, and to more specific methodological frameworks, on the other—again, divided along the line of structuralism and poststructuralism. We claim that methodology can be thought of as "packages," and we again suggest a tentative mapping, this time to outline the relationship between methodologies and feminist appropriations hereof.

Structuralism and Methodology

The structuralist paradigm makes itself felt in different methodological "packages" that to some extent correspond to the theories discussed in

Chapter 2. To illustrate the workings of the structuralist paradigm in communication methods, we have chosen to describe two distinctive methodological frameworks: (a) sociolinguistics and conversation analysis and (b) critical semiotics and critical discourse analysis. Both of these methodological packages consist of the larger methodological framework (sociolinguistics and critical theory) and a method (conversation analysis and critical discourse analysis). Both have also been used and appropriated by feminist communication scholars, and examples of this work will be briefly mentioned below and more discussed in detail in Chapters 4 to 5.

Conversation Analysis (CA)

Sociolinguists study language in use and the occurrence of conventional patterns in speech. During the 1960s, this was viewed as a paradigmatic shift away from formal linguistics in the tradition of, for example, Noam Chomsky and the view of language-as-a-system exemplified by Ferdinand Saussure (see Chapter 2). Sociolinguistics inspired a range of methodological considerations and developments, such as ethnography of communication, ethnomethodology, and conversation analysis (CA).

Sociolinguistics was initially concerned with determining the relationship between the use of particular vocabularies, grammatical features, and pronunciation patterns, on one hand, and, on the other, certain social stratifications such as sex, class, race, and sexuality. The field gradually expanded to study the correlations between language in use and the social world. William Labov and John Gumperz (1972), for example, found that pronunciation and language use vary not only with the social strata of the speaker but also relative to the situation in which the speaker finds himself or herself. Gumperz (1982) further developed this notion and talked about a codelike relationship not only between language and the social but also between different types of language use among particular groups or speech communities.

Scholars focused on the numerous ways in which speakers change their language depending on social circumstances: for example, speaking standard English in some situations and a vernacular form of English in others. Of particular interest was language use in heterogeneous, multicultural societies and how language is used across linguistic and cultural groups in various kinds of interethnic communication, not least in cases understood as miscommunication. What started as a rather simple study of variation patterns in language use, reflecting a given social stratification, was now distinguished by the investigation of the complex patterns of social, cultural, and linguistic contact and developed into interactional sociolinguistics.

Ethnography of communication was another field in which sociolinguistics was applied. The goal of ethnography of communication is to study particular ways of communicating that occur within specific speech communities in order to highlight "native" communication practices. Ethnographic methods such as interviews, observations, and tape and video recordings are used to study spoken discourse, always from the perspective of the members of the group studied and in terms of their own cultural framing. Ethnographers of communication observe contextual patterns of communication within a given community and understand them in terms of culture.

Dell Hymes, an influential figure in the field, distinguished between three interacting layers of communication: (a) the speech act, which is embedded in (b) the speech event, which again is embedded in (c) the speech situation, for example, a joke made during a conversation at a party (Fitch, 2001). Hymes further proposed that studying communication from the perspective of a given community should include the "SPEAKING" grid. The grid is made up of the different components of communication: "S" stands for the setting, "P" for the participants (speaker, sender, audience), "E" for the ends (purposes and goals), "A" for the act (message), "K" for the key (tone and manner), "I" for instrumentalities (channel-verbal, nonverbal, mediated), "N" for norms of interaction, and "G" for genre (Schiffrin, 1994). According to tradition, speakers are aware of the ways they use the SPEAK-ING grid, and contextualize it in terms of a "native" speaking and as a means of creating local speech communities. Moreover, Hymes borrowed the phrase "linguistic competence" from Noam Chomsky and reframed it as a "creative communication competency" to denote the awareness of and ability to use the grid in community building.

Erving Goffman broadened the framework by hypothesizing that communication is a performance that follows particular generic formats and types of embodiment, much the same way as in ritual and drama. Goffman's central insight was that interactions follow certain procedures that again constitute a distinctive syntax, a socio-logic of interaction that provides for the framing, the sequential ordering of acts, and the relative positioning, called "footing," of participants (Heritage, 2001). Of further importance is the concept of front- and backstage performances (the norms of public and private) and of maintenance of "face" (keeping one's self-respect and the mutual respect of communicators), that is, the moral laws behind interaction, directing the rights and obligations of communication in different contexts. On the basis of these insights, Goffman (1959) generated the hypothesis that communicative conventions are linked to social institutions and even to the matrix of societies.

We now turn to the method of CA. To conversation analysts, talk is a joint enterprise, and the primary methodological focus is on talk-as-action (Kitzinger, 2002). It is posited that interlocutors actively (though often unwittingly) create and attend to conversational order and that it is what people *do* with talk that is of interest. Conversation analysts want to understand how conversations are structured and what makes them successful (see, for instance, the work of Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson). This includes, for example, turn-taking organization, turn allocation techniques, sequence organization, repair work (in terms of face-keeping), and turn-constructional units (Heritage, 2001). Conversation analysts argue that we rely on conversational rules in our everyday language use: One person speaks at a time, each speaker gives way to other speakers so that no one monopolizes the floor, silence takes place only in a limited way, and simultaneous speech is kept at a minimum. We even develop rules as to when it is time to "jump" into a conversation. Intonation, stress, and pausing remind us that a "turn transition point" is at hand. Current speakers may also select the next speaker (through eye contact, directional questions, etc.), the next speaker may self-select (voluntarily contribute), or the current speaker may continue speaking (Cameron, 2001). Within each conversational "unit," exchanges must relate to a previous exchange in such a manner that a greeting follows a greeting and a question is followed by an answer. This relative ordering, also known as "adjacency pairs," is a powerful way of organizing utterances (Cameron, 2001; Kitzinger, 2002).

CA emerged not only within the general framework of sociolinguistics, but more specifically within the context of ethnomethodology, and it was strongly inspired by the work of Harold Garfinkel. To ethnomethodologists, and Garfinkel in particular, it is important to note that constructs such as power and oppression are *accomplishments*. They are not preexisting, objective, or coherent phenomena. Rather, they are processes that are continually created, sustained, and resisted through talk and interaction (Kitzinger, 2002). An ethnomethodological perspective commits us to understanding people as active agents who engage in the reinstatement of and resistance to the social world (Kitzinger, 2002). Ethnomethodology, therefore, constitutes a provocative turn away from not only formal structural linguistics but also structural sociolinguistics, preparing the ground for poststructuralism and the performance turn. Not surprisingly, CA has been an inspiration to both structuralist and poststructuralist feminist communication scholarship, and it will be discussed further in Chapters 4 to 7. However, ethnomethodology has also been criticized for being preoccupied with the systematic formatting of talk-in-action, and frequently, because of its rather general statements about rules for talking, it has been seen to reinforce a universal Western

position. As we shall see, these claims have been reflected in feminist communication studies and met on different terms, according to the particular theoretical framing.

CA focuses on naturally occurring materials of interaction and on people's own orientation to talk. Consequently, CA practitioners tend to avoid predetermined research agendas, and power is understood as something enacted in communication itself. Thus, questions of gender and power are considered relevant in the analysis only if the participants themselves do so. Nevertheless, as discussed above, feminist CA practitioners such as Susan Herring (1996) have insisted that this aspect, although central to ethnomethodology, can be redefined in feminist-inspired CA work (see Chapter 4 for further discussion). Herring is an example of a feminist researcher who has stayed with CA throughout the different theoretical and empirical orientations of feminist communication research. She has continuously renewed the framework and applied it to new contexts, such as computer-mediated communication. However, we claim that sociolinguistics, and in particular the feminist appropriations of CA, are most closely connected to early second-wave feminism, muted group theory, and the dominance and deficit approach (see Chapter 4).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

During the 1970s to 1980s, critical theory met with linguistics and the now expanding field of semiotics concerned with different types and uses of signs. From this scientific contact grew new approaches to communication, such as critical linguistics and social semiotics. Let us first take a look at some of the more pertinent examples of critical theory in order to then introduce you to critical discourse analysis (CDA).

Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress (2001) provided communication scholars with a critical theory approach grounded in linguistics, semiotics, and communication research and developed a methodological approach under the headline of critical linguistics or social semiotics. Building on sociolinguistics, they were interested in a socially relevant linguistics in the guise of the correlative perspective mentioned above and of the slightly different perspective of choice and intention in the tradition of, among others, Michael Halliday (Kress, 2001). This new approach gave rise to the study of differences in language use or, rather, how the social is manifested in the utterance, text, or communication practice in question, for Kress (2001) argued that the social is *in* the sign. Moreover, in a plausible social view of language, sign makers transform the resources available to them in their social environments and in relation to the power of the imagined audience/recipients of

the sign-as-message: "Yet emphasis on 'interest' ensures that there is a real agency, transformative action, *work*" (Kress 2001, p. 37; italics in original). Thus, social semiotics critiqued the relation between power and communication manifest in communication itself. The intent of the researcher is to study and address the social challenges experienced by subordinated groups, and thus the emergence of this field marks a turn toward a critical view of the use of signs as a means of communication invested with power (Kress, 2001).

Another take on critical theory can be found in the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (see Chapter 2). Laclau and Mouffe (1985/ 2001) built on Gramsci's definition of hegemony as a strategic situation in which political alliances arise around particular issues, transcending classes and the historical division of (economic) basis and (ideological) superstructure in powerful discourses. They redefined hegemony as a set of discourses on the antagonistic oppositions of society, which involve not only class interests but also racial, ethnic, gender, and other conflicts. Together, these discourses comprise vast argumentative webs or orders, which people both inhabit and transform through articulation. Though bound to given discourses, individuals, or rather groups of individuals, continuously strive to establish new orderings by creating what Laclau and Mouffe have called "chains of equivalence," "nodal points" or "master signifiers." They may eventually disturb the orders of discourse and thus contribute to revising them. Although Laclau and Mouffe developed critical theory into a distinct methodological approach in a range of significant studies on political and social subjects, Norman Fairclough, Lilie Chouliaraki, and Ruth Wodak have contributed most consistently to CDA.

In a series of works published during the 1980s to 1990s, Norman Fairclough elaborated on the link between critical theory as a theory of discourse and critical linguistics as a methodology of discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995a, 1995b). One may say that Fairclough combined discourse theory with sociolinguistics and created CDA. To establish a connection between the different traditions, Fairclough (1995a) suggested that discourse is to be understood as the use of language in a particular form of social practice, thus underscoring the suturing of communication and social agency (p. 7). He further suggested that discourses are, on one hand, distinct from nondiscursive practices and, on the other, from "pure" grammar. However, to implement CDA, both grammar and nondiscursive practices must be considered. Thus, CDA must not only focus on a given "text" (be it written or spoken, mediated or unmediated), it must also consider the discursive practices of text production and consumption as well as their embeddedness in larger social practices. Whereas the microlevel includes phonology,

grammar, vocabulary, structure, meaning, and so on, the mesolevel includes generic types, media formats, and the particular forms and conditions of both production and consumption, and the macrolevel includes the wider discourses and social practices of groups, institutions, and so on. Of particular interest, however, is the *intertextuality* on all levels, in both time and space, which is explicit in terms of citations and references and implicit in that they draw on the same discourse orders. The focus on intertextuality also expresses the methodological interest of CDA in investigating how "webs" of rhetoric and argumentation are created, spread, and challenged.

Ruth Wodak, Teun van Dijk, and Michael Billig have also contributed to the development of the link between critical theory and CDA. According to van Dijk, critical discourse analysts take an explicit sociopolitical stance and spell out their points of view, perspectives, principles, and aims both within their discipline and within society at large. Their work is openly political, and their ambition is to instigate change through critical understanding. They believe in the possibility of identifying global and local power structures and elites, as well as social inequality and injustice (van Dijk, 2001).

Van Dijk has worked extensively with discrimination and racism and provided a significant example of CDA in action in his analysis of a speech given in the British House of Commons in 1985 by conservative representative and Member of Parliament (MP) Mr. Marcus Fox (van Dijk, 2001). The speech is occasioned by a case from Bradford, England, where the mostly Asian students, their parents, and the city council accused the principal of a local secondary school, Mr. Honeyford, of racist speech and writings; he blamed certain groups of students for schooling problems. Fox argued that Honeyford had merely delivered an original and deserved critique of multicultural education and that his opponents were personally harassing him and thus posed a threat to free speech. Fox associated the opposition with totalitarian communism, known to be against freedom and democracy, and tried to discredit it. Fox's claim was that by attacking Honeyford, his opponents were limiting freedom of speech and attacking democracy itself (van Dijk, 2001, p. 311). Van Dijk demonstrated how Fox's speech was built on an argumentative shortcut; it had a thesis, but no support. He also showed how Fox used his position and power to promote his argument and give it legitimacy—but in so doing also misused the formal speech genre of the House of Commons and his position as an MP. Thus, the speech supported the system of ethnic-racial dominance, both directly and indirectly.

Wodak, who is also a prolific writer on the topics of feminist discourse theory and analysis, has worked along the same lines and contributed extensively to the elaboration of the methodology of CDA. She has suggested the following definition: "Critical Discourse Analysis sees discourse—the use of

language in speech and writing—as a form of social practice" (Wodak, 1996, p. 17). She has further defined the methodological issue in the following way: "Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation, institution, and social structure that frame it: the discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them" (Wodak, 1996, p. 17). Thus, Wodak has accepted the idea of a basic dialectic between the social and the discursive, but she has argued that discourse combines the two as social practice. In line with Fairclough, she has adapted Foucault's concept of "orders of discourse" and applied it to ordered sets of discursive practices associated with particular social domains, institutions, and settings. These range from private, informal conversations to ritualized genres like medical counseling or educational lectures. Such discursive practices may, in turn, be strongly or weakly demarcated, may be used more or less consciously, may serve to express approval or protest, and so on. Thus, boundaries between and within orders of discourse are constantly shifting. Wodak has elaborated on the methodology of CDA, paving the way for a renewal of the method, inspired by poststructuralism and the performance turn (Weiss & Wodak, 2003; Wodak & Meyer, 2001). We return to her work in Chapter 5.

Despite such complexities, the basic interest of CDA has been, and still is, power: the organization and articulation of social power through discourse and as dominance but also as modes of challenge and "counterpower" in identity work and oppositional discursive practices. In our case study in Chapter 5, we present an example from Wodak's (2003) study of European politicians' discourses in the context of the European Union (EU).

Poststructuralism and Methodology

The theoretical development of poststructuralism is also made manifest in new constellations of theories and methodologies, which are, in turn, challenged and adapted by feminist communication scholars. Poststructuralism first comes to expression in a critique of structuralism and then transcends it to reveal new theoretical and methodological horizons. In this context, we have chosen to outline performance theory and positioning theory in poststructuralist discourse analysis and take a brief look at methodological transversity in continuation of transgender and cyborg perspectives.

Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis (PDA)

The poststructural turn to discourse and performance has led to a general interest in communication and agency. We now see a revival of rhetorical

studies and also a new feminist rhetoric, and we experience a revival of speech act theory and performance studies and the point of contact between the two. Therefore, Judith Butler's work is again of particular interest. Taking her point of departure in Foucault and discourse theory and inspired by John L. Austin's speech act theory, Pierre Bourdieu's critical communication theory, and Jacques Derrida's semiotics, Butler (1997) has presented us with a rhetorical perspective that bridges these different traditions. Or rather, she has rearticulated the former in terms of the latter and created a highly influential framework for PDA. To follow her reflections on speech acts, however, we need a short introduction to speech act theory.

John Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* (1962) is considered the seminal text of speech act theory. Austin distinguished between different types of speech acts: constatives, which are evaluated in terms of truth or falsity, and performatives, which are evaluated in terms of success or failure. Examples of constatives are (a) "the Queen of Denmark smokes," a statement that is true, or (b) "the Queen of England is 50 years old," a statement that is false. Examples of performatives are (a) "I do" (take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife), which is felicitous in the course of a marriage ceremony, or (b) "I name this child Jonathan William Turner," which is also felicitous in the course of a christening ceremony. Austin further dissolved performatives into three dimensions, which also constitute different types: the locutionary act (the utterance of an act—the sounds, the words, or the very act of saying something), the illocutionary act (the act performed in saying the locution), and the perlocutionary act (the consequential effects). The above-mentioned speech acts are first and foremost illocutionary compared to, for instance, "I will become angry, if . . ."

Austin later on claimed that all speech acts are somehow performatives and that two qualities need to be present in order for a performative to work: text and context. For example, the use of the performative verb "I do" is an illocutionary act only in that exact wording and in a particular setup, in this case a wedding ceremony; "I name" is an illocutionary performative when performed correctly during a christening ceremony. It is only by maintaining the conventional scripts that the "doing" and "naming" perform a "real" act, in this case marriage and baptism. Consequently, a speech act can fail to perform the act due to an incorrect script or the absence of the right setup, and thus, there is always the possibility that a performative may misfire. What happens, for example, when the statement "I pronounce you man and wife" is made to two same-sex individuals?

Butler has reinterpreted Austin and placed the performative at the center of a North American discussion of hate speech. Butler (1997) claimed (with Althusser, see Chapter 2) that it is in and by language that we are instantiated as social beings and that our social existence can therefore be threatened

in and by hate speech. However, opposing legislation and prohibition of, for instance, sexist or racist statements, she has also claimed that the speech act is still not equal to acting directly on the body. The words create a slippage between the doer and the deed and also between the deed and the one acted upon, which not only leaves room for agency but also is somehow already an acknowledgment of the right of the acted upon to speak up or talk back. The point is that in naming each other, whether we hail or curse, we acknowledge each other as social agents. Nevertheless, an injury still occurs when the performative gains illocutionary force by calling upon a strong social convention. For example, the use of the words *slut* or *nigger* still calls upon a history of sexism and racism that precede the subjects involved.

Significantly, Butler (1997) has reinterpreted Austin's concept of "sovereign autonomy in speech," widening the criteria for the illocutionary force of the performative as both socially and bodily embedded. For an illocutionary performative to work, it has to be supported both by the social context and by the bodily authority of the speaker (see also Chapter 2). If not, there is a possibility of back-talking, in the moment, and of resignification, over time. The word *nigger,* for example, can be counteracted by appropriating and subverting the expression. Thereby, the hate speech is displaced and a space left open for resignification. Butler's success criteria for hate speech or back-talking, however, still depend on whether the performance is both embodied and socially embedded.

In her elaboration of these criteria, Butler (1997) drew partly on French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, who emphasized social legitimacy and status, and partly on Derrida, who claimed that the quality of the sign itself is important. Butler has focused, however, on the embodiment of the speech act in terms of a coherence of word and body and the anchoring of the words in the social relation in question. Her prime example is a parable, taken from the African American author Toni Morrison's 1993 Nobel Lecture in Literature, in which language is conceptualized as a living thing itself. In the story, young children play a cruel joke and ask a blind woman to guess whether the bird in their hands is living or dead. She responds by displacing the question: "I don't know . . . but what I do know is that it is in your hands" (Butler, 1997, p. 6). The old woman thereby forces the youngsters to take responsibility themselves—not only for the bird but also for the way they speak and interact. She furthermore displaces the implied conventions about age, ability, and gender. What gives her performative agency in the situation is neither convention, nor context and social power, nor her forceful wording; it is the way she embodies her speaking in the situation and in the relation between the persons involved. Thus, she turns the theme of life and death into the *form* of their exchange.

An example of a long-term intervention is the successful resignification of the word *queer*. Queer has been used to condemn a group of people, but it is now being cited against its original purpose, thus breaking "the ritual chain" and remaking the semantic contents (Butler, 1997, p. 14). Queer has become a word that in certain contexts at least, signifies pride and strength.

To Butler, the speaking body is the ultimate criterion of the illocutionary performative. It is because of the correlation between the word/saying, the speaking body, and the thing spoken about that it works, but it is also in the slippages hereof that the possibility of change exists. This is Butler's special contribution to speech act theory and methodology, comparable to the implication of the proper context (Austin), the social power (Bourdieu) or the iterability/history, and the break from context by the graphemic mark itself (Derrida).

Another trend within PDA stems from the point of contact between discursive psychology and psycholinguistics: what Bronwyn Davies and Rom Harré (1990/2001), Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell (2001), and Kenneth J. Gergen (2002) have referred to as "positioning analysis." Davies and Harré (see Chapter 2) have argued that discursive practices provide subject positions that include both a conceptual repertoire and a location. Having assumed a particular position, a person inevitably sees and acts on the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of certain images, metaphors, story lines, and concepts known as "interpretative repertoires." The possibility of choice stems from the existence of many, often contradictory, discursive practices. It follows that positioning is displayed at different levels of discourse: at the microlevel of grammar and sentence building; at the mesolevel of conversation, storytelling, and social interaction; and at the macrolevel of aesthetic schemata, discursive repertoires, idioms, and so on (see also Chapter 2). However, within the framework of PDA, the main object of investigation is the mesolevel, and focus is on conversation understood as "a structured set of speech acts, that is, as sayings and doings of types defined by reference to their social [illocutionary] force" (Davies & Harré, 1990/2001, p. 263).

Davies and Harré (1990/2001) gave an example, taken from one of their own conversations during a conference stay abroad, in which one (the woman, a feminist) falls ill and the other (her male colleague) darts hastily into a range of shops to ask for medicine. At a certain point, he stops and states, "I'm sorry to have dragged you all this way when you're not well." She promptly replies, "You didn't drag me, I chose to come" (p. 263). This exchange sets off a chain of (anxious, angry, etc.) responses, directed by the positioning effects of the first exchange of statements, intended or not. The woman feels that she is being positioned as disempowered and paternalized,

whereas the man maintains that he did not intend to position anyone with his excuse and thus feels misunderstood, or positioned by a political (feminist) project.

This little interaction reveals a whole range of mechanisms to be identified and described within positioning theory and analysis (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). One of these mechanisms is first- and second-order positioning: Whereas the first one is reflective, the latter is reflexive. Thus the woman's response, "You didn't drag me, I chose to come," can be considered not merely a reflection of the first positioning but also reflexive in terms of commenting on their relationship and the very act of positioning each other. From this distinction follows several others: between performative (immediate) and accountive (metacommunicative) positioning, between personal and professional communication, intentional and nonintentional communication, and so on. However, the main focus is on the mechanism of self- and other positioning that takes place in most utterances: "Whenever somebody positions him/herself, this discursive act always implies a positioning of the one to whom it is addressed. And similarly, when somebody positions somebody else, that always implies a positioning of the person him/herself" (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999, p. 22). This is certainly the case in the example given above, in the two opening remarks of the conversation. The double positioning and the subtle effects hereof initiate a chain of reactions and becomes an issue in itself.

To find a way to analyze the process of positioning and being positioned, both Davies and Harré (1990/2001) and Wetherell (2001) have used the concept of interpretative repertoires: a way of balancing between, on one hand, the ideological effects and, on the other hand, the possible subject positions embedded in the (conflicting) discourses available. Thus, interpretative repertoires function as a kind of conflict management; however, they can also themselves be in conflict, and conversations or "talk-in-action" are accordingly approached as "battlegrounds," where opposing ideological stands and subject positions are negotiated (Wetherell, 2001). Therefore, another variation of PDA is narrative positioning, in which the possibility of positioning oneself is attached, on one hand, to the narrative perspective or point of view and event construction, and, on the other hand, to a performance-based approach to oral and conversational narration (Bamberg, 2000, 2004; Gergen 2002).

Judith Baxter, who has a background in linguistics and CA, has taken her point of departure in poststructuralist discourse theory (2003a). She has persistently developed poststructuralist discourse theory into a concise method and has furthermore outlined it in terms of a specifically feminist PDA (2003b). She has also discussed the intersections of CA, CDA, and PDA and

inspired us by indicating similarities as well as differences (Baxter, 2002). Her definition of the feminist poststructuralist approach runs like this: "I highlight a central concern of the FPDA approach: namely to examine the ways in which speakers negotiate their identities, relationships and positions in the world according to the ways in which they are *multiply* located by different discourses" (Baxter 2003b, p. 10). Compared to, for instance, Davis and Harré or Wetherell, she thus underscores not only the complex and contingent web of discourses and positions for subjects to navigate between but also that subjects are located and locate themselves in and by different discourses. We therefore return to Baxter in our case study in Chapter 6.

Transversal Discourse Analysis (TDA)

Transversal discourse analysis (TDA) is a term we have coined for the future directions of feminist communication methodology, which breaks with established methods. At its outset feminist, TDA draws its inspiration from third-wave feminist transversal politics (see Chapter 1) and the performance and performativity turns (see Chapter 2). TDA focuses on crossing disciplinary boundaries, and its strength lies in recombining conventional methodological packages. In the process, new conceptualizations, connections, alliances, and webs of understanding seem to develop. Whereas the method is not yet clearly articulated, we find examples of it in performance and performativity scholarship (Langellier), computer-mediated communication and cyberfeminism (Stone), and transgender discourse (Halberstam). In crossing boundaries and recombining of tools and concepts, TDA also signals the emergence of a transfeminism. Let us first, however, look at the points of inspiration.

TDA is inspired by feminist transversal politics, in particular the work of feminist scholar Nira Yuval-Davis (see Chapter 1). It involves a constant pivoting of the center of analysis: what Yuval-Davies (1997) referred to as the process of "rooting" and "shifting." She used this method in the context of conflict management and the process of building feminist solidarity that does not fall prey to homogenizing the "other," but we believe that her guidelines can serve as methodological tools as well. Transversal feminists seek to avoid essentialist identity groupings and instead engage in the critical interrogation of essentialist terms such as *feminine, masculine, female, male, butch, femme,* and so on. To engage in sophisticated shifting, however, is to engage in *strategic essentialism,* a term borrowed from Gayatri Spivak and a form of role play that helps the researcher understand how communication unfolds without also falling victim to easy identity categories. A communication scholar may, for example, be critical of the description of a transgendered person as

"a woman trapped inside of a man's body" *or* see it as a form of strategic essentialism that engages in essentialist categories to gain visibility and acceptance in a heteronormative culture that would rather see transgendered people as "biological errors" than challenge the two-tiered sex and gender category systems (Koyama, 2003).

Gender theorist Judith Halberstam (1998) has employed TDA through a range of methodologies that she collectively calls a "queer methodology" (p. 10): textual criticism, ethnography, historical surveys, archival research, and the production of taxonomies. Halberstam could have remained methodologically "faithful" to one type of criticism but has deliberately refused to fit her project into any one conventional methodological category and has instead engaged in a range of methods that help spotlight various locations of female masculinity, from the Hershe Bar Drag King Contests in 1995–1996 to Queen Latifah's performance as the butch character "Cleo" in *Set It Off,* from 1997. Engaging in multiple methodologies not only opens up to various locations of female masculinity but also provides both the scholar and the reader with a historical context in which examples of female masculinity can be critically interrogated. Halberstam (1998) has referred to it as a "scavenger methodology" (p. 13), which is particularly useful when we wish to study individuals who have traditionally been excluded from studies of human communication.

The methodological challenges that computer-mediated communication pose to communication scholars have also contributed to our idea of a TDA. How do we study communication when the body of the speaker is unknown? When bodies are only textual? When speech is interactive? Or when communication is constantly changing and always unfinished? We believe that TDA and the methodological tools of "rooting" and "shifting" may help understand the gender implications of CMC. Whereas communication scholars have tended to read online bodies as true representations of offline identities, a pivoting of the center will help uncover the ways in which gender and other identity markers are textually managed, always in flux, and constantly challenged. We discuss this further in Chapter 7.

Conclusion

Methodological approaches tend, in general, to have become established without feminist involvement and are consequently often criticized for being sexist (Kitzinger, 2002). The notion that "the master's tools will never demolish the master's house" has led some feminist communication scholars to search for their own methodological approaches, whereas others have continued their work within particular communication subdisciplines and

have found imaginative ways to include feminist concerns and thereby revise scholarly agendas (Kitzinger, 2002). One of these scholars is Celia Kitzinger, who has worked with feminist-inspired CA. During the 1990s, she debated the relevance of gender and social identity to CA with Emanuel Schegloff, in many ways the standard-bearer of the methodology (Kitzinger, 2002). Ruth Wodak (1996, 2003) has also contributed to the development of CDA in cooperation with Norman Fairclough, and she has taken gender perspectives to the core of the methodological debates.

Moreover, Judith Baxter has developed PDA as a methodological framework and has initiated a debate on feminist poststructuralist methodology that embeds both performance and positioning approaches. Although scholars have debated whether CA, CDA, and PDA are mutually exclusive or mutually supportive (Baxter, 2002; West, 2002), we wish only to note that the initial formulations of each of these methods were inspired by theories (sociolinguistics, critical theory, and performance theory) to articulate a distinct methodological focus. What these scholars share, however, is an insistence on putting gender issues at the forefront of their work and, as a result, they have made important contributions to the field of communication.

In Chapters 4 to 7, we argue that feminist conversation analysis (FCA) is related to the difference and dominance position through the generic enterprise of explicating how dominance is carried out in communication. Consequently, early second-wave feminist scholars are more likely to have engaged in FCA as a method. Feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA) may be related to the difference and identity position of second-wave feminist scholarship, and feminist poststructuralist analysis (FPDA) to the performance and positioning position inspired by third-wave feminist scholarship. It should be noted, however, that these approaches are subject to continual reassessment and renewal. We therefore caution our readers that none of the methods described "belong" to any particular feminist communication perspective. For example, whereas CA was used in classic feminist communication dominance work in the 1970s and 1980s, in its current form, it is just as, if not more, valid within poststructuralist feminist communication work, and it is continually reclaimed for feminist purposes today. Just as feminist communication perspectives have changed, so have the feminist applications of these methods, and as we have seen, we now seem to be in the midst of a deliberate recombination of methods and a turn to a TDA.

We hope that by including a discussion of feminist communication methods, we give our readers an opportunity to see theory and method in mutual interaction, thus not only paving the road for future feminist scholarship but also equipping our readers with critical lenses through which to make their own educated evaluations of feminist communication scholarship (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1   Feminist Communication Methodology

Method	*Methodology*	*Feminist Communication Studies*
Chapter 4 **Conversation Analysis (CA)**	**Sociolinguistics:** Ethnomethodology & Ethnography of Communication	**Feminist Conversation Analysis (FCA)**
Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson, David Silverman	Harold Garfinkel, Erving Goffman, John Gumperz, Dell Hymes, William Labov	Celia Kitzinger, Pamela Fishman, Janet Holmes, Susan Herring, Candace West and Don Zimmerman
Chapter 5 **Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**	**Critical Theory:** Critical Linguistics & Social Semiotics	**Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA)**
Norman Fairclough, Lilie Chouliaraki, Michael Billig, Teun van Dijk, Ruth Wodak	Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress, Norman Fairclough, Teun van Dijk, Michael Billig, Ruth Wodak	Deborah Cameron, Jennifer Coates, Marsha Houston, Mary Talbot, Sara Mills, Ruth Wodak, Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet
Chapter 6 **Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis (PDA)**	**Discourse Theory:** Performance and Positioning Theory	**Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA)**
Michael Bamberg, Margaret Wetherell, Bronwyn Davies and Rom Harré, Judith Baxter	Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell, Rom Harré, Luk van Langenhove, Bronwyn Davies, Judith Butler	Don Kulick, Deborah Cameron, Bronwyn Davies, Judith Baxter, Kira Hall, Mary Bucholtz, Kristin Langellier
Chapter 7 **Transversal Discourse Analysis (TDA)**	**Transversity Perspectives:** Performativity, Transgenderism, and Cyberfeminism	**Feminist Transversal Discourse Analysis (FTDA)**
Kira Hall, Donna Haraway, Nira Yuval-Davis, Edward Davies, Judith Halberstam	Kira Hall, Donna Haraway, Nira Yuval-Davis, Edward Davies, Judith Halberstam	Brenda Danet, Shannon McRae, Sandy Stone, Kristin Langellier