

The 'how' of reading: indexical repair in comments on an unfinished essay

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This abstract has its origins in the locus of my interest (academic literacies, AL) and the foremost way in which I approach it (ethnomethodology, EM). According to Sharrock & Ikeya (2000:271), that there can be a 'how' to reading is something that follows naturally from ethnomethodology's approach. It follows that texts can be read in diverse ways. As fellows in carrying out 'situated' studies, AL and EM will have a mutual interest in the 'how' of academic reading, and so in local instances of reading and their analysis. On AL's part, this interest will come not least from the fact that it has to date been more focused on writing than reading (Lillis & Scott 2007).

The main intention in this presentation is to present my thoughts on a piece of data that will probably appear in my doctoral dissertation. The data is an undergraduate draft essay some thousand words in length, with feedback in the form of a few brief electronically-produced text boxes and comments from the marker/reader. My analysis is far from complete and I offer the presentation as much as a prompt for discussion as a delivery of ideas.

However, it is clear that the reader's comments are an exercise in *indexical repair*, and it suggests a number of questions concerning the 'work' of reading in this case, e.g: What is the nature of the reading that is presented by the feedback comments? If the feedback is proxy for the reading, do the comments have 'recipient design' features of their own? How can the draft possibly be judged for generic features and quality when it provides only half of the required length? What do the comments suggest about the essay from a 'process' point of view?

Comments from any disciplinary perspective will be appreciated.