

# ACADEMIC NETWORKING FACE-TO-FACE: WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE AND WHAT IT CAN TELL US ABOUT RESEARCH COLLABORATION

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## ABSTRACT

This paper draws on the tools of conversation analysis and network theory to investigate how academic networking takes place face-to-face in academic presentations. An analysis of 176 presentations made to interdisciplinary peer audiences by early-career scholars participating in an EU-funded postdoctoral programme reveals five functions of mentioning individual audience members (procedural, deictic anchoring of examples, contextualizing, co-membership, 'fishing' for research collaboration); it also highlights typical patterns of intertextual chaining. The study documents variation in the use of individual mentions by scholars from different disciplines; it also shows that the order in which scholars present influences the chances of their being mentioned by others. A follow-up questionnaire designed to probe how the patterns identified relate to subsequent collaboration shows that the scholars who mentioned others were more likely to maintain contact and co-author with members of their cohort. Implications of the study for a better understanding of the dynamics of research collaboration and for training for academic practice are briefly discussed.

**KEY WORDS:** academic presentations, academic publishing, audience mention, research collaboration, co-authoring, conversation analysis, network theory, macro-micro link.

## RESUMEN

Este trabajo se basa en las herramientas de análisis de la conversación y la teoría de redes para investigar cómo se realizan las redes académicas en la interacción cara a cara en presentaciones científicas. Un análisis de 176 exposiciones presentadas a un público interdisciplinario de investigadores por pares al principio de su carrera participando en un programa postdoctoral europeo reveló cinco funciones de mencionar miembros individuales del público (procesal, anclaje déictico de ejemplos, contextualizar, establecer co-afiliación, 'cazar' colaboración investigadora); también se destacan patrones típicos de encadenamiento intertextual. El estudio documenta una variación en el uso de menciones individuales por estudiosos de diversas disciplinas; también muestra que el orden en que los investigadores exponen influye en las posibilidades de ser mencionado por otros. Un cuestionario de seguimiento diseñado para sondear cómo se relacionan los patrones identificados con colaboración posterior muestra que los investigadores que mencionaron otros eran más propensos a mantener contacto y colaborar como co-autores con miembros de su cohorte. Implicaciones del estudio para una



mejor comprensión de la dinámica de colaboración de investigación y capacitación para la práctica académica serán tratadas brevemente.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Palabras clave: presentaciones académicas, publicaciones académicas, mención de audiencia, colaboración en investigación, co-autoría, análisis de conversación, teoría de redes, eslabón macro-micro.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the constructivist turn in the social sciences has increasingly emphasized the role of face-to-face interaction in the creation and circulation of scientific knowledge. Evidence of this attention to social processes in academia can be found in studies carried out from diverse disciplinary perspectives, including bibliometrics, research policy, network theory, and research on academic writing.<sup>1</sup> Of particular interest to the focus of the current contribution is recent work that brings together insights from these latter two strands of research within an academic literacies perspective. Curry and Lillis, for instance, underline the importance of understanding how academics actually enter into and consolidate research networks. Citing data from their longitudinal study of publishing by 50 scholars from four different European countries, the two authors stress the importance of face-to-face contact: their informants repeatedly indicated face-to-face interaction at conferences, seminars and research meetings as an important catalyst in establishing and maintaining research contacts (Lillis and Curry). These results are in line with those of several earlier interview-based studies on research collaboration carried out in other contexts (Lieberman and Wolf; Melin; also see Laudel, qtd. Wagner and Leydesdorff; Coromina et al.). Investigating the practices through which scholars seek out like-minded others face-to-face would thus appear useful to understanding how research and publishing networks are established and maintained. The present analysis investigates what I hypothesize constitutes a key interactional resource for doing academic networking: the individual mention, in the course of academic presentations, of specific audience members.

Given its interdisciplinary focus, the study draws on theoretical frameworks, methodological tools and research results from three distinct lines of inquiry: conversation analysis (which takes as its starting point the view that the close study of talk-in-interaction can uncover participants' orientations towards the social events in which they are engaged); network theory (which investigates how social relationships can be characterized in terms of the interpersonal ties that individuals establish and maintain with others); and research on academic writing and publishing (which has documented the existence of disciplinary variation in co-authoring and modes of

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<sup>1</sup> For representative work in the first three fields relevant to the present contribution, see Carolan and Natriello; Defazio et al.; Katz and Martin; Moody; Wagner and Leydesdorff. For examples of work on academic writing focusing on social aspects of the writing/publishing process, see Burrough-Boenisch; Ferenz; Li and Flowerdew; Lillis and Curry.



research collaboration). These complementary perspectives are used to investigate the practices of several different groups of individuals engaged, in the same setting and in similar conditions, in the production of an ad hoc academic genre geared specifically to fostering research collaboration. The data examined are of two types:

1. A primary data set consisting in 176 oral presentations made by four cohorts of fellowship holders at the beginning of a one-year post-doc period with the express aim of familiarizing each other with their respective lines of research and establishing possible research links;

2. A follow-up questionnaire with the scholars in question after they left the post-doctoral programme, in which they were asked to detail any ongoing research and publishing collaboration with other members of their cohort.

Based on a formal and sequential analysis of the presentations from a conversational analytic perspective (integrated with a quantitative analysis, where appropriate), I describe the functions to which individual mention is put in the context examined, the dynamics to which it is subject, and variation in its use among scholars from four different disciplines. The goal of this analysis is to identify how the deployment of this interactional resource relates to stable and evolving aspects of the local discourse context—specifically, to the disciplinary membership of participants and the order in which they present their work. In analysing the questionnaire data, instead, I draw on some basic concepts from network theory—specifically, the notions of strength/intensity of network ties and of network density—in order to assess to what extent mentioning audience members foreshadows subsequent research collaboration. Here, as with the presentation data, recent work on disciplinary variation in academic collaboration constitutes the main backdrop to my discussion of the results.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 contextualizes the study by highlighting why, in analysing oral presentations, the audience needs to be viewed as an interactional resource—in other words, as a constitutive feature of the genre. Section 3 introduces the data and methodology used. Section 4 illustrates the principal uses to which mention of audience members is put. Section 5 explores the dynamics of individual mention in the four cohorts, with particular reference to how participants draw on previous presentations to create characteristic patterns of intertextual chaining. Section 6 discusses disciplinary differences in the use of individual mentions. Section 7 discusses patterns of post-programme research collaboration among the scholars in question, distinguishing between those who mentioned audience members and those who did not; on the basis of the results obtained, some brief considerations about what the analysis of oral interaction can and cannot contribute to attempts to bridge the well-known micro-macro gap in studies on social interaction are advanced. The paper concludes with a brief reflection on the implications of the results for an understanding of how scholars interact in international academia and, in applied terms, for the teaching of academic English and for the management of institutional practices designed to foster research collaboration.



## 2. AUDIENCE AS INTERACTIONAL RESOURCE

Contributions from various disciplines (for a useful overview, see Rendle-Short) have shown that in academic presentations the audience is an interactional resource towards which speakers are constantly orienting as they structure a discourse which is only apparently monologic. The co-presence of speaker and audience in a shared physical space has a pervasive impact on all levels—from bodily orientation and the use of gaze and gesture, to dynamic processes such as pacing and the staging of information. The audience's presence can also be exploited overtly by referring to or addressing it directly. Such audience mention can be either collective or individual and creates specific contextual effects.

“Collective mention” of the audience as a group with particular characteristics can help render certain information particularly salient. The following two examples illustrate some ways in which “membership categorization” (Sacks) of the audience can occur.<sup>2</sup> In example 1, the audience is invited to sit up and listen by casting it in a role (that of “consumers”) that is also shared by the speaker:<sup>3</sup>

- (1) Now what I want to focus on is enforcement of competition policy by damage actions (.) brought by individuals, consumers like you and me, harmed by the anticompetitive behaviour and brought before the court. (B-08)

In example 2, instead, collective mention is used to partition the audience into different types of listeners—here, experts and non-experts—thus making different types of listening behaviour relevant for different members of the group:

- (2) During my PhD I mainly focused on international trade and also on economic geography and political economics. But I did all this emphasising the role of firm productivity heterogeneity. So I know that for those of you who are not economists that doesn't mean something, so I will try to just explain this in a few words. (C-07)

“Mention of individual audience members” also creates contextual effects. These arise, as will be illustrated below, from the speaker's projecting a tie of some sort between him/herself and the person mentioned. Because the act of mentioning takes place in a public space, what is at issue is not simply the existence or establishment of some sort of relationship between two individuals: whoever is present in

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<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed study of how membership categorization takes place in this setting, see Anderson (“Internationality”).

<sup>3</sup> All examples, here and elsewhere in the paper, are taken from the corpus analysed. The transcriptions are verbatim, but details about mode of enunciation and timing have not been noted unless directly relevant to the point under discussion. Conventions: (.) = pause; text- = syllable cut short; text = extra stress or deliberate enunciation; (XXX) = recording unclear; ((text)) = non-verbal activity or transcriber's comment.



the context is invited to take note of possible connections between the speaker and the individual mentioned. It thus appears legitimate to assume that acts of mention of “present others” in oral presentations possess a potential for setting up socially relevant connections.

In order to operationalize the investigation of such contextual effects, the current study addresses the following questions:

1. What functions of individual mention can be identified in the data?
2. Who mentions whom? More specifically:
  - 2a. What are the dynamics of individual mention? Does order of presentation (whether one speaks earlier or later) have an impact?
  - 2b. To what extent do disciplinary membership and affinities between disciplines come into play?
3. What correlations, if any, are there between patterns of individual mention and patterns of post-programme research collaboration between presenters and audience members, as evidenced by responses to the post-programme questionnaire?
4. How do the patterns of individual mention and modes of research collaboration identified relate to previous findings about disciplinary variation in academic collaboration and publishing?

The following section describes the data sets and methodology used in this study to investigate the above questions.

### 3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The primary data set utilized consists in 176 video-recorded presentations of 12-15 minutes in length<sup>4</sup> made by holders of one-year fellowships at the Max Weber post-doctoral programme, located at the European University Institute, Florence.<sup>5</sup> The initiative in question is the largest post-doctoral programme in the social sciences in Europe and is funded by the European Commission. The fellows come from a wide range of geographical and linguistic backgrounds and represent

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<sup>4</sup> In total 183 presentations were recorded; for technical reasons seven have been excluded from the present analysis.

<sup>5</sup> I would like to thank Ramon Marimon (at the time of recording, director) and Karin Tilmans, (coordinator) of the Max Weber Programme, for providing me with the opportunity to observe this unique community of international scholars in action; Nicky Owtram (head of the EUI Language Centre) and Nicki Hargreaves (member of the EUI English Unit) for useful discussions about the materials and the broader institutional context; Letizia Cirillo (with whom I am currently conducting research on talk by international scholars in multidisciplinary contexts) for support in the transcription and analysis of the data presented in this paper. Any errors or omissions remain my sole responsibility.



four broad disciplinary areas: economics, history, law and social and political sciences (henceforth, ECO, HIS, LAW, SPS). The data were collected over a four-year period; the following table summarizes the disciplinary backgrounds of the fellows in the four cohorts considered in the present study:

TABLE 1.

COHORT	ECONOMICS	HISTORY	LAW	POLITICAL & SOCIAL SCIENCES	TOTAL
A	9	10	10	11	40
B	11	11	10	15	47
C	11	10	8	17	46
D	8	12	8	15	43
total	39	43	36	58	176

The presentations analysed took place on 5-6 consecutive weekdays at the beginning of the fellowship period. In addition to the other fellows in the cohort, the audience typically included one or more supervisors (professors from the various departments), the director, coordinator and one or more members of the programme staff. All four cohorts received the same instructions, and in each session presenters from different disciplinary backgrounds were deliberately mixed. The presentations were video-recorded using a digital video-recorder on a fixed tripod, positioned approximately in the centre of the audience. Recording was carried out for both research and training purposes, and all speakers received pedagogic feedback on their presentations from EAP professionals.

For the purposes of the present study, the videos were viewed separately by two analysts in order to identify all cases of reference to or address of individual audience members. This process led to the identification of 160 instances of individual mentions (henceforth also referred to as “acts of mention” or, simply, “mentions”), of which 146 were mentions of other fellows and 14 of other audience members.<sup>6</sup> These mentions were transcribed, together with the immediately preceding and following segments of talk, and were subsequently entered into a database containing details about both the presenters’ background (discipline, native language, country of PhD)<sup>7</sup> and the presentations themselves (duration, sequential order). For each mention, two pieces of information about the referred-to audience member were also recorded: his/her disciplinary affiliation and, for those who were also speakers (i.e. the fellows), the sequential position of his/her presentation. The following

<sup>6</sup> All 160 cases were considered in developing the typology of functions of individual mention presented in Section 4. Because the focus on the study is specifically on the patterns and dynamics of audience mention and its links with research collaboration among academic peers, in rest of the article only mentions of other fellows are considered.

<sup>7</sup> To protect their anonymity, all identifying information about the participants has been deleted in the examples presented.



formal and sequential characteristics considered relevant to pinpointing patterns in the corpus were also recorded: whether the audience member was referred to by name or name plus surname, by reference to the position and/or content of his/her presentation, by citing his/her exact words;<sup>8</sup> whether the mention in question was isolated or part of an intertextual “chain” or other recognisable discourse structure.

Drawing on an analysis of the above information, each case of individual mention was then categorized in functional terms. In line with the conversational analytic perspective adopted, this categorization was carried out on the basis of repeated reviewing of the data in order to take all relevant formal and sequential features into account; the five categories identified in this way are described and illustrated in section 4, below. After entering into the database the primary function of each mention, an analysis of the dynamics of individual mention and of the role that disciplinary membership plays in determining who mentions whom was then carried out; the procedures used for these two analyses are described directly in the respective results sections (sections 5 and 6).

The second data set consists in the responses provided by the presenters to three questions about post-programme collaboration with other members of the same cohort. These questions were included in a more extensive survey about post-programme research and publishing by the scholars in question administered by E-mail approximately 1 ½ years after the last of the four cohorts exited the programme. The questions regarded (i) co-authoring, (ii) participation in joint research projects, and (iii) other research-related collaboration, such as organisation of workshops or conference panels, participation in teaching exchanges, etc. The responses to these questions by respondents who had and had not mentioned other fellows in the audience during their presentations were compared in order to identify possible links between how the speakers interacted with an interdisciplinary peer audience and subsequent patterns of research collaboration. Details about the analysis, which drew on the network theory concepts of intensity and density to investigate the research collaboration ties maintained by participants in the study, are presented in section 7, together with the results.

#### 4. FUNCTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL MENTION IN THE DATA

The analysis of the 160 cases of individual mention revealed two broad categories: mentions which included no reference to the contents of the mentioned audience member’s research (57 cases; 35.6%) and content-based mentions highlighting some aspect of his/her research topic or methodology (103 cases; 64.4%).

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<sup>8</sup> Although not the central focus in the current analysis, of direct relevance to the present contribution is work in the conversation analysis tradition on the distinction between naming and so-called recognitional reference: see Sacks and Schegloff; Schegloff; and the volume on person reference edited by Enfield and Stivers).



The mentions belonging to the former category have two distinct functions: *procedural* (i.e. they serve to instantiate “oral presentations” as a conventional discourse genre) and *deictic* (i.e. they are used to anchor examples in the situational context, thus bringing them alive for the target listeners). Audience members mentioned with these two functions included both other fellows (43 mentions) and departmental supervisors and members of the programme staff (14 mentions).

The mentions in the second category, i.e. those regarding audience members’ research topics or methodology, can be functionally distinguished into three types, broadly positioned along a gradient of intensity of interest expressed in the mentioned audience member’s area of research. *Contextualizing mentions* are those in which reference to the contents of presentations by previous speakers basically serves to create a shared context of reference. With the term “*co-membership*,” instead, I will refer to those mentions in which presenters claim that they and the audience member indicated share some relevant characteristic(s) and therefore belong to a particular category. Finally, “*fishing*” will be used to refer to the third and most explicit type of content-based mention, in which the possibility of future research collaborations is projected by indicating overlaps in research topics or by explicitly declaring an interest in collaborating. In the data examined, individual mentions with these three functions involve only other fellows, not other members of the audience.

The five functions in question are briefly described and illustrated below.

#### 4.1. NON CONTENT-RELATED MENTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL AUDIENCE MEMBERS

##### 4.1.1. *Procedural*

The procedural mentions of individual audience members identified in the data (32 occurrences; 20% of all mentions) are highly routinized and conventional. They are located in two positions: at the beginning of the presentations and in the question-answer sessions. In both positions they serve to ensure the smooth functioning of the discourse genre “oral presentation.”

In initial position procedural mentions include politeness moves such as thanking the chair for the floor (examples 3-4) and acknowledging the presence of the presenter’s departmental supervisor (examples 5-6):<sup>9</sup>

- (3) Thank you very much NAME/CHAIR. Thank you all for being here today.  
(A-09)

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<sup>9</sup> The term “mentor” is used in this context to refer to the faculty member who acts as a reference point for a fellow during his/her stay. Again to preserve the anonymity of both speakers and audience members (see footnote 3, above), disciplinary affiliations have only been indicated when considered relevant to the analysis.





- (4) Merci NAME/CHAIR.<sup>10</sup> Thank you everybody for coming. (D-15)
- (5) My name is NAME-SURNAME and I'm affiliated here with the department of economics and I would like to welcome also my mentor, professor NAME-SURNAME/SUPERVISOR. I'm going to talk today a bit about my work, about my experience, about my general research, and finally about my research agenda concerning my stay at the EUI. (A-34)
- (6) So good afternoon everybody and let me say first welcome to one of my two mentors, NAME-SURNAME/SUPERVISOR. What you see on the screen is the title of my new research, but first of all I would like to speak about my educational background. (A-35)

They also include passing references to other presenters in the same session, as illustrated by examples 7 and 8, in which the speaker refers—respectively—to the preceding and following speakers:<sup>11</sup>

- (7) There is a piece of paper that's coming around, which is (XXX) what I'm gonna talk about. So I have the duty and honour of closing the first day with a topic which is not as exciting as popular music in Yugoslavia [reference to D-06], but is about my research which is on the implementation mechanisms for competition policy. (D-07)
- (8) Okay. Well, thank you. I think I've met most of you by now. Like NAME/A-18 and other panellists in this session I've the fortune of having already been here for a year and I'll just present you with what I've come up so far and what I will do next. (A-17)

The data even contain instances in which presenters apparently felt obliged to mention a colleague in the audience for no other reason than the simple fact that he/she had originally been scheduled to speak. Example 9 contains a mention of this sort (alongside direct address of four (unspecified) members of the audience) and once again illustrates the importance of politeness considerations in the opening sections of presentations:

- (9) Uhm thank you everyone for coming. First of all I'd like to apologize for the last minute change in schedule and uh thank you NAME/C-48 ((waves)) I know that at least four of you were probably expecting to see him today and

<sup>10</sup> The chair of this section was a native speaker of French; the presenter was not.

<sup>11</sup> As example 7 illustrates, procedural mention can draw on intertextuality as a resource, as do some instances of "fishing" and one of the two modes of "co-membership" described in section 4.4. For the operational criteria used to distinguish "core" intertextual mentions from these derivative uses, see section 4.3.



would prefer to see him today and you'll have to put up with me for about twelve minutes. So the uhm I'm a microeconomist by training. (C-26)

Individual mentions in question-answer sessions also help “oil” the interactional machinery. Here they are used to show appreciation of the interest expressed by the questioner. When questions have been collected from the floor, such mentions also serve a tracking function by helping to signal which question the presenter is about to answer (e.g. “And about NAME’s question (D-33); “And as to NAME’s comments” (D-27)).

#### 4.1.2. *Deictic anchoring of examples*

A second function of mentions of individual audience members is to “animate” examples designed to illustrate ideas and concepts by anchoring them deictically in the ongoing context of interaction. Although occasionally presented as authentic (example 10), such examples are usually framed as hypothetical (examples 11-12). In the latter case any member of the audience could presumably be mentioned. In practice, however, speakers tend to refer to individuals who are easily identifiable. These include fellows who have just spoken or are about to speak, members of the programme staff, or members of their own department:

- (10) Consciously or unconsciously we compare prices of the same product. For example NAME/SPS-A-33 two days ago she bought sheets for her bed finally. And she paid thirty euro. So I asked and said oh, you could wait and I could bring you from Poland for half the price ((laughter)). But she said to me, listen in India I could buy forty sheets for this price ((laughter)). (ECO-A-34)
- (11) Consumers are different in terms of how rich they are okay? How much they're willing to pay for a good, depending on how much money they have. But they're also different in their cost characteristics. (.) Assume I uhm ((sighs)) (.) I want to teach a student how to speak English, well this student can be very talented and he'll need less effort, a few hours of education uh: ((laughs)) (.) like NAME/ECO-B-40 ((laughs)) well it's a long story. (.) Other student can be (.) a student, can be actually very slow like me, and it takes so much effort to uh have me speaking English. (ECO-B-13)
- (12) Human rights apply in relationships between private parties, for example between myself and NAME/STAFF or for example if I slept with NAME/STAFF (SAME), it could be a human offence. (LAW-C-29)

Occasionally, however, audience members appear to be chosen because some stable characteristic they possess is pertinent to the point being made. This is the



case in the following example, in which mention of the programme director is used to explain the presenter's work on team organization (example 13):

- (13) So the one on organizing teams. Uhm essentially what I'm interested in is, imagine that there's a group of us and someone uhm NAME/STAFF has to organize us into a group so that we're the most productive right? And he's got a limited number of resources so he can create a link say between me and NAME/SPS-C-27 and between me and NAME/ECO-C-48 or- and via- using these links he creates different organizations, so different structures. So if I have a link with NAME/SPS-C-27 there are complementarities we both enjoy which bring us to produce more. (ECO-C-26)

Whether drawing on situational information or on stable characteristics of individuals to ensure recognisability, the mention of a member of the audience seems designed to bring alive the example by increasing its relevance/pertinence to listeners. In all, 25 mentions (15.6% of the occurrences in the data) belong to this category.

#### 4.2. CONTENT-ORIENTED MENTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL AUDIENCE MEMBERS

##### 4.2.1. *Contextualizing mentions*

Mentions have been categorised as “contextualizing mentions” for the purposes of the present analysis, when their core use is to highlight connections between the content of the speaker's presentation and those of others without explicitly affirming a convergence of interests. Such connections usually regard research topics or theoretical perspectives (examples 14, 15, 16), but can also concern commonalities in terms of methodology (example 17). These mentions (36 cases; 22.5% of the total) are usually explicit. Where other fellows are not mentioned by name, they are identified in terms of time and space coordinates that are accessible to the audience (e.g. use of “yesterday” in example 16). Stivers calls the latter type of recognitional descriptors “in the know reference forms,” and argues that they serve to make visible a shared context of reference:

- (14) This kind of issue is studied in a very well-known work (XXX) in economics, which is the complete market model, which NAME/ECO-A-13 talked-introduced a few days ago. (ECO-A-26)
- (15) Especially as NAME/SPS-B-44 said, as the process of ageing which is affecting very much this system. (ECO-B-45)
- (16) So we talked about game theory already yesterday [reference to ECO-D-06] (ECO-D-11)



- (17) So, I'm happy, following the presentation of NAME/SPS-B-14, she already talked about how important the data are. (ECO-B-15)

The content-based ties included in this category usually invoke broad affinities in research topic. However, they can also serve to bridge rather divergent interests: in example 18, for instance, a historian frames her choice of wording through reference to the notion of “branding” introduced by a sociologist in a previous session:

- (18) Sachen-Masoch is most known as the so-called founding father of masochism. So we have, using NAME/SPS-B-21's term, we have a brand. (HIS-B-28)

#### 4.2.2. “Co-membershiping”

Co-membershiping through individual mention draws on a variety of resources to achieve its effects. Although a relatively limited phenomenon in the data (12 cases, 7.5 % of all mentions), mentions of this sort are particularly interesting. Presenters can highlight stable personal characteristics they share with audience members (e.g. educational background in example 19; marital status in example 20) or they can invoke ad hoc categories to which they claim both they and the audience member belong (the category of “Max Weber fans coming out of the closet” in example 21). While co-membershiping on the basis of stable personal characteristics may be presented as grounded in prior knowledge about the audience member, it is usually justified intertextually; ad hoc categories are likewise invoked by referring to the content of the person's presentation or by citing his/her exact words:

- (19) So in terms of personal background, NAME/ECO-D-30 was telling us that he came full circle because he did his undergraduate degree here and then came back here. My circle is even bigger, first of all because I think I'm older than you, also because I was born here and now I'm coming back. (SPS-D-37)
- (20) And both places are recommended venues for weddings [reference to photo of wedding location projected by LAW-C-28] (LAW-C-37)
- (21) (XXX) so “coming out” as NAME/SPS-B-11 put it this afternoon, I also like Max Weber. (NAME/SPS-B-20)

Functional categories are rarely airtight: example 21 suggests how co-membershiping, when it touches on research interests, may shade into “fishing” (see following section).



### 4.2.3. "Fishing"

"Fishing" is the most widespread function of individual mention in this corpus, a tendency that reflects the institutional aims of this ad hoc genre (55 cases of individual mention, i.e. 34.4%, fall into this category). The following examples illustrate typical ways in which presenters signal interest in establishing possible collaborations with individual audience members.

Sometimes interest is expressed indirectly, with speakers limiting themselves to affirming a convergence of interests or areas of possible overlap (example 22).

- (22) I think I found a link with NAME/LAW-B-04, who yesterday also presented his project. (LAW-B-17)

More overt bids for collaboration are frequently framed as an interest in simply "talking about" or "discussing" the topic (examples 23 and 24). This choice of wording may be linked to the fact that explicit "fishing" for collaborators can be potentially face-threatening for both the presenter and the audience member mentioned:

- (23) The second element is party organisation, but that's something that I've really not gone into very much, so I'll I look forward to talk, talking about this with NAME/SPS-B-03. (SPS-B-26)

- (24) Well, as I said, my main subject is free movement of workers. And I've actually discovered that my office mate works on the same subject. So she's already proposed to me, also with NAME/SPS-D-16, too, and NAME/LAW-D-12, to kind of discuss what we could do when it comes to labour market policy and labour market issues, so the broad domain we're interested in, and that could be a field of potential collaboration. (SPS-D-01)

Attention to face concerns is also apparent from other features. Mentions of this sort are in fact frequently hedged through the use of attenuating expressions (e.g. "kind of discuss" in example 24), verbs of cognition or volition (e.g. "hoping" in example 25) epistemic modals (e.g. "might" in example 26) and/or the addition of humorous touches, such as the use of hyperbole or understatement (respectively examples 25 and 26):

- (25) What about interdisciplinary relevance? Well, I thought about this. The one person whose research I think is fairly similar that's NAME/SPS-D-41. Hoping we'll write six or seven papers together this year! (SPS-D-03)

- (26) Cooperation wise, there might be some overlap with the work that that NAME/SPS-D-03's doing, we might work together on things (XXX) you're studying non-violent stuff, I study the violent side ((laughter)) (SPS-D-41)

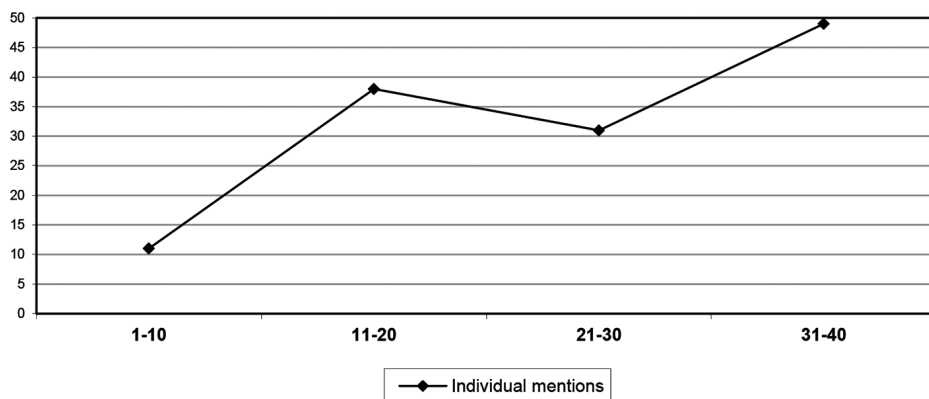
In the following section we now turn to the dynamics of individual mention over each 5-6 day period.



## 5. DYNAMICS OF “INDIVIDUAL MENTION”

To what extent does the position of a presentation along the temporal dimension have an impact on patterns of individual mention? And what sort of intertextual effects, if any, can be discerned in the talk produced?

Taking the smallest cohort (40 fellows) as a reference point, Graph 1 (below) shows the distribution of individual mentions of other fellows in the first 40 presentations of each cohort, considering the presentations in successive blocks of 10. It can be observed how such mentions are initially limited (note the low frequency for the first 10 presentations), and then increase. This suggests that a certain critical mass of shared information is needed in order to get the ball rolling. Quantitative support for this view emerges from an analysis of mentions of other fellows in terms of directionality: excluding those occurring in question-answer sessions and mentions of the session chair (which are obviously directly anchored in the immediate discourse context), close to 80% refer to fellows who have already spoken, as opposed to fellows who have yet to speak.



Graph 1. Frequency of individual mentions in the first forty presentations, excluding question-answer sessions (aggregate data for all 4 cohorts, n. 129 mentions).

We have already had occasion to observe, through a qualitative examination of the data, how a sense of shared context is constituted and reinforced through talk: many of the examples examined in section 4 have illustrated how speakers draw on contextually available information about audience members in producing individual mentions. We will therefore limit our attention here to a specific practice with some interesting structural characteristics—what I will term “intertextual chaining.”

Intertextual chaining consists in the reuse by two or more speakers of the words of another speaker who has preceded them. Such “revoicing” (Bakhtin) can

contribute to creating recognizable local meanings that are unique to the group in question. For instance, in the chain reproduced in example 27, the expression “dot dot dot” becomes, over the course of the three presentations, a shorthand way of referring to the speaker’s research plans for the year:

(27) intertextual chain—“dot dot dot”:

Okay, so the title of my presentation is social equality, self-respect, and dot dot dot. I changed that from social equality and self-respect to this because the end is what I’m planning to do with my post-doc research obviously. (SPS-C-28)

So my presentation is entitled political representation and income inequality, and in line with NAME/SPS-C-28 I guess I could call it income inequality dot dot dot. Political representation what I’ve done and income inequality what I intend to do. (SPS-C-30)

(XXX) everyone. My topic is Lisbon two, national parliaments and dot dot dot. [reference to SPS-C-28 and SPS-C-30] Has to deal with the European referenda and the longer I spend here in Florence the more dots I think we’re gonna add to this first line, but I’ll let you know in two-week’s time how many dots exactly. (LAW-C-40)

A similar dynamic is discernible in the chain presented in example 28: here, the term “schizophrenic” gradually becomes an insider way of indicating an interest in a range of research topics:

(28) intertextual chain—“schizophrenic”:

So I do a lot of different things. So you can describe me in one way as this ((looking at the whiteboard, where “schizophrenic” is written)) but would be more sympathetic to me if what you say (XXX) ((audience laughter)) (.)  
So I have a lot of different interests. (SPS-D-29)

NAME/SPS D-29 earlier said that his work is somewhat schizophrenic, I like to say that my interests are eclectic. (HIS-D-31)

And I will just leave up for you know for you to see the the connections that I see. I also have schizophrenic- broad interests [reference to SPS-D29 and HIS-D-31]. So I would be happy to talk with you about that. (SPS-D-37)

Although the number of intertextual chains in the data is not sufficient to make firm generalizations about specific structural characteristics, it is interesting to note that in the chains identified the third speaker no longer appears to feel it necessary to attribute the expression used to the original speaker. To express what occurs here in conversation analytic terms, we might say that what a given expression “means” is displayed in such cases as a talk achievement (“what we—presenters and audience -have understood through our discussion thus far”).



## 6. DISCIPLINARY ORIENTATIONS IN “INDIVIDUAL MENTION”

This section investigates how mention of individual audience members in the setting examined relates to disciplinary membership. The literature on research collaboration shows that the production of scientific knowledge is more of a collective enterprise in certain disciplines than in others, a state of affairs that to a large extent is captured by patterns of co-authoring in various fields (cf., among others, Katz and Martin; Wagner and Leydesdorff; Jons; Anderson, “Publishing”). Given this greater or lesser orientation towards working in teams, it would thus seem reasonable to expect some disciplinary variation in how presenters orient towards the audience. To explore this, in this section I focus on the 146 mentions of fellows in the audience, examining “how frequently” scholars in the four disciplines represented in the corpus mention other fellows present (6.1) and for “what purposes” (6.2); I then move on to explore how “who mentions whom” provides insights into disciplinary orientations among young scholars in the four fields of the social sciences represented in the corpus (6.3).

### 6.1. TENDENCY TO MENTION ACCORDING TO DISCIPLINE

Table 2 (below) indicates, for each cohort, the number of presenters in each discipline (out of the total number of fellows in the discipline for the cohort in question) who mentioned specific members of the audience. The second column for each cohort indicates the percentage of fellows in the discipline who made such mentions; the third, the relative ranking of the discipline within the cohort in terms of the tendency of its members to mention audience members (table 2):

TABLE 2. MENTION/NON-MENTION OF AUDIENCE MEMBERS  
(N = 176 PRESENTERS; PRESENTERS WHO MENTION = 74; PRESENTERS  
WHO DO NOT MENTION = 102; RANKING INDICATES WHICH  
DISCIPLINE USED AUDIENCE MENTION MOST/LEAST IN COHORT IN QUESTION).

DISCIPLINE	Speakers within each discipline who make individual mentions (in raw numbers and%)														
	COHORT A			COHORT B			COHORT C			COHORT D			ALL COHORTS		
	n	%	rank- ing	n	%	rank- ing	n	%	rank- ing	n	%	rank- ing	n	%	rank- ing
SPS	5/11	45.5	1	9/15	60.0	1	7/17	41.2	1	9/15	60.0	2	30/58	51.7	1
LAW	4/10	40.0	2	4/10	40.0	3	3/8	37.5	2	6/8	75.0	1	17/36	47.2	2
ECO	3/9	33.3	3	6/11	54.5	2	4/11	36.4	3	4/8	50.0	3	17/39	43.6	3
HIS	1/10	10.0	4	2/11	18.2	4	2/10	20.0	4	5/12	41.7	4	10/43	23.3	4
all speakers	13/40	32.5	//	21/47	44.7	//	17/46	37.0	//	24/43	55.8	//	74/176	42.1	//



As can be seen, the social and political scientists tend to mention audience members most often, while the historians do so least. Although there is variation from one cohort to another in terms of “overall” frequency of mention (from a low of 32.5% of the speakers in cohort A who mention present others, to a high of 55.8% in cohort D), these disciplinary tendencies hold (with slight variations) for each of the cohorts considered separately. This suggests that the way speakers orient towards multidisciplinary audiences is largely a question of what discipline they belong to, and depends only marginally on the makeup of the particular group.

To get a better picture of how disciplinary membership intersects with audience mention, however, it is necessary to look at the purposes to which individual mentions are put, a question to which we turn in the next section.

## 6.2. FUNCTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL MENTION ACCORDING TO DISCIPLINE

Table 3 summarises the functions to which mentions are put by the presenters in each of the four fields. To facilitate comparisons, tendencies within each discipline have been expressed in both raw numbers and percentages, and the functions have been ranked from most to least frequent (again, for the discipline in question):

TABLE 3. RANKING OF DIFFERENT FUNCTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL MENTION ACCORDING TO DISCIPLINE (1 = MOST FREQUENT; 5 = LEAST FREQUENT).

	SPS			LAW			ECO			HIS		
	function	n.	%	function	n.	%	function	n.	%	function	n.	%
1	'fishing'	34	47.9	'fishing'	9	42.9	deictic	14	43.8	'fishing'	10	45.5
2	procedural	13	18.3	contextualizing	7	33.3	contextualizing	11	34.3	contextualizing	7	31.8
3	contextualizing	11	15.5	procedural	2	9.5	procedural	4	12.5	procedural	5	22.7
4	co-membership	10	14.1	co-membership	1	4.8	'fishing'	2	6.3	–	0	0
5	deictic	3	4.2	–	0	0	co-membership	1	3.1	–	0	0

Some interesting similarities but also some intriguing differences among the four disciplines emerge from this functional analysis.

All four disciplines seem attentive to the need to construct a comprehensible and structured context of interaction: “contextualizing” uses are the second most common function for three out of four disciplines, while procedural uses, which help instantiate the genre, come in third (again, for three disciplines out of four). There are discernible differences, instead, in how members of the four disciplines



appear to view this multidisciplinary setting in terms of its potential for facilitating research contacts.

For the social and political scientists, legal scholars and historians, “fishing” for collaboration is the main function of individual mention: all three disciplines thus appear to be responding (to a greater or lesser extent) to the institutional mandate to use these research presentations as an opportunity to explore potential research links. The recourse to “co-membership” among the social scientists—a mode of individual mention that, as highlighted in section 4.2.2, can also be used to signal common interests—reinforces the view that members of this discipline see the setting as well-suited to seeking out potential research contacts.

For the economists, however, “fishing” and “co-membership” are marginal. In their presentations, individual mentions are mainly deictic and occur in examples designed to make their work accessible to non-specialists (see examples 10, 11 and 13, section 4.2). These divergent patterns of individual mention suggest that the economists consider talk to multidisciplinary peer audiences as not particularly conducive to setting up research collaborations, perhaps because they view it primarily as a form of expert/non-expert communication.<sup>12</sup>

### 6.3. ORIENTATIONS TOWARD OWN AND OTHER DISCIPLINES

A final question is that of disciplinary affinities, i.e. of how members of the four disciplines orient to individuals in the audience according to the discipline to which the latter belong. Tables 4 and 5 explore this issue by looking at the ties with other fellows projected by the presenters. It should be noted that the unit of analysis here is not the single act of mention but, rather, the interpersonal tie projected: for example, if SPS fellow n. 1 mentions ECO fellow n. 5 twice in the course of his presentation, one tie (not two) has been considered. To facilitate comparisons, the orientations of each discipline have been expressed both in terms of raw numbers and in terms of the percentage of fellows mentioned per discipline.

Table 4 presents the disciplinary orientations among the participants in the study when all five functional categories of individual mentions are taken into account; table 5, instead, those that emerge when only mentions explicitly aimed at affirming co-membership in a given group or establishing collaborative links are considered:

The data reveal that a tendency common to presenters in all four disciplines is a strong orientation towards members of their “own” discipline: this can be readily seen in both tables, where bold font has been used to highlight the diagonal containing the percentages in question. Mentions of audience members belonging to the same discipline range from 44.4 to 60% in Table 4 (all mentions) and from 61.5 to 72.7% in Table 5 (explicit bids for collaboration). There also appears to be some

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<sup>12</sup> The economists also often use category mentions to signal that they are addressing non-experts in the audience (paper in preparation).



TABLE 4. TIES PROJECTED BETWEEN PRESENTERS AND FELLOWS IN AUDIENCE, ALL 5 CATEGORIES OF MENTIONS (146 ACTS OF MENTION; 74 MENTIONERS; 79 FELLOWS MENTIONED IN TOTAL, OF WHOM 21 BY PRESENTERS FROM TWO OR MORE DISCIPLINES).

PRESENTER'S DISCIPLINE	DISCIPLINE OF AUDIENCE MEMBER MENTIONED								TOTAL TIES
	SPS		LAW		ECO		HIS		
	n.	%	n.	%	n.	%	n.	%	
SPS	25	<b>56.8</b>	5	11.4	44	13.6	8	18.2	44
LAW	5	29.4	10	<b>58.8</b>	17	5.9	1	5.9	17
ECO	7	38.9	--	--	18	<b>44.4</b>	3	16.7	18
HIS	5	25.0	3	15.0	20	--	12	<b>60.0</b>	20

TABLE 5. TIES PROJECTED BETWEEN PRESENTERS AND FELLOWS IN AUDIENCE THROUGH 'FISHING' AND 'CO-MEMBERSHIPING' MENTIONS ONLY (67 ACTS OF MENTION; 33 MENTIONERS, 56 FELLOWS MENTIONED, OF WHOM 6 BY PRESENTERS FROM TWO OR MORE DISCIPLINES).

PRESENTER'S DISCIPLINE	DISCIPLINE OF AUDIENCE MEMBER MENTIONED								TOTAL TIES
	SPS		LAW		ECO		HIS		
	n.	%	n.	%	n.	%	n.	%	
SPS	24	<b>61,5</b>	4	10,3	39	7,7	8	20,5	39
LAW	2	18,2	8	<b>72,7</b>	11	9,1	--	--	11
ECO	1	33,3	--	--	3	<b>66,7</b>	--	--	3
HIS	2	22,2	1	11,1	9	--	6	<b>66,7</b>	9

interest among the SPS fellows in collaborating with historians; a possible explanation may be a perception that the historical dimension can provide a complementary perspective on contemporary social phenomena. In addition, both tables suggest that political and social scientists exert a certain appeal to lawyers, economists and historians, although this observation should be treated as tentative, given the fact that in all four cohorts the SPS fellows were the most numerous.

The next section investigates to what extent the patterns of individual mention outlined in this and the preceding sections are reflected in actual research collaboration by the participants in this study, as documented by their responses to the post-programme questionnaire.

## 7. PATTERNS OF POST-PROGRAMME COLLABORATION

Does mentioning individual audience members make a difference in terms of subsequent research collaboration? Posing such a question implies assuming an “emergentist” perspective on the relationship between discourse practices and social



practices—in this case, on links between ways of doing oral presentations and ways of doing research. Once the question is posed, however, it becomes almost immediately evident that operationalizing it is not an easy matter. Does investigating the issue imply tracing the links between specific mentions of individual audience members and subsequent research collaborations between the presenter who made them and the scholar in question? Or are we interested, instead, in examining whether mentioning audience members by name predicts a general propensity towards collaborative research with other cohort members?

Were we to take the first approach to the data at hand, the answer is immediately apparent: of the vast majority of the mentions in the presentations, there is no trace in the questionnaire data. Vice versa, if we attempt to retrace specific research collaborations back to the presentations, the evidence is likewise slight—although we would find, for example, that four of the co-authoring relationships reported are foreshadowed by mentions by at least one of the co-authoring presenters. Establishing direct links between a single communicative event and structural characteristics of scholars' professional activity such as research collaboration is not, in short, a feasible endeavour.

It is more reasonable—and also more in line with our experience of everyday reality—to take the second approach, in which the relationship between discourse and social structure is viewed not as linear but rather as a question of “cumulative practice” (Knorr-Cetina and Cicourel; Krause). In this view, rather than direct links between acts of mention and research collaboration, what is of interest are possible correlations between an openness to further interaction with members of the audience, as manifested by mentioning audience members, and subsequent engagement in collaborative research. In the following analysis I pursue this line of inquiry by comparing post-programme collaboration by members of two groups—participants who mentioned audience members and participants who did not. To do so I draw on two central notions from network theory: intensity (also termed “strength” by some scholars) and density (Burt; Coromina et al.).

“Intensity,” in the network literature, is usually defined as the frequency of contacts between individuals. Here I operationalize it in terms of the three different levels of research collaboration investigated in the questionnaire: (a) co-authoring (high intensity); (b) participation in joint research (medium intensity); (c) other professional collaboration e.g. organising of conference panels, participation in workshops or teaching exchanges (low intensity). “Density,” succinctly put, is the extent to which individuals in a network are connected to other individuals in the network. I operationalize this parameter on the basis of how many other members of the cohort were mentioned as current research contacts by scholars responding to the questionnaire.

Table 6 presents the results of the analysis of the questionnaire responses in terms of intensity of research collaboration.<sup>13</sup> Individuals have been placed in the

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<sup>13</sup> 78 fellows out of 176 (44.3%) responded to the questionnaire. The responses received yielded collaboration data for 104 participants in the study (59.1%). Network analysts stress that every effort should be made to obtain data for all group members (Contractor and Su). Although in



TABLE 6. INTENSITY OF POST-PROGRAMME COLLABORATION, DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN FELLOWS WHO MENTIONED AUDIENCE MEMBERS ('MENTIONERS'; N = 53) AND THOSE WHO NOT ('NON-MENTIONERS'; N = 51) (N=104).

TYPE OF COLLABORATION		'MENTIONERS'		'NON-MENTIONERS'	
		n	%	n	%
(a)	co-authoring	12	22.6	7	13.7
(b)	joint research	8	15.1	7	13.7
(c)	other professional collaboration	8	15.1	6	11.8
(a-b-c)	<i>maintained research contact with one or more cohort members</i>	28	52.8	20	39.2
	generic (no individuals named)	2	3.8	2	3.9
	none (or question left in blank)	23	43.4	29	56.9
		53		51	

TABLE 7. NUMBER OF POST-PROGRAMME RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS OF FELLOWS WHO MAINTAINED RESEARCH CONTACTS, DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN THOSE WHO MENTIONED AUDIENCE MEMBERS ('MENTIONERS') AND THOSE WHO DID NOT ('NON-MENTIONERS') (N=48).

N. OF COLLABORATIONS MAINTAINED WITH COHORT MEMBERS	'MENTIONERS'		'NON-MENTIONERS'	
	n.	%	n.	%
with 1 other fellow	20	71.4	16	80
with 2 other fellows	5	17.9	3	15
with 3 other fellows	2	7.1	0	-
with 4 other fellows	0	-	0	-
with 5 other fellows	1	3.6	1	5

highest—i.e. most “intense”—category indicated in the responses received to the questionnaire: this means that those categorized as “co-authoring,” for example, may—and, indeed, often do—have other forms of research collaboration with the same or other cohort members:

The results show that fellows who mentioned audience members by name during their presentations are more likely to maintain post-programme research contacts with other scholars in their cohort (52,8% v. 39.2%); they also tend to

the present case this has not proved possible, the overall response rate is in line with rates typical for follow-up surveys in general, and can therefore be considered informative for comparative purposes. It is interesting to note that there was a noticeable difference in the response rate for mentioners (40 individuals out of 74; 54.1%) and non-mentioners (38 individuals out of 102; 37.3%). This difference suggests greater “programme loyalty” and, indirectly, a greater propensity to collaborate—among mentioners, and is thus in line with the overall questionnaire results.



collaborate more closely with the ex-colleagues with whom they have remained in contact (a + b: 37.7% of the “mentioners”; 27.4% of the “non-mentioners”).

Table 7, instead, presents the questionnaire results regarding the density of research collaborations, as measured by the number of research contacts maintained by those participants who collaborate with ex-colleagues. Although the difference between the two groups is less striking (for both “mentioners” and “non-mentioners,” collaborations were generally maintained with only one ex-colleague), there is a tendency for fellows who mentioned audience members in their presentations to maintain denser research networks: calculating density (following Burt 1983, cit. in Coromina et al. 2008: 54) as the ratio between the number of actual ties per cohort and possible ties per cohort, the contribution to the average network density per cohort (circa 0,90%) is 0,54% for “mentioners” and 0,36% for “non-mentioners.” To put this another way: “mentioners” participate in approximately 60% of the intra-cohort ties and “non-mentioners” in approximately 40%.

A final aspect of interest regards disciplinary patterns in post-programme collaboration. Here the questionnaire evidence confirms the tendency to orient towards one’s own discipline found in the oral presentation data. Both “mentioners” and “non-mentioners” prefer to collaborate with ex-colleagues from their own discipline. This is particularly true when co-authoring is involved: among the ex-fellows for whom post-programme collaboration data was received, there are only two cross-disciplinary authoring pairs (SPS-HIS and ECO-SPS).

## 8. CONSTRUCTING RESEARCH COLLABORATION FACE-TO-FACE: SOME PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study represents the first attempt (at least to my knowledge) to bring together insights from research on network theory and on writing for publication with the analysis of face-to-face interaction with a multidisciplinary audience. I have argued that the stated aims of the ad hoc genre investigated here, i.e. to facilitate research collaboration within groups of post doc fellows, make it a particularly useful locus in which to investigate informal processes in networking among academics. The operational assumption has been to consider mentions of individual audience members in oral presentations as potential ties between the speaker and the individual(s) mentioned. Starting from this premise, I have attempted to investigate connections between who speakers mention or address, patterns of disciplinary affinity, and functions to which individual mention is put. I have also tried to investigate what connections may be visible between social structure “writ small” (in the mentions in question) and social structure “writ large” (in subsequent patterns of research collaboration). In searching for these connections, I have tried to take into account the role of context, viewed not as a static determinant but as a resource upon which speakers draw and to which their talk actively contributes, using as my point of departure a research perspective in which socially-relevant phenomena (here, research collaboration) are viewed as the result of cumulative social practice.



As the original impetus behind the present study was an interest in scholarly publishing, in these brief concluding remarks I will first focus on the implications of the results for a better understanding of this aspect of scholarly activity. I will then briefly highlight the methodological contribution of the study and its implications for those involved in training for academic practice (e.g. EAP researchers and practitioners, PhD supervisors) and in promoting and supporting research collaboration on an institutional and inter-institutional level (e.g. project coordinators, programme administrators).

First of all, as regards our understanding of the dynamics of research collaboration and publishing, a common thread emerging from the analysis is that, at least at this point in their careers, the participants in the study are predominantly oriented towards establishing connections, whether substantive or simply phatic, with others working within their own discipline. These results are in line with studies comparing co-authoring by early and late-career scholars which indicate that co-authoring across disciplines is more common among the latter group (Wagner and Leydesdorff; Balakrishnan et al.). It has been claimed that such differences in co-authoring reflect the need among younger scholars to create a strong disciplinary identity and consolidate ties within their own fields conducive to career advancement; the results of the present investigation support this conclusion.

A second result that merits some reflection is how the patterns of mention of audience members by speakers belonging to different disciplines relate to disciplinary patterns in writing for publication attested in the literature. The tendencies that emerge for the social scientists and historians are in line with tendencies towards collaboration identified in the bibliometric and academic publishing literature on single and co-authorship—there is evidence of a strong “other-orientation” among the social scientists (for whom co-authorship is common) and of a low “other-orientation” among the historians (for whom single authorship is the norm). The current dearth of studies on co-authoring among legal scholars does not permit comparison of the results obtain. The patterns for individual mention found for the economists, instead, do not reflect trends documented in the publishing literature, which has repeatedly indicated co-authoring as routine. The divergent uses to which the economists in the sample put individual audience mentions—in particular, in order to deictically anchor examples designed to clarify their work to non-specialists in the audience—highlight how multidisciplinary settings can present very different affordances for networking to members of different disciplines

As concerns the methodological implications of the present study, these are closely linked to its applied aims, i.e. to provide insights useful for training for academic practice and for initiatives designed to support research collaboration. A key contribution of the analysis of the presentation data is the way in which it documents how dynamic aspects of the context—in the present case, at what point over the 5-6 day period a given fellow actually presents his/her work—influence the “opportunity structure” for establishing contacts and collaborations. The study clearly reveals how scholars who present earlier have more likelihood of being mentioned, while those who present later are able to draw on a richer shared context of reference. This finding has implications not only on a methodological level for



the analysis of institutional talk, but also in practical terms for those involved in organizing workshops and conferences, and—more generally—in coordinating research initiatives: deciding who is to speak when is not a logistic issue of secondary importance, but may have an impact on how future research collaborations develop. As far as training for academic practice is concerned, instead, the typology of the functions to which individual mention is put in the data and the examples provided will be of use to those involved in supporting early-career scholars in the development of the presentation skills necessary to network successfully, both with disciplinary peers and in multidisciplinary settings.

A final contribution of the study derives from the comparison of the analysis of individual mentions with the patterns of research collaboration documented by the post-programme questionnaire. Methodologically, by exposing some of the difficulties involved in addressing the gap between the meso-level of network studies and the micro-level of the analysis of face-to-face interaction, this comparison highlights some of the hurdles involved in attempting to bring the tools of network analysis to bear on conversational data. To more fully understand how scholars establish and maintain research collaborations, it would be useful to integrate the analysis presented here with information derived from interviews of the participants. Despite its limitations, the study nonetheless provides a nuanced, and hopefully more realistic, view of the range of factors that come into play in settings and in specific genres designed to foster interdisciplinary collaboration.

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