

"...and you'd said 'yes' cos you were enjoying the company" :problematic glossing in police interviews with women reporting rape.

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Abstract

Rape victims' experiences at the hands of the police and courts has been described variously as 'rape of the second kind' (Matoesian, 1993), 'secondary rape' (Anderson & Doherty, 2008), and 'judicial rape' (Lees, 1993). Drawing on a corpus of genuine police interviews with women reporting rape, I will focus on a number of linguistic resources drawn on by officers to (re)construct the events that are reported, and to exert their own influence over the final account – namely, the reproduction of elements of interviewees' talk. This is achieved either through reported speech - the practice of 'reporting...the words of other people' (Stokoe & Edwards, 2007: 338) – or through formulation, where a participant in a conversation takes the opportunity to 'describe that conversation, to explain it, or characterize it, or explicate, or translate, or summarize, or furnish the gist of it...' (Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970: 350). Far from fully and accurately representing the interviewees' stated position, 'final versions' often report only on those elements of the account deemed significant by the police. Since what is treated as significant in the treatment of rape cases in various institutions has repeatedly been shown to rely heavily on unsupported cultural assumptions about rape and its causes (e.g. Moore, 2009), these practices have serious implications for both the quality of the evidence gathered and for victim care.

References

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