

John Benjamins Publishing Company



This is a contribution from *Handbook of Pragmatics* compiled by Jef Verschueren and Jan-Ola Östman

© 2006. John Benjamins Publishing Company

This electronic file may not be altered in any way.

The author(s) of this article is/are permitted to use this PDF file to generate printed copies to be used by way of offprints, for their personal use only.

Permission is granted by the publishers to post this file on a closed server which is accessible to members (students and staff) only of the author's/s' institute.

For any other use of this material prior written permission should be obtained from the publishers or through the Copyright Clearance Center (for USA: www.copyright.com).

Please contact rights@benjamins.nl or consult our website: www.benjamins.com

Tables of Contents, abstracts and guidelines are available at www.benjamins.com

CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

Rebecca Clift, Paul Drew and Ian Hutchby

1. Introduction

Conversation analysis (CA) has come to be the recognised term for what is in fact the study of talk-in-interaction (henceforth ‘talk’) in general; while it is not restricted to the study of conversation, it recognises that ordinary conversation is the basic environment for language use. In studying conversation and its adaptations, CA contributes to the development of a naturalistic, observation-based empirical science of actual verbal behavior alongside work in related fields within pragmatics (e.g., sociolinguistics and discourse analysis). What makes this approach distinctive is both its analytical focus and its treatment of interactional data. The focus of CA research is talk as a vehicle for action and its concern with how participants collaborate in constructing recognisable and coherent courses of action. To that end, recordings of naturally-occurring interaction are transcribed in such a way as to capture the temporal production of utterances in turns-at-talk and thus make available for analysis how participants understand and respond to one another. We shall see in due course a sample of data transcribed according to conversation analytic conventions and establish what this transcription makes possible, but we first turn to its emergence as a distinct field of inquiry.

2. Origins and overview

Conversation analysis emerged in the pioneering researches of Harvey Sacks into the structural organization of everyday language use, at the University of California

in the early 1960s (Sacks 1992). Influenced both by ethnomethodological concerns with members' methods of practical reasoning (through an early association with Harold Garfinkel; see Garfinkel 1967), and by Erving Goffman's explorations of the structural properties of face-to-face interaction (Goffman 1963, 1964), Sacks initiated a radical research programme designed to investigate the levels of social order which could be revealed in the everyday practice of talking.

The hypothesis with which this programme was begun — that ordinary conversation may be a deeply ordered, structurally organized phenomenon — could best be explored, Sacks reasoned, through the use of recorded naturally-occurring data which could be looked at repeatedly. Initially, Sacks worked on whatever data were available to him: principally recordings of calls to a Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Center. While retaining his sensitivity to the troubles of the persons whose talk he was studying, Sacks began to develop a unique approach to the study of ordinary language, which focused on the 'machinery' of conversational turn-taking — the methods by which persons concertedly manage the routine exchange of turns while minimizing gap and overlap between them — and on the sequential patterns and structures associated with the management of social activities in conversation (see Sacks, 1992). Because he had access to a whole corpus of phone calls, Sacks was able to show that the activities he was investigating were accomplished in systematic and methodical ways across several calls, irrespective of the personal characteristics or individual histories of the participants involved. As these researches progressed, and through his collaboration with colleagues Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson, the available data were supplemented with expanding corpora of more 'mundane' telephone calls; and the exploratory research was refined and developed. Their landmark paper on turn-taking in conversation (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974) is notable for being the first study of language to put participants' own displayed understandings in interaction at the centre of the analysis; the units of analysis are taken to be those that the participants themselves are observed to be using, rather than any abstraction or grammatically defined entity, such as the sentence or clause. This focus on turns and the management of turn exchange has laid the groundwork for two distinct but related lines of investigation, firstly into the structural organization of talk, and secondly, investigation of the distinctive methods of turn-taking and activity organization found in the

specialized settings of institutional talk. We now examine these two lines of investigation in turn.

Research into the structural organization of talk encompasses both the mechanisms through which talk is accomplished and the actions and activities prosecuted by means of the talk itself. We now have compelling accounts of sequence organization (Schegloff, 1990, 2006), structural organizations in overlapping talk (Jefferson, 1986, Schegloff, 2000), repair (Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks, 1977, Schegloff, 1979, 1992, 1997, Drew, 1997), and preference organization (Pomerantz, 1984, Schegloff, 1988a). The actions analyzed in talk have included the familiar, such as greetings (Schegloff, 1986), invitations (Drew, 1984), complaints (Drew and Holt, 1998, Drew, 1998), teases (Drew, 1987), questions (Koshik, 2005), answers (Raymond, 2003), anticipatory completions (Lerner, 1996) and agreements and disagreements (Pomerantz, 1984, Heritage, 2002), as well as the less so, such as preliminaries of various kinds (Terasaki 1976; Schegloff 1980, 1988b), and even the hitherto unidentified, such as confirming allusions (Schegloff, 1996) or asserting epistemic priority (Heritage and Raymond, 2005, Stivers, 2005). Alongside these has been research into activities, or a series of connected actions managed over a sequence, such as storytelling (Jefferson 1978, Lerner 1992) and topic shift (Jefferson, 1984a, 1993, Drew and Holt, 1998, Holt and Drew, 2005). This structural investigation of talk has imported a rigorously empirical methodology to traditional areas of linguistic inquiry (see Clift, 2005 for an overview). So CA work on such items as *oh* (Heritage, 1984, 1998, 2002), *well* (Pomerantz, 1984), *actually* (Clift, 2001) and *so* (Raymond, 2004) addresses issues relevant to lexical semantics; and research on turn-taking has been integrated with work on prosody (see Local and Kelly, 1986, Couper-Kuhlen, 2001, Local and Walker, 2004, Local, 2005, and the collection in Couper-Kuhlen and Selting, 1996, and Couper-Kuhlen and Ford, 2004) as well as syntax (see, e.g. Lerner, 1991, Ono and Thompson, 1996, and the collections in Ochs et. al, 1996, and Ford et. al 2002). Yet it is also evident that the study of naturally-occurring interaction necessitates reference to domains broader than those of traditional linguistics. There has, for example, been extensive work on non-lexical response tokens such as *Uh huh* (Schegloff 1981), laughter (Jefferson, 1984b, Jefferson, Sacks & Schegloff 1987), *Mm* (Gardner 1997) and the expression of surprise (Kitzinger and Wilkinson, 2005). And work on membership

categorization (see, e.g. Kitzinger, 2005, Zimmerman, 1998), beyond the realm of the solely linguistic, returns to one of Sacks's earliest preoccupations (Sacks, 1992). In addition, conversation analytic work has expanded beyond the domain of telephone interactions, which represented a propitious starting point for the analysis of talk-in-interaction precisely because of the lack of possibly 'complicating' visual and gestural contact between participants, to study video recordings of interactions with the aim of analyzing the integration of speech with non-vocal activities. This has revealed further ways in which participants may mobilize a range of resources – both linguistic and non-linguistic – in the service of interaction (Charles Goodwin 1981, 2000). Indeed, in cases where language is impaired, as in cases of aphasia (Charles Goodwin, 1995, the collection in Goodwin, 2003), or yet to develop, as in young children (Lerner and Zimmerman, 2003), the study of video materials is essential.

That the preponderance of conversation analytic work has been with English materials should not go unremarked. This is, of course, a function of its origins. However, there is an increasing diversity of research on languages as varied as Thai (Moerman, 1988), Swedish (Lindström, 1994), Dutch (Mazeland and Huiskes, 2001) Finnish (Sorjonen, 1996, 2002, Ogden, 2004), German (Egbert, 1997a,b), Mandarin (Wu, 2004), Japanese (Hayashi, 1999, Hayashi et al. 2002, Lerner & Takagi, 1999, Tanaka 1999), and Korean (Kim, 1999, Park, 1998).

The central focus of conversation analytic work – to identify the generic practices of talk and develop the tools for analyzing them – has emerged from its engagement with the materials of mundane conversation. Yet, as Sacks's early work on helpline calls indicates, conversation analysts have, from the earliest days, worked on interactional materials from institutional settings, and it is research on institutional talk which forms the other main line of investigation in CA research. We now have accounts of interactions in courts of law (Atkinson and Drew, 1979, Maynard, 1984), classrooms (Mehan, 1979, Lerner, 1995), public speeches (Atkinson, 1984), broadcast news interviews (Clayman and Heritage, 2002), calls to the emergency services (Zimmerman, 1992), and medical interaction (Stivers and Heritage, 2001, see the collection in Heritage & Maynard, 2006) amongst others; for an overview, see the introduction in Drew and Heritage (1992) and

the collection therein. CA has also been used within a broader ethnographic framework by anthropologists such as Moerman (1988) and Marjorie H. Goodwin (1990, 2002).

In all these applications, CA research aims to reveal how the technical aspects of speech exchange are the structured, socially organized resources by which participants perform and co-ordinate activities through talking-in-interaction. Talk is treated as a vehicle for social action; and also as a principal means by which social organization in person-to-person interaction is mutually constructed and sustained. Hence it is a strategic site in which social agents' orientation to and evocation of the social contexts of their interaction can empirically and rigorously be investigated.

3. Data, transcription and analysis

Conversation analysis focuses its attention on recordings of actual spates of talk-in-interaction. These are transcribed using a system which is intended to capture in fine detail the *temporal* production of talk; in other words, the characteristics of the *sequencing* of turns, including gaps, pauses and overlaps; and elements of *speech delivery* such as audible breath and laughter, stress, enunciation, intonation and pitch, all of which have been shown to have interactional import. The transcription system of course is a selective system: it does not capture — nor does it claim to capture — all the possible distinctions that any recording of talk might yield. Rather, transcripts aim to provide a detailed but accessible rendering of those features that, for CA researchers, prove to be the most relevant for analyzing the methods by which participants concertedly accomplish orderly and intelligible social interaction. An important methodological upshot is of course transparency: transcripts are available for inspection alongside the analyses themselves.

The following extract, taken from a recording of a telephone call between two middle-aged, middle class American women, is representative of the kind of transcripts with which conversation analysts work.

(1) **NB: II:2:1-2**

1. Nancy: Hello:,
2. Edna: .hh HI::.
3. (.)
4. Nancy: Oh: 'i::='ow a:re you Edna:,
5. Edna: FI:NE yer LINE'S BEEN BUSY.
6. Nancy: Yea:h (.) my u-fuhh! h- .hhhh my fa:ther's wife
7. ca:lled me,h .hhh So when she ca:lls me::,h I
8. always talk fer a lo:ng ti:me cuz she c'n afford it
9. en I ca:n't.hhh_rhhhh_rhuh_r
10. Edna: L^OH:L:::J: my rgo:sh=Ah †th_raht=
11. Nancy: L†AOO:::::hh!J
12. Edna: =my phone wuz outta order:
13. (0.2)
14. Nancy: n_r:No:::?
15. Edna: LI called my sister en I get this busy en then I'd
16. hang up en I'd lift it up again id be: busy.
17. (0.9)
18. Edna: .hh How you doin'.
19. Nancy: .t hhh Pretty good I gutta rai:se.h .hh_rhh
20. Edna: LGoo:urd.
21. Nancy: LYeh
22. two dollars a week.h
23. (.)
24. Edna: Oh rwo:w.
25. Nancy: L†Ih:::huh hu_r:h huh,
26. Edna: LWudee gun: do with it a:ll.
27. Nancy: Gol' I rilly I jis' don't know Ah'm gunnuh
28. spend all that money
29. (0.2)
30. Edna: Y'oughta go sho:pping,
31. Nancy: .hhhh Well I should but (.) yihknow et eight
32. dollars a mo:n:th:, anything I'd_r buy'd, be using=
33. Edna: Lhm hmm hm-mm-hm. J
34. Nancy: =up my raise fer 'alf ra YEA:R:† ((smile voice))
35. Edna: LYe:a:h. J
36. Edna: .hhhhh Bud j's lef' t' play go:lf he's gotta go tuh
37. Riverside

This transcript shows a number of relevant features of the socially organized nature of talk-in-interaction. At the most basic level, it is designed to display how the talk is organized into a series of turns. For conversation analysis, however, turns are not just serially organized but are sequentially organized (Sacks 1987). That is to say, there are describable loci of order relating one turn to a next; and coordinating them into patterned sequences through which particular activities are accomplished. Those loci of order are found by treating the transitions between turns as revealing two kinds of things. First, 'next turn' is the place in which speakers display their understanding of a prior turn's possible completion; and second, next turns are places where speakers display their understanding of a prior turn's 'content', or more specifically, the action it has been designed to do.

In terms of the first issue, empirical observation shows that overwhelmingly, turn-transitions are coordinated by participants with no or minimal gap and overlap between turns. Note in the transcript above, for instance, that only four between-turn gaps occur, and the longest of these is no more than two-tenths of a second, showing participants' orientations to the projectability of turns. (We return to the issue of overlaps presently.) Sacks et al. (1974) proposed that turns are made up of turn-constructual units (TCUs) — examples are: a sentence, a clause, a phrase, or a single word such as *Hello* — which are recognizable by members as meaningful units. The end of any TCU represents a point at which a next speaker may legitimately make a bid for the floor: Sacks et al. captured this feature by referring to TCUs as presenting transition-relevance places (TRPs) at their completion. At a TRP a candidate next speaker may, but need not, attempt to take a turn; while a current speaker may, but need not, attempt to produce a next TCU. Current speakers may also select a next speaker, in which case the one selected is obliged to take a turn at that point. These rules for turn-taking are context-free: that is, they allow for such local contextual variations as the identities and number of speakers, length and content of turns, and so on. But they are also context-sensitive in that they apply to the local circumstances of particular turns in particular conversations.

The crucial point about these rules is that they are observably oriented to by members. An orientation to the possible completion of a turn at TCU completion, and the legitimate relevance of turn-transition at that point, can be illustrated using the extract above if we focus on the occurrence of overlap. On the face of it overlapping talk may be considered evidence of an incoming speaker's failure adequately to attend to the status of a current speaker's turn. However, we can notice that most

instances of overlap in Extract 1 (marked with left brackets [for onset and right brackets] for cessation) clearly occur in the environment of TRPs (see Jefferson 1986). For instance, at line 9 what Edna's *OH:::::* overlaps is a quiet laugh particle, *hhh hhh huh*, which Nancy fits onto the end of a TCU: *So when she calls me::, h I always talk fer a lo:ng ti:me cuz she c'n afford it en I ca:n't*. At line 21, what Nancy overlaps is the last phoneme of a recognizable TCU: Edna's assessment, *Goo:ud*, to Nancy's announcement *I gutta rai:se*.

Other instances appear more complex, but can still be accounted for as orderly. For instance at line 11, Nancy's *AOO:::::hh!* is a high-pitched laugh (or hoot), which seems to be produced in overlap with — but prior to the recognizable completion of — Edna's remark that she thought her phone was out of order (since she had tried numerous times to get through). However, notice that in her immediately prior turn Nancy had offered a joke of sorts about talking on the phone for a long time when her *fa:ther's wife* calls, *cuz she c'n afford it en I ca:n't*. She then begins quietly to laugh. Edna's turn is begun with a loud, and high-pitched *OH::::: my gosh*, to which Nancy responds with her similarly-pitched *AOO:::::hh!* We can say then that Nancy hears the action that Edna is doing as that of responding to her joke, and starts to laugh by reference to *OH::::: my gosh* as a recognizable, and possibly complete, joke-response. The overlap is 'complicated' by Edna's carrying on her turn, following up Nancy's quip by herself quipping about the length of time Nancy's phone has been engaged: *OH::::: my gosh=Ah thaht my phone wuz outta order*.

Focusing on this instance of overlap, and wondering why it occurs in the place it does, allows us to illustrate a principal policy of conversation analysis, and to suggest the analytical pay-off from that policy. The policy is to treat anything that occurs in talk-in-interaction as possibly orderly — to dismiss no detail a priori as disorderly, trivial, or irrelevant. The pay-off is that we thereby gain an insight into the nature of participants' own understandings of what is going on at any moment in interaction, as displayed in the ways their turns address the turns they are sequentially 'next' to.

4. Exhibiting an understanding in next turn

CA's interest in how the sequential organization of talk can be used to reveal the ways participants exhibit understanding of one another's utterances can be

illustrated further with the use of data from the second half of extract (1). In line 19, Nancy announces that she *gutta rai:se*. By the end of the extract, it is evident that the raise has been presented as, and understood to be, a *lousy raise*: that Nancy is dissatisfied with the raise; the raise, in brief, was hardly worth getting. However, none of these things are said outright. The presentation of the raise as a *lousy raise* is achieved entirely *indirectly*. A central resource used by Nancy here is that of irony. What is interesting to note is the way that ironical complaint, and its uptake, emerge in the course of a sequence of talk in which Edna's understanding of the meaning of Nancy's talk is observably modified.

The sequence begins at line 18, when Edna inquires, *How you doin'*. This inquiry reciprocates Nancy's earlier *'ow a:re you Edna:* (line 4); the intervening 13 lines having been taken up with the talk occasioned by Edna's remark *yer LINE's BEEN BUSY*, which we focused on above.

In line 21, Nancy's response to Edna's inquiry begins: *Pretty good*. A first thing to note is that *Pretty good* is a different kind of response from a *How are you*-type inquiry to the response that Edna had given earlier — i.e., *FI:NE*. *Fine* represents the conventional response to *How are you* (Sacks 1975); it is a *no problem* response. *Pretty good*, on the other hand, represents a 'downgraded conventional response': although it appears very similar to *Fine*, one kind of work which *Pretty good* does that *Fine* does not do is to adumbrate 'bad news' (Jefferson 1980). Basically, if a speaker has some bad news to report or some trouble to tell, it appears they will use *Pretty good* in this sequential environment in order to set up a trajectory in which the trouble might be elaborated on; by contrast, use of *Fine* in this position, although it may be followed by news of some sort, is specifically not followed by bad news.

Adumbrating bad news, then, is a potential property of a *Pretty good* response to *How are you*: potential in that bad news may or may not follow, and may or may not be told (for instance, Jefferson 1980 analyzes cases in which the troubles talk adumbrated by a *Pretty good* response at the beginning of a conversation in fact does not emerge until some minutes into that conversation). This potentiality makes it a perfect kind of resource for Nancy to engage in complaining about her raise ironically, and hence indirectly. The first mention of the raise immediately follows the *Pretty good* response; and itself takes the form of a straightforward, unelaborated announcement: *I gutta rai:se*. At this stage, then, the news that is being offered is, it appears, good news. And indeed, it appears that Edna understands that to be the case, as exhibited in her response in line 20: *Goo:ud*.

It is only in the next two turns (lines 21–24) that the sense of Nancy’s news being ‘not so good’ in fact emerges. But notice that there is nothing in Nancy’s next turn itself — *Yeh two dollars a week* — which overtly suggests that Edna may need to revise her initial understanding of the news. She does not contest Edna’s congratulatory reaction, for instance by saying, *It’s not that good* — it’s only two dollars a week’. Rather, her turn begins with an affirmation, *Yeh*, and then goes on simply to name the amount. In other words, the turn does the work of ironicizing the news implicitly: it is left up to Edna to recognize the significance of *two dollars a week*, and so to detect the irony in Nancy’s talk. Edna’s reinterpretation of the announcement appears in the next turn, line 24. Notice that while her initial reaction, *Goo:ud*, was fitted to the form of the announcement as ‘good news’, this second reaction, a downward-intoned *Oh wo:w*. (the period marking the downward inflection), equally is fitted to the revised status of the news following Nancy’s naming of the tiny sum involved. The fact that the turn begins with *Oh* is significant here. The marker *Oh* routinely performs the interactional work of displaying that its producer has undergone some ‘change of state’ in their knowledge (Heritage 1984). Thus Edna’s use of the item here connects with the way she is exhibiting a new understanding of her coparticipant’s talk. More importantly, the particular kind of new understanding being exhibited is marked in the enunciation of the *wo:w*. itself. The downward inflection on *wo:w* marks the ‘bad news’ — or perhaps more accurately, ‘no news’ — status to be accorded the raise, just as an alternative, upward and animated inflection (*Oh wow!*) would mark the news as something quite different.

Following that, and Nancy’s burst of laughter in line 25, Edna works to sustain the joke about the paltriness of the raise by asking, ironically, *Wudee gun:do with it a:ll* (line 26) and suggesting that Nancy *oughta go sho:pping* (line 30). Nancy’s responses to these turns — especially the heavily ironic *Gol- I rilly I jis don’t know how Ah’m gunnuh spend all that money* (lines 27–28), in sustaining the irony, work to display to Edna that her revised understanding in fact is the correct one.

These brief remarks on the interactional accomplishment of irony illustrate how ‘next position’ can be treated as a systematic locus in which participants in talk-in-interaction use essentially local interpretive resources to establish and maintain a shared orientation on salient aspects of social reality. Furthermore, by focusing on the sequential emergence of irony in this instance, we have illustrated another central issue in CA: that of the relationship between particular social actions and

the sequential resources by which they are accomplished. As Schegloff has noted, ‘...both *position* and *composition* are ordinarily constitutive of the sense and import of an element of conduct that embodies some phenomenon or practice’ (1993:121). Our observations on the ironical form and ironical uptake of Nancy’s complaint show how indirect actions such as ironical reference are not simply properties of individual speech acts but are situated features of interaction, achieved in local space and real time (Schegloff 1988b).

5. Conditional relevance of next position

Next position can also be a place in which specific interactional constraints are operative. Certain categories of utterance make relevant a circumscribed class of responses in next position. Canonical examples are: a question, which makes an answer relevant as the next move; a greeting, which makes a return greeting relevant in next turn; an invitation, which makes an acceptance or declination relevant in next position; or an accusation, which makes a rebuttal or justification relevant next. These are all representative of types of *adjacency pairs*: one of the central concepts in CA research.

The concept of the adjacency pair illustrates the way in which particular types of utterance can be made conditionally relevant by prior turns. The production of a first pair-part, such as a greeting, sets up a constraint that a next selected speaker should follow directly by producing the relevant second pair-part — in this case, a return greeting. Moreover, whatever does follow a first pair-part will be monitored for exactly how it works as a response to that move. By saying that a second pair-part is conditionally relevant given a first, conversation analysts are pointing to the normative character of the adjacency pair relationship. The normative constraint is strong on two levels. First, motivational inferences can be drawn from the non-occurrence of a second part following the production of a first. For instance, not returning a greeting may be taken as a sign of rudeness; not providing an answer to a question may be taken as indicative of evasiveness; while not proffering a defence to an accusation may be taken as a tacit admission of guilt.

Second, the oriented-to relevance of second parts following the production of a first can remain in play across time: it is not limited to cases of literal adjacency. Thus, instances in which, say, a question is followed by another question,

rather than an answer, may seem to militate against the force of the adjacency pair concept. But such cases in fact can quite strongly display the temporally extendible relevance of the adjacency pair framework, once we see that the second question routinely represents a first move in an insertion sequence (Levinson 1983: 304–306; Schegloff 1990). Insertion sequences defer a second pair-part's production, but they do not negate its relevance. A speaker may respond to a question such as, *Can I borrow the car?* with another question: *How long do you need it?* The response to that inserted question — say, *Only a couple of hours* — provides a next slot in which a response to the first question is relevant and can be monitored for.

Another aspect of the normative properties of adjacency pairs lies in the systematically different ways that recipients of first parts design the alternative actions to be done in second position. Invitations, for instance, can be accepted or declined; requests can be granted or rejected. These alternatives are non-equivalent. That non-equivalence is traced in the features of turn design through which alternative second parts are proffered. Broadly, responses which agree or are congruent with the expectation projected by a first pair-part are produced contiguously and without mitigation. Responses which diverge from that expectation — which in some way disagree — tend to be prefaced by hesitations, discourse markers such as *Well...*, and, unlike congruent responses, are accompanied by accounts for why the speaker is responding in this way (Pomerantz 1984; Sacks 1987; Schegloff 1988b).

These different response types are termed preferred and dispreferred respectively. The concept of preference in CA is not used to refer to the psychological dispositions or motives of individuals; but to point to just this structural feature of the sequential organization of some types of adjacency pair. Research has shown that the design features of dispreferred responses can be used as a resource for the maintenance of social solidarity in talk-in-interaction. This is so not only in the way that dispreferred responses may be accompanied by accounts or explanations; but also in the way that hesitations and other means of 'marking' a dispreferred response can provide a source for a first speaker to revise the original first pair-part in such a way as to try and avoid disagreement or rejection (Davidson 1984).

These points bring out again the centrality, for CA, of the inferential properties that attach to speakers' moves in interaction sequences. They also address the ways that those inferences have a distinctly moral, or evaluative, dimension. Speakers can be seen not only to be establishing and maintaining mutual understanding of one another's actions in sequences of talk, but also to be holding each

other accountable for those actions. In this sense the adjacency pair framework, and the preference organization that operates for some types of adjacency pair, constitute an important site in which to observe the relationships between patterns of language use and structures of social action.

6. Conclusions

We have stressed two principal areas of analytic concern in conversation analysis: ‘position and composition’, or the relationship between turns at talk in specific sequences, and the design features of individual turns within sequences. Of course, other subfields within or related to the pragmatics tradition have been interested in these ‘syntagmatic’ and ‘paradigmatic’ dimensions of language use. Central to the originality of CA is the fact that it is not primarily interested in one or other of these elements, but specifically in the interrelationships between them. This is what has made conversation analytic insights so valuable to linguists, sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, and indeed all those interested in social interaction; through exploring these relationships, CA reveals an institutionalized substratum of rules and procedures by reference to which conversationalists engage in recognizable, coherent and accountable interaction. And this is a form of social organization which is at the heart of the pragmatic enterprise: the description of language as a vehicle of social action.

References

- ATKINSON, J. M. (1984) *Our masters' voices*. Methuen.
- ATKINSON, J. M. & P. DREW (1979) *Order in court*. Macmillan.
- ATKINSON, J. M. & J. HERITAGE (eds.) (1984) *Structures of social action*. Cambridge University Press.
- BUTTON, G. & J. R. E. LEE (eds.) (1987) *Talk and social organization*. Multilingual Matters.
- CLAYMAN, S. & J. HERITAGE (2002) *The News Interview: Journalists and Public Figures on the Air*. Cambridge University Press.
- CLIFT, R. (2001) Meaning in interaction: The case of “actually”. *Language* 77: 245–291.
- (2005) Discovering order. *Lingua* 115: 1641–1665.
- COUPER-KUHLEN, E. (2001) Interactional prosody: High onsets in reason-for-the-call turns. *Language in Society* 30: 29–53.

- COUPER-KUHLEN, E. & M. SELTING (eds.) (1996) *Prosody in conversation: Interactional Studies*. Cambridge University Press.
- COUPER-KUHLEN, E. & C. E. FORD (eds.) (2004) *Sound Patterns in Interaction*. Benjamins.
- DAVIDSON, J. (1984) Subsequent versions of invitations, offers, requests and proposals dealing with potential or actual rejection. In J. M. Atkinson & J. Heritage (eds.): 102–128.
- DREW, P. (1984) Speakers' reportings in invitation sequences. In J. M. Atkinson & J. Heritage (eds.): 129–151.
- (1987) Po-faced receipts of teases. *Linguistics* 25: 219–253.
- (1997) 'Open' class repair initiators in response to sequential sources of troubles in conversation. *Journal of Pragmatics* 28: 69–101.
- (1998) Complaints about transgressions and misconduct. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 31: 295–325.
- DREW, P. & J. HERITAGE (1992) *Talk at work*. Cambridge University Press.
- DREW, P. & E. HOLT (1988) Complainable matters: The use of idiomatic expressions in making complaints. *Social Problems* 35: 398–417.
- (1998) Figures of speech: Figurative expressions and the management of topic transition in conversation. *Language in Society* 27: 495–522.
- EGBERT, M. (1997a) Schisming: The collaborative transformation from a single conversation to multiple conversations. *Language in Society* 25: 587–612.
- (1997b) Some interactional achievements of other-initiated repair in multi-person conversations. *Journal of Pragmatics* 27:611–634.
- FORD, C. E., B. A. FOX & S. A. THOMPSON (eds.) (2002) *The Language of Turn and Sequence*. Oxford University Press.
- GARDNER, R. (1997) The conversation object Mm: a weak and variable acknowledging token. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 30: 131–156.
- GARFINKEL, H. (1967) *Studies in ethnomethodology*. Prentice-Hall.
- GOFFMAN, E. (1963) *Behavior in public places*. Free Press.
- (1964) The neglected situation. *American Anthropologist* 66: 133–136.
- GOODWIN, C. (1981) *Conversational organization*. Academic Press.
- (1995) Co-constructing meaning in conversations with an aphasic man. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 28: 233–260.
- (2000) Action and embodiment within situated human interaction. *Journal of Pragmatics* 32: 1489–1522.
- (ed.) (2003) *Conversation and Brain Damage*. Oxford University Press.
- GOODWIN, M. H. (1990) *He-said-she-said*. Indiana University Press.
- (2002) Building power asymmetries in girls' interaction. *Discourse & Society* 13: 715–30.
- GREATBATCH, D. (1988) A turn-taking system for British news interviews. *Language In Society* 17: 401–430.
- HAYASHI, M. (1999) Where grammar and interaction meet: A study of co-participant completion in Japanese conversation. *Human Studies* 22: 475–499.
- HAYASHI, M., J. MORI & T. TAKAGI (2002) Contingent achievement of co-tellership in a Japanese conversation. In C. E. Ford, B. A. Fox & S. A. Thompson (eds.): 81–122.
- HERITAGE, J. (1984) A change-of-state token and aspects of its sequential placement. In J. M. Atkinson & J. Heritage (eds.): 299–345.
- (1998) *Oh*-prefaced responses to inquiry. *Language in Society* 27: 291–334.

- (2002) “Oh”-prefaced responses to assessments: A method of modifying agreement/disagreement. In C. E. Ford, B. A. Fox & S. A. Thompson (eds.): 196–224.
- HERITAGE, J. & G. RAYMOND (2005) The terms of agreement: Indexing epistemic authority and subordination in talk-in-interaction. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 68:15–38.
- HERITAGE, J. & D. MAYNARD (eds.) (2006) *Communication in Medical Care: Interaction between Primary Care Physicians and Patients*. Cambridge University Press.
- HOLT, E. & P. DREW (2005) Figurative pivots: The use of figurative expressions in pivotal topic transitions. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 38: 35–61.
- JEFFERSON, G. (1978) Sequential aspects of storytelling in conversation. In J. Schenkein (ed.) *Studies in the organization of conversational interaction*: 219–248. Academic Press.
- (1980) On trouble-premonitory response to inquiry. *Sociological Inquiry* 50: 153–185.
- (1984a) On stepwise transition from talk about a trouble to inappropriately next-positioned matters. In J. M. Atkinson & J. Heritage (eds.): 191–222.
- (1984b) On the organization of laughter in talk about troubles. In J. M. Atkinson & J. Heritage (eds): 346–369. Cambridge University Press.
- (1986) Notes on latency in overlap onset. *Human Studies* 9: 153–183.
- (1993) Caveat speaker: Preliminary notes on recipient topic-shift implicature. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 26: 1–30.
- JEFFERSON, G., H. SACKS & E. A. SCHEGLOFF (1987) Notes on laughter in pursuit of intimacy. In G. Button & J. R. E. Lee (eds.): 152–205.
- KIM, K. (1999) Other-initiated repair sequences in Korean conversation as interactional resources. *Japanese/Korean Linguistics* 3: 3–18.
- KITZINGER, C. (2005) Heteronormativity in action: Reproducing the heterosexual nuclear family in after-hours medical calls. *Social Problems* 52: 477–498.
- KITZINGER, C. & S. WILKINSON (2006) Surprise as an interactional achievement: Reaction tokens in conversation. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 69: 150–182.
- KOSHIK, I. (2005) *Beyond Rhetorical Questions: Assertive Questions in Everyday Interaction*. John Benjamins.
- LERNER, G. H. (1991) On the syntax of sentences-in-progress. *Language in Society* 20: 441–458.
- (1992) Assisted storytelling: deploying shared knowledge as a practical matter. *Qualitative Sociology* 15: 247–271.
- (1995) Turn design and the organization of participation in instructional activities. *Discourse Processes* 19: 111–131.
- (1996) On the “semi-permeable” character of grammatical units in conversation: conditional entry into the turn space of another speaker. In Ochs et. al (eds.): 238–276.
- LERNER, G. H. & T. TAKAGI (1999) On the place of linguistic resources in the organization of talk-in-interaction: A co-investigation of English and Japanese grammatical practices. *Journal of Pragmatics* 30: 49–75.
- LERNER, G. H. & D. H. ZIMMERMAN (2003) Action and the appearance of action in the conduct of very young children. In P. Glenn, C. D. LeBaron & J. Mandelbaum (eds.): *Studies in Language and Social Interaction: In honor of Robert Hopper*: 441–457. Lawrence Erlbaum.
- LEVINSON, S. C. (1983) *Pragmatics*. Cambridge University Press.
- LINDSTRÖM, A. (1994) Identification and recognition in Swedish telephone conversation openings. *Language in Society* 23: 231–252.

- LOCAL, J. (2005) On the interactional and phonetic design of collaborative completions. In W. Hardcastle & J. Beck (eds.) *A Figure of Speech: a Festschrift for John Laver*: 263–282. Lawrence Erlbaum.
- LOCAL, J. & J. KELLY (1986) Projection and “silences”: Notes on phonetic and conversational structure. *Human Studies* 9: 185–204.
- LOCAL, J. & G. WALKER (2004) Abrupt-joins as a resource for the production of multi-unit, multi-action turns. *Journal of Pragmatics* 36:1375–1403.
- MAYNARD, D. (1984) *Inside plea bargaining*. Plenum.
- MAZELAND, H. & M. HUISKES (2001) Dutch ‘But’ as a sequential conjunction: Its use as a resumption marker. In M. Selting & E. Couper-Kuhlen (eds.) *Studies in Interactional Linguistics*: 141–169. John Benjamins.
- MEHAN, H. (1979) *Learning lessons*. Harvard University Press.
- MOERMAN, M. (1988) *Talking culture*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- OCHS, E., E. A. SCHEGLOFF & S. A. THOMPSON (eds.) (1996) *Interaction and Grammar*. Cambridge University Press.
- OGDEN, R. (2004) Non-modal voice quality and turn-taking in Finnish. In E. Couper-Kuhlen & C. E. Ford (eds.): 29–62. Benjamins.
- ONO, T. & S. THOMPSON (1996) Interaction and syntax in the structure of conversational discourse. In E. Hovy & D. Scott (eds.) *Discourse processing: An interdisciplinary perspective*: 67–96. Springer Verlag.
- PARK, Y. -Y. (1998) A discourse analysis of contrasting connectives in English, Korean and Japanese conversation: With special reference to the context of dispreferred responses. In A. Jucker & Y. Ziv (eds.): 277–300. John Benjamins.
- POMERANTZ, A. (1984) Agreeing and disagreeing with assessments. In J. M. Atkinson & J. Heritage (eds.): 57–101.
- RAYMOND, G. (2003) Grammar and social organization: Yes/no type interrogatives and the structure of responding. *American Sociological Review* 68: 939–967.
- (2004) Prompting action: The stand-alone “so” in ordinary conversation. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 37: 185–218.
- SACKS, H. (1987) On the preferences for agreement and contiguity in sequences in conversation. In G. Button & J. R. E. Lee (eds.): 54–69.
- (1992) *Lectures on conversation*, 2 vols. Blackwell.
- SACKS, H., E. A. SCHEGLOFF & G. JEFFERSON (1974) A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation. *Language* 50: 696–735.
- SCHEGLOFF, E. A. (1979) The relevance of repair to syntax-for-conversation. In T. Givón (ed.) *Syntax and semantics, volume 12: Discourse and Syntax*: 261–286. Academic Press.
- (1980) Preliminaries to preliminaries. *Sociological Inquiry* 50: 104–152.
- (1981) Discourse as an interactional achievement. In D. Tannen (ed.) *Georgetown University roundtable on languages and linguistics*: 71–93. Georgetown University Press.
- (1986) The routine as achievement. *Human Studies* 9: 111–151.
- (1988a) On an actual virtual servo-mechanism for guessing bad news. *Social Problems* 35: 442–457.
- (1988b) Presequences and indirection. *Journal of Pragmatics* 12: 55–62.
- (1990) On the organization of sequences as a source of ‘coherence’ in talk-in-interaction. In B. Dorval (ed.) *Conversational organization and its development*: 51–77. Ablex.

- (1992) Repair after next turn: The last structurally provided defense of intersubjectivity in conversation. *American Journal of Sociology* 97: 1295–1345.
- (1993) Reflections on quantification in the study of conversation. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 26: 99–128.
- (1996) Confirming allusions: Toward an empirical account of social action. *American Journal of Sociology* 102: 161–216.
- (1997) Practices and actions: Boundary cases of other-initiated repair. *Discourse Processes* 23: 499–545.
- (2000) Overlapping talk and the organization of turn-taking for conversation. *Language in Society* 29: 1–63.
- (2006) *Sequence Organization in interaction: A primer in conversation analysis*. Cambridge University Press.
- SCHEGLOFF, E. A., G. JEFFERSON & H. SACKS (1977) The preference for self-correction in the organization of repair in conversation. *Language* 53: 361–382.
- SORJONEN, M. -L. (1996) On repeats and responses in Finnish conversations. In E. Ochs, E. A. Schegloff & S. A. Thompson (eds.): 277–327.
- (2002) Recipient activities: The particle *no* as a go-ahead response in Finnish conversations. In C. E. Ford, B. A. Fox & S. A. Thompson (eds.): 165–195.
- STIVERS, T. (2005) Modified repeats: One method for asserting primary rights from second position. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 38: 131–158.
- STIVERS, T. & J. HERITAGE (2001) Breaking the sequential mould: Narrative and other methods of answering “more than the question” during medical history taking. *Text* 21: 151–185.
- TANAKA, H. (1999) *Turn-taking in Japanese Conversation. A Study in Grammar and Interaction*. John Benjamins.
- TERASAKI, A. (1976) Pre-announcement sequences in conversation. *Social Science Working Paper* 99, University of California, Irvine.
- WU, R. -J. R. (2004) *Stance in Talk: A Conversation Analysis of Mandarin Final Particles*. John Benjamins.
- ZIMMERMAN, D. H. (1992) Achieving context: openings in emergency calls. In G. Watson & R. M. Seiler (eds.) *Text in Context: Contributions to Ethnomethodology*: 35–51. Sage.
- (1998) Identity, context and interaction. In C. Antaki & S. Widdicombe (eds.) *Identity in Talk*: 87–106. Sage.