Analyzing Single Episodes of Interaction: An Exercise in Conversation Analysis

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A variety of analytic resources provided by past work in conversation analysis are brought to bear on the analysis of a single utterance in its sequential context, drawn from an ordinary conversation. Various facets of the organization of talk-in-interaction are thereby both introduced and exemplified. The result displays the capacity of this analytic modality to meet a fundamental responsibility of social analysis, namely the capacity to explicate single episodes of action in interaction as a basic locus of social order.

INTRODUCTION

This paper has two primary goals. One goal is to display one mode of analysis to which the phenomena of talk-in-interaction may be subjected, one mode of analysis among several which have developed within so-called "conversation analysis." In spite of its name, this analytic undertaking is concerned with the understanding of talk-in-interaction more generally, and with interaction per se more generally still. However, it takes ordinary conversation to be the fundamental form of talk-in-interaction (in the sense that other, task- or context-specialized forms are transformations of it [Sacks et al., 1974, p. 730–31]), and a/the primordial site of human sociality and social life.

In one form which data analysis takes in this enterprise, the effort is to elucidate and describe the structure of a coherent, naturally bounded phenomenon or domain of phenomena in interaction, how it is organized, and the practices by which it is produced. For this, one ordinarily works with a collection of fragments of talk (or other conduct) which instantiate the phenomenon and its variants, or which exemplify the range of phenomena composing the domain. A *set of fragments*, then, to explicate a *single phenomenon* or a *single domain* of phenomena (cf. Drew, forthcoming; Goodwin, 1980; Heritage, 1984; Jefferson, 1978; Pomerantz, 1980; Sacks, forthcoming [1973]; Schegloff, 1980 among others for particular phenomena and the practices underlying them; Sacks et al., 1974 or Schegloff et al., 1977 for domains of phenomena).

The mode of data analysis employed here is different. In a sort of exercise, the resources of past work on a *range of phenomena* and organizational domains in talk-in-interaction are brought to bear on the analytic explication of a *single fragment* of talk.[1] Here the first goal of the paper meshes with a second, which is to display something (though far from all) of the range of issues addressed over the past twenty years or so by conversation-analytic work, some of the results which this work has yielded, and their effectiveness as tools of analysis. Although several bits of news will be developed in its course, the paper is not primarily addressed to the development of previously unknown findings. It is rather concerned with a third goal, which is to assess the capacity of this analytic enterprise, using its past results, to analyze one of the sorts of data which, in this view, it (and social science more generally) should be able to analyze. What sort of data is that? A bit of context is in order.

[1] Examination of single fragments has been used in other ways as well. For example, Sacks (1975, and throughout his lectures, 1964–72) uses analysis of a single fragment as a way of introducing and constraining an account of a practice or set of practices, as does C. Goodwin (1984). Jefferson (1980) brings the analytic tools and possibilities developed in the first part of her paper to bear on a single extended instance, as a sort of test and payoff of the analysis. For another exercise along the lines of the present effort, see Schegloff (1984; [1976]).

We are engaged, among other things, in the study of the organization of social action. For that is what talking in interaction is. However humble the occasion and however apparently trivial the pursuit, the bits of talk under study are lent dignity by being instances of social action in the real worlds of people's lives, instances through which much grander themes can often be more clearly seen. One point which seems increasingly clear is that, in a great many respects, social action done through talk is organized and orderly not, or not only, as a matter of rule or as a statistical regularity, but on a case by case, action by action, basis. Particular complements of participants on singular occasions of interaction proceed in, to them, orderly ways; or, failing this, have ways of coping with the apparent lack of order which also operate on a single case basis. Both past analytic work and continuing ordinary experience testify to the relevance of the single occasion as the locus of order.

In a paper now some twenty years old (Schegloff, 1968), a formulation proposed a regularity about a type of conversational occurrence which adequately described 499 of the 500 cases under examination—a good batting average by most social scientific standards. But the puzzle was: what about the participants in that 500th case? Although the "generalization" did not apply in their case, they had also achieved, somehow, the outcome in question (getting a telephone conversation underway). How? And was there some account of the "how" that could include both the single case and the other 499? There was, and it was quite different in character from the previous account (and allowed the derivation of the previous account). It was found because one had to respect the fact that the 500th case was also, and equally, orderly for its participants, even though it was anomalous in the aggregate.

Or consider the academic occasions which most readers of this journal encounter weekly— lectures, seminars, oral examinations, and the like. They also are instances of talk-in-interaction, although not of conversation. Lectures, to fix on one of these occasions, have familiar organizational forms and practices which recur with great regularity on the multiple occasions on which they are delivered. But if a lecturer should begin producing bizarre behavior, it is unlikely that those present would find it sufficient to set this aside as just a statistical anomaly. It would not suffice to consider that all the previously attended lectures followed one or another canonical form; that there was bound to be a case which deviated; and that this is it. Rather, observers find themselves making some sense or other of what is going on, and find some way of conducting themselves that deals

with the situation. On reflection, of course, that is what is done in each of the *ordinary* such occasions in which persons participate. They find on each singular occasion whether and when to laugh, when to nod or knit the brow, whether and when to applaud, when and how to leave early if it is a bore, or they are not feeling well, or both, and how to indicate which of these is the case. Again, the locus of order is the single case.

Accordingly, an analytic machinery which is meant to come to terms with the orderliness of interaction, and especially the orderliness of conduct in interaction, and to do so by explicating the orderly practices of the participants in interaction (conversational or otherwise), should be able to deal in an illuminating manner with single episodes of talk taken from "the real world." There *is* a constitutive order to singular occasions of interaction, and to the organization of action within them. This is the bedrock of social life—the primordial site of sociality. Social science theorizing, certainly sociological theorizing, must be answerable to it, and to the details of its actual, natural occurrences. That is an inescapable responsibility of social theory, and perhaps a priority one, for much other social analysis presumes it. Whatever concerns for macrosocial issues we entertain, our ways of dealing with them will in the end have to be compatible with a capacity to address the details of single episodes of action through talking in interaction (Schegloff, 1987).

Although these remarks have been framed as constraints on sociological theorizing and the proper goals of sociological theory, it is not a theoretical or, rather, a conceptual solution which is needed. It is now fifty years since Parsons in *The Structure of Social Action* (1937) placed at the start of his project of social theorizing what he called "the unit act." This may sound like the single or singular bit of social action referred to above, but it is not. Indeed, from the point of view being argued here, there could hardly have been a more contrasting point of departure. For Parsons began with an *analytic* object of interest, whose analysis (into "means," "ends," "conditions," etc.) was conceptual and stipulated from the outset. By contrast, the single actions and episodes to which sociological analysis is being held accountable here are (in Parsonian terms) "concrete"; things which actual persons did, someplace at some time, in the course of living actual lives in society, that is, in some actual context. And the analysis should be empirical not conceptual, bringing to bear findings derived from the study of other actual actions and episodes of interaction.

This then is what is meant in proposing to undertake the analysis of a singular episode of

interaction, to exemplify and to assess our capacity to deal with the sort of data with which we should be able to deal. This is meant to provide an exercise in a kind of decomposition, in which various empirically based analytic resources are drawn on to see how an utterance from an ordinary conversation is put together, what it does, how it works. And thereby to provide by illustration access to one mode of conversation analysis, and a suggestion of one way to provide an analytic capacity to address the details of singular episodes of ordinary interaction.

ACHIEVING THE TURN IN/AND ITS SEQUENCE: LOOKING FORWARD

The utterance to be examined here occurs at lines 16–18 of Segment (1) below.[2] The excerpt starts at the beginning of a new spate of talk, a new sequence if you will, and has been modified to omit most of a separate simultaneous conversation, with the exception of a child's summons to the dog at line 15. The host of this backyard picnic is Curt; next to him is Gary (the husband of Curt's cousin), who is involved in the separate conversation for most of this episode but joins the target conversation near the end of the segment being examined. Across the table from Gary is Mike, a friend of Curt's but not well known to Gary. Next to him, and across from Curt, is Phyllis, Mike's wife. The main axis of this sequence is talk between Curt and Mike. Further characterization of the talk and of the setting will be reserved until later. Again, the focus of attention will be on Curt's utterance at lines 16–18.

SEGMENT 1

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 1   Curt:      (W'll) how wz the races las'night.
 2              (0.8)
 3   Curt:      Who w'n ⌈th'feature.⌉
 4   Mike:            ⌊Al won,  ⌋
 5              (0.3)
 6   Curt:      ⌈(who)⌉ =
 7   Mike:      ⌊Al.  ⌋ =
 8   Curt:      = Al did?
 9              (0.8)
10   Curt:      Dz he go out there pretty regular?
11              (1.5)
12   Mike:      Generally evry Saturdee.
13              (1.2)
14   Phyllis:   He wins js about every Saturday too:.
15   Ryan:      Bo⌈: Bo!
16   Curt:        ⌊He- He's about the only regular<he's about
17              the only good regular out there.'z Keegan still go
18              out? =
19   Mike:      = Keegan's, (0.2) out there (,) he's, He run,
20              (0.5)
21   Mike:      E:⌈r he's uh::
22   Gary:        ⌊Wuhyih mean my:,⌋
23   Gary:      My ⌈brother in law's out there,⌉
24   Mike:         ⌊doin real good this year'n⌋ M'Gilton's
25              doin real good thi⌈s year,
26   Curt:                        ⌊M'Gilton still there? =
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27   Gary:      = hHawki┌ns,
28   Curt                └Oxfrey (run?-) I heard Oxfrey gotta new
29              ca:r.
30   Gary:      Hawkins is ru┌nnin,
31   Mike:                    └Oxfrey's runnin the same car 'e
32              run last year, =
33   Phyllis:   = Mike siz there wz a big fight down there
34              las'night,
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We begin with some observations—observations which may help render the utterance investigable, and ones which may help advance its analysis.

A first observation is that the utterance that occupies this turn-at-talk is composed of two turn-constructional units; units of the sort a speaker may set out to build a turn with. In this case, they are both sentences: "he's about the only good regular out there" (together with its included repairs) and "does Keegan still go out". Using the model of turn-taking organization developed by Sacks et al., (1974), a multi-unit turn is of potential analytic interest on those grounds alone. On this model, unless a speaker has somehow provided a projection of some extended type of turn (Sacks, 1975; Schegloff, 1980), other participants may treat the end of a first unit (such as a sentence) as an appropriate place for them to talk, and, if they do so and start to talk there and encounter no resistance, the turn will end up with one turn-constructional unit in it. This possibility builds in a structural constraint in the direction of minimization of turn size, systematically providing an occasion for transition to a next speaker at the end of a first turn-unit. Talk by a speaker which is made up of more than one unit, a "discourse" in one sense of that term, may therefore be treated as a possible achievement—something that may have taken some doing in the face of potential resistance (Schegloff, 1982).[3]

Having noted that the multi-unit feature of this turn *may* have taken some achieving, we can ask if anything special seems in fact to have been done to achieve a multi-unit turn here; or, more precisely, if anything special seems to have been done to get a second turn-constructional unit in. And that leads to a second observation.

The second observation is that this second turn-constructional unit *is* an achievement. In particular, it is not the default product of a failure by another participant to talk after Curt has brought his turn to a possible completion; such a failure of uptake by another could yield a gap of silence which the prior speaker, Curt, might then fill with an addition to *his* talk. This is another way multi-unit turns can get produced.

This multi-unit turn was not produced in that manner, however. Rather, Curt methodically organizes the production of his talk, that is, the first component of his turn, to provide for the addition of another component. Using a device we can call a "rush-through" (Schegloff, 1982), he speeds up the talk just before possible completion of the first turn-unit ("there" does not have the "drawl" or sound stretch often found in last words or syllables); he omits the slight gap of silence which commonly intervenes between one unit and another, reduces the first word of what follows to its last sound ("z"), and thereby "rushes" into a next turn-constructional unit, interdicting (so to speak) the otherwise possibly relevant starting up of talk by another at that point. Not only is a multi-unit turn *potentially* of interest as a methodical achievement; this instance was *actually* such a methodically achieved outcome.

Although we defer until later a fuller characterization of the increment thus added to the turn, note for now that it is a question. As Sacks (forthcoming, 1973) noted some years ago,[4] if a turn has several components (that is, turn-constructional units) in it, one of which is a question, the question is almost always the last of them, for on its completion, the question will ordinarily have made it someone else's turn to talk. So the format we have here, unit + unit,

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[3] The present paper is in several respects a sequel to the 1982 paper. It may be worth noting that this is one respect in which the model of turn-taking with which I am operating differs from that put forward by Duncan and his associates (Duncan, 1972; Duncan and Fiske, 1977; cf. Wilson et al., 1984 for a comparison of models of turn-taking). Aside from the differences in generality of scope (Duncan's model would be hard to apply here for it deals only with the case of two-person interaction and there are four participants here), the speaker in Duncan's model does not encounter such structurally in-built potential resistance as is provided by possible turn-completion in the Sacks et al. model, and an utterance such as the one under examination would be of no special interest, at least on these grounds, from the point of view of that model. Of course, not every multi-unit turn will turn out to be interesting on this (or any other) account.

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[4] For example, in his public lecture "On the preferences for agreement and continuity in sequences" at the 1973 Linguistic Institute, University of Michigan, to appear in Button and Lee (forthcoming).

where the second is a question, is quite a common one, and one which is the systematic product of orderly ways of organizing talk.

For the next observation, we shift our focus momentarily, and look to Mike, one of the other participants. He is, however, more than just another participant; he is the one most directly addressed by Curt's talk. As far as we can tell, Curt shows him to be the addressee by making him the target of his gaze. And, in the context of the preceding sequence and its topic, Mike is the participant who is knowledgeable about the races, who has been telling about them, and who has been the directed recipient of Curt's prior inquiries about them. In noting what Mike is visibly doing,[5] we are noting what Curt is seeing while he is talking. What he sees in the course of his talk is a horizontal or lateral head shake.

It is useful to characterize the head gesture initially in this strictly physical manner, for it allows us to focus clearly on the analysis of its interactional import. Almost certainly, the common initial interpretation of this lateral headshake is the same as Darwin's in The *Expression of Emotion in Man and Animal* (1872) about a century ago, namely, it is a gestural expression of the negative. Although several investigators in the years since Darwin wrote have brought to our attention cultural variations on the western practice of the lateral shake as a display of the negative and the vertical shake (or nod) as a display of the positive or affirmative, within the midwestern American context in which this social occasion occurred, the understanding of Mike's shake as a "negative marker" is one plausible candidate. But even within this cultural context, this gesture will not sustain a single, invariant, necessary "reading," as can be seen in the following fragment from a later moment on the same occasion, first discussed by Marjorie Goodwin (1980) in a paper in which many of the points that follow were considerably elaborated.

While discussing another matter (but still on the general topic of "cars"), Mike has referred to someone he knows who owns ". . . a bunch a' old clunkers," but then immediately corrects himself, as he identifies them as high-priced vintage antique cars, to the amazement of Curt:

SEGMENT 2

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Mike:   Well I can't say they're ol'clunkers eez gotta Co:rd?
        (0.1)
Mike:   Two Co:rds,
        (1.0)
Mike:   ⌜And
Curt:   ⌞Not original,
        (0.7)
Mike:   Oh yes. Very origi(h)nal      ← #1
Curt:   Oh::: reall⌜y?
Mike:        ⌞Yah. Ve(h)ry      ← #2
        origi(h)nal.            ← #2
Curt:   Awhhh are you shittin me?=
Mike:   =No I'm not.
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                              (simplified)

There are two vigorous head gestures on Mike's part in this little sequence. What is appealing about this data segment is that the two gestures are produced to accompany virtually identical utterances, but the gestures appear to be sharply contrasting—one a horizontal or lateral shake and the other a vertical one. The first comes at the utterance marked with arrow #1 in the transcript. The head gesture here is a horizontal shake. The utterance it accompanies gives clear evidence that this gesture does not invariably mark the negative; the utterance is emphatically positive: "Oh yes. Very original." Two turns later Mike produces a virtually identical utterance, at arrow #2, "Yah. Very original." The gesture accompanying this utterance is a vertical shake/nod.

Two observations will suffice to indicate what these gestures can be doing. First, gesture #1 is produced to accompany an utterance which is in *disagreement* with the prior utterance of another, whereas gesture #2 is produced as an *agreement* or confirmation. Although many disagreements are negative sentences and vice versa, not all are. Sometimes, agreements are negatives and disagreements are affirmatives (if, for example, what is being agreed or disagreed with was a negative). Lateral shakes may, then,

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[5] There is no adequate alternative to the audience/reader viewing and hearing the tape and thereby having independent access to the data being described. The audiences at the various "live presentations" of this analysis were able to view and hear the tape repeatedly. The reader can be given only a discursive description which presumes and buries the very analysis which is its point.

mark not a feature of the turn itself (its negative aspect), but a feature of its relationship to another utterance in the sequence — disagreement.

Second, note that the lateral shake can serve as a gestural marker of another feature of these utterances, although it is used to do so only in the first of the two in this little sequence. Lateral shakes can be used as the gestural realization of what linguists call "intensifiers." In the fragment above, note that both utterances under examination include the verbal intensifier "very." The lateral gesture in #1 may be understood not only as expressing the disagreement the utterance is doing but, in addition, as a gestural expression of the intensifier (or, as M. Goodwin, 1980, called it, a marker of the "out of the ordinary").

In sum, a horizontal or lateral head shake can have at least three distinct uses: as a marker or expression of the negative, of disagreement, and/or of intensification. How does all this bear on the utterance we were examining in the first instance?

We might begin by noticing that the initial component of Curt's turn ("He's about the only good regular out there") offers an assessment, both of "Al" and of "the races." As Pomerantz (1978; 1984) has shown, one type of response which assessments can make relevant, and which with considerable regularity follows them in next turn, is agreement or disagreement, and one of these is accordingly sequentially relevant after Curt's assessment. Because the assessment proposed in Curt's utterance is expressed in an affirmative format, a disagreement with it (were one to be forthcoming) might be expected to be expressed in a negative format. Both the negative and the disagreement uses of lateral shakes thus have a *prima facie* potential relevance here, provided by the sequential locus of Mike's action — "after an assessment."

One problem needs to be addressed before proceeding along these lines. In the "Two Cords" fragment on which a preliminary basis was developed for alternative readings of the head gestures, the gesturer was the speaker. And this is by no means an arbitrary co-occurrence. A great many gestures, perhaps the great majority, are restricted to speakers (Kendon, 1979; Schegloff, 1984). Certainly hand gestures are almost all so restricted. Persons who gesticulate when they are not speaking or using the gesticulations as speech substitutes, and especially when another is speaking, are likely to be seen as anomolous at best.

Head gestures are somewhat different. The vertical shake or nod has a major use as a "continuer" or indicator that a recipient of speech understands that an extended unit of talk is in progress and should continue (Schegloff,

1982). And although an ongoing speaker may leave a bit of a silence into which such a continuer may be inserted, thus making the nodder into a virtual speaker at that moment, often enough such nods are nonanomalously produced while another is in the process of talking, and are understood as specifically a recipient's gesture. Lateral shakes also can apparently have a recipient usage, as a kind of mark of sympathetic uptake or receipt, a usage which may be related to the usability of the gesture by speakers as an intensifier. But none of these usages seem in point for Mike's shake in the "only good regular" utterance on which we are focusing. His lateral shake does not appear to be a recipient's or hearer's gesture.

Perhaps we can advance the analysis by asking *where* gestures are placed. Because most gestures are produced by speakers, it is not surprising that one useful way of characterizing their placement is by reference to the talk which they accompany. For some important classes of gesture, it appears that they occur *before* the talk components to which they specifically are tied (Kendon 1979; 1977; Schegloff, 1984); often they have been completed by the time that talk has been produced, but they are almost always initiated before that talk. But this way of characterizing the placement of gesture, or of its onset, seems of little use here; there is no talk of Mike's relative to which we could assess the gesture's onset.

If we cannot, for now, characterize Mike's gesture by its placement relative to his own talk, perhaps we can locate it relative to Curt's talk, during which it begins. Our next observation, then, is that Mike's lateral shake begins just after "*out*" in Curt's utterance (Segment 1, line 17). The point is not, however, the word "out," but its manner of delivery, only roughly captured in the transcript by the underlining; "out" is the carrier both of a pitch peak and of raised amplitude.

The relevance of a pitch peak of this sort (but certainly not of all pitch peaks) is that it marks the enhanced likelihood that the next possible completion of the turn-constructional unit will be an actually intended turn-completion.[6] That is, the developing grammatical structure of an utterance in the course of its production is potentially compatible with alternative points of possible completion. Pitch peaks, and their suppression, are one means by which speakers can indicate which syntactically possible completions are built to be completions on this occasion, and which not. A pitch peak thus can

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[6] See Duncan, 1972, on the association of distinctive pitch contours with turn completion. For the more specific points being made here, cf. Schegloff, 1982.

project intended turn completion at the next grammatically possible completion point. In doing so, it can also open the "transition relevance space" (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 703 et passim), the stretch of time in which transition from current to next speaker is properly done. It is after such pitch peaks that intending-next-speakers who aim to get an early start begin their next turns. It is such pitch peaks which speakers suppress to show their parsing interlocutors that imminent syntactically possible completions are not designed to be actual completions. It is such pitch peaks after which speakers may increase the pace of their talk in an effort to "rush through" into a next turn component. Such a pitch peak can, then, mark the imminent completion of a turn, and the appropriate place for a next turn, and its speaker, to start.

What we have then is the marking of a turn currently in production as about to end, and, directly after that display, a bit of gestural behavior by another which regularly occurs in the company of speech, and regularly precedes that speech. We should then appreciate Mike's head gesture not as that of a hearer, but as that of an incipient speaker, who, as it turns out, ends up not speaking at that point.

We previously characterized the sequential environment "after an assessment" as one in which agreement or disagreement are relevant. We can now add another observation, and that is that in the course of the one remaining word of the turn-constructional unit which is in progress, "there" (Segment 1, line 17), Mike accomplishes the minimum head movement necessary to display that he is doing a lateral shake rather than a "look over" to his side; actually he accomplishes a bit more—one "round trip" (i.e., a head turn to the left and return to "centered" position) plus the start of a next lateral move. By the end of the projectedly last word of the turn, then, Mike has produced, and Curt has seen, the projection of an incipient disagreement embodied in this minimal head gesture.

Previous work on the organization of sequences in talk-in-interaction, for example work by Sacks (forthcoming, 1973) and by Pomerantz (1984), has indicated that, with notable and important exceptions, disagreement and other "rejecting" response turn types are *dis*preferred options. Among the sequential expressions of this status is the deferral of actual disagreements. Sometimes this takes the form of delays in the actual onset of the turn, either by silence or by some form of repair initiator (Schegloff et al., 1977), such as "huh?" or "what?" Alternatively, the *start* of next turn may not be delayed, but the disagreement may be deferred *within* it, being preceded by various tokens such as "uh," "well," and the like, and even by pro forma agreement tokens, as in the familiar "Yes, but . . .". These various delay devices can all serve as "predisagreements," harbingers of what is to come. But predisagreements involve *more* than just a first indication of upcoming disagreement.

One point of a sequential object such as a predisagreement is that it affords the prior speaker, the speaker of the turn about to be disagreed with, an opportunity to recast their talk, and potentially to recast it in a form which will circumvent the disagreement. The "predisagreement" may then end up not preceding a disagreement at all, for if the prior speaker takes the opportunity, and recasts the prior turn or otherwise changes the sequential environment, the disagreement may be avoided, thereby giving full effect to the dispreference for disagreement. This, at least, is what a number of investigators have found for such previously explored predisagreements as were mentioned above.

Returning to our target utterance, we may note that the second turn-constructional unit which Curt achieves by his "rush-through" is specifically responsive to this projected disagreement. Indeed, this second unit—"(Doe)z Keegan still go out there?"—may most properly be said to follow not the first unit in the turn, but the predisagreement accomplished through Mike's head gesture, which, because it is not talk, can be produced simultaneously with the prior talk without "overlapping." Although there is no break between the two components of Curt's turn, it is nonetheless clear that the second component is a preemptive response to Mike's projected disagreement with Curt's proposed assessment. This two-unit turn, this "discourse" in that sense, is thus a thoroughly interactional achievement.[7]

That Curt's second unit is responsive to Mike's projected disagreement is reflected in various of its features. We noted earlier that this

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[7] Note, by the way, that a vertical nod by Mike, adumbrating agreement with Curt's assessment, would not engender the same sorts of sequential relevances or consequences; it would most likely not engender an insistent extension of Curt's turn. This should be taken as evidence, contra the stance adopted by Duncan and his associates, that however autonomous the organization of turn-taking may appear to be, no full account can be developed without reference to other simultaneously operating organizations, such as the organization of agreement/disagreement in sequences involved here, for these clearly bear on the size of turns, and potentially on their distribution. It should be clear as well, in this regard, that the suggestion by various interpreters (e.g., Cicourel, 1978; 1981; Corsaro, 1981) that conversation analysis is committed to, and perhaps even constituted by, a set of *autonomous* turn-taking rules, is quite wide of the mark.

second component was formatted as a question. Now we can add several further observations. One is that this is a yes/no question, and that is a question format which itself sets up the relevance of agreement or disagreement in the following turn (Sacks, forthcoming, 1973). That is, this increment to Curt's turn retains the relevance of agreement or disagreement by Mike in next turn, but changes the terms with which agreement or disagreement are to be done.

Further, the question proffers a candidate exception to the assessment offered in the first part of the turn. It is a guess at what, or rather whom, Mike has in mind in projecting the disagreement displayed by his lateral shake.

Note that this move by Curt involves more than just the attempted circumvention of a dispreferred disagreement. If the projected disagreement by Mike adumbrated a divergence of outlooks or information, a way in which Mike and Curt were "not together," then Curt's move is potentially exquisite in reversing the implication. For, if successful, it will show that from a purely formal and contentless harbinger of disagreement (the lateral shake), he (Curt) can figure out just whom Mike "has in mind"; that is how "close" their minds are. He knows exactly to whom he is talking, just how that one understood his claim, just how that one might disagree, etc.

The initial success of this move is striking. Instead of the imminent disagreement of which the lateral shake was a harbinger, we now find an apparent agreement. Mike agrees with, and confirms, Curt's guess that "Keegan's out there" and (in keeping with the revised version of Curt's turn which concerns not only "regulars" but "*good*" regulars), he adds that he is "doin real good this year." This agreement-formatted talk is accompanied by a vigorous vertical nod (at Segment 1, line 19), embodying by gesture the shift from the disagreeing/negative to an agreeing/affirmative response. This is precisely what a predisagreement is designed to do: it has allowed the conversion of a sequence whose component turns were about to be in a relationship of disagreement to be done instead as an agreement. And it allows the parties to end up in a mutual alignment rather than in an opposition.

At least it seems to. Actually, there are various signs of continuing misalignment between Mike and Curt, which deserve at least cursory mention. I call attention first to the form of Mike's response, "Keegan's out there." This is a sequential environment in which Mike could have used what I will call a "locally subsequent reference form," in this case the pronoun "he," to refer to the one who "still goes out," He doesn't. He uses instead a "locally initial" reference form, the same one used by Curt, namely "Keegan." Although this usage form is

not yet well understood, there is some evidence (Fox, 1984) that this usage shows up (among other places) in disagreement environments, and may be one way of marking them as such.

Second, note that Curt's preemptive inquiry mentions a single case as a candidate exception to the assessment he had proposed. Mike, on the other hand, does not accept so limited a basis for his disagreement. And indeed he should not; for if there were but a single exception, he might appear ungenerous, and to be "doing being contrary," to disagree outright on that basis, rather than agreeing and adding an exception as an "afterthought." Keegan is but the first of his "cases"; his response to Curt is produced in a "list" format, in which M'Gilton is a second case (lines 24–25), and not a final one at that. When that second one is mentioned, Curt comes up with a third, another possible exception, Oxfrey (lines 28–29), but begins to change the focus of the talk to having "a new car" with which Mike immediately disagrees (lines 31–32).

So in various respects, disagreement as a relationship between the participants continues in this sequence, even though at the start of Mike's response, disagreement between successive turns in the sequence has been circumvented. In effect, Mike disagrees, but does so in a turn formated as an agreement. From this we should learn that the organization of action, here realized in turns at talk in sequences, has a formal basis as a partially autonomous organization. It is not merely the basis for, or a reflection of, either the moment-to-moment or longer term relationship between the participants. Three different orders of relationship are involved: that between the turns, moves or acts of the participants; the alignment they take to another in the sequence or episode; and the longer term mutual alignment (if any) which the present occasion may sustain, renew, transform, etc.

We can catch a glimpse of how the sequence might have developed were it not for the preemptive guess by Curt. Gary is also sitting at the table, and, although he has not talked in this sequence, he has been intermittently attentive to it. He also disagrees with Curt's assessment about "only good regular," but he has had no preliminary exchange of alignment intentions with Curt. The result is an outright challenge response at lines 22 and 23—"Wuhyih mean, my brother-in-law's out there" etc., which, although disattended by both Curt and Mike, is just the sort of disagreement response which it appears the "dance" between Curt and Mike successfully avoided.[8]

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[8] For more detailed discussion of this exchange with Gary, see C. Goodwin (1986, p. 289–93).

ACHIEVING THE TURN IN/AND ITS SEQUENCE:
LOOKING BACKWARD

So far, the entire analysis has been conducted without respect to what the actual assessment was which Curt proposed in the first component of the target turn, and the import of that assessment within the interactional episode in which it occurs. The analysis has also disregarded two apparent hitches in the production of that first component—two points at which the turn-so-far is stopped, and the turn is restarted, and in one of those cases changed on reproduction.

In order to address these as yet unexplicated features of the utterance, it will be useful to review and to partially characterize the sequence in which it occurs. As it happens, this is quite a rich sequence; if not distinctively rich, then one whose riches are relatively easily accessible. But only a small bit of its texture can be touched on here—only two or three points, in fact, which are directly germane to the target utterance.

The sequence as a whole can be characterized as a topic-proffering one.[9] From preceding talk we can infer that Mike had gone to the automobile races the previous evening; Curt, not knowing this, had gone by his house to visit, and had stayed quite a long while, even though Mike's wife Phyllis was the only person home. Previous talk about the races has been immediately diverted into teasing talk about the possible infidelities of the previous evening. Now, talk about the races is broached again by Curt. The forms of topic-proffering run through here are quite canonical, but the description of those forms is too bulky to develop in detail. I want to note only that ordinarily several tries are made, through distinct subsequences, as here in "how was the races last night" (line 1), "who won the feature" (line 3), and "Does he go out there pretty regular?" (line 10).

To say that these subsequences are "distinct" is not necessarily to say that they are independent. The several tries or proffers may be related in various ways—most obviously by the same references appearing in them or informing them, as some reference to "the races" appears to inform the second try in this sequence (line 3), "Who won the feature." Another way in which separate contributions to a topic-starting undertaking can be related is that a subsequent proffer not only refers to something referred to in an earlier one, but addresses the *product* of an

earlier sequence. In the talk which we are examining, the utterance "Does he go out there pretty regular?" *is* related to prior talk in this way, along the following lines.

Note, first, that Mike's "Al won" is delivered in a manner, largely through its prosody (and cf. footnote 5), which marks it as "routine," as "a foregone conclusion," as "of course," as "as usual."

Note next that Curt's efforts to "retrieve" and then to verify the person reference (through "who" at line 6 and "Al did?" at line 8), although clearly prompted by its involvement in overlap, at the same time disappoint the claim built into the prosody of "Al won." Expectable talk can regularly get heard through, and despite, all sorts of acoustic interferences; just aspects of the expectable item are needed to confirm that that is indeed what is being said. In twice failing to hear unproblematically who won, Curt fails to align himself with the "routineness" of Al's winning built into Mike's announcement.

Note, third, that Curt's next contribution to the introduction and establishment of this topic (at line 10) is addressed to just this matter of "routineness;" it makes explicit what Mike's earlier turn had done implicitly, that is, through prosody; and it questions it, rather than asserting it, let alone presupposing it. "Does he go out there pretty regular?" thus builds upon the product of an earlier sequence, rather than readdressing its object in parallel fashion.

Note further, however, that in pursuing this matter, Curt has slightly, apparently imperceptibly, changed the terms. Mike's "as usual" marking had been applied (line 4) to Al's *winning*; Curt has asked (line 10) about Al's "*going out there.*" This might not seem to matter; certainly it does not matter only because some logical or semantic analysis might show the content of two such propositions to be different. But note that after Mike confirms (by a head nod at line 11) that Al goes out there "generally every Saturday," his wife Phyllis chimes in (line 14) that "he wins just about every Saturday too." That is, Phyllis appears to have detected the difference between "winning" and "going out there," has treated it as relevant, and has entered as a speaker into a conversational episode to which she had not otherwise contributed in order to address this difference. The manner of her delivery is related to, though it does not recapitulate, the manner of Mike's "Al won," and suggests one possible basis for her treating this as a relevant and actionable matter. It retains the sense of "as usual," but hints (to my ear) of boredom, ennui, world weariness. It hints, in other words, at a persistent issue between them (he went to the races, she did not): namely, why go to the races

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[9] Other modes of topic initiation described in the literature include topic elicitation and nomination (Button and Casey, 1984; 1985) and "stepwise transition" (Jefferson, 1984; Schegloff and Sacks, 1973). Cf. also Maynard (1980) and Maynard and Zimmerman (1984).

when they, and their outcomes, are so repetitive.

These few observations about the sequence preceding our target utterance will have to suffice to supply the sequential context for the remaining analysis. This analysis is directed to two aspects of the first component of the turn (line 16). Twice that turn-constructional unit is stopped before coming to completion, and is rebegun, the second of those times being changed on its reproduction. Both of these occurrences involve the use of the mechanism of "repair," the methodical practices provided in the organization of talk-in-interaction for dealing with problems or troubles in speaking, hearing, or understanding the talk (Schegloff et al., 1977). What, then, can be said about these two perturbations in the production of this turn component?

The first—the cut-off of the turn after "he" and its reuse to restart the turn—seems relatively straightforward. Two sorts of "troubles" in the talk have been established as environments in which this sort of practice is found. First (though not applicable in the case under analysis), Charles Goodwin has shown (1980; 1981) that when a speaker beginning a turn brings his or her gaze to bear on recipient and does not find recipient already returning the look, a break in the talk regularly works to attract the recipient's eyes. And Schegloff (forthcoming, 1973) described the use of what was termed "recycled turn beginnings" to manage the emergence of one speaker's utterance from overlap with another's. Here we may note that Curt's turn begins in overlap with other talk (line 15) which, although from a wholly separate conversation, is at high pitch and volume. Although an occurrence like this allows us to see that, and how, persons attend and adjust to environmental events which are not parts of their interaction proper, this theme cannot concern us further here.

The second of these repairs (still at line 16) will require somewhat more elaborate treatment. To begin with, how shall we characterize what it is doing, where it is done, what consequences it has for the interaction?

One characterization might treat this occurrence only as an instance of repair, and focus on those of its features relevant to repair. The repair operation involved is "insertion;" the redoing of the utterance allows the insertion of an element, a word ("good") not present on the first saying. The operation of restarting the turn to allow the insertion is begun just after the word before which the new item is to be inserted; or, put differently, the repair is initiated just after "next word" after the slot for the missing word. The sort of terms in this characterization are general for the domain of repair (Schegloff et al., 1977; Schegloff, 1979); "insertion" is a thoroughly formal term, like deletion, expansion and reduction. The notion "after next word relative to the locus of the trouble" is also quite a formal characterization, given that we are dealing with talk.

Another characterization might specify this occurrence *within* the domain of repair, but focus on it as a specific *type* of repair. Here we note that one quite regular type of repair is the addition of an adjective to a noun, of a modifier to a noun phrase, or of a descriptor to a reference, to offer three different terminologies for the same occurrence. We might note here that the inserted item is a descriptor, it is inserted before the reference it is a descriptor for, and that the repair is initiated just after the reference to which the descriptor will apply. This characterization is repair-*type* specific, and formulates what is being done, and where it is done, in terms not of the organization of repair in general, but in terms of a particular subset of repairs. Neither characterization addresses what *this* instance of repair, of *this* subtype of repair, is doing in *this* turn, in *this* sequence, in *this* conversation (which does not mean that they are less good characterizations, only that they serve different analytic interests). To do so we have to build onto what has already been said, with respect both to what the repair accomplishes and with respect to where it is done.

The turn as initially done (or projected), namely, "He's about the only regular [out there]," is built as an assessment occupying "third position" in a sequence which begins with Curt's question "Does he go out there pretty regular" (at line 10), and gets as its response from Mike a head nod and "Generally every Saturday" (at lines 11 and 12). The construction of this assessment in third position in terms of "regular" connects it to Curt's question and Mike's answer. As initially done, it sequentially deletes Phyllis' turn "He <u>wins</u> just about every Saturday too;" that is, it treats it as sequentially nonconsequential. Phyllis' turn, we noted before, picked up a potentially insignificant shift by Curt from the matter-of-factness of Al's *winning* to the routineness of his *competing*. Her turn was built specifically to add to, and contrast with, the sequence developed by Curt and Mike on Al's participation. That addition and contrast is ignored, is treated as a nonevent, in the first version of Curt's assessment, which returns to the theme of Al being "a regular" and assesses him as the *only* regular. The second version of the turn, marked specifically by the use of repair to insert the descriptor "good," incorporates a reference to Phyllis' contribution. Indeed, by doing it *as a repair*, Curt overtly displays it being taken into account, as he also displays that initially it had

not been taken into account (cf. Jefferson, 1974, on the use of repair as an interactional resource).

We should, therefore, appreciate that the repair mechanism by which a descriptor is inserted into this utterance in the course of producing a second version of it incorporates a reference to an otherwise disattended utterance by another participant, and thereby also potentially incorporates its speaker as a potentially active participant in the conversation. And, insofar as our earlier observations about Phyllis' turn are in point (the implied boredom with the races and possible complaint about Mike's attendance), Curt's reincorporation of that remark adds its critical edge to Curt's turn. Perhaps this will enhance our appreciation of the early start of Mike's incipient disagreement with it.

Correlative with this understanding of the interactional import of the second version of this first turn-constructional unit, and the repair which it incorporates, is a recasting of our account of where this repair is done. To our earlier characterization, which related the repair to that which was being repaired, we can add an account of the placement of the repair within the turn. In that regard, we may note that the repair—the insertion of the descriptor "good" with the import already ascribed to it—is initiated just before the possible opening of the transition space; that is, just before transfer of the turn to another may become relevant and "legal." Since the repair appears in the transcript to be buried well toward the middle of the turn, this may seem to be quite a quixotic proposal. Let me try to justify it in the following manner.

Note first that on rebeginning the turn, Curt uses exactly the same words he used in the first version—"he's about the only." Although I cannot display here the relevant array of data, reusing the same words is a way speakers have of showing, or claiming that "what I am saying now is what I was saying before." In the present case, it may be taken as claiming to be saying the same thing, except for the change accomplished by the repair.

Note next that the next word after "regular" in the second version of the turn is "out;" "out" with the pitch peak which we noted earlier can serve to project imminent possible completion, opening the transition space, making talk by another relevant, and even making legal overlapping talk by possible next speakers who aim for earliest possible start. Then, if the second version of the utterance is built to display "equivalence-except-for-the-change" with the first, then we may be warranted in inferring that the first was projected to continue in the manner in which the second actually does continue. Then, *after the word "regular"* is *just before the*

word *"out"*—the point at which the turn would be displayed to be possible incipiently complete, and others would be entitled to talk.

This then is a potentially last assured position in the structure of the turn for the speaker to undertake a recasting of it, and we should note that Curt speeds up his talk just a bit (that is the import of the left-pointing arrow in line 16 at this point) to get the repair started there, before others, whether Mike or Phyllis, get to address themselves to it. It is, in this sense, a last possible moment before the turn projects a possible completion, and this structural characterization is no less in point just because subsequent developments led to the completion not only of the second version of this turn-constructional unit before the turn actually ended, but the inclusion of a whole additional unit as well. In real time, at the moment at which the repair was done, the turn was projectably almost over.

With this I hope to have provided some sense of the interactional basis for the occurrence in this turn at talk of two distinct turn-constructional units, and for the three tries—including two distinct versions—of the first of these units. I hope to have shown some analytic leverage on the multi-unit turn as an achievement, on the basis for Curt's squeezing a second unit in, on the basis for Mike's incipient disagreement in the critical character of Curt's first unit, on the basis for Curt's upgrading that critical character by revising the first unit, and the use of that revision in the taking note of, rather than the ignoring of, Phyllis' interpolation. A lot about two lines of transcript, but these two lines have served us as instantiations for several different domains of phenomena which intersect on this humble utterance. Let me assure you: we have by no means exhausted the interest of this bit of talk. But as William Bull once put it (1968), although we may not have exhausted the topic, it may well have exhausted us—at least for now.

CONCLUSION

One of this paper's goals, it will be recalled, was to display the capacity of this form of conversation analysis to do what its underlying theoretical conception of talk in interaction requires; namely, to analyze singular episodes of talk which, having been produced as orderly, more or less accessible from moment to moment enterprises by their participants, should be so accessible in principle to professional analysts. In so doing, we have touched on one version of a, or the, basic problem for the study of social interaction and the use of language in it. There are various versions of "the big problem," such as Chomsky's "how an infinity of new sen-

tences are produced with a finite set of rules," or Labov's "Why does anyone say anything?" in linguistics, and the Hobbesian problem of order for some versions of sociology. Perhaps another big problem can be formulated in the following manner: "How is it that with the use of abstract, formal resources, interactional participants create idosyncratic, particularized to some here-and-now, interactions?" For we have come to the analysis of our target utterance, particularized as it is to its distinctive local context, with the tools of a formal sequential analysis which incorporates sensitivity to context, in various senses, as an abstract and formal matter.

Various senses of the term "context" and various ways of lending it definite reference have been threaded throughout this exercise—from "Central Ohio" to "before the word which opens the transition space." What will be understood by the term "context" is intimately related to one's theoretical stance; within the stance exemplified here, only those senses and aspects of context which can be shown to be relevant to the participants properly enter into the analysis (Schegloff, 1987). And the ways in which context bears upon analysis (and the degree to which it does) will be variable; some aspects of the talk will not appear to require (or permit) its introduction. Recall that the first part of the analysis of our text was conducted before characterizing the sequence in which it was embedded. In the final analysis, a notion like "context" will have to remain substantively contentless and uncomitted to any prespecified referrent, and be instead "programmatically relevant"—relevant in principle, but with a sense of always-to-be-discovered rather than given-to-be-applied.

We have touched on a number of familiar sociological themes. For example, we have looked directly at what is very likely the first interactional opportunity there is for dealing with conflict and incipient conflict. That is, of course, what disagreement is; and a great deal of the overt expression of conflict first appears as disagreement in interaction. It has long been known that if all conflict had to be dealt with after it emerged, the problem of social order would look quite different than it does. Most of it must be dealt with before it comes to full flower. We have various psychological theories about how it is kept from happening,, and sociological theories about how it is resolved once it is full blown. Almost certainly a crucial mechanism is that by which parties to interaction nip it in the bud, or decline to do so. And this is an interactional achievement.

But it is equally clear that we need not turn to such traditional problems to see the core sociology in what I have been about. For the direct technical analysis of single episodes of action in interaction and their components, whether they involve conflict or not, is a central office for sociology, one which has not received the same attention as other of its jobs. I have meant to sketch one direction in which a meeting of that responsibility may be pursued.

APPENDIX
Transcription Conventions

The notational conventions employed in the transcripts are taken from a set developed by Gail Jefferson. The most recent version of these conventions may be found on pp. ix–xvi of *Structures of Social Action,* edited by J. Maxwell Atkinson and John Heritage (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). In general, the orthography tries to capture how the participants actually talked, without rendering the transcript unreadable. In addition, there are specific conventions. I provide glosses below only for the conventions actually employed in this paper.

(word)	parentheses surrounding a word indicate uncertainty about the transcription.
(0.8)	parentheses around a number on a line or between lines indicates silence, in tenths of a second.
[	interlocking open brackets indicate the onset of simultaneous talk between the linked utterances.
]	interlocking close brackets indicate the ending of simultaneous talk between the linked utterances.
=	equal signs come in pairs, at the end of one line or utterance, and at the start of a subsequent one; the talk linked by equal signs (whether by different speakers or same speaker) is continuous, and is not interrupted by any silence or other break.
?,.	punctuation marks indicate intonation contours; they do *not* indicate grammatical status (e.g., question).
out	underlining indicates emphasis; the more of a word is underlined, the greater the emphasis.
::	colons mark the prolongation of the preceding sound; the more colons, the greater the prolongation.
<	the "less than" sign marks a slightly early start of the bit of talk which follows it.
run-	the hyphen indicates the self-interruption of the preceding sound.
(h)	the letter "h" in parentheses indicates aspiration in the course of a word, commonly laughter.

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