

# Answering the phone\*

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It has been suggested<sup>1</sup> that the production of an answer to a summons is a selectional issue. It is selectional not only in the interactionally interesting sense, whereby that an answerer can select a problematic answer can serve as a constraint on a prospective summoner to not summon if such an answer is possibly relevant, and an answerer can rely on a summoner having been attentive to such considerations in nonetheless producing his summons; the selectionality remains relevant on the proximate level. Having analyzed an utterance as a summons, a summoned in answering is involved in selecting an answer. The initial selection is between the class of clearance cue answers and the class of problematic answers. It will be useful to review and elaborate some of the resources relevant to this selection in face-to-face settings.<sup>2</sup>

## Answering a summons in face-to-face settings

In selecting an answer, one set of resources is the availability to the summoned of the summons as a selected summons. The prospective answerer can see in the actually employed summons utterance a set of practices and selections which produced it as an outcome. On the one hand, in the fact of the production of a summons, he may, as was suggested above, see the outcome of relevant pre-assessments by summoner of the comparative priorities of any ongoing courses of action and the course of action his summons pre-sequences, as well as an assessment of the possible propriety of temporal fit between those courses of action if relevant (e.g., if it is as an insertion interruption that the pre-sequenced activity is to be accomplished). The summoned may thereby be furnished in turn with a sense of the sort of activity that is being pre-sequenced, being entitled to expect via the summoner's analysis that it has such claims of priority and temporal fit that would warrant its introduction into an ongo-

ing setting such as both summoner and summoned may inspect. In seeing the fact of the production of a summons as the outcome of such pre-assessment practices by summoner, a prospective answerer is furnished information about some features of the pre-sequenced course of action.

Other sorts of information, both about the character of the presequenced course of action and about the summoner (and about the former by virtue of the latter), may be furnished by an analysis of the sort of summons employed, by attending not only that a summons was produced, but the selection that was made to employ the actual item that was produced, and the sub-class of terms from which it was selected. To have selected a summons from the class of “courtesy terms” (i.e., “excuse me,” “pardon me,” etc.), may be heard to display an analysis by summoner that summoned is to him a “stranger.” The use of such a term as a summons is a vehicle for displaying a projected “type” of conversation, one between “unacquainted.” Since “stranger” is a symmetrical “relational category” (Sacks 1972a), then if summoned is a stranger to summoner, the converse holds as well. To be summoned by such a selected term can then be informative to summoned that summoner is not an “acquainted,” and that the pre-sequenced activity may initially be presumed to be one which unacquainted are entitled to do,<sup>3</sup> that order of identification of the parties being made relevant by the selection of a class of terms whose selection turns on just such an identification. Alternatively, to be summoned by a term from the sub-class “terms of address” may itself be variously informative, as may the selection from among the various sub-classes of that sub-class. For example, to be summoned by name can display at least that order of acquaintedness as “knowing my name,” while the particular name selected may display a claim of relative status, intimacy, solidarity, or membership in some class which entitles use of such a form of address,<sup>4</sup> the selection of “Bill” rather than “Mr. Smith” allowing summoned important resources for analysis.

Similar resources may be provided by the use of non-name terms of address, for example, occupational titles. That summoned parties will employ the term used to summon them to identify the summoner may then be used by others to “kid around” by employing summons terms which intendedly lead to incorrect inferences, as in the following observation:

On Broadway; one policeman walking about 15 yards behind another who is “unaware” of him.

Policeman: Officer . . . officer . . . help, police . . . help.

Bystander smiles; bystander and policeman exchange smiles.

Summonses, then, can display and make available for summoned parties' analysis how they were selected, given that that they are selected is something summoned can orient to. They display features relevant to such identifications as "acquainted-stranger," "relationship to summoned," etc., by displaying identifications summoner has made of summoned on such dimensions. Such identifications are relevant also to inferences concerning the sort of activity the summons may be pre-sequencing, or they may serve to exclude some domains of action from prospect. Together with the evidence the fact of doing a summons may be taken to give with respect to the claimed priority and temporal fit of the pre-sequenced activity, these can provide one set of resources, interactional resources concerning the relative states of the parties, for a prospective answerer for selecting between the classes "clearance cues" and "problematic answers."

If the initial selection should be the class "problematic answers," there may be further selection within that class, for example to fit the problematic answer to the setting, as for example in selecting between "Just a minute" and some formulation of ongoing course of action. If the initial selection is the class "clearance cues," there does not appear to be a selectional issue within the class; there does not appear to be a relevant selection made, for example, between "yeah" and "what." (There may be settings in which such selection may be specifically required, as when military ranks are established as the relevant identifications, a subordinate may be required to display his recognized subordinate status by answering "Yes, sir.") While the selection of a clearance cue answer provides the basis for the occurrence of a next action or utterance by summoner, the particular answer employed is not a basis for fitting next utterance, for special selection of sort of utterance, for example, and does not, in that sense, set constraints on what can be done next. A summoned party may, from his analysis of the summons and the setting, decide to clear the summoner to continue with the sort of activity he may take if summoner was pre-sequencing (if he had, indeed, any inference in that regard), but a clearance cue answer in effect clears summoner to proceed without displayed constraint; it does not display what answerer takes if the order of pre-sequenced activity may be, and does not constrain it beyond whatever constraint may have been involved in summoner's preassessments. It provides, so to speak, a *carte blanche*.

## Answering the summons on the telephone

The features of the opening of telephone conversations are somewhat different.<sup>5</sup> The telephone ring, as a form of summons, is not treated by members as displaying selectionality, i.e., as making available to summoned parties the practices whereby it was selected. While members may come to see, in the developing course of the conversation, that a telephone conversation was selected over, e.g., a visit, they do not treat the telephone ring as selected from among a set of ways of doing a summons. The telephone ring stands as a standardized summons. While there are resources upon which one confronted with a ringing phone can base inferences regarding the summoner and the possible character of the pre-sequenced activity, such as the time of day (calls at 3 A.M. to one known not to be normally awake then being inferably high priority), pending business, regular calling practices, “who’s due to call,” etc. (some of which will be elaborated below), displayed selection procedure of the summons is not one of them, and typically they provide at best “good guesses” about what may follow an answer, and are not treated as providing adequate bases for action.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, the telephone ring as summons is not treated as evidencing a pre-assessment by summoner of comparative priorities or temporal fit between pre-sequenced and possibly ongoing courses of action, no such comparative alignment being envisioned (except, again, in cases where it can be taken that summoner must “surely” have known that he was “interrupting,” as with a call at 3 A.M.). There seem to be no interactional resources, then, in analyzing the selection of the summons, and typically in the fact of its production, for deciding between a clearance cue answer and problematic answer (though there may be other bases for not selecting a clearance cue, e.g., ongoing course of action has such priority that it is treated as non-interruptable; in that case, however, the outcome is “no answer”), and although there may be other bases of inference that are relevant, they are typically not treated as adequate grounds for answering the telephone with a problematic answer. Indeed, in the absence of interactionally based grounds, problematic answers are rarely used in telephone conversation.<sup>7</sup>

In telephone conversation, there does not seem to be a selection issue between clearance cue and problematic answers. The alternative is not, however, a *carte blanche* clearance cue as the sole possibility. While such a non-constraining cue as “yeah” is used in telephone conversations as well as in face-to-face settings, it is used in a restricted set of circumstances, and marks the conversation as characterized by those circumstances. In telephone conversation, however, there *is* a selection possibility *within* the class of clearance cue

answers. Aside from “yeah,” telephone summonses may be answered by “hello” or with some self-identification by answerer (there are other possibilities, but these are the central ones). This chapter will be concerned with the selection within the class of clearance cue answers, and with what each selection may be said to accomplish. With regard to the latter issue, it will be suggested that there are answer resources which can introduce some constraints on what is to be done in the following utterances in the conversation. The theme of that discussion may be anticipated here: it is that the answer is fitted not so much to the summons (though it is that too) as to features of the setting in which the answerer is located, and to which summoner is presumed to be oriented in calling.<sup>8</sup>

Before proceeding to a discussion of the clearance cue answers available on the phone, their selection, and their use, we may note several consequences of the preceding discussion. “Hello” and self-identifications (or self-formulations) are not typically used answers to summonses in unmediated interaction. The class of clearance cue answers is, then, partitioned into bounded sub-classes, relevant to the “telephone/face-to-face” distinction. The ring of the phone is not merely the way one initiates a conversation on the telephone; it types the conversation as a telephone conversation with consequences such as the following: a) no selection issue between clearance cue answers and problematic answers; b) a selection issue within the class clearance cue answers; c) the selection includes possibilities whose use is restricted to the phone, i.e., answers which display, and themselves type, the prospective course of action as a telephone conversation; d) the selection is not limited to the restricted sub-class of telephone-specific answers; and within that sub-class there remains a selection issue. Accordingly, the claim may be warranted that the distinction that has hitherto been employed between face-to-face or unmediated interactions and telephonic ones is not an analyst’s constructive distinction or an empirically describable but unused one, but is based on a members’ distinction which has interactional consequences.<sup>9</sup>

### “Yeah”

It was suggested above that there are settings in which the non-constraining clearance cue answers “yeah” and “hi,” regularly used in face-to-face interaction, are used also in telephonic interaction. These are settings in which the information available to a summoned party through the displayed selection of a summons in face-to-face interaction is available through other resources.

They may be employed by answerers when that information may be treated as providing them not with “good guesses” but with reliable bases of inference about the summoner (caller), either who he is (when personal identity is relevant) or what sort he is (when category is relevant). The latter interest may be satisfied in the case of “inter-com” telephones, where the ring of telephone can be taken as evidence, mechanically assured, of the sort of caller, the category of caller, who is calling – i.e., a co-member of the organization. When such analysis is available to the summoned, he may answer “yeah,” as in the following materials selected from the corpus

- #500  
 → D: Yes.  
 C: Do you want your private ambulance up there? etc.
- #391  
 → D: Yeah  
 C: Listen, I got a hold of Colonel \_\_\_\_\_ ... etc.
- #350  
 → D: Yes.  
 C: You’d better put emergency 5 in on that, we’ve got ... etc.

Or the following transfer of call by intercom, drawn from another organization:

- L7: No, listen, do you want to talk to Hal,  
 he can probably be more technical.
- S7: O.K.
- L8: O.K. Just a minute.
- S8: Right.  
 (pause)
- H9: Yeah.

(Radio SB)

The former interest, where information is seen to be available not about the *sort* of summoner who is calling, but about “who it is,” may be satisfied when one party to a conversation in progress proposes to hang up and “call right back.” When, the connection having been broken, the phone rings after such an interval as the summoned may find would have accommodated the proposed intervening activity (e.g., redialing, getting information, making arrangements, etc.), the answerer may answer “yeah” or “hi” (re: “hi” as compared to “hello,” see below, p. 102, n. 14). Thus, in the following data, E has called J to inquire about an event; J has no information on it, but P does:

- E: Well, call 'er can' call me back.  
 J: O.K.  
 E: Guhbye  
 J: Yeah.

(Trio, I)

After a three minute 37 second conversation with P, J calls E back:

- E: Yah?  
 J: Well, she doesn't know.

(Trio, III)

These circumstances, in which answers regularly used in face-to-face interaction are used on the phone as well, are ones in which at least some of the information about summoners available in face-to-face interaction, in part through the displayed selection of the summons, are available in other ways in the telephone ring. Whether by some mechanical attribute of the telephone instrument which may show the call to be intercom, or by the temporal organization of the telephone's ring with respect to some earlier completed or suspended conversation, the summons is analyzable to find what sort of conversation is thereby being initiated. The crucial feature is the availability of information in the summons, and not the sheer matter of whether the summoning is done by mechanical ring or lexical term. And the relevant information may be analyzed not only in the displayed selectedness of the summons, but in its temporal placement.

This discussion has been meant to indicate the dimensions of analysis relevant to a prospective answerer in selecting answers such as "yeah" or "hi." On the other hand, as the selection of a summons in face-to-face interaction displays for analysis in the summons selected the procedure whereby it was selected, so, given that there is a selection issue for answers,<sup>10</sup> the answer selected may display to the caller the method whereby *it* was selected. The answer selected may then be said to "type" the conversation as intercom, expected, resumed, returned, scheduled, etc., or more generally "foreknown." (A basis for deciding between some of these possibilities, these varieties of "foreknown," will be sketched below.) A caller who is answered with a "yeah" or "hi" may hear in that answer that answerer was "expecting" a particular call, and takes it that the present ring is the ring of that call. The answer is selected to "go with," it is "fitted" to, the type of conversation that is presumptively being initiated, and in being selected for such a fit it begins the process of constituting a conversation of that type. There are other features which may mark this type, i.e., other ways of producing the talk of the conversation that constitute it, or

partially constitute it, or are consistent with its constitution as an intercom call, a resumed conversation, etc. For example, in the intercom and personal “call-back” calls cited earlier (numbers 500, 391 and 350; Trio III), note that the callers give no self-identification, and that callers’ first utterances contain classic indexical expressions (e.g., “there,” “that”), whose referent is not in “this conversation.” Neither of these features is distinctive to intercom, or resumed, or scheduled, or expected calls; no caller identification is routine in calls to the police; and the use of indexicals without referent is characteristic of talk even among strangers following, for example, dramatic public events (e.g., disasters are often initially referred to as “up there,” in the aftermath of both Kennedy assassinations, strangers might ask “How is he doing?” without creating a puzzle). But when produced as co-occurrent features together with others, they may constitute a type of conversation.

One important feature of this “foreknown-ness” is that the relevance of a presumed shared “agenda” is invoked by such an answer. Whether an agenda of “topics” (as may be the case in a resumed or returned “personal call”) or an agenda of “sorts of topics” (as may be the case in intercom calls), “yeah” or “hi” may invoke a mutual orientation to “what we know we (were) talk(ing) about” without displaying the parameters of that agenda in the answer.<sup>11</sup> An orientation to an agenda of this sort is built on, and implies, an identification and formulation of the “we” for whom it is an agenda, either specifically identified co-participants, or sorts of participants (categories of them). Further, invoking the relevance of a preset agenda without explicating its basis is built on, displays, and requires reliance on the “mutually oriented to” character of the agenda, its interactional status. Again then we see that the “*carte blanche*” form of clearance cue has its use tied to the availability of interactional resources (for example, with regard to the data from Trio I above, the expectations that the “call back” will be the “earliest possible call back,” i.e., a call back “as soon as the other call is completed,” rather than a call back at some indefinite future).

This mutually oriented-to agenda is ordered at least with respect to “first topic;” the orientation to a shared agenda is in the first instance an orientation to a shared priority topic. Such a shared priority topic may then supply, and be relied on to supply, the unexplicated referents of indexical expressions or “pro-terms.” The use, and analyzability, of such pro-terms without explicated referents is a way in which parties can show one another their sensitivity to what is “on one another’s minds.” For the achievement of this demonstration, “no explication of referents” is required; it is not so much that members can “manage” without explication, but to show their “common orientation” in *this* way, it may be necessary to be able to deal with the pro-terms with no expli-



cated referents. The use of unexplicated pro-terms in a dramatic public event such as a disaster or assassination is thus a way whereby persons, otherwise unacquainted, can show one another a mutually oriented, commonly focused priority topic – “the event” – thereby displaying “what’s on everyone’s mind”; not only everyone displaying what is on his mind, but everyone displaying what they take it is on everybody else’s mind as well. And in being routinely correct in that regard, in the routine interpretability of initial remarks with unexplicated pro-terms, persons may achieve that “sense of community,” “solidarity,” “together across status boundaries,” etc., so commonly remarked upon in the literature and reportage concerning dramatic public events. The same mechanism may be displayed and relied on in less public occasions, as when a husband returning home on the day promotions were to be announced is greeted by his wife with “Well?”

In many interactional settings, one party can show attention to another party with regard to “what’s on your mind?” once he knows who “you” are. Thus, in a call from a reporter to a fire department:

- A: City Fire Department, Livingston speaking.  
 → B: This is Carrie Fortune.  
 → A: It was a garbage rack.  
 B: Oh(hh)kay. Thank//you  
 A: heh heh heh Ri(hh)ght  
 B: G’bye.

(AFD, I, 16)

With “yeah” and “hi” it is foreknowledge of “who” or “what category” that allows this mechanism to be brought to bear on the selection of an answer to the summons. (Here, knowing “who” or “what category” does not indicate that for any value of “who” or “what category,” as long as it is known, such an answer may be selected. The “who” and the category known in this way are ones for whom an agenda is also known, and for whom a “yeah” or “hi” may be in order.) But in selecting such an answer, the prospective conversation is typed as one in which some pre-arrangement is relevant, either an agreement which is now being realized, or a “naturally” arrived at concordance of interest, mutually oriented to.

To say that answering the phone “yeah” or “hi” types the conversation is not, however, to propose that the typing is thereby finalized, or that no further attention need be given to producing the conversation “to type.” In projecting the conversation as a particular type of conversation, some considerations and constraints are introduced to which the co-participants are to be oriented

in constructing the conversation in its course, considerations and constraints which in the case of any particular conversation require attention to the particulars of that conversation, at that time, with those personnel, that history, etc., in particular, with that shared priority topic. For example, as the data cited earlier in which “yeah” is the selected answer suggest, when answerer has selected “yeah” as the answer, then the “business” of the conversation should be done immediately by the caller, that is, in the very next turn in the conversation. (E.g., “Well, she doesn’t know.”) Where a shared orientation to priority topic has been invoked by the called’s answer, other possible “moves” by caller in the next slot may show that the expectation on which the answerer based his selection of answer is disappointed. When it is recalled that such an utterance in the next slot regularly involves the use of unexplicated pro-terms, we can see that if the caller is not one who has a pre-arrangement, is not a proper category member, or is not co-oriented to a priority topic, he may not be in a position to continue “to type.”

It is by the answerer’s invoking a priority co-oriented topic or sort of topic without explicating its basis, and by setting up the relevance of an immediately next utterance consistent with that usage, that a caller may get the sense that he is involved in an “expected” call. Should he be party to the “pre-arrangement” (whether “formally agreed” or “naturally occurring”), he will be in a position to recognize that it is indeed for him that the “hi” or “yeah” is meant, and will have the resources to accomplish a fitted next utterance. Other callers may take it that answerer could not know who or what sort was calling, or that answerer’s warrantable expectation will prove wrong (as when an outside call is transferred over the intercom). By not being a party to any pre-arrangement, not sharing an orientation to a priority topic or sort of topic, and being confronted with the current operation of such pre-arrangements and co-oriented topics, such an answer can make of such a caller, right off, an “outsider.”

Answerer, however, is at this point in the conversation as yet unaware of that fact. While a “proper” caller, i.e., one for whom the “yeah” or “hi” answer is on that occasion proper, appropriately in the next slot turns to the priority topic, co-orientation to which is presumptively displayed by the answer, “non-proper caller’s” job in the next turn is to identify themselves (even if they might otherwise not have done so; even if, for example, such a caller might – was entitled to – have sought voice recognition by saying only “hello,” had the initial answer been “hello”); for they are not so much identifying themselves, as showing themselves to be other than the answerer apparently expected, or could have been expected to expect. So, for example, in the conversation re-

ported as Radio SB above, while the call is received by “H” as an intercom, it is not a co-member of the organization on the line. The sequel then is:

- H: Yeah.  
 S: Hi, Hal?  
 H: Yeah, what can I do for ya?  
 → S: Marty Anderson here.  
 H: Yeah.

And answerers who discover that they are not talking to the one they expected, and hearing that their answer may well have made of the actual caller an “outsider to an arrangement,” may undertake to repair matters by accounting for their initial answer and citing their expectations.

We may summarize this discussion as follows. The telephone ring types a forthcoming conversation as a telephone conversation (both caller and called attend the rings – and attend each others’ orientation to the rings – through the use of “number of rings” as a measurement system for the temporal relation of answer to summons, used as a basis for inferences regarding “absence” or eagerness [cf. the subsequently published Schegloff 1986]), establishing thereby the relevance of a selection problem for clearance cue answers. Answers such as “yeah,” “hi,” etc., are, then, produced and heard to be produced as the outcome of a selection procedure. Their selection presumptively types the prospective conversation as “foreknown,” as one in which the answerer takes it he has warrantable information about the caller and the prospective course of action. Such answers type the prospective conversation “presumptively” because there may not be a convergence between caller and called on the type, and caller may undertake to correct what he sees as the answerer’s “mistake,” thereby possibly transforming the type of the call in his first utterance.<sup>12</sup>

“Yeah” and “Hi” are, however, marked forms, and the settings in which they are selected, in which answerers treat their “information” in regard to caller as warranting such a selection, are not typical. How do answerers proceed when the ring of the phone does not furnish them information adequate to the selection of such an answer, when they may not feel they have “reliable” information on the caller and therefore on the presequenced course of action, and when therefore a *carte blanche* answer such as is used in face-to-face interaction may not be appropriate? And what are the interactional consequences of alternative selections? In the following pages we examine two: “hello” and some form of self-identification.

## “Hello”

A first question to be addressed with respect to “hello” as an initial utterance in telephone conversation is whether it is an answer, whether it is as an answer to a summons that it is to be analyzed. The question arises in the following way. We noted earlier that “hello” has as one of its prominent uses that of “greetings.” It is further clearly the case that not any use of “hello” is a greeting, or a possible greeting. When a conversation is temporarily adjourned, as when one co-participant goes to check something, the resumption may be marked by an exchange of “hellos”. There, whether they are treated as availability signs, or as a summons-answer exchange, the “hellos” are not used to do greetings. Whether “hello” is a greeting, or a possible greeting, seems to turn on a combination of the lexeme and its placement in the conversation. Sacks (1975) has proposed that an utterance from the class that can be greetings (of which “hello” is a member), when placed at the beginning of a conversation (e.g., in the first slot, or in the first exchange; the argument may hold for slots further in the conversation, but should hold at least for “first slot”), constitutes a greeting. The production of an utterance as a greeting, its analysis as a greeting by co-participant, or a search for greetings (e.g., a finding that one was not greeted) turn on a combination of a “place” in the conversation where greeting would occur were it to occur, and a class of utterances, a member of which is placed in that “place.” Greeting term in first position, then, specifies a “greeting”; in this analysis, the initial “hello” in a telephone conversation is not, or is not in the first place, or is not only, an answer to a summons, but a “greeting.”

There are (or would be) describable virtues to using a greeting as the initial utterance in a telephone conversation. As has been noted, greetings come in pairs; they are properly organized as utterance pairs, the occurrence of the first making a second (or return) conditionally relevant. In doing a greeting as his initial utterance, a called party might thereby set constraints on what a caller could properly do in *his* first utterance, making at least a greeting-return the first-order relevant action for caller. For a called party who, to this point, had available as resources only the ring of the phone, some basis might thereby be made available for some identification of the caller and the order of activity that might be forthcoming, by affording the called at least an opportunity for voice recognition.

Several considerations make this analysis of the initial “hello” in some telephone conversations unsatisfactory, unless modified.

First, in conversations in which the initial “hello” is not answered with a return greeting, a return greeting may nonetheless not be found to be missing.

For example:

- A: Hello/  
 → B: Marty Rosenthal calling collect, will you accept the charge/  
 A: Yes, certainly, operator.  
 (CF, p. 22)

- A: Hello  
 → B: Are you awake/  
 A: Yeah I // dis got up  
 B: I – Oh didjuh/  
 A: Yeah  
 B: hh Weh gooud. I'm alone.  
 (NB: IV:3, p. 1)

- A: Hello  
 → B: Is Jessie there/  
 A: (No) Jessie's over et 'er gramma's fer a couple days.  
 B: A'right thankyou  
 A: Yer welcome/  
 B: Bye  
 A: Dianne/  
 (NB: 9/10/68; c. 1, p. 1)

Secondly, one feature of greetings and greeting exchanges appears to be “one per party per occasion, if reciprocated.”<sup>13</sup> Although after a greeting exchange parties may employ what Sacks (1975) has termed “greeting substitutes” (such as “How are you?”), they should not continue with additional greeting *per se*. Yet there are substantial materials available in which after the initial “hello,” a caller “identifies himself,” is “recognized” by answerer, and/or is found by answerer to be one with whom he is in “informal” relations, or a “friend,” and gets from answerer the greeting form that appears to be selected by reference to showing recognition, or being consistent with “informal” or “friendly” relations, i.e., “hi.”<sup>14</sup> For example:

- A: Hello.  
 B: Marty, Al.  
 → A: Oh, hi.  
 (CF, p. 24)

- A: Hello/  
 B: Martin/  
 A: Yeah/

- B: Hi, this is Sophia  
 → A: Oh, hi.  
 (CF, p. 25)

- A: Hello  
 B: Eddy  
 A: Yeh  
 B: Guy Huston.  
 → A: Hi Guy.  
 (NB, I, 1, p. 1)

If the initial “hello” is analyzed straightforwardly as a greeting, then, given that return greetings are conditionally relevant, the non-occurrence of a return should be its absence, notable, actable upon, etc., which does not appear to be the case. Since the pair organization of greetings and their non-repeatability seem amply supported by a wide variety of data, it does not appear that the initial “hello” of some telephone conversations is treated by co-participants, or is to be treated by analysts, as straightforwardly a greeting. The grounds for treating the initial “hello” as an answer to a summons have been developed in Schegloff (1968); the features of greetings do not provide for preferring a “greeting analysis” to an “answer analysis.” The initial “hello,” then, is treated as, and is to be treated as, in the first place an answer to the telephone ring’s summons.

Although it is not in the first place a greeting, there *is* some empirical basis for finding the relevance of greetings in the analysis of the initial “hello.” On the one hand, caller’s first utterance may begin with a greeting term which then seems to operate as the second part of a pair, as in:

- A: Hello/  
 → B: Hello. I’m trying to locate Professor \_\_\_\_\_, is he there/  
 A: No, he’s not.  
 B: Thank you  
 A: Mmm  
 (EAS, FN)

On the other hand, while the occurrence of the answerer’s initial “hello” does not entail any subsequent greeting by the answerer, it is also the case that caller’s first utterance may be a greeting alone, that answerer may not answer the greeting, and no greeting return be found absent, as in the following:

- A: Hello.  
 → B: 'Allo.  
 A: G'you–your roommate talks forever; or is it you?  
 B: The roomie ... (etc.)

(CF, p. 8)

In such an occurrence, and in ones likes it, it appears that the sequence may emerge non-violative because the “possible greeting” status of the initial “hello” is exploited. The foregoing arguments do not entail that the initial “hello” *cannot* be a greeting, only that it *need* not be, and that when used as the initial utterance in a telephone conversation, greeting need not be the first-order activity that the utterance is accomplishing. Above all, the initial “hello” is an answer to a summons. Whatever else it accomplishes, it accomplishes (unless specially modified) the completion of an SA sequence [summons-answer sequence] and the establishment of availability; that it accomplishes at least that for co-participants can be seen in the invariable immediate relevance of further talk (and the near invariable occurrence of further talk; when non-occurring, it is relevantly absent<sup>15</sup>) in closely paced order directly after the utterance.

In the use of a possible greeting term to accomplish the answer, and by virtue of the slot for an answer being, in telephone conversation a slot in which a greeting term should be placed to do greeting, the utterance has a possible analysis in addition to that of “answer” (a possible analysis, that is, both for co-participants and for analysts), and that is “possible greeting.” By “possible greeting” is intended that whether it is a greeting or not, whether it accomplishes greeting or not, can turn on what follows it, on whether co-participants convert, or can be seen to have converted, its status as a “possible greeting” into “no greeting” or “actual greeting.” Thus, if it is followed by a caller’s greeting and no further greeting by called, then the latter will not be seen as absent, the possible greeting status of the initial “hello” serving as called’s greeting (as in the data from “CF, p. 8” cited above). If, however, the sequence develops with a subsequent possible greeting by called, then the first may be seen not to have been a greeting, and the non-repeatability constraint is not violated (as in the data cited as “CF, p. 24,” “CF, p. 25,” and “NB, I, 1, p. 1,” above). We may also then expect that when the phone is answered “hi” in the usage described in a previous section of this chapter, then the non-occurrence of a greeting from caller in the next slot may not involve its absence, the “hi” serving as an answer to the summons of a particular type, and (though it is a greeting term in first position) not as a greeting.

If the status of “hello” is as a “possible greeting,” then the “constraints” on a next slot suggested earlier as the possible virtue of using a greeting as an initial utterance are very weak constraints indeed, if they are constraints at all. For while they make a return greeting “possibly relevant,” should there be no return greeting it need not be found absent. Are there then no constraints or no specially relevant actions to be done in the caller’s first turn, which “hello” may be seen to occasion? There does seem to be considerable orderliness to what is done in the turn(s) following “hello,” and conversation seems to be organized to provide for that orderliness (rather than, for example, it being an order which no special organization is designed to achieve; on the contrast, see Sacks 1992, *passim*). However, as compared to the hypothetical orderliness involved in the “greeting” constraints which are tied to the utterance-to-utterance order of organization, the orderliness to be discussed below – involving the relevance of reasons or “identification work” after the initial “hello” – is to be understood by reference to the overall structure of conversation. It is not, then, that the initial “hello” makes “identification work” relevant, but that the initial “hello” may be the occasion for the relevance of “identification work.”

It is a feature of the overall structural organization of conversations that identification work or delimited alternative activities are relevant at their beginnings; “hello” may occasion that work, or its relevance, by establishing the availability of the parties, thus meeting a critical condition for beginning. Once the co-participants can proceed, they proceed with the relevant activities, e.g., identification, but those activities are made relevant not by “hello” (as a return greeting might be said to be made relevant by “hello”), but by reference to overall structural considerations. To understand the kind of answer “hello” is on the telephone, the work it does, and the work it occasions, we need at least to sketch some features of overall conversational organization which its use seems to invoke. In describing the overall structural features relevant to the present discussion, we will need to digress a bit in an attempt to specify some features of a class of conversations of which telephone conversations are members, to set the context which makes relevant the doing of identification work.

### **Designed and by-product conversations**

The present discussion is intended to give some depth and perspective to several points, which can be supported on quite other bases. They are that in telephone conversations (and the relevance of that as a type for members has been established above) identification work and/or reasons for the contact are



relevant actions at the very beginning, i.e., directly following the answer. Empirically, one and/or the other are regularly and massively found there. That they are relevant there will be suggested below by showing that the method whereby they are sometimes accomplished turns on their being relevant (see discussion of voice recognition below). The present discussion is in the interests of showing that this relevance is to be understood by reference to certain overall organizational features, and that these are not overall organizational features specific to telephone conversation *per se*, but organizational features of a type of conversation – what I am here terming “designed” conversation – of which all telephone conversations are treated by members as instances, but of which some face-to-face conversations are treated as instances as well. The discussion will, therefore, begin by limning the sense of the distinct types in face-to-face interaction, although the lack of specific materials and analyses precludes systematic description here.

An initial sense of the distinction between designed and by-product conversations or encounters may be provided by the following examples. One person passing another may exchange greetings alone with him, or may do so in passing his office if his door happens to be open (see Goffman (1953:159–161) for examples from an isolated rural community). Such minimal exchanges do not characterize occasions on which one has entered the office of another, or “approached” him, nor do we find telephone conversations which consist of no more than an exchange of greetings. When persons “accidentally” encounter one another, it appears, they may be at liberty to confine their remarks to an exchange of greetings (Goffman 1953:485 points out that length of salutation may depend “on the period that had elapsed since the last salutation and the period that seemed likely before the next”; but a minimal exchange is possible); when there is a “planned” or “intended” encounter, more than a minimal pair is done. The notion of “accidental” and “intentional” encounters implicitly presumes that the encounterers are acquainted; non-acquaintances do not “accidentally” encounter each other, they do not encounter at all. “Accidental” and “intentional” are the acquainted’s version of “by-product” and “designed.”

That members may treat as relevant whether an action has been a produced designedly or as by-product, as a general distinction, can be seen as well in Sacks’ observation (1992a:792–793) that there are important differences in the treatments accorded “interactionally generated” invitations and what might be called “designed” invitations. When an invitation is extended by a “called” party, it can be seen that the conversation was not designed for the invitation’s achievement, the conversation having been initiated by the other; such an invitation may be seen to be interactionally generated, while caller’s invitations may

(though they need not invariably) be seen as designed. While interactionally generated invitations may be treated by offering “counter-invitation” (“why don’t you come over here?”), cautioning against elaborate preparation, etc., designed invitations do not seem to be properly treated that way. So, members can orient to the designed versus by-product features of an action. The argument here is that conversation as a whole may be similarly analyzed, or more particularly, conversation beginnings may be, and different relevancies be associated with different findings (The point about specifying the discussion to conversational beginnings is that once initiated, transformations of conversational type are possible, so that what may have been initiated as one type may be transformed into another. That is, there are ways of transforming many sorts of conversational “type.” But unless transformed, an initiated “type” holds; cf. the discussion of “expectable monotopicality” below, at pp. 104–105, n. 23.)

One method by which the “designed” or “by-product” character of a prospective conversation may be displayed (by possible initiator) and analyzed (by possible recipient) turns on the temporal relation between certain features of the setting, e.g., the achievement and acknowledgment of co-presence, and the attempted initiation of conversation. Conversation initiation may be accomplished as “by-product” when persons find each other to be co-present, do co-presence acknowledgments (e.g., see Goffman 1963a: 83–88 on signs of civil inattention), and do not in closely paced order<sup>16</sup> undertake conversation. Co-presence acknowledgements may then serve as a temporal marker; if it does not directly occasion an attempted initiation, the co-presence will not be seen to have been designed and achieved in the interests of conversation. If conversation is initiated in close order, then the co-presence may be seen to have been designed and achieved to allow it. Where the finding and acknowledgment of co-presence is not directly followed by attempted conversation initiation, where co-presence is seen as by-product and not designed, for example when two persons come to be standing at a bus stop, sitting in a waiting room, occupying adjacent seats on an airplane, be juxtaposed in a queue, etc., they may accomplish and be seen to accomplish the establishment of a “base” upon arrival, coming to a stop, sitting down, setting down portable belongings, etc., establishing that their presence there is designed for locally relevant activities, and not for the co-presence with the other it accomplishes as a by-product. Such “establishing a base” may involve as well adjustments in pace of walking on arrival, respect for micro-ecological space boundaries (see Sommers 1959, 1969; Hall 1959; Goffman 1963), body and face positioning to avoid direct confrontation (Schefflen 1963, 1964), eye aversion (Kendon 1967), neutral facial expression (Birdwhistell 1970), etc.

By contrast, a different configuration of deportment may be produced and seen as “doing preliminaries” to conversation, as “approaching someone” or “being approached.” When one walks a path aimed at another, does not vary or slacken pace as distance diminishes while giving no signs of veering to avoid collision, facing directly at other, incipiently smiling, crossing micro-ecological boundaries and entering conversational range, positioning body vis-a-vis, then that preliminaries to starting up a conversation are being accomplished may be available to the one whose path is thus occupied, who is thus confronted, etc. Persons may sometimes see preliminaries being done in their direction, and “brace themselves” for the initiation of conversation, only to find that the preliminaries were being done “to” one directly behind them in a same path with the initiator. But where preliminaries are seen, the conversation that is then initiated may be analyzed as a designed, rather than a byproduct, conversation. (To be sure, it may be seen that another has, by an orientation to these ways of seeing designed and by-product conversations, designed one to seem a by-product, as when women see “chance” and “casual” encounters “engineered” by males; but the rights to see by-product conversations as designedly engineered may be limited to those for whom there may be reason for such engineering, as in the courtship case, or persons of high prestige or reputation. Others do so at the risk of being seen as paranoid.)

While the above discussion is by no means an adequately detailed, systematic, or methodic account of the “doing” and “analyzing” of conversation initiations as “designed” or “by-product,” it may suffice for the present occasion to suggest the types involved and some basis for seeing that they are relevantly discriminated by members. (Where the parties are entitled to mutual recognition as acquaintances, then the discrimination may be formulated, as noted above, as “accidental” versus “intentional,” the issue being whether their “co-presence” is designed or chance.) The discrimination is in point, because, as types, “designed” and “by-product” conversations have different overall structural organizations. The discussion here will largely confine itself to “designed” conversations, for telephone conversation seems to be invariably treated as “designed,” so it is the overall structural features of “designed” conversation that will be relevant here.

When a conversation is initiated and seen to be initiated as a designed conversation, a relevant matter attended to as a task for the conversation at its beginning is establishing adequate grounds for its undertaking, establishing its entitlement.<sup>17</sup> One basis for its entitlement may be the announcement of a legitimate reason for initiating the conversation. While I cannot here provide an adequate account of what constitutes a “legitimate” reason, that being in any

case a matter that may be contested by the co-participants, several sorts of reasons which may claim a sort of *prima facie* legitimacy have been suggested by others; for example, Goffman's (1963: 128) observations that adequate warrant may be claimed by using the interests of the other as the grounds for starting the conversation (e.g., "You dropped your wallet"; "Your purse is open"), by citing "free needs" (e.g., coin change, the time, a match, directions, etc. *ibid.*, 130), and "ritually impaired" objects which may be fair topic for anyone's comment (e.g., children and dogs, *ibid.*, 126). Whatever the features that constitute legitimate grounds, initiators of designed conversations regularly provide them in the beginnings of conversational openings (i.e., as their first utterance, or as their second utterance, if their first was a summons).

Alternative adequate grounds for starting up a conversation (I will address below the issue of whether the following should stand as alternative to reasons, or vice versa) is reciprocal entitled identification of the parties as "acquainted." Parties who may relevantly identify each other as acquaintances may need no reason to serve as adequate grounds for starting a conversation (they are not precluded from offering reasons; however, by virtue of not needing them, having them assumes a different status, as will be discussed below). In face-to-face interaction, of course, acquaintanceship may be established by visual inspection. To say that it may be is not, however, to provide a basis for its occurrence, or its relevance.

The clarification of the issue of the relevance of identifications by parties of one another as "acquainted," and the visual-inspection recognition whereby it is achieved, will require a digression, one whose resources will be used not only for the present discussion but for subsequent issues as well.<sup>18</sup>

The relevance of "acquainted" is problematic because it is one of an indefinitely large collection of identifications, or identification types, that could be made of any parties. Sacks has shown that for the identification of a member, there is at least more than one identification term (or categorization), drawn from a collection of terms (as the term "male" is drawn from the collection "sex"; or the term "plumber" is drawn from the collection "occupations" which also includes "doctor", "lawyer," etc.), which is "correct" for a member. That is, there are at least two collections (i.e., age and sex) which have terms one of which will be correct for any member of any unspecified population (in fact there are many more than two that have this property, and an indefinite number which will have correct terms if there is prior specification of the population to be identified). As a consequence, identifications are not adequately warranted by their "correctness" (in some correspondence sense of correctness, whereby "male" is correct if the object so identified is male), for alternate iden-

tifications would be correct as well. In proposing an identification, then, some procedure whereby that identification term, from that collection of terms, is found relevant is required.

By reference to this argument, it is not enough that two members are “acquainted” for us to so identify them, or for them to be asserted to so identify themselves; some procedure whereby the relevance of *that* identification, and the collection from which it is drawn, the collection of paired-relationship terms (called “R” by Sacks), is established is required. While it has been asserted above that for the receiver of a conversation initiation, or indeed one who sees preliminaries being done, the collection “acquainted-unacquainted” is made relevant, unacquainted requiring reasons and acquainteds not, on the one hand it is not clearly the case that on any occasion of being addressed the collection “acquainted-unacquainted” is of first-order relevance, and on the other no provision is thereby made for the relevance to a prospective first speaker of “acquainted-unacquainted” as the possibly adequate grounds for his starting a conversation. We may, therefore, outline some considerations which warrant a general first-order relevance of the collection “acquainted-unacquainted,” and the identification “acquainted” in particular.

While greetings may be appropriate between members formulated by a wide variety of identifications, greeting exchanges seen to be obligated, and minimal greeting exchanges allowed, between encountering acquainteds. A greeting exchange may serve as an acknowledgment of recognition, and as acknowledgment of co-presence, for acquainteds. If acquainteds see each other to have seen each other, they ought to acknowledge reciprocal recognition and acquaintanceship. While modified by specifications concerning entitlement to reciprocal recognition, status orderings on who greets first, and the like, members regularly have others to whom they will owe a greeting, indeed a first greeting, if co-present.

The relevance of this rule can be seen in that failure to do an initial greeting when the rule is relevant may entail an official absence. While second greetings, or return greetings may be found absent when non-occurring by virtue of the pair organization of greetings, and the conditional relevance of a second on the occurrence of the first, such a rule does not provide for the official absence of first greetings; yet first greetings may be found absent.<sup>19</sup> They may warrant remarks or inferences such as “He didn’t even say ‘hello,’” “He (you) didn’t (don’t) recognize me”), or, if those are not supportable, “He’s angry,” etc. Members can then be “held responsible” for not doing first greetings, by reference to an obligation they may have to acknowledge recognition and co-presence with those entitled to recognition as acquaintances. Such an obligation, and

an orientation to meeting it, seem to entail for members monitoring the environment for entitled acquainteds, whose co-presence, or mutually ratified co-presence, might occasion the relevance of a greeting.<sup>20</sup> The relevance of the collection “acquainted-unacquainted,” or more correctly of the identification “acquainted,” may be provided by the possible obligations that recognition may entail. (The monitoring may have no interest in the identification “unacquainted.”<sup>21</sup> It may therefore be more correct to see the initial adequate grounds for starting a conversation to be the identification “acquainted,” reasons serving as an alternative if that identification cannot be established. This would reverse the order of alternatives suggested earlier. I see no basis now, however, for preferring either version).

If the foregoing sketch may be taken to provide some warrant for the relevance of identification as “acquainted” as a first-order relevant identification, then a basis may have been provided for its availability as possible adequate grounds for starting up a conversation, the point which prompted this excursus in the first place. Acquaintanceship recognition being available to visual inspection in face-to-face interaction, a basis for accomplishing it is thereby provided.<sup>22</sup>

There is an additional basis for seeing the relevance of the category “acquainted” as a first-order identification, i.e., if a conversation is to be started with a summons, then one selection issue for summonses turns on the acquainted-stranger alternation, “excuse me” being a term selected for unacquainted.

While I have urged that “acquainted” is an identification of first-order relevance to the beginning of conversation (although it should be recalled that discussion is intendedly limited to designed conversation), other identifications may be relevant at the beginning. “Acquainted” as an identification is special in that it may serve as an alternative to reasons, reasons not being needed if acquaintanceship is established. But identifications may be relevant and offered even though they do not lift the requirement of reasons. In particular, identifications may be relevant as orientations to reasons, and as possible modifiers on the sorts of reasons that will serve as legitimate grounds for the conversation. That is, we earlier reported observations on sorts of reasons which non-formulated members, “anybodies,” might offer as legitimate bases for conversation. Some reasons not legitimate for unidentified initiators of conversation might be legitimate for formulated members, initiators identified in particular ways. Prospective reasons may, therefore, make identification (i.e., self-identification by initiator) relevant.

Similarly, while reciprocally recognized acquaintanceship in itself may serve as adequate grounds for starting up a designed conversation (and therefore, for achieving co-presence), acquaintances may have reasons too. However, not having to have a reason makes having a reason a different sort of phenomenon.

When acquaintances (where acquaintanceship is established as relevant) offer reasons, the reasons are not for starting up a conversation, but for starting a conversation “*now*.” Where acquaintanceship serves as adequate grounds, however, so that no reason is required, having a reason on each occasion of starting a conversation (calling, dropping in, going over, etc.) may dim the relevance or adequacy of the acquaintanceship *per se* as a basis for conversation. As Sacks observed (1992b: 163–166), persons may hesitate to call with a reason if they find they have recently called only with reasons, and may make a point of calling for no reason. In announcing that they are “dropping in to say hello,” “calling to find out how you are,” or noting that “I haven’t seen you lately,” initiators of conversations may show that they not only do not have a reason for starting up (which as acquainteds they do not need) but that they don’t have a reason for calling “*now*.” They thereby show that while any conversation might be said to occur in some “*now*,” it is not by reference to any particular “*now*” that they are starting a conversation. Indeed, the character of some members’ acquaintanceship may be defined by the regular “no reason” initiation of conversations, where that there is no reason, that there is no “*now*” for the conversation, need no longer be asserted, as with persons who “talk every day.” To start a conversation, to design a conversation, with no reason, and with no reason for doing it “*now*,” may thus display that one is thinking of the other without occasioned reasons or interests in doing so, as a matter of pure acquaintanceship.

The question, then, is not: is identification relevant and/or is a reason relevant, but, by virtue of an identification, a reason may or may not be; by virtue of a reason, an identification may or may not be. Accomplishing one or another or both, however, are relevant actions at the beginnings of designed conversations as a feature of their overall structural organization. There are, however, independent grounds for identification if its outcome in the collection “acquainted-unacquainted” is “acquainted,” i.e., acquaintanceship should be recognized and acknowledged, if possible.

There are, of course, conversation starts between unacquaintededs that do not display reasons in the beginning of the conversation. By-product conversations may not have reasons in the beginning, and although our main interest is in designed conversations, it may be in point here to note some features

of by-product conversations. They may have reasons offered at the beginning when started by unacquainted, but if they do not, they will regularly display in their beginnings, in the first or second utterance by initiator, a legitimate basis for the conversation's start (again, once initiated, the conversations may be transformed, so the basis for its start may not constrain its development over its course). One feature of by-product conversation, it may be recalled, is that co-presence is not seen as having been designed and achieved in the interests of the conversation, but rather, the parties pursuing their own courses of action, co-presence is a by-product. Such occasions of co-presence are frequently ones that have elsewhere been characterized as ones in which a continuing state of incipient talk may exist (Schegloff & Sacks 1973). One feature of such scenes may be that their temporal boundary is fixed independent of the internal development of conversations that may be ongoing. Occupants of adjacent seats on an airplane, those waiting in waiting rooms, at bus-stops, for elevators, at ski lifts, etc., are in such settings. When by-product conversations are started in such settings, initial utterances regularly display attention to the co-membership of initiator and target in the setting in which the conversation is started (in the case of airplane seatmates, for example, by utterances invoking the relevance of the plane, the city left, the city of destination, the stewardess, the weather, etc.). By invoking or displaying attention to features of the setting in which the parties are co-members, or searching out features of the setting by reference to which initiator and target are co-members (Goffman 1963a: 133), a basis for the conversation is claimed, what may be termed "acquaintanceship substitutes." But such bases for conversation do not seem to be invoked for designed conversations, as warranting their beginnings (again, once initiated, such acquaintanceship substitutes may be invoked as grounds for transforming the conversation).

I have urged that members orient to a distinction in producing and analyzing conversation initiations between designed and by-product conversation; that designed conversation has as a feature of its overall structural organization the relevance right off at the beginning of the conversation of adequate grounds for its conduct;<sup>23</sup> that adequate grounds may be provided by reciprocally recognized acquaintanceship, or by legitimate reasons (where legitimacy may be related to identifications of the parties other than in terms of acquaintanceship); and that therefore, in designed conversations, establishing acquaintanceship or reasons will be a relevant bit of work at the very beginning. The relevance of this discussion to the matter at hand is that telephone conversation appears invariably to be treated as designed conversation. In having to organize a course of action (e.g., most obviously, in dialing) to achieve its initiation, and in be-



ing seen to have done so, the caller is seen to have designed the conversation's occurrence. That is available to the called in the ring of the phone.

For telephone conversation, then, it appears that the overall structural organization of designed conversation is relevant, and that directly at its beginning the establishment of acquaintanceship or the offering of reasons is the relevant matter. "Hello" as an answer may thus be seen to occasion one or the other, and the former in preference to the latter if possible. That acquaintanceship identification, or as I shall refer to it, "identification work" (to take note of the fact that "identification work" may be done though no identifications are asked for or offered, as in the case of voice identification to be discussed shortly) is relevant by reference to overall structural organization seems required to understand routinely produced sequences directly after "hello," for which "hello" does not provide any ready basis of understanding on an utterance-to-utterance level of organization.

While the answerer's initial "hello" does not prospectively invoke identifications or reasons by way of utterance-to-utterance organization, but rather occasions their relevance through the overall structural organization of designed conversation, a caller doing identification work or reasons must accomplish them so as to display attention to the utterance-to-utterance level of organization. The actions made relevant by overall structural considerations are produced with respect for, and with attention to, orderliness at other levels of organization. The utterances produced by caller to do identification work or reasons are thus "fitted to" the initial utterance which they follow; they are produced to follow the answerer's initial utterance. And they are produced by an orientation to whatever "type" the initial utterance may have projected for the conversation, either to be consistent with it and so continue to constitute the conversation as one of that type, or to transform the type (as caller's first utterance after "yeah" or "hi" may serve to further constitute a "fore-known," shared-priority-but-unexplicated-topic type conversation, or to transform it). For each of the possibly relevant actions for caller in his first turn, there is a variety of techniques for accomplishing it. For example, identification work can be accomplished by voice recognition or by "doing identification," and each of those has ways in which it can be accomplished. But since selection among those techniques in part turns on considerations of "fit" to the initial answer, it will be best to defer a discussion of such sequelae until we have completed an examination of the range of answer resources, what they seem to accomplish and how they are selected, to which caller's first utterance is fitted (as utterance and as type). In doing so, we will have occasion to examine some interactional resources employed by answerer to select an answer (not to select

between clearance cue answers and problematic answers, for, as was suggested above, the interactional resources for that selection appear unavailable in telephone conversation beginnings; but to select between possible clearance cue answers), and whose use for the selection is displayed in the answer, and is employed by caller in producing his initial utterance. We will then be in a position to return to what happens after the initial answer, and to work through the accomplishment of the identification work or reasons which the initial “hello” may occasion.

Here we can note that in occasioning the relevance of identification work and/or reasons as next actions, the initial “hello” does introduce constraints on the turn immediately following it. However, in setting these constraints, it is left to the caller to select a reason or an identification to introduce, and to choose the manner of its introduction. No constraints are explicated in the initial answer which would set boundaries on a class of legitimate reasons or identifications. “Hello” provides a license to talk to callers identified by a wide range of identifications and with a wide variety of reasons, as long as they properly provide their identifications or reasons at the beginning. This is well fitted to the use of “hello” as the typical answering form at “home phones” or “personal phones,” where a wide variety of callers may properly call with a wide variety of prospective conversations, there being no *a priori* topical restrictions relevant. To say that “hello” is the “typical” form used at “home” or “personal” phones is to say that this typicality is produced by answerers’ use of their setting as one basis for selecting an answer. The selection procedures involved will be discussed in the last section of this chapter. It is also, however, to suggest that “hello” “types” the conversation it begins as a “personal” conversation, and this is an incorrect suggestion. “Hello” is the unmarked form of answer to the telephone; whereas “yeah” or “hi” may type a prospective conversation as “expected,” and a self-identification form of answer, such as “Police Desk” may type it as “business” (as we shall see below), “Hello” may show that it is not “specifically expected,” and is not “specifically business,” but is not selected specifically to show those negative features. While not selected for those features, it may nonetheless come to be seen that it is one of those features that is most consequential on some occasion of use. Thus:

- A: Hello  
 → B: “Hello:?”  
 A: Yeah. “Hello.”  
 B: Wuh—is this 293-4673  
 A: No, it’s 293-4637..

- B: Oh, I'm awfully sorry.  
 ...  
 A: Am I supposed to be a business firm?  
 → B: Yes. That's right. That's exactly right. I'm calling my office. They never answer with "hello:."

(GZ, p. 27)

"Hello," then, in allowing "possible business" and "possible personal" conversations, may type the conversation only as "non-typed," as not in advance setting priority or exclusively relevant topics, conversation types, or legitimate identifications for callers. While there are constraints on callers to provide either reasons or identifications, no constraints are introduced by the "hello"-form answer on the accomplishment of those actions (though constraints may otherwise be operative, e.g., those provided by the way in which "hello" is done). In this respect, self-identification forms of answer may differ.

### "Police Desk"

A first observation about self-identifications as answers to telephone summonses, as the answerer's initial utterance, is that they are preemptive identifications. Identifications, it was noted earlier, are made relevant in designed conversations as one way of possibly establishing the entitlement for starting up a conversation. Accordingly, the work of identification (or of giving reasons) was the initiator's work – in the case of telephone conversation, the caller's work, for it is his entitlement to have started the conversation that may be at issue. The locus of that work, of the relevance of identifications and/or reasons, was thus initiator's (caller's) first utterance after the possible start of a conversation has been established; where an initiator's first utterance was a summons, then it might be in his second utterance that identifications and/or reasons would be relevant. On the telephone, since the summons is not accomplished by an utterance, it is in fact in caller's first utterance that that work is relevant. Answering the telephone with a self-identification is preemptive because it does the work of identification before the turn-taking organization has provided caller his first opportunity for doing so. At caller's first turn, he is not then able to do an initial identification; any identification done there will stand in some relationship to the preemptive identification already accomplished in the answer.

An answer such as “Police Desk” accomplishes an identification of a particular kind, and thereby makes the identification issue the provision of identifications of a particular kind. Of the identifications that may stand as adequate grounds for starting up a conversation, one collection was noted above to be specially relevant, i.e., acquainted-unacquainted. Identification in terms of this collection, in particular identification as “acquainted,” involves a personal identification; together with many other kinds of identification that may be offered as part of the work of warranting a conversation, it identifies a particular initiator or caller, it addresses the issue “who’s calling,” and may, for example, use a personal name to accomplish the identification. Self-identification answers of the form of “Police Desk” make the relevant sort of identification not personal but categorical. Identificational interest is then not in “who in particular is calling” but in the “sort of caller.” After such an answer and the type of identification it makes relevant (and the type of conversation thereby initiated), no personal self-identification by caller need be given or relevant (e.g., no personal name), and it may not be asked for over the whole conversation. For example:

- D: Police Desk.  
 C: Uh, I have a large uh Pontiac station wagon. Do you think you could use it?  
 D: Yes, sir, the cattle barn is the emergency first aid station set up there and uh if you go to 73rd and Arena, the main gate, and uh tell the officer that you were sent by headquarters to the cattle barn.  
 C: I’ll be right out there.  
 D: Thank you.

(IPD, #19)

- D: Police Desk  
 C: Uh uh a car accident at 4700 East Lincoln, Taylor’s Lane and Lincoln.  
 D: 4700 East Lincoln?  
 C: Yes.  
 D: Anybody hurt there?  
 C: I don’t believe so.  
 D: O.K. . . . I’ll have somebody check.  
 C: Thank you.

(IPD, #83)

Indeed when a personal identification is given, and furthermore is one inviting recognition as an acquaintance (that the form used in the following data is such a form will be shown below), it is not picked up when offered.

- D: Police Desk, what is it please?  
 → C: Un it's Watson.  
 → D: Huh?  
 C: Watson?  
 D: Yeah.

(IPD, #466)

Personal identification, even identification as acquaintance, is not of first-order relevance in conversations begun with a self-identification answer. Unlike calls answered with “hello” in which caller’s first utterance may be inspected for possible acquaintanceship identification, for example, through voice recognition (Schegloff 1979), answerers in this “type” of call display no interest in personal identifications in caller’s first utterance.

The foregoing discussion may seem to have introduced a confusion, for while the identification work asserted to be relevant in the overall structural organization of conversation is identification of the initiator or caller, it being *his* entitlement or *his* grounds for starting up that are at issue, the self-identification offered in the answerer’s initial utterance is identification of the called. In this regard, it is, then, critical to note that an identification of either party makes relevant correlative identifications for the other. That this is so turns on the organization of identifications briefly described earlier in connection with the relevance of the identification “acquainted” as first order identification for members (pp. 82–85 above, and Sacks 1972a). Identification terms being organized into classes, the use of a term from a class may make the class or collection from which it is selected relevant for other identifications in the setting. Thus one rule Sacks proposes for the organization of identifications, the “consistency rule,” holds that if a first identification of a member from a population to be categorized or identified is selected from some collection of identification terms, the subsequent identifications in that population may be selected from the same collection of terms. While in selecting analyses of identifications employed by others the consistency rule may have the form of a strong rule, requiring hearing two identifications as selected from a same collection of terms if possible (as is argued in Sacks 1972b), as a rule for speaker’s selection of identifications it is a “weak” rule (i.e., second identifications “may” be selected from a same collection, but need not be). As such, it may be seen to have the status of a minimal preference rule, holding in the absence of any supervening rule, and allowing non-consistent identifications thereby to display the operation of a supervening rule. Unless a supervening rule is used to se-

lect another identification, then a consistent identification, one from the same collection as an initial identification, will be seen to be relevant.

One consequence of this organization of identifications is that when a term of self-identification is used by answerer for his answer, a collection of identification terms is thereby made relevant for the identification of the caller as well. In the absence of claims to, and use of, other identifications which might be selected by supervening rules (e.g., that acquaintances should so identify themselves), the identification from that collection that would hold for caller is the identification of him that has been made relevant for the conversation, and in terms of which answerer may be seen to attend a next utterance. In the case of the primary data under examination here, "Police Desk" makes relevant a collection of identifications for callers related to the "professional" identification of the answerer; in the case of most of the calls in our corpus, the identification this makes relevant for caller is "citizen" or "member of the public" or "complainant." This is, as was noted earlier, an "identification of sorts," i.e., an orientation to a "sort of caller" rather than to personal or named identification.

It was suggested in the discussion of the overall structural organization of designed conversation that initiators might offer identification even when, by reference to the collection "acquainted-unacquainted," they were not acquainted and therefore did not find in the identification adequate warrant for starting up the conversation. This was because the legitimacy of reasons, the alternative basis of entitlement, was related to identifications, some reasons which were not legitimate for unidentified members, "anybodies," being legitimate for members identified in some way. There it was argued that identifications might be offered as orientations for reasons, establishing by the identification the legitimacy of the reason that was to be offered, and thereby also suggesting by the identification the sort of reason that might be forthcoming. This tie between identifications and legitimate reasons should now be seen for its restrictive possibilities as well. While an identification may make legitimate a reason that might not be legitimate (i.e., supplying adequate grounds for starting the conversation, and for possibly continuing it) for an unidentified initiator, or an otherwise identified initiator, a given identification may bound a domain of legitimate reasons for starting a conversation, and presumptively restrict the reasons that may properly be offered for initiating a conversation to one analyzable as within that domain.

"Police Desk" (and self-identifications generally, for in these respects "American Airlines," "Shoe Department," "Service Department," etc. are no different), then, serves to presumptively make "identification of sorts" relevant to the conversation it begins, and to deprive "acquaintanceship" identification,

which requires personal identification, of immediate relevance as a way for caller to establish adequate grounds.<sup>24</sup> As between identifications and reasons as adequate grounds for initiating the conversations, reasons are thereby made the primary resource. “Police Desk” does not, however, merely make “identification of sorts” the relevant type of identification; it makes identification “of a particular sort” relevant, i.e., identification as “citizen,” “member-of-public,” or “complainant” vis-a-vis “police” the sort of identification relevant to the initiated conversation. The reasons possibly relevant to initiating the conversation are, then, to be reasons for a “citizen” or “member-of-the-public” to initiate a conversation with “the police” (or, as in the present data more specifically, for “a complainant” to initiate a conversation with the “police complaint desk”). “Police Desk” makes the relevant task of caller’s first utterance giving a legitimate reason for starting “this conversation,” and by introducing the identifications it does, it bounds a domain of reasons, or sorts of reasons, from which a legitimate reason for starting “this conversation,” with “these parties” (i.e., “these parties so identified”) should be offered.<sup>25</sup>

Self-identification answers of the form of “Police Desk” type the prospective conversations they initiate as “business calls,” proffering identifications of the parties by reference to the sort of business the prospective conversation might be directed to, and bounding the domain from which reasons for the initiation of the conversation are properly selected as ones relevant to the type of business for which the identification of the parties is relevant. As with “fore-known” type calls, the relevance of “type” is not confined to “topical restrictions,” but extends to the ways in which topically relevant talk is constructed. In “shared priority topic” calls, it was noted, such talk may be constructed specifically using indexicals with no explicated referents, as one feature. In “business” type calls, the talk on topics may be constructed so as to display that the talk is organized by reference to the type of conversation, with the types of co-participants who are involved. (“Co-participant orientation” has come up earlier<sup>26</sup> without being labelled as such; it will be further discussed below). Thus, for example, callers’ reasons may not only be drawn from a domain relevant to “police,” but the talk on those reasons may have its features co-selected “for the police.” Consider then the formulation of reasons in terms of the criminal law, such as the following:

- D: Police Desk.  
→ C: I'd like to report a vandalism.  
(IPD, #377)
- D: Police Desk.  
→ C: I'd like to call up and report a break-in.  
D: Whereabouts.  
C: In my on my car, I don't know for sure whether they got in or not.  
The both of the doors was still locked, but uh the windshield is on  
the driver's side of it is broken.  
(IPD, #452)

The features of the setting-as-reported and the talk about them are co-selected in forming up a reason “for the police.” Doing “police business” as a type for the conversation has a relevance extending past the initial selection of legitimate reason for initiating the conversation; it is relevant to how the talk about that reason is organized and produced, both in its initial presentation and subsequently.<sup>27</sup>

Answer forms involving self-identifications such as “police desk” have been discussed here as preemptive identifications, as using the answerer’s first turn to accomplish an initial identification of the parties. When conceived of as an identification issue, however, a basic problem concerning identification may be seen to be involved, namely how the relevance of some among the many possibly correct identifications is established.

Given that on any occasion of identification, in principle more than one identification term, from more than one collection of such terms, is available, the selection of some identification can be depicted as an achievement, and the method whereby the outcome was achieved needs to be described. In earlier discussions, it was suggested that where non-first identifications were involved, the consistency rule might provide the relevance of an identification selected from the same collection as a first identification. Thereby, the relevance of the identification of callers of the police being identified as “citizens” or “complainants” given the initial self-identification by answerers as “police;” and thereby the relevance to targets of attempted initiations of conversation of “possible acquaintance,” given that as a possibly relevant basis for the initiators starting up a conversation. But no such basis is available for *first* identifications; the consistency rule is of no help when there is no initial identification for a subsequent one to be consistent with. This problem was touched on earlier in establishing the basis for the relevance to the possible initiator of a conversation (rather than his target) of the identification “acquainted;” there, the relevance of such an identification was established by reference to greeting obligations



among acquaintances, and the tasks of monitoring an environment for that obligation that is laid on those who might, by reference to it, have to greet first.

The problem arises now again in the case of “Police Desk.” How is the relevance of such an identification established for the ones who answer the phone? How is it selected from the indefinitely large set of collections which have as members of them “correct” identifications for these answerers?

The problem posed in this way is a relevant problem if the production of “Police Desk” is posed as an identification problem. That is, if it is taken as given that the answer is to be a self-identification, then the problem is how to select a relevant self-identification, or how to locate a relevant identification, or how the relevance of some selected identification is established. The problem may, however, be otherwise conceived, and is otherwise to be conceived in the case of answers such as “Police Desk.” For rather than the above format, the problem may be seen to involve that the selection of a self-identification form of answer *ipso facto* selects the particular self-identification to be employed (a similar format was suggested and rejected with respect to first-speakership in Schegloff 2002 [1970]), the possibility having been entertained that the determination that conversation was relevant would thereby select who should begin it). Indeed, it is not that the relevance of a self-identification form requires the selection of a particular self-identification, but that the relevance of a particular identification, germane to answering the phone in the first place, makes relevant the selection of a self-identification form of answer.

## Answerers

The discussion of the preceding sections has referred to “the answerer,” implicitly thereby either treating the selection of an answerer as non-problematic, or temporarily locating the matters being discussed at a point after an answerer has been selected. The selection (or self-selection) of an answerer is not, however, automatic, and since some of the considerations relevant to that selection are relevant to the answerer’s selection of an answer as well, it is useful to consider the matter briefly at this point.

A sense of the issues involved may be conveyed by considering some hypothetical procedures by which an answerer might be selected (or self-selected) upon the ringing of the phone. Aspects of the situation such as the following might supply criteria for the selection, but turn out to be inadequate. Proximity might be used, the person (or adult) nearest the ringing phone being the one to answer it. Some stratified set of formulations of the available personnel

might be used – the oldest or youngest, highest status or lowest status, person being the one whom the phone’s ring selects. “Answerer” might be made an “official position,” there being a pre-selection of a single person to answer on any occasion of the phone’s ringing, or the rights or obligations of the position being passed around as “turns to answer.” None of these procedures seem correct as first-order solutions to the selection of an answerer. Indeed, in the simplest case, in which there is but one person present when the phone rings, it might be thought there is no problem to be solved, the one present being the only available answerer. Yet it appears that the sole person present may not answer (as in the cases of the guest in the house, or the janitor in a business after hours).

The problem is not one of selecting which of the present parties should answer, for it may happen that none of them is found eligible. Instead, the initial problem is one of determining a first-order eligible population of potential answerers, the selection of an answerer being in the first place a selection from that population of candidates, with others answering derivatively – by delegated right, or upon finding that no eligible potential answerer is present or available to answer.

The above discussion raises, in a rather different form, a question entertained at the beginning of this whole project (Schegloff 1967, 1968, 2002 [1970]): “who speaks first.”

There, the domain of reference was the population of two presumed in the setting features of two-party conversation. It was proposed that, in that form, it was not a general question and had no general solution. For a given formulation of members of that population as “caller-called,” a general solution seemed to hold, formulated by the distribution rule. It should now be seen why that question is not general for unformulated parties, and that, indeed, it is an altogether equivocal question. No basis for bounding the population as a population of two members (or a population of some particular two members between whom a selection of first speaker is to be made) was established. The two members who *turn out to be involved* in a two-party conversation is not available as a discriminated, bounded population of reference when the beginning of the conversation is at issue. To so treat it would be to assume the accomplished state of affairs as prerequisite to its accomplishment. Under specified circumstances, such a formulation of the problem may be in point, as when a “state of talk” may be seen to have been established between two parties before a first utterance has been made. Then the problem of which of the two should go first may be warranted, the population as a possible population

of reference having been established (as in the earlier mentioned example of “breaking the ice.”)

The problem considered in Schegloff (1968, etc.) was “who speaks first.” The problem here, while it can be seen to be relevant to the production of the same datum, is differently formulated: not “who speaks first” but “who answers.” The utterance concerned is, then, a “formulated utterance,” and although the selected person will indeed “speak first” in the conversation, it is not in the first place relevant that he will “speak first” *with respect to the population from which he is selected*, for other members of that population may not speak at all (although they are not precluded from doing so, as when members of a family talk serially to some caller). The population of reference here is a bounded population. While the speaker selection problem that was posed in Schegloff (1968, etc.) is thus equivocal and misconceived, there is a relevant speaker selection problem implicated in the data; it involves the selection of an answerer from those present in the environment of the ringing phone, and that involves initially the determination of an eligible population of potential answerers.

The determination of particular eligible populations of potential answerers in particular settings, the composition of those populations, and the bases for inclusion or exclusion of particular parties are matters for local determination in each setting. But such local determinations are shaped by a major general order of consideration, with a discussion of which the present chapter will close. The determination of eligible answerers, and the selection by answerers of appropriate answers, are both sensitive to interactional considerations. The relevant considerations are not ones pertaining to interaction ongoing in the setting in which the phone rings. Indeed, it is precisely to such considerations that the structures set off by the telephone’s summons are *insensitive*: the procedures whereby an answerer is selected can have the consequence that current speakers do not complete their utterances, that selected next speakers do not speak next in order to answer, etc., these being precisely the features to which a telephone summoner – a caller – cannot have attended in placing the summons, i.e., temporal and priority reviews. As they are not employed by caller, and cannot be assumed by answerer, so also they are of diminished relevance in selecting an answerer. Procedures for determining a population of eligible answerers, and of selecting an answerer from among them, might include systematic provision for exempting current speakers, or selected next speakers, etc. This is not the case.

The interactional considerations relevant to determination of eligible answerers pertain to the prospective conversation that the telephone ring fore-

shadows: they are considerations of prospective co-participant orientation. In particular, they are considerations about the identification or formulation of prospective interlocutors, under the auspices of which callers may be seen to have designed the incipient conversation.

What is central here is that the telephone is treated as a *territorial* phenomenon, being socially placed in some territory (in the ethological sense) or itself defining a location. A phone is, in the first place, “somewhere.” Overwhelmingly, furthermore, the territory to which a phone is attached is a “someone’s territory;” that is, members, or classes of members, are affiliated to the territory, having special claims on it; its phone is then their phone. There are classes of territories, and classes of affiliated personnel, the types of classes of personnel being co-relevant with types of class of territory. For telephones, two classes of territory to which phones can be attached are most important: “domestic” and “business.” Each provides for its own relevantly affiliated types of personnel: for domestic, the basic set of classes of members that is co-relevant can be grouped under the rubric “family.” This formulation of the affiliated personnel holds presumptively; that is, callers unacquainted with the persons affiliated to some phone known only to be “domestic,” may treat an answering male voice as “husband,” and ask for a “wife”:

- A: Hello  
 B: Hello, Mr. Smith?  
 A: Yes?  
 → B: May I speak to Mrs. Smith, please?  
 → A: There is no Mrs. Smith.

For acquainteds, the presumptive formulations of personnel affiliated to “domestic” phones may be replaced by others:

- A: Hello  
 B: ‘allo  
 → A: G’ your roommate talks forever? or is it you.

(CF, 8)

“Business” phones have other sets of formulations of the affiliated personnel presumptively relevant. In either case, an orientation to the type of territory to which a telephone is attached, and its appropriately formulated affiliated personnel, provides callers encountering an unrecognized voice ways of hearing it as “the secretary,” “the wife,” “the roommate,” “the girl friend,” “the house guest,” etc.

It is membership in the classes of affiliated personnel, co-relevant with the territory in its type to which the phone is attached, which principally shapes the first-order eligible population of potential answerers. It is by reference to its affiliated personnel that callers call, and inspect answerers' initial utterances. And it is by reference to such orientations on callers' parts that who might answer is initially determined. It is, therefore, by reference to co-participant considerations for the incipient or prospective interaction, by reference to callers' orientations, that answering is shaped. Considerations of proximity, seniority, current involvements, etc. may be involved in the organization that results in not everyone making a move for the telephone when it rings, but these considerations are relevant in the first instance for the locally eligible population of potential answerers, however locally composed, by reference to which it is presumed a caller came to get the particular phone to ring.

Arrangements for answering are built, together with auspices for calling, to allow the possibility that an initial turn to talk will supply the caller with a "confirmation," with evidence of having reached what he wanted to reach. Such considerations underlying the bounding of a population of eligible potential answerers, and a selection if possible from among them, it also underlies the selection of an answer in the conversation's initial turn, bearing on such selections as "hello" for domestic phones, and a self-identification form for "business" phones. When other than eligibles, other than potential answerers, for some phone come to answer it (e.g., having been asked to do so by absent or otherwise occupied eligibles), they may select an answer form to display in first turn that *other* than an eligible has answered, providing a caller immediately with an account for the absence of the confirmation he might otherwise have been waiting for (letting him know thereby, for example, that he has not reached a wrong number). One such form, for domestic phones is:

A: Hello, Levy residence.  
(EAS, FN)

The telephone's ring, then, is the occasion for reviews by all persons present of the place they are in, and the *type* of place in its phone-relevance, of their affiliation to that place, and thereby of their possible membership in the class of eligible potential answerers. Such reviews will be relevant for any present party, not only on his own behalf, but on behalf of other parties with whom he may be in current interaction, for even if some given party is not a potential answerer, his current interlocutor may be, and if that person is to deal with the summons, there are organizational requirements on the other participants in his ongoing interaction. The telephone's ring, thus, invokes a set of con-

siderations on the part of members co-present with it about their relations to the place they are in, about other co-present persons' relations to that place, about their current relations with one another, and about the orientations of an at-that-time anonymous caller who is about to be co-participant with one of them. It is out of such considerations, which adumbrate and realize aspects of the upcoming conversation before its first utterance is produced, that answerers get selected to answer the phone, and which strongly condition their selection of an answer form to constitute the conversation's first turn.

## Notes

\* This chapter is a revision, completed in 1969–1970, of chapter three of my doctoral dissertation, "The First Five Seconds: The Order of Conversational Openings" (Department of Sociology, University of California, Berkeley, 1967). However, bibliographical citations have been updated. The revision of chapter two, completed at the same time, is now available as Schegloff (2002 [1970]), where interested readers may pursue references in this chapter to prior parts of the argument.

The data for this chapter and for the dissertation of which it was a part were composed of a corpus of some five hundred telephone calls to the police of a midwestern American city in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. Calls were routed from a central switchboard to a so-called "complaint desk," at which point the recording of them began. I am indebted to the Disaster Research Center, at that time located at The Ohio State University, which collected the materials and made them available to me when this research was begun. I am also indebted to the Advance Research Projects Agency, DOD, for support through the Air Force Office of Scientific Research under Contract number AF 49(638)-1761. Finally, I am indebted to David Sudnow, whose encouragement and help came at a most strategic time.

1. In the revised version of the (preceding) chapter two of the work from which this text is taken. Now published as Schegloff (2002 [1970]).
2. We will have occasion below to justify this formulation of a class of settings, and the formulation "telephone conversation," both of which have been used throughout the preceding discussion with no warrant.
3. There is, of course, a considerable range of such activities, and summoned may engage in further identificatory work in selecting an answer to the summons. He may, for example, search the setting, e.g., the appearance of the summoner, to decide, for example, whether the pre-sequenced activity is likely to be a solicitation or direction-asking, whether and/or what to answer turning on the outcome of such further identification. Errors are, of course, possible, as when one turns away from a "lower-class beggar" only to have him follow and reproachfully ask for a match. For a discussion of what "anybody owes anybody" in public places, see Goffman 1963a: 130.
4. For a discussion of the dimensions relevant to selection of first name as compared to title plus last name see Brown and Ford (1964). The whole corpus of literature on kinship

terminology presents materials on what might be called “address entitlements,” which from a summoned’s perspective may serve as resources in recovering from the address term used the position of one who is entitled to use it. For a review of the literature on terms of address, see Hymes (1964); for a recent discussion, see Ervin-Tripp (1969).

This discussion is couched in terms of “information about the summoner,” i.e., the sort or category of summoner, for that is the more general case. There is, of course, the possibility, when summoned by voice in face-to-face interaction, of recognizing the voice, and thus recognizing “who the summoner is,” making a personal rather than social identification (see Goffman 1963b:2, 43, 56–62). Voice recognition, and interest in personal identification and recognition versus category identification, are discussed below [and in Schegloff 1979].

5. I do not mean thereby to imply that it is by reference to the differentness that members proceed; they are not engaged, as far as I can see, in comparing face-to-face with mediated interaction, and using the comparison or the respects in which they differ as the basis for their actions. In doing either form of interaction, they deal with the features of that form. Although my discussion appears to deal with telephone interaction as a special case of face-to-face, it is not clear that members deal with it that way, and it is thus here essentially a rhetorical device and part of the format of presentation. The methodological import of Goffman’s suggestion that “... telephone talk ... must first be seen as a departure from the norm, else its structure and significance will be lost” (1964: 135–136) is thus unclear, though his point does not appear aimed at presentational formats. I will argue below, however, that the *distinction* between the forms *is* a members’ distinction, and they are attentive to the relevant features of each form.

6. For example, though persons at a ringing phone may exchange assurances as one goes to answer that “It’s Jim,” the answerer does not regularly answer “Hi, Jim.”

7. But “just a moment” is; it, however, has different properties when used in telephone conversation; while in unmediated interaction a summoner may go on, the fact of availability of a hearer (in a narrow sense) having been established by the occurrence of *an* answer, this is not the case in telephone interaction, where “just a moment, please” may be followed by a break in the acoustic channel, or unavailability of an ear at the earpiece.

8. One way of dealing with the use of variable answer forms is to see it as a matter of convention. But this does not go very far, and merely displaces the problem. For unless the convention is organized such that individuals adopt by convention some one form and use it invariably, which does not appear to be the case, the question remains what the convention is: i.e., what members are required to know, and on what basis selection is made (if selection is involved) which issues in the conventional patterns of use. It will not do, for example, simply to propose that some business establishment adopted the convention of having its telephone answered with the name of the business, and so instructed its employees. For the practice and realization of such a “convention” would still depend on employees finding themselves relevantly to be “at the business” (and thereby also for “persons” to find themselves to be, relevantly at the moment, “employees”) for the convention to be relevant, i.e., it requires on the part of such an employee-answerer certain orientations to relevant formulations of their context. What these are may be general, and relevant far beyond some local set of conventional practices, and may involve the use of analyses and usages of a general

character specified to this particular problem. Whether or not convention is involved, then, it is in point to consider what is involved in the selection between answer formats.

9. The consequences for conversational openings are, of course, not the only ones. What is needed is a description of “telephone conversation” as a technical object, a description that might imply a technical account of “face-to-face” interaction as well. Some elements of such a description are available, but would lead too far afield in the present context. [Cf. the later Schegloff 1993.]

10. How there came to be a selection issue for answers on the telephone, or how there came to be a selection issue for clearance cue answers but not between clearance cue and problematic answers on the telephone, as compared to face-to-face interaction, is a matter of the historical development of the conversational system, and its adaptation to the contingencies presented by the telephone. That a conversational system may develop to exploit the peculiar features of its setting is suggested by the exploitation of the resources for voice recognition in specially pure form in telephone interaction. (The last point was suggested by Harvey Sacks.) Voice recognition is discussed below. In any case, for current members, the selection issue for answers on the telephone is an established resource whose availability is not their responsibility or concern.

11. The relevance of the last observation will become clear in the later discussion; the contrast is with an answer like “Macy’s” which may also invoke a relevant “agenda of sorts,” but displays the basis of the agenda in the answer.

12. A methodological point may be in order here. This discussion of “yeah” may be compared to “yeah” as an answer to a summons in face-to-face interaction. They involve utterly different usages in many respects, by virtue of a) what they follow, b) the kind of selection issues that result in them and which they display, and c) the way those two features, combined with others, are fitted to – and partially constitute – different settings. An attempt to deal with an utterance such as “yeah” semantically, therefore, seems doomed. Interactional analysis is required. That much seems clear even before dealing with “yeah” in a second slot where the first slot is filled with a remark (other than a summons), let alone “yeah” elsewhere in conversation.

13. Discussed in Schegloff (2002 [1970]).

14. It should be noted that although “hi” may be the appropriate greeting form for “acquainteds” or “intimates,” and thus from the point of view of the caller, knowing he is calling an intimate, the greeting form it is appropriate for him to receive, if the answerer’s initial utterance is “hi,” it will not be heard as an appropriate greeting but as a mistaken opening of an expected call. Insofar as an initial “hello” is treated as a greeting, and one which turns out to be too “formal” for the caller, and which is then transformed to “hi,” it appears that the whole process is required: starting out with the “hi” that might turn out to be an appropriate form would not short-cut the process, but would be heard as a different action entirely.

15. As shown in Schegloff (2002 [1970]).

16. What the parameters of “close pacing” are remains to be determined. One possibility is the relationship of “next action” discussed in Schegloff (2002 [1970]).

17. Much of what follows is discussed in Goffman, 1963a:112–148, although the present discussion differs in several respects from Goffman’s, most centrally in that Goffman is con-



cerned with the conditions for different sorts of “face engagements,” while I am concerned with establishing the basis for sorts of work that need to get done as constituent parts of the unit “a single conversation,” that supply features of the overall structural organization of that unit.

18. The remainder of this paragraph draws on Sacks, 1972a and 1972b. On recognition, see also Goffman 1963: 112–114; 57–68).

19. It is the occurrence of “absent first greetings” that forces the specifications about entitlement to reciprocal recognition, status orderings on who greets first, etc. For it might have been expected that if A does not greet B, B will greet A, and then either A will do a return greeting or he will not. In the former case, an exchange will have occurred; in the latter case, it will be a second, or return, greeting that will be absent. The fact that first greetings are sometimes found absent suggests that there may be grounds for B to not initiate the exchange if A has failed to do so; status relations, and a linked asymmetry of rights to be recognized by the other, may supply such grounds.

20. To be sure, settings may vary, and may be attended by members as varying, in their possible-acquaintance-richness. Where a setting, a place-time, is treated as possible-acquaintance-poor, monitoring for possible greeting occasions may not be relevant, and persons may then be found to fail to recognize. The relevance of “possible recognition” will be discussed below with respect to voice recognition on the telephone.

21. It has “no interest” insofar as it does not entail greeting obligations, although it may entail others, e.g., avoidance obligations. That its relevance to the possible legitimacy of initiating a conversation is oriented to can be seen in members’ use of opening utterances such as “You don’t know me, but . . .”

22. Where recognition is not available to visual inspection, as when persons who have corresponded and/or spoken on the telephone are to meet in a public place, they may undertake identification work to establish acquaintanceship as the adequate grounds for starting a conversation before greetings:

- A: Paul Smith?  
 B: Yes?  
 A: I’m Al Jones.  
 B: Oh, hi.  
 A: Hi.

Note: 1) the introductions at the beginning are specially notable in that introductions are “historically sensitive.” In contrast to greetings which are properly done whatever the history of contact between two persons, being relevant at first meetings and after fifty years of marriage (though for repeated encounters within a short period of time, their relevance may gradually fade, e.g., over the course of a business day in an office), introductions should not be done, should not *have* to be done, after a first, or possibly a second, meeting (cf. Sacks 1975). For ones who turn out to be acquainteds, introductions are therefore specially marked activities. Routinely, they should start with greetings. 2) There *are* circumstances in which one may find greetings and self-introductions in that order, but those are regularly features of by-product interactions, or ones designed to appear by-product, as in initiation of conversation at parties with ones who “happen to be” next to one. 3) A sequence of the

gross sort as the one cited may occur when it is not “identification as acquainteds” that is being accomplished, as when a piece of business is to be executed with “a Mr. Smith,” and one starts by enquiring or confirming that it is the relevant person one has located, and then identifying oneself. But in the data cited: a) the self-introduction employs the “recognition-relevant” frame (“I am...” rather than “My name is...”); b) the response is a recognition sign (see discussion of voice recognition below); and c) although it is not indicated in the citation, no (further) account for initiating the conversation is given, whereas in the contrasting case, such a sequence ought be followed by “the business” that might warrant having undertaken such an opening. In the last respect, considerations of a known shared agenda, known and shared by virtue of prior acquaintanceship or prior contact, such as was discussed in connection with “fore-known” calls, appears relevant, and marks the opening as establishing acquaintanceship as adequate grounds for starting the conversation, rather than self-introductions as preliminaries to announcing the adequate grounds for initiating the conversation. In telephone conversation, where acquaintanceship recognition is also not available to visual inspection, identification work will also be found relevant (see below).

23. The ways in which the alternative bases of warrant for the conversation are related to its overall structural organization remain to be described in detail. Such a full discussion cannot be entertained here, but one kind of linkage can be outlined. I have referred to one of the alternatives as “reasons”, that is a reference to the domain which is drawn upon in warranting the initiation of a conversation; it is a “sort” of warrant. For any particular conversation, an initiator does not require reasons; as a general matter, it would appear, that using this sort of warrant requires of an initiator “a reason.” Conversations initiated with “a reason” as their warrant (i.e., as their sole warrant, when acquaintanceship is not employed) may have their developing overall structure attended by the parties as one based on the topic the reason serves to constitute. They may find where they are in the conversation by finding where they are in that topic, the end of the “reason topic” serving as the occasion for starting the closing of the conversation (Schegloff & Sacks 1973), silences there being treated, for example, as closing-relevant rather than as occasions for transition to a next topic. Such conversations, i.e., designed conversations with a reason as their warrant, may be treated prospectively as presumptively mono-topical. It is such a joint orientation to the prospective structure of the conversation that may serve as the basis for an initiator of such a contact “prefacing” an initial topic with a marker such as “two things,” indicating thereby that the overall structure of the conversation should not be constituted progressively using the initial topic as model. “Monotopicality” is an attribute of overall structural organization. (It should be noted, however, that it is not the first in a series of attributes which might continue “bi-topicality, tri-topicality. . .” The critical distinction, for the purposes of overall structural organization, is between one and more than one, because of the way that sets different bases for coordinating the closing of the conversation. Accordingly, the “two” in “two things” is not to be, and is not, treated literally, constraining the conversation from moving to a third topic. What is critical is the “more-than-one.” The markers used to indicate prospective poly-topicality use a variety of means to accomplish that; I cite several for illustrative purposes, taken from a radio talk show, omitting the opening sequence in each:

B: one quick qesh'n before y' get into my topic.  
(BC, tan, p. 62)

B: First of all, I wanna c'ngrachulachu – c'ngatchulatche on your progr'm.  
(BC, tan, p. 83)

B: well numbuh one, the woman you just finished talking to,  
(BC, tan, p. 104)

B: First of all, uh, I understand yer going intuh the hospital.

A: Yes ma'am.

B: And uh—let me jus' wish you lots of good luck.

A: Thank you.

B: Uhm, the second thing, about the mayor an' the governor, I've listen' to all the things thet chu've said, an' I agree with you so much. Now, I wanna ask you something . . .

(BC, red, pp. 189–190)

B: Two quick comments,

A: Yes sir.

B: D'you get the feelin thet we've been outflanked by the Pueblo an' the garbage affayuh,

A: eh eh eh heyeh eh eh eh eh ha ha eh

B: Right/ An' also the other fast comment . . .

(BC, red, p. 89)

The use of “list-ing” as a technique relies on the treatment of lists as having more than one member, a “first” being a “first” only if there is a “second.” These techniques may, of course, accomplish other outcomes in addition to indicating non-monotopicality; they may, for example, serve to indicate that the thing first to be talked about is not to be treated as “the reason,” an accomplishment which may itself be arrived at by different techniques; they may serve as indications of the degree to which topics ought to be “worked up” or elaborated, the projection of an “agenda” possibly affecting time allocation; or the degree to which “interactionally generated topics” will be accommodated, i.e., topics which “come up” by way of topics under way. In all these respects, as well, overall structural organization is constituted. In any case, these techniques seem addressed to heading off, or transforming, an otherwise presumptive type of overall structural organization for the initiated conversation, i.e., mono-topical. Here, then, is one instance of an operation referred to earlier in the text without examples – a transformation of conversational type after the opening.

24. This does not mean that callers cannot establish acquaintanceship; only that it, together with other forms of possible personal identification, are not features in terms of which a next utterance, or next utterances are inspected. Thus, callers' first utterances which, when placed after “hello,” serve as occasions for possible voice recognition and are seen to invite possible voice recognition, are not so seen and are not so treated when placed after “police desk,” or self-identifications of that form. Callers may, for example, invite voice recognition after an answerer's “hello” by using “hello” alone (or some variant) as their first utterance.

- #197  
 Police make call.  
 A(woman): hello  
 → D: Yeah.  
 → A: You mean you're not busy/  
 D: Oh yeah, but I thought I'd call and let you know what we know so far.

After “police desk” such utterances are heard not as voice-recognition-relevant, but as confusions of the summons-answer structure, and warrant a repeat of the answer.

- #365  
 D: Police desk.  
 → C: Hello.  
 → D: Police desk.

25. Caller's utterances may be inspected in order to find how they might be ones which formulate reasons which can warrant the conversation with the parties as identified. Such inspection may lead to direct inquiries, e.g.:

- #115  
 D: Police desk.  
 C: Hello/  
 D: Hello.  
 C: I come down here to see my wife jill, I'm from Missouri?  
 D: Yes.  
 C: And uh they ain't down here now, they moved.  
 (Pause)  
 → D: Well, what do you want me to do?

26. In Schegloff (2002 [1970]).

27. The failure to find the “police relevant reason” in #115 cited in the preceding note may be related to caller's failure there to co-select the parts of his talk so as to formulate “business-for-the-police” as he might have, perhaps, by talk of “missing persons.”

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