Discourse, pragmatics, conversation, analysis

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ABSTRACT In a period given to emphasizing diversity among humans, we would do well to explore diversity among forms of discourse and among forms of talk-in-interaction in particular. Among the speech-exchange systems, ordinary conversation has been claimed to be distinctive and fundamental, but questions have been raised about both claims. The resources for discriminating among speech-exchange systems are located in such generic organizations of practice as turn-taking, sequence organization, the organization of repair and the overall structural organization of episodes of interaction. I try to show that 'conversation' as a distinctive speech-exchange system is real and is not only a residual category, and that it is to be understood as the 'basic' speech-exchange system, in part by reference to the distinctive turn-taking organization (among others) through which it is implemented. The 'motivation' for having developed a formal account of this turn-taking organization is recounted, and that formal account is defended for its usability in the analytic explication of singular, contexted episodes of talk. The remainder of the article is given over to such an exemplary account – an examination of an episode of interaction during a testing session between a man whose brain hemispheres had been surgically separated and a researcher.

KEYWORDS: *brain trauma, conversation, sequences, turn-taking*

Introduction

Over the last half century students of discourse and pragmatics have come increasingly to focus on diversities rather than commonalities. The most featured diversities have been those of identity – of culture and language, of ethnicity and nationality, of race and religion, of class and gender, of profession and family status. Surely these have come to have an enhanced prima facie legitimacy as

default foci for academic interest, and as a prima facie locus for the so-called linguistic and cultural turn in the social and human sciences. And it appears that this focus on diversity has engendered another – a focus on *misunderstandings* whose genesis is taken to be lodged in these diversities, and which increasingly comes to preoccupy students of discourse. In light of what we read in the newspapers and find documented in many scholarly reports, to take any other position on our diversities and such malign consequences may seem eccentric and merely provocative at best, or in tragically bad taste at worst. Yet need we not appreciate that misunderstandings – whatever their genesis – occur in the context of massively stable interaction? It is, after all, only by virtue of the massive and 'routine' stabilities of daily interaction that we get to experience and see the misunderstandings and breakdowns which we then come to feature as the central phenomena. Is not some redress in order as part of our scholarly calling, a proper sense of proportion about what composes the domain that we study?

The terms of diversity I have mentioned differentiate individuals and complements of individuals *as members*, into *categories* of members. But underlying the diversities embodied in this catalogue of categories (which represent only a fraction of the diversities of the recurrently relevant categories in the settings from which any aggregate of persons comes) is our tacit recognition, if you will, of a universe of *discourse* within which, and from which, these diversities get their relevance and import. I refer not to the sort of 'universe of discourse' which the readership of this journal recurrently fashion in their teaching activities to cope with a varied student body, or which is introduced to facilitate interdisciplinary dialogue. Rather I mean the 'universe of discourse' which allows us to travel even among those with whom we share *no* language, and still get by – however clearly set apart we may be from their discourse community. I mean the universe of discourse – or of discours*es* – which undergirds our interaction as members of a single social species – humankind. I mean talk-in-interaction in general and, in particular, *conversation*, which is increasingly a focus of special interest when the rubric 'discourse' is invoked.[1]

Here then is another diversity – a cross-cutting diversity – which we would do well to recognize; a diversity not of individuals and groups, but the diversity of forms of discourse in which language and communication and sociality may be implemented, and, after the familiar initial contrast between oral and written discourse, among the various forms of *talk-in-interaction* themselves.

I have shifted quickly here from speaking of 'oral discourse' or 'spoken language' to 'talk-in-interaction' because, with relatively few exceptions, oral discourse *is* talk-in-interaction. Not everyone has to talk in order for 'oral discourse' to be talk-in-interaction. Even when a speaker is addressing a large audience with 'a speech', s/he can be doing so only with the co-participation of the audience members in *withholding* talk, or in doing it sotto voce to a person sitting nearby. A speaker's eyes wandering over the room may register nods and smiles, and ones timed to coincide with the arrival of those scanning eyes, or to avoid those eyes. And should there be no laughter at all after a recognizable pass at a joke, the tenor

of the speaker's subsequent remarks may be changed. So occasions like scholarly or professional talks, and even more so the classroom lectures *without* a prepared text whose delivery supplies (or *will* supply) the livelihood for many of the readers of this journal, these are occasions of talk-in-interaction too, even if, for the most part, only one of the participants does the talking.[2]

As this observation suggests, there is a diversity of organizational formats for talk-in-interaction, what some conversation analysts refer to as 'speech-exchange systems' (Sacks et al., 1974: 701, 729–31). Aside from the 'lecture', these include a variety of others – familiar to us in common-sense terms, but only in some instances subjected to adequate technical account – such other ones as classroom discourse, the discourse of courts-in-session, meetings, testing sessions, debates, and a whole range of speech-exchange systems which we subsume under the single vernacular term 'interview' across a considerable variation in actual formats; think for example of news interviews, survey interviews, and employment interviews, for an initial sense of the range.

Some of these terms appear in the agendas of conferences and scholarly meetings, in the tables of contents of the journals we read (including, undoubtedly, forthcoming issues of this journal), the books advertised in mailings we receive from publishers – for example, research interviews, business meetings, medical interviews, news interviews, talk shows, and so forth. I hasten to enter the caution that we bear in mind the difference between the *institutional setting* in which some speech event takes place and the *speech-exchange system* by which it is organized (Schegloff, 1992a). Not everything which is called a 'business meeting' – even by its participants – is conducted by reference to the distinctive mode of organizing talk-in-interaction which we call the 'meeting' speech-exchange system. The talk may not be guided by a Chair, one who takes alternate turns, in which she or he assigns or recognizes next speakership, and so forth.

I have left out of this partial listing of speech-exchange systems the one which (as noted earlier) is increasingly the special topic of conferences, of special issues of journals: what I take to be the primordial form of talk-in-interaction – conversation, that is, that organization of talk which is *not* subject to functionally specific or context-specific restrictions or specialized practices or conventionalized arrangements, in the way in which courts of law in session *are*, or classrooms, or religious ceremonies, or news interviews, or talks at scholarly and scientific meetings.

Now characterizations of 'conversation' of the sort I have just given have prompted for some colleagues the question whether there *is* any such thing as 'conversation' at all. Characterizing conversation by what it is *not* – not subject to special restrictions or practices whether legal or functional, or, as some put it, talk *not* in institutional or formal contexts – makes it sound as if 'conversation' is a residual category, what is left over once we have isolated affirmatively describable *other* forms of talk-in-interaction. A concern not unrelated to this one is whether conversation is indeed the *primordial* form of talk-in-interaction, one from which others are departures and, indeed, derived, or to use a controversial term, the *foundational* form of talk-in-interaction.

These are consequential issues not only in their own terms, ones which embody a grasp of the contours of the domain which we study, but also because, for that very reason, they serve as considerations which shape our sense of the forms which analysis should take and the directions in which it should be pursued. For example, they shape our sense of whether the proper understanding of the delivery of information or its receipt are most cogently pursued exclusively by reference to the 'institutional setting' or speech-exchange system from which the data are drawn, or whether they are better understood when that context and its practices are juxtaposed against those of ordinary conversation.[3] I do not propose to examine these two issues fully here; rather, I focus on actual analysis – which, for me is what our enterprise is all about. *Analysis* is what our 'positions' on such questions should make better; and it is *analysis* which should make our '*positions*' better. But let us at least begin.

Is there such a thing as 'ordinary conversation'?

To begin with, is conversation something in its own right, or is it merely a residual category? This concern seems to me misplaced on several counts; I mention two here.

First, in order to avoid the connotations of triviality and 'chit-chat' which have at times been associated with the word 'conversation,' we have begun using the more ample and neutral term, 'talk-in-interaction'. This is an empirically and analytically bounded domain, generous in its inclusiveness, yet not including everything, and thus not a merely terminological convention.

On the side of its inclusiveness and the serious import of what is included, there is for a sociologist like myself perhaps no more compelling way of registering this than to note that it is through talk-in-interaction that most of the work of all the major institutions of society gets done. The economy, the polity, the law, religion, the reproduction of the population through the cycle of courtship–family life–socialization – education, and so forth – all these have much of their social embodiment realized through the various forms of talk-in-interaction. This is a broad and serious mandate indeed.[4]

On the other hand, not *all* talk falls within this boundary. For example, when I read out, in my study at home, a draft of the text of a talk which I am scheduled to deliver so as to hear what it sounds like and to ensure that it fits within my assigned time limits, this is *not* talk-in-interaction, although it is surely talk. And when the subject in the experimental designs of many psychological or psycholinguistic experiments is given the task of 'describing some stimuli so that a subsequent listener to the tape recording of the response could identify what was being described', the talk which results – though ostensibly produced for some virtual recipient – is nonetheless not 'talk-in-interaction', although here again it is surely talk (Levelt, 1983; Schegloff, 1991: 54–57).[5]

So we start with an empirically and analytically bounded domain. Within this

boundary one may locate and isolate for separate treatment particular subsets of occurrences which seem to be differently organized, like meetings, debates, and the like; however, that does not render occurrences *not* included in such *sub*sets as residual. They were given an affirmative identification in the *first* instance – both ostensive and analytically formulated.

Second, conversation has been given further, empirically grounded, analytic *specification*. What, after all, composes a speech-exchange system, whether conversation or some other? And what makes for the differences between speech-exchange systems?

Isn't it that talk-in-interaction is composed of various practices by which ensembles of participants bring into being – by which they *co-construct* – an occasion of interaction over its course, in real time? And interactional episodes in *different speech-exchange systems* are the products of different *practices*, and accordingly have different *features*.

Some of these practices are addressed to very basic organizational issues which need to be managed in order for orderly, understandable and effective interaction to get done at all – what we could call 'generic issues', whose solutions are managed by what we can call 'generic organizations'.

For example, although there are surely transient (and orderly) variations from this, episodes of talk-in-interaction ordinarily provide for one participant at a time to talk, and there are practices designed to allow the participants to achieve this concertedly, and to manage departures *from* it and restorations *to* it. These practices form an *organization* of practices for managing the *allocation* of opportunities to participate – turns at talk – and for shaping the disposition of these turns by those who have come to have them through so-called turn-constructional units. These are turn-taking organizations, one type of generic organization. One deeply consequential way in which speech-exchange systems can vary is by differences in their turn-taking organizations (on turn-taking in broadcast news interviews compare with Sacks et al., 1974, for example, Greatbatch, 1988; Heritage and Greatbatch, 1991).

Turn-taking is not the only type of generic organization, and not the only one which can differentiate between speech-exchange systems. For not only is there an underlying ordering to the way in which turns are distributed among participants and constructed by them (even when this ends up sounding *dis*orderly); what is *done* in these turns is orderly as well – 'orderly' in the sense of non-arbitrary and non-random. This is often called 'coherence,' and has most commonly been understood to pertain to matters of topicality and topical organization.

Yet it seems to me that most talk-in-interaction is better understood for what it is *doing* than for what it is *about*. For example, in an exchange such as the following, taken from an interaction during dinner, involving two student couples (discussed at greater length in Schegloff, 1997: 180–83; notational conventions are described in the Appendix),

(1)
Chicken Dinner 1: 18–29

1	Shane:	[ˈhehh huh ˈhhhh Most wishful thinkin
2	→	hey hand me some a'dat fuckin budder willyou?
3	?Shane:	°°Oh::yeah°°
4		(1.1)
5	Nancy:	C'n I have some t[oo
6	Michael:	[mm-hm[hm:
7	Nancy:	[hm-hm-↑h[m [↑he-ha-]haˈhehh]
8	Vivian:	[Ye[h[I wa]nt]someto.]
9	Shane:	[N[o:.] [( ) -
10	Shane:	No.
11		(0.2)
12	Shane:	Ladie[s la:st.

"hand me some of that fucking butter" (in normalized orthography) is better understood as doing a request than as 'about butter', and this is no less true of ostensibly more descriptive utterances. Among other evidences that this captures the participants' understandings and orientations is the fact that the ensuing utterances follow up on the 'requestness' of the utterance at line 2 by queuing up ensuing requests (at lines 5 and 8) and taking a stand on them (at lines 9, 10 and 12), rather than producing on-topic talk. To be sure, one very important and common action which an utterance or a series of utterances can be doing is 'doing topic talk', in which case analysis in topic terms – for what it is 'about' – can become very much in point. Indeed, that is how parties show their orientation to the 'topic-talkness' of some utterance – by producing further utterance designed to be on-topic with a prior. 'Topic-talking' – or 'doing topic talk' – is itself an action participants do. The more *general* organization, then, seems to be the organization of *action* in talk-in-interaction, and more specifically of *courses*-of-action realized in *sequences* of turns, with contingent but orderly, describable trajectories and structures to them – ranging from simple two-turn sequences to extraordinarily long and inflected ones (Schegloff, 1990, 1995).

This is 'sequence organization', and just as different speech-exchange systems can be shaped by, and therefore can be characterized by, different *turn-taking* organizations, so too can they be characterized by differently shaped *sequence* organizations. For example, question/answer sequences in classrooms, courtrooms and television studios can be very different from those in ordinary conversation, and from one another. They can differ in the type and design of the questions and in the character and form of response which they make relevant, as well as in other aspects of the sequence, such as whether there *is* a third-position receipt turn, what forms it takes, or what the alternatives to it are (Atkinson and Drew, 1979; Button, 1987; Drew and Heritage, 1992; Heritage and Roth, 1995; Suchman and Jordan, 1990).

Consider another generic organization in talk-in-interaction: the organization of repair. Here again we find distinctive practices, and distinctive organizations of practice, in different speech-exchange systems. Button (1987), for example, describes a specific practice characteristic of employment interviews, in which answers by an applicant which display a problematic understanding of the question being

responded to, are *not* met by a practice common (though not mandated) in such contexts in ordinary conversation – 'third-position repair' (Schegloff, 1992b), canonically taking the form 'No, I didn't mean X, I meant Y'. Broadcast news interviews also have special practices of repair – fitted precisely to their characteristics as a distinctive speech-exchange system. For example, in the News Hour with Jim Lehrer, on the Public Broadcast System in the United States, the moderator and interviewer often intervenes in the response of a guest in order to identify a figure mentioned by the interviewee but not widely known to the viewing public (in the judgement of the interviewer), or to identify an organization referred to by the interviewee by its acronym. Unlike the 'candidate understandings' common with problematic understandings in ordinary conversation, these are not articulated with an upward intonation, and are plainly not designed to clarify the *interviewer's* understanding problem. Rather, they are interventions designed by the interviewer to address potential understanding problems of precisely that 'overhearing audience' which Heritage (1985) proposed to be the critical feature (or one of them) differentiating the news interview from other forms of talk in interaction. Although not yet the subject of systematic inquiry, casual observation suggests that such interventions are far less common with 'experienced' interviewees (who take care to suit their references less to the knowledgable interviewer who has put the question than to the overhearing audience for whom the answer is designed) than they are with occasional interviewees, whose references reflect their expertise and that of their questioner. With the latter group, furthermore, interviewer interventions are commonly 'interruptive', and the simultaneous talk is sustained longer than is the case with the 'veteran' interviewees, who more quickly recognize what the intervention is doing as 'repair', and accordingly yield more quickly to it. These observations suggest the operation of a distinctive set of repair practices, fitted specifically to a distinct speech-exchange system, in which the interviewer (like the teacher in a classroom) is well-practiced, but into which interviewees need to be 'socialized' (like students to the discipline of the school classroom), and can be recognizably more and less experienced or competent at the working of the interview qua interview.

Finally – and more allusively – the overall structural organization of single episodes of interaction can also be distinctive to particular speech-exchange systems or classes of them. In the United States, for example, answering the telephone with an organizational self-identification can be the hallmark of a professional or business interaction – even when that is taken ironically (as when a guest in a domestic setting answers the phone on behalf of the host with an utterance like "Brown Residence", to be met with comments about the family having employed a butler). There are more carefully and empirically studied instances as well, and ones which range across the whole trajectory of the interaction. For example, it is quite common to note that ordinary 'business' conversations do not include "how are you" exchanges as part of a canonical opening sequence on the telephone (Schegloff, 1986); that is part of what constitutes them 'business calls'. Robinson (1998), discussing co-present interaction in medical settings, describes in great detail how, in doctor–patient interaction, even

common elements of openings such as the "how are you" question take on a quite different import when delivered at certain points in the opening while retaining their usual import at other points in the opening, suggesting that the interaction can start out as an ordinary conversational interaction and then shift to a different speech-exchange system (see Heath, 1986). Heritage and Maynard (in press, a) describe the canonical phases that compose doctor–patient interactions in the United States 'managed care' settings, phases oriented to by the parties in the conduct of the interaction turn-by-turn and sequence-by-sequence, nicely demonstrated by Robinson and Stivers (forthcoming), who show how patients can anticipate the end of a phase and prepare their bodies for the physical examination they 'know' is to follow.[6] And so forth through the closing of the interaction.[7]

Returning now to the concern that conversation is a merely residual category with no affirmative, constitutive features of its own, one can say that 'conversation' is talk-in-interaction produced by the participants' orientation to, and implementation of, the generic organizations for *conversation*; for example, by an orientation to the turn-taking, repair, sequence and the overall structural organizations for conversation (and very likely others as well).

I am partial to one particular account of the turn-taking organization for conversation, described in a paper published in 1974 (Sacks et al., 1974). But the claim that conversation is partially specifiable (and affirmatively, not residually) as a distinct speech-exchange system by reference to its distinctive turn-taking organization and the features which it engenders does not preclude finding any particular account of turn-taking organization – such as the Sacks et al. (1974) article – faulted and in need of correction or amplification, or even so grossly faulted as to require wholesale replacement. The same holds for the other organizations of practice of which we have detailed, empirically grounded accounts.

Of course, there is both overlap between speech-exchange systems and considerable variation within any one of them; however, this does not necessarily subvert their integrity as bounded classes of interactional events, and organizations of practice for co-constructing them. As noted by Sacks et al. (1974: 701), when talk in conversation starts to display features which are characteristic of some other speech-exchange system, participants may remark on, or complain about, the occasion turning into 'a lecture' or a 'cross-examination', etc., displaying thereby their orientation to the elective affinity (and even constitutive force) of certain practices of talk-in-interaction with their host speech-exchange system and the activities associated with it (a theme articulated about 'activity types' by Levinson, 1979), and clearly implicating not only turn-taking features but action, sequence, activity, and others as well. And, as Heritage and Greatbatch (1991) argue, it is precisely in the distinctive turn-taking organization for broadcast news interviews (Greatbatch, 1988) that we can see the continuously sustained and renewed orientation by the parties to the special activity and speech-exchange system in which they are implicated and the institutional context which informs it. It is just in the incipient departure of the talk from the

turn-taking and sequence organizational practices of the speech-exchange system for 'broadcast news interviews' that we can see a 'news interview' devolve into a form of talk organized by the practices of ordinary conversation and get seen as 'a confrontation' (Clayman and Whalen, 1988/89; Heritage and Greatbatch, 1991; Schegloff, 1988/89).

There are, of course, other forms of variation that are not structural in this sense yet recognizable as indicative of other differentiations than those of speech-exchange systems – for example, ones of ethnicity (Schiffrin, 1984; Tannen, 1981, 1984), of gender (Ochs, 1992; Tannen, 1990, 1994; West and Zimmerman, 1987), of social class (Bernstein, 1964, 1972), and many others (see Scherer and Giles, 1979 for a range of these), including distinctive practices of talk and other conduct which serve to constitute a recognizably distinctive personal identity. Although these may all be subsumed under the notion 'style' (Tannen, 1984), their constitutive import (West and Zimmerman, 1987) may be slighted by that conceptual or terminological convention.

The upshot of this discussion is that some variations between interactional practices are 'structural' and bear on their speech-exchange system (as recognized and registered both by participants and by professional analysts), and some are not; nor is this the same as saying some are important and some are not.[8] It is, however, to say that 'ordinary conversation' *is* more than a negatively characterized residual category of talk-in-interaction. It is a recognizable modality of talk-in-interaction, produced by its participants' deployment of distinctive practices and organizations of practice for generic aspects of talking-in-interaction such as turn-taking, sequence organization, repair organization, overall structural organization, and others which cannot be explored here.

Is ordinary conversation the 'basic' speech exchange system?

I can devote less space to the discussion of so-called 'primordiality' or 'foundationalism'. What these terms convey is the notion that not all speech-exchange systems occupy the same place in the array of ways of interacting deployed by humans. What humans grow up with is an ordinary interaction within the family, within peer groups, neighborhoods, communities, etc. In all of these, it appears most likely that the basic medium of 'interactional exchange' is ordinary conversation – in whatever practices it is embodied in those settings.[9] When children begin their engagement with 'formal' educational institutions, they ordinarily need to come to deploy and observe different practices of talk-in-interaction which, in some educational settings but not others (e.g. in classrooms but not in the schoolyard) supersede those of ordinary conversation. This includes turn-taking practices (how turns are allocated, for example), sequence-organizational practices (the role of question-initiated sequences, for example, or the special practices of 'pedagogical' questions like the 'known-answer question'), distinctive practices of repair, etc. So also with adults preparing for activities which incorporate different speech exchange systems (whether

occupational – for example, as participants in formal meetings; civic – for example, as juror or witness in the courtoom; or 'avocational' – for example, as participants in dramatic performances or religious rituals).

Or consider, for example, the account by the psychiatrist Frieda Fromm-Reichmann of the key issues in the training of therapists, related by Sacks (1992: I 768, 771) to practices of talking and listening in ordinary conversation. Briefly put, the practices of talk-in-interaction – and the associated practices of story-telling in conversation and their uptake by recipients – make relevant, on a story's completion, displays of understanding by recipients. One generally relevant practice for showing understanding is the telling of another story – a second story – selected as apposite to the one which has just been told, and therefore displaying its teller's understanding of the story which has just been told. Because so many stories told in conversation are ones in which the teller figures as a character of some sort, a key aspect for recipients in tracking stories in the course of their telling is for the recipient to be on alert for elements of her/his own experience from which an appropriate 'second story' could be fashioned for delivery on completion of the story being told. It is in light of such contingencies and practices of ordinary conversation that Sacks (1992) proposed to understand Fromm-Reichmann's remarks about the training of therapists. One of Fromm-Reichmann's points was that a key skill a prospective therapist must acquire is this: 'To be able to listen ... without reacting along the lines of one's own problems or experience – of which one may be reminded, perhaps in a disturbing way – is an art of interpersonal exchange which few people are able to practice without special training'. About this matter Sacks remarked that, '... listening, in non-psychotherapeutic conversation, involves as its appropriate task that one listen in such a way as to *be* reminded of one's own experiences' (p. 768). Sacks goes on to relate this to contingencies of ordinary talk-in-interaction, of conversation – with respect both to turn-to-turn relations and sequence organization of the story-telling type. Here again, then, another speech exchange system, that of therapeutic interaction, can be seen to involve systematic transformation of the practices otherwise composing ordinary talk-in-interaction.

There are of course many other exemplars of this theme. See, for example, the accounts by Heritage (1984, 1985) and by Schiffrin (1987) on the placement of the particle 'oh' after a question/answer exchange, and the discussion in Schegloff (1993), turning on the differential import of such a token in ordinary conversation, in sociolinguistic interviews, and in broadcast news interviews, respectively. Without extended discussion here, it seems clear that some features present in question/answer sequences (with few exceptions) in ordinary conversation are neutralized in broadcast news interviews by the institutional presumption that the talk is being produced for an 'overhearing audience', a presumption which would be called into question by recurrent indications by the interviewer of having been informed by the answer, even if the interviewer had indeed been informed (Heritage, 1985). Surely, then, features present in ordinary conversational practice are blocked in the different speech-exchange system of the broadcast news interview.

The claim is not, of course, that each interviewer, on each occasion, for each question/answer sequence, is oriented first to articulating a 'change-of-state token' (Heritage, 1984) and then neutralizes it; or that socialized viewers and hearers of such broadcasts have that sort of trajectory in understanding what is transpiring. Competent members control the set of speech-exchange systems with which they have to operate, and are socialized into new ones as the occasion arises (e.g. how to participate in a 'focus group'). Still, the other speech-exchange systems themselves appear to be shaped by the adaptation of the practices and organizations of ordinary conversation to their special functional needs, legal constraints, etc. And variation in the deployment of 'oh' is hardly the only exemplar of this general point.[10]

Formal accounts and the analysis of singular occurrences

I have provided mere mentions of several quite elaborate organizations of practice which appear central to talk-in-interaction, and whose configurations may serve to differentiate distinct speech-exchange systems and provide affirmative characterizations of them. But the written accounts of these organizations on which I have been relying serve not only to specify such empirical domains as 'conversation'. Perhaps more important, they serve as resources with which to address singular episodes of interaction in ways which allow us to get at what is going on in them interactionally, and how that is getting done.

Some of these analytic resources – for example, the papers on turn-taking or adjacency pairs – have attracted critical comment for their so-called 'formalism'. It has been understood to entail a systematic inattention to the contextual specifics and the lived reality of the events being examined – a kind of dry and scientistic academicism. Some have even taken this to be a principled commitment of conversation analysis. But this is quite mistaken – both with regard to research strategy and with regard to the most appropriate *use* of these formal analytic resources.

In my view, these 'formal' accounts are like an inventory of tools, materials and know-how from which practicing research analysts can draw for their analytic undertakings because practicing *interactants* draw on them in concertedly constructing and grasping what transpires in interaction. That is why disciplined control of these analytic resources should be part of the tool kit of any competent analyst concerned with what is getting done by the linguistic forms and discursive practices out of which mundane talk-in-interaction is fashioned. At the same time, the provision of a formal account of such organizations of practice as turn-taking or adjacency pair-based sequence organization was not and is not merely an investigatory idiom; there were and are substantive grounds for developing such accounts and formulations, if it turned out that human conduct was so organized as to permit such descriptions

I now turn to exemplify both of these claims; one by providing a brief account, in part historical, of the basis for a formal account of turn-taking; the other by

examining a bit of data and its explication. I hope that this exercise shows how some analytic resources which were developed as part of *formally* oriented inquiry into generic organizations for talk-in-interaction, and for conversation in particular, serve as tools in explicating the *action and interactional* import of particular episodes of conduct in interaction and, in this case, in assessing the capacities of the participants.

Why a formal account of turn-taking?

So why *was* it in point to have a systematics for turn-taking? Here, briefly, is one view.

From early on in conversation-analytic work, a great many analyses of discrete bits of talk-in-interaction seemed to prompt, and then be shaped by, observations about the construction of utterances in *turns*. These were analyses otherwise largely directed to what some utterance was doing or how some activity was constructed, and yet they required reference to *turn*-oriented practices. Sacks' *Lectures* (1992) are full of such discussions, ones which involve only truncated observations about turn-taking organization – just enough to return to the preoccupation on whose behalf they were undertaken. I offer one case in point out of many.

Much of Sacks' treatment of story-telling in conversation and its sequential organization (aside from 1992, passim; see Sacks, 1974) is launched from two observations: first, that units like clauses and sentences can constitute possibly complete turns, on whose completion transition to a next speaker may become relevant; and, second, that virtually in the nature of the case, stories take more than one such unit to tell. This pair of observations leads to the recognition and formulation of the problem for prospective tellers of getting to tell the whole story – namely, that at the first possible completion of a turn unit, or any subsequent one, a recipient may start talking along lines which frustrate a continuation of the telling. They lead as well to one solution to that problem for prospective tellers – the story-preface and the sequence which it initiates (e.g. "A funny thing happened on the way to the forum"), and the place of that sequence in the larger organization of story-telling.

The focus here was *story-telling* in conversation, but it required an incursion into turn-taking organization to explicate important parts of its structuring. There are many such discussions in Sacks' *Lectures*, including ones addressed to even more narrowly circumscribed 'actions'. So also in Jefferson's work around the same period. Those familiar with the so-called 'precision-placement' paper (in *Semiotica*; Jefferson, 1973) may recall the multi-faceted ways in which what someone was doing was contingent on where in the developing structure of a turn some bit of talk was placed. This theme figured in my own early work as well – on sequence structure, on overlapping talk, on conversational openings, and the like.

However, these analytic exercises all had a scent of the ad hoc about them.

They articulated only those observations about turn-taking which were prompted by, and were needed for, the exigencies of the 'other' analytic project in progress, whatever it happened to be. They were, in that sense, opportunistic. They pointed to a larger domain of organization, and were parasitic on it, but always turned as quickly as possible to the project *for which* they were borrowing. Yet if that more extensive turn-taking organization *was there*, and if *so often* the elucidation of other particular practices, devices, phenomena or activities *relied* on facets of that turn-taking organization, it was virtually mandatory that our understanding of it not be limited to those aspects we were directed to by what were, strictly speaking, exogenous interests. At some point, turn-taking *had* to be examined as a domain in its own right, so as to make explicit the fund, the resource, on which we were so often drawing.

Of course, that meant that there would be – in *that* undertaking – no quick return to a more limited, action/activity/device/or practice as the topical pre-occupation and analytic payoff. And it is that juxtaposition – between the terms on which turn-taking had *previously* figured in conversation-analytic work, and the way in which it figured in *this, systematic*, undertaking – which I think engendered in many readers of the turn-taking article a sense of desiccated formalism, of 'the clacking of "turns" over their "possible completion points"', as Michael Moerman (1988: xi) so graphically and disapprovingly put it several years ago. It appeared as if the situated substantive analysis of discrete actions and discrete episodes of interaction and their interactional import had been severed from the explication of the formal organization of turn-taking itself.

However understandable as a narrative line, I think this is a deeply flawed understanding of the place of formal and systematic analysis in the larger enterprise of studies of talk-in-interaction – whether the formal analysis is of turn-taking, of sequence organization, of repair, or of any other organizational domain of practices of talk-in-interaction. As I have remarked, *in my view, such formal resources are like a reservoir of tools, materials and know-how from which particular academic analytic undertakings can draw in inquiry, because practicing interactants draw on them in concertedly constructing what transpires in interaction.* That is why disciplined control of these analytic resources should be part of any competent analyst's tool kit – not necessarily particular *terminologies*, only the actual phenomena and practices which such work has in the past brought to attention. Only now they have been explored and described more systematically as an ordered set of practices – a domain of organization with determinate internal shape.

In what follows, I want to show the role which the resources provided by formal analysis of the sort exemplified by work on turntaking or sequence organization can play in examining stretches of talk-in-interaction, *including* the action import of their components. There is an underlying suggestion here and it is this. It is ill-considered to fault a focus of formal inquiry (like turn-taking or sequence structure or repair) simply for not taking 'meaning' or 'action' as its officially central pre-occupation; for it may be by reference to just such formal features of the

talk that action, and what is vernacularly termed 'meaning', are constituted and grasped in the first instance.

And now to work

The episode I examine is drawn from materials which may be of special interest to those especially concerned with matters alternatively subsumed under the rubrics 'discourse' and 'pragmatics', and with the deployment of linguistic and other resources in practical conduct, and *as* practical conduct. One of the participants comes to the occasion with challenged and suspect linguistic capacities. He is a commissurotomy patient, that is, a man whose brain hemispheres were surgically severed from one another some years earlier – an operation used to deal with otherwise intractable neurological problems. The setting is one in a series of testing sessions in which the impact of this surgery on cognitive and linguistic functioning is being examined; we look at a momentary, *non*-testing interpolation in that session.

The project from which I am drawing began with the juxtaposition of some empirical observations with one view about the localization of various aspects of linguistic functioning in the brain.

Roughly, the view held at the time these observations were made (some 8–9 years ago), and very likely still widely held (but see Perkins, 1998: 307; Zaidel, 1998; Zaidel et al., 1998), was that, whereas much of the neurological substrate of language – for phonology, syntax, the lexicon and semantics – is localized in the *left* hemisphere (among the naturally right handed, etc.), the so-called discourse-organizational and pragmatic functions are situated in the *right* hemisphere. Various sorts of evidence were held to support this view, drawing almost entirely on clinical and testing observations regarding various so-called 'pragmatic deficits' attendant upon cerebro-vascular insults to the right hemisphere.

What exactly should count as 'pragmatics' or 'discourse' has never been thoroughly clarified,[11] let alone become a matter of consensus, and there is no reason to think that all the preoccupations which are treated as belonging to 'discourse' or 'pragmatics' form some sort of unified or coherent domain. Among the deficits included in the discussion of the consequences of disruption in the right hemisphere were counted an impaired capacity to enact and recognize emotional expression; problems in the use and recognition of non-literal uses of language, such as irony, metaphor, humor and, most importantly, indirection; and the compromising of other operations understood to be associated with the use of language in organized undertakings such as interaction – including turn-taking, the doing of particular actions of the so-called 'commissive' type, such as commands and requests, and the range of conventional norms we ordinarily term 'etiquette' or 'politeness'.[12]

Through the cooperation of the neuropsychologist Eran Zaidel and the philosopher Asa Kasher, I gained access to videotapes of several testing sessions with commisurotomy patients whom Zaidel has been studying for quite a long time.[13]

Although not exactly 'right-hemisphere *damaged*', persons who have had commisurotomies have undergone surgery which severed the *corpus callosum*, the pathway through which the two hemispheres of the brain 'communicate'. However intact the right hemisphere itself may be in these persons, the left hemisphere presumably has no access to its operations and products – at least according to the currently dominant version of brain function as I am given to understand it (Zaidel et al., 1998: 281, suggest four accounts of 'normally unified everyday behavior of the patients' in spite of this disconnection). In such persons we should see most clearly the effects of depriving the rest of the language faculty – what is thought of in contemporary linguistics as the very *core* of the language faculty – of the robust operation of its pragmatic and discourse components.

Although it is of potentially considerable interest for students of discourse and pragmatics, I abandon for the remainder of this account further discussion of the issues which originally prompted these observations (Schegloff, in press). Suffice it to say that it is *not* the upshot of my work on this project that persons whose hemispheres have been sundered are just like everybody else; nor am I in a position to specify the respects in which their capacities and routine conduct are different from those who have not undergone this procedure.[14] But in order to specify in a reliable way just what the effects are, we need empirically grounded accounts of what such persons *can* do – *do* do – in circumstances embodying ordinary contingencies of interaction, and not just how they perform in testing situations which, far from neutralizing interactional contexts, themselves can constitute distinctive speech-exchange systems which confront participants with quite distinctive, and potentially complicating, interactional exigencies.[15]

The fragment, which lasts no more than a few seconds, occurs in the middle of a testing session with a man whom I call Alvin.[16] Although Alvin does not talk in this exchange (in fact, he has been asked by the research assistant to talk as little as possible),[17] the episode displays his capacity to parse and to grasp the talk of an interlocutor and to respond effectively in interaction. For the purposes of the present discussion, the point is to see the access we get to this brief exchange with the analytic resources of so-called 'formal' treatments of turn-taking and sequence organization.

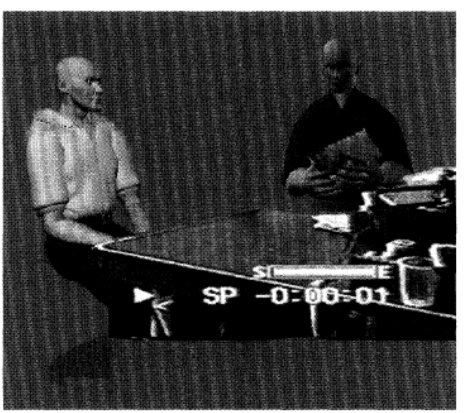

FIGURE 1. *At the start of EZ's first turn, at 1*

The research assistant, Dan (DG), has been administering the tests, while the Principal Investigator, Ezra (EZ), is manning the camera in an adjacent room, shooting through the doorway. As the sequence on which we focus begins (at no. 1 in the following transcript), Alvin (AA) is sitting

almost motionless, watching the assistant take out and examine the next set of stimulus cards (Figure 1).

My examination of this exchange is organized around the numbers positioned above the lines of transcript. Each number marks the locus of some observations about the sequence to that point and the import of those observations, the first of which is the gloss of the state of the interaction at the onset of this sequence just provided.

```
     1              2                              3
EZ:  Alvin, can yo[u come a bit closer to the [table=
                  [((AA turning               [((AA leans
                  to EZ))                     forward,
                                              head down))
          4          5
     =may[be even the[re?=
          [((AA eyes  [((AA grasps chair,
          up))        eyes down))
                                                      6
AA:  =((slides chair forward one substantial measure, then looks
     up to EZ))
             7
EZ:  That's [good.=
             [((AA slides forward another small increment))
AA:  =((lips part, head turns back to table, puts left hand to
              8              9
     mouth and coughs,[left hand adjusts glasses))
                      [
DG:                   [Oh:::kay,  ((puts first new stimulus card
                                    on table in front of AA))
```

Let us note first, at 2, Alvin's prompt coordinated response to Ezra's use of his name as an address term; he looks to Ezra directly after Ezra has spoken his name, aligning himself as a recipient for the turn-in-progress (Goodwin, 1981). That he has analyzed his name – Alvin – *as* doing addressing is itself, of course, an achievement. Taken as an object for 'on-line' parsing and analysis in real time, 'Alvin' can be understood in either of two ways. One is as an address term or vocative; the other is as the subject of a clause/sentence. On the former analysis, Alvin would be the addressee and, potentially,[18] the selected next speaker (the prior request that he minimize speaking to the contrary notwithstanding). On the latter analysis, the utterance would be understood as *about* Alvin, but addressed to the testing assistant, Dan.

Not until the word 'you' is there grammatical evidence that it is an utterance along the first of these lines which is in progress. But by the time 'you' is articulated, Alvin is already turning his head toward Ezra, so that by the time 'come a bit' is being said, Alvin is already fully oriented toward him as an aligned recipient (Figure 2).

Since Alvin and Dan are sitting side by side, the loudness of the utterance does not differentiate them as intended recipients. Alvin has analyzed the talk for its

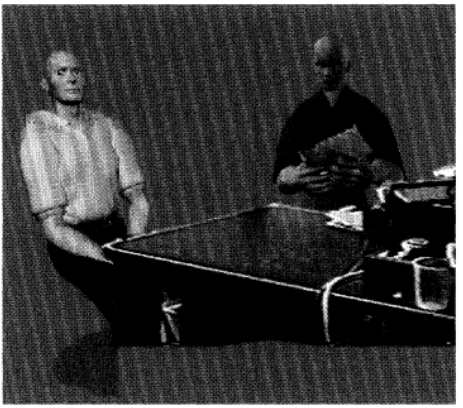

FIGURE 2. *At the word 'you', at 2*

displayed target, has recognized its first element as indicative of that, and has produced an appropriate response when he finds himself to be that target – an initial indication of discourse/pragmatic capacity, with respect both to turn-taking and sequence organizational features of the talk; for the design of this bit of talk serves to (potentially) select Alvin to occupy the next turn position and also involves constraints on what should be done there – a response to the summons, which he here realizes by gaze re-direction, in compliance with the earlier instruction to minimize talking.[19]

By 3, Alvin has begun withdrawing his gaze and initiating a compliant response at the word 'table', which is projectable as the incipient possible completion of Ezra's turn (see Figure 3). Note that there are at least two orders of discourse/pragmatic competence involved here. The first of these is Alvin's analysis of the turn-in-progress for its imminent possible completion, displayed by his incipient gaze withdrawal – a turn-taking matter.

A second competence displayed here regards the turn's sequence-organizational status; Alvin displays an analysis of Ezra's utterance as making relevant some sort of responsive turn or action next, and 'next' means 'now'. In particular, Alvin begins to display an analysis of Ezra's turn as a *request*, and a request for an *action*, by initiating an action seeable and analyzable (by Ezra) as *compliance* with the request.

It might be noted as well that the request is in the form which many forms of conventional speech-act theory would term 'indirect'. The form '*can you* come a bit closer . . .' in this view literally asks a question about ability or capacity. The 'request for action', has to be analyzed out of this utterance as the indirect speech act being enacted. This is just the sort of speech act, just the sort of non-literal usage which – in the common view – persons with a discourse/pragmatic deficit would be expected to have trouble with.[20]

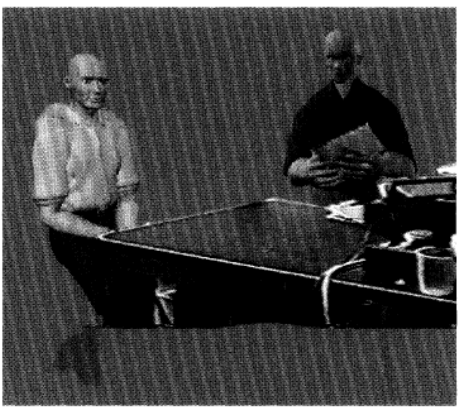

FIGURE 3. *At the start of the word 'table', at 3*

Directly following 'table', with the audible continuation of talk (the

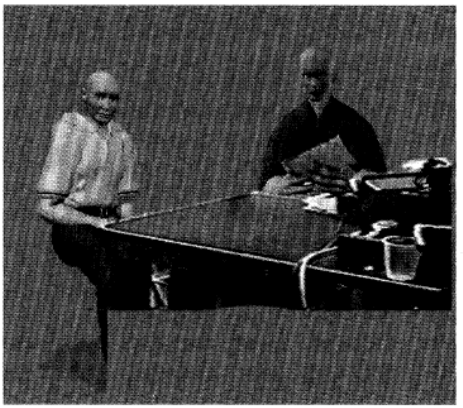

FIGURE 4. *Halfway through the word "maybe", at 4*

'may' of 'maybe'), at 4, Alvin apparently registers that the turn may be extended *past* its projectable point of possible completion, and his eyes begin to return to the speaker Ezra (Figure 4) – again turn-taking competence of a detailed sort.

At 5, Alvin hears in the talk that the extension of the turn past its initial possible completion is not 'generative', that is, it is not a whole new unit of talk, but involves some add-ons (or 'increments') to the prior turn-constructional unit. The previous analysis of upcoming possible completion appears then to be re-instituted; Alvin again withdraws his gaze and continues the previously initiated action, which, with the grasping of the chair, now shows itself transparently to be a compliance with the request (Figure 5); Alvin now slides his chair closer to the table by a substantial increment. Again, then, both turn-taking and sequence-organizational constraints are being grasped and met.

At 6, at the possible completion of the action designed as compliance with Ezra's request, Alvin looks to Ezra (Figure 6).

Sequence-structurally this is a third position, a position in which the initiator of a sequence (especially a sequence like a request sequence) regularly makes some assessment of, or other reaction to whatever was done as a response to the sequence initiation (i.e. in second position). Here then is a place at which orientation to sequence structure can warrant 'anticipation' of a sequence-structural, third position, uptake – a place for Alvin to look to Ezra for an assessment of the adequacy of his 'move'; has he moved 'close enough'?

Note that here, unlike the first observation, it can *not* be by virtue of Ezra being a speaker or a source of sound that Alvin looks to him. Although Ezra does indeed deliver the type of utterance which 'belongs' in third position ('That's good'), Alvin glances toward him *before* this utterance is begun. Note again that the posture in Figure 6 is captured just before Ezra's assessment, 'That's good'. This is a gaze

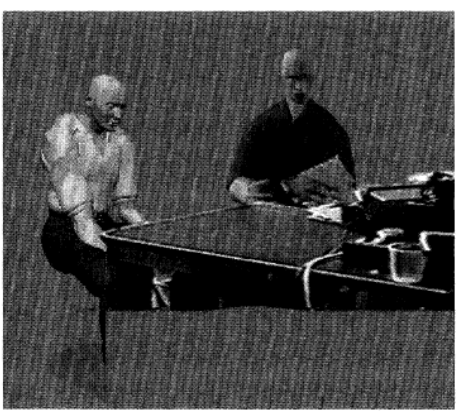

FIGURE 5. *Halfway through the word "there", at 5*

direction warranted by *sequence structure* (in particular, request/compliance sequence structure), a relevance structure[21] to which Alvin, by his glance, shows himself to be oriented and attentive. Indeed, his turn to Ezra, aligning himself as recipient, may serve to prompt the assessment utterance which is then forthcoming.

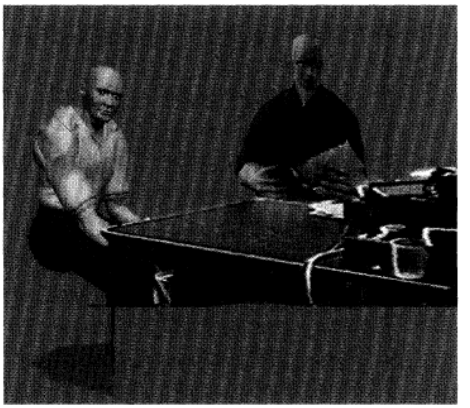

FIGURE 6. *After forward slide of chair, at 6*

Although we lack the data here, we can venture a guess that as Alvin looks to him, Ezra is neither smiling nor nodding, and that his evaluation of the adequacy of Alvin's compliance move is not clear until his utterance. In the absence of 'approval', Alvin may read the possible *in*adequacy of his response, and, *as* Ezra is saying 'That's good', at 7, Alvin is already executing a move to add another increment of compliance to what he had already done. In the video of this episode, one can see an additional small increment of sliding the chair forward during 'That's good', as if in response to the absence of validation of the previously designed compliant action. We have here not merely discourse/pragmatic competence, but a kind of sensitive micro-tuning and adjustment of conduct to interactional contingencies in a request/compliance sequence.

Upon completion of the added increment of moving closer and Ezra's assessment, it appears that Alvin has analyzed Ezra's 'That's good' as *both* the end of a turn *and* the end of a sequence. He shows this in several ways. First, he turns his head back to the table and away from Ezra; second, he adjusts his glasses (at 9; see Figure 8) – which is for him a 'work-related' gesture, regularly used with new or difficult stimulus tasks; third, these movements are well coordinated with the testing assistant, Dan, such that the adjustment of the glasses converges with Dan's 'Okay' and placement of the new stimulus on the table (Figure 9).

This amounts, then, to Alvin's recognition, and *collaborative constitution* with Ezra and Dan of this little sequence as a 'side sequence' (Jefferson, 1972) interpolated into a larger, ongoing activity, *from* which it created a temporary departure, and *to* which there should be a return on its completion. There is then the recognition and joint construction of a *hierarchical* structuring of activities and sequences of activities.

Finally, we should register the observation that, at just the juncture between the end of the side sequence and the resumption of the 'work' activity, Alvin puts his hand to his mouth and coughs (at 8), or – to put it in terms of the etiquette with which he shows himself to be in compliance – he 'covers his mouth while coughing' (Figure 7). By placing the cough in the no-man's land between sequences (note, it comes *after* the gaze withdrawal and *before* the adjustment of

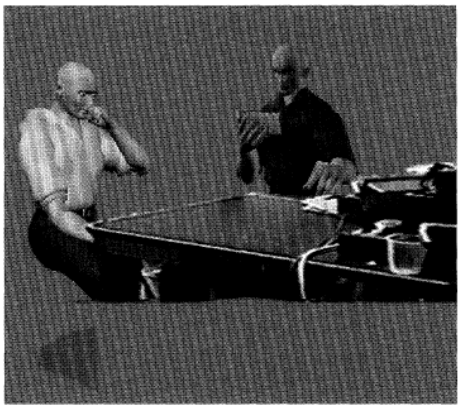

FIGURE 7. *After turning away from camera, at 8*

glasses marking task resumption), he puts it at a relatively non-sensitive moment, when no one is an active interactional co-participant, into whose interactional space this ritually marked body adjustment is thrust. And etiquette is, of course, arguably *another* of the components of pragmatics and interactive discourse organization.

About this whole episode, with its robust and exquisitely detailed attention to compliance with an indirect request, it remains only to remark that, later on, it turned out that (according to the results of formal testing procedures) Alvin 'did not perform well on tests related to commands and indirect requests'. What is to be made of this sharp contrast in the results of different modes of inquiry requires more careful and sustained treatment than can be given it here, and I discuss it elsewhere (Schegloff, in press). Perhaps this much can be suggested here: perhaps the testing goes not so much to commands and indirect requests per se as it does to decontexted actions, actions not parts of indigenously engendered courses of action.[22]

This little episode is thoroughly unremarkable. How do we find its texture, its structure, what is going on in it? How does one go to work on it? I submit that in order to understand the physical movements which constitute the whole of Alvin's participation in this episode – indeed to come to 'see' them at all, in an analytic sense – we need to appreciate (we *have* appreciated) their status as social actions. Compliance, responsive attention deployment, approval solicitation, and the like – that is what they are. By them, Alvin displays his orientation to the relevant organizational dimensions within which this interaction is being realized and on which it is being scaffolded. The timing of his moves displays Alvin's grasp – *in its detailed course* – of the developmental structure of Ezra's talk – as composing a turn constructional unit, which is progressing toward possible completion, at which point it may be for *him* to respond, and as constituting an action which will shape the *terms* of

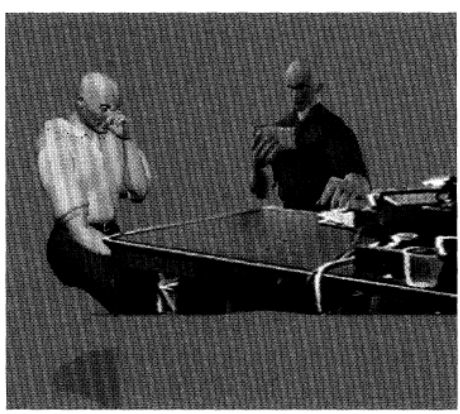

FIGURE 8. *As Dan says "Oh:::kay", at 9*

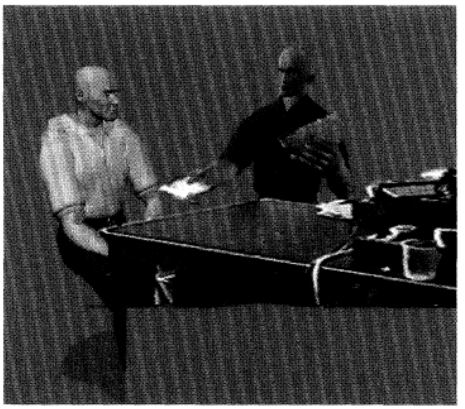

FIGURE 9. *Dan resumes testing, after 9*

his response within a jointly oriented-to sequence structure. These movements embody and display in this setting's situated details Alvin's and Ezra's collaborative orientation to the resources, constraints and practices of turn-taking and sequence organization as formal organizational frameworks for their concerted participation, through whose deployment the import of what is going on here is materialized, is fabricated, jointly, *by* the parties, *for* the parties.

How is all that made available to *us*, external observers? We do not encounter it in the same fashion as the participants do – micro-moment by micro-moment forward in real time, subject to the practical contingencies and exigencies of responding, and the interactional import of *non*-response. Here is where the resources of formal accounts of such structures of practice come into play. For that is what work such as the turn-taking article and accounts of adjacency pairs and their expansions are designed in part to do.

Surely they are designed to elucidate the elegant formal structure and efficacious design of the organizations of interactional practice as objects of interest in their own right. But their payoff finally rests in their capacity to illuminate actual episodes of interaction, to serve as tools in the understanding of what is going on there for the parties and how it is getting done – tools like 'possible turn completion', 'transition-relevance of possible completion', 'the conditional relevance brought into play by a first pair part', etc. Formal analysis is then not an *alternative* to so-called 'substantive', or 'content-ful', or 'meaningful' or 'setting-specific' treatment of ordinary talk-in-interaction; it is an *instrument* for its *implementation*. It serves us well as professional analysts to the degree that it has accurately depicted the formal character of how ordinary participants in talk-in-interaction co-construct those episodes and understand them in their course, and for that very reason.

For that very reason, such analysis must be capable of addressing the deployment of the body in interaction, for it is in co-present interaction an inescapable facet of the practices and resources of co-construction. I hope that this brief analytic exercise dispels another puzzling misconception, that conversation analysis ignores the body and its deployment in interaction, as well as actions which are not verbally realized. Were that the case, we would have had nothing at all to say about one of the featured participants in this little episode. But note: even though Alvin's participation in this exchange is sensitive to the turn organization of the talk to which he is responding in a fine-grained way, and although his actions do

satisfactorily answer to the relevance rules underlying the action sequence being implemented here, it would be analytically ill-conceived and ill-advised to treat his contribution to this exchange as a turn-at-talk. Even though it is a contribution to the sequence, it is not a turn-at-talk.[23] That does not mean that it is not orderly, the product of practices of conduct in interaction. His actions have an organization to them – some of which have been mentioned informally in the preceding account – displayed launching of an action, implementation of the action, showing that the action has been brought to completion by a 'decay' of its physical movements, etc.

The description of such elements of conduct in interaction has been less developed in conversation analysis than accounts of talk, but it has not been absent (see for example Sacks and Schegloff, in press; Schegloff, 1984, 1998; other recent contributions are found in the work of Charles and Marjorie Goodwin – C. Goodwin, 1994, 1995; M.H. Goodwin, 1997, 1998). Further development of such work is in order, as is well-considered discussion of the relationship of such action to turns at talk, but not (as is sometimes proposed) the treatment of physically implemented actions as turns-at-talk, which – in the plain meaning of the words – they are specifically not. Two sorts of work are then in prospect in this regard, if past experience is a proper guide: detailed explications of single episodes of interaction in which physically implemented actions (including gestures, postures, etc.) are elaborated (Goodwin, in press a, b); and efforts to elucidate formal structures of practice in the deployment of the body in episodes of interaction (indeed, one such effort – Sacks and Schegloff, in press – was first delivered some 25 years ago; see also Schegloff, 1998). Perhaps it will now be easier to see these two types of undertaking as mutually enabling and enriching, rather than as competitors for the allegiance of students in this area.

Conclusion

I began by registering the increasing focus on the diversity of discursive participants by reference to categories of member. This is, of course, a congenial stance within the general cultural commitments of Western/European culture, with its stipulation to the ultimate reality of the single, embodied, minded individual, and its treatment of situation and interaction as ephemeral and transient products of the coming together of individuals. I have urged a compensatory emphasis among students of discourse on what might be called the procedural infrastructure of interaction and talk-in-interaction – the organizations of practice which arguably underwrite the stable consociation of the individuals whose coming together constitutes the interactional arenas in which a society comes to practical, mundane, daily realization. There is a diversity of these speech-exchange systems as well but, I have urged, it is not a random or arbitrary diversity. Conversation as a form of talk-in-interaction seems central, other forms systematic variants of it. And some components of a speech-exchange systems seem central and inescapable, what I termed 'generic organizations', such as turn-

taking, sequence organization, the organization of repair, because with them parties to interaction address generic issues in the organization of interaction without a solution to which stable interaction is not sustainable – the ordered allocation of opportunities to participate and the managed extensiveness of any such opportunity; constraints on the orderliness of successive units of participation; the capacity and resources for managing structured sources of trouble in speaking or hearing or understanding the talk and other conduct of which the interaction is composed, without which the talk comes to a halt without remedy. In the end, what makes it possible to have a society out of the diverse categories of members includes importantly that there *are* organizations of practice that are stable, foundational, constitutive.

In a famous metaphor in the history of the social sciences, the economist Joseph Schumpeter contrasted the capitalist image – in which property owners were stable points of reference and property in land moved among them, with the feudal image – in which land supplied the stable frame of reference, and persons, including property owners, were distributed and redistributed across it. To adapt the metaphor for our purposes, instead of thinking only or primarily of types and categories of persons and identities, mediated by evanescent lines of communication, perhaps we can also – or instead – think of structures of interaction as the recurrent structures of sociality, which recruit constantly shifting cohorts of participants to staff the episodes of conversation and other forms of talk-in-interaction which they organize. Because there is no escaping divergent interests, beliefs, commitments or projects among humans, these structures of sociality will have among their recurrent events the expression of such divergences – realized as conflict, disagreement, misunderstanding, and the like, and their trajectories of channeling, reconciliation, triumph and loss. These are not signs of dysfunction; they are among the main things we should expect to be served by a procedural infrastructure for interaction among members of societies. Because of their frequently dramatic character, and because they feature contingent outcomes with respect to divergences which mobilize our interest as members of society, they can come to dominate our vision and our energies. But as students of discourse and its deployment in practical action, we need always to bear in mind the invisible 'eight-ninths of the iceberg' below the surface of ready visibility which sustains that which commands our attention – the solid, stable, binding structures which supply the meaningful context for what appears to separate us.

What then makes us one species? Anything? Just our anatomy and physiology? Is *everything* else the product of the Tower of Babel, for better or for worse? Is there nothing which transcends the heterogeneities of culture, language, ethnicity, race, gender, class, nationality, and so on? Is it not, in the end, the formal organizations of interactional practice – conversation preeminent among them – which provide that armature of sociality which undergirds our common humanity?

APPENDIX

Notational conventions employed in the transcribed episodes examined in the text include the following (a fuller glossary of conventions may be found in Ochs et al. 1996: 461–65):

:::	colons indicate stretching of the preceding sound, proportional to the number of colons
(( ))	double parentheses enclose descriptions of conduct rather than transcriptions of it
[	left brackets connecting two lines indicate simultaneous onset of what follows the
[	brackets
=	equal signs at the end of one line and the start of the next indicate no break or dealy between the lines thereby connected
table	underlining indicates slight overstress on the underlined item
(1.1)	numbers in parentheses indicate silence in tenths of a second
° °	words between degree marks are markedly softer than surrounding talk in proportion to the number of degree marks

NOTES

1. This is attested by the striking number of special or thematic issues of journals in which 'conversation' figures centrally in the last decade or so – for example, *Social Psychology Quarterly* 50:2 (1987) on 'Language and Social Interaction'; *Social Problems* 35:4 (1988) on 'Language, Interaction and Social Problems'; *Social Research* 65:3 (1998) on 'Conversation;' and *Language and Speech* 41:3/4 (1999) on 'Prosody and Conversation'. There is also an increasing number of journals which do not have such special issues because 'conversation' is understood to be central to their commitment overall, among them this journal.
2. I have here hardly scratched the surface of a topic extensively explored in Goffman's (1981) 'The Lecture', itself, like the present text, a written version of a previously articulated presentation, including reflexive observations on its own constitution.
3. On the delivery of information, consider, for example, Maynard (1991, 1997, and pers. comm.) and Schegloff, 1988; on receipt, see Heritage (1984), Schiffrin (1987), Schegloff (1993). On the general issue see also Schegloff (1999).
4. I hasten to add that the notion that 'chit chat' or 'idle conversation' is 'trivial' has little merit as a serious analytic characterization, whatever standing it may have as a piece of vernacular stylistic judgement; this is not, however, an appropriate place in which to mobilize evidence on this matter.
5. A vast range of work meets the terms of this description, though by no means all psychological and psycholinguistic experiments. I have cited Levelt's article in particular only because of its author's distinction and care and because I have elsewhere discussed this issue at somewhat greater length with respect to his paper.
6. And Boyd (1998) shows that telephone conversations between two doctors, one representing a health insurer and assessing the eligibilty of the proposal for surgery submitted by the other, have a phase structure as well, embodying the stages of the work to be done in them.
7. Drew and Heritage (1992) review a range of these organizations (and others not mentioned here, such as turn design and word selection) as they bear on interaction which is not 'ordinary conversation' in far greater detail and scope than is possible here.
8. Of course, things get more complicated when practices that are for their users a matter of style have for their recipients structural import. This can be a major source of so-called 'intercultural misunderstanding'. For an empirically grounded account of

the difference between structural and stylistic practices in another speech-exchange system – that of American Presidential press conferences, see Schegloff (1987: 222–8).

9. This includes, by the way, asymmetries of participation which may be part and parcel of the organization of conversation in particular settings – asymmetries realized by the parties implementing the practices of conversation in a fashion which engenders them. The fact that the turn-taking organization for conversation *permits* an equalitarian distribution of turns does not mean that it *requires* an equalitarian distribution. As noted in Sacks et al. (1974: 711), '. . . the rule-set provides for the possibility of any over-all distribution of turns, and frees turn-distribution for manipulation by such interests as can be realized with the distribution of turns'. The key issue about turn-taking as a generic organization for conversation is not what actual distribution of turns is produced on some occasion but the set of practices employed by the participants for organizing the talk by which the actual distribution is achieved. The fact that language socialization (Ochs and Schieffelin, 1986) occurs in settings generally characterized by asymmetrical turn distribution is not in itself evidence that a speech-exchange system other than that for conversation informs the talk.
10. The treatment of this issue here is meant, of course, to add to the account in Sacks et al. (1974) which is scattered throughout the article, but comes to its most pointed statements at p. 701, n. 11, and in the final section at pp. 729–31, especially the final paragraph.
11. A useful discussion of the boundaries of 'pragmatics' may be found in Chapter 1 of Levinson (1983).
12. For a review of much of the relevant literature, see Zaidel (1998) and Zaidel et al. (1998).
13. I would like to thank Asa Kasher and Eran Zaidel for providing access to data from their study of split-brain patients, a study supported by the USA–Israel Binational Science Foundation (grant no. 88–00116/3) and by the Israel Science Foundation (grants nos. 891/96–7 773//92–3 to Asa Kasher, Tel-Aviv University, and Eran Zaidel, UCLA), and by the USPHS NIH (grant no. NS 20187 to Eran Zaidel).
14. The work of Zaidel and Kasher from which the data being examined are drawn, as I understand it, has been largely focused on issues concerning the modularity of language structure, issues which are distinct from those of hemispheric localization, however thematically similar. Whatever inferences may be drawn from the analysis sketched here for issues of hemispheric localization are of equivocal import for issues of modularity (though it may be noted that Zaidel, 1998: 383, concludes his review of the relevant literature with the assessment that it 'argues against a strictly modular view of natural language competence').
15. For a discussion of a setting which raises related issues, see Schegloff (1991: 54–7). For a more general discussion of the relationship between naturalistic and experimental research on talk-in-interaction which bears on testing as a mode of inquiry as well, see Schegloff (1996: 22–30).

    Zaidel et al. (1998) explicitly register divergences between conduct in ordinary interaction and performance in testing situations: 'Long-term personal interaction with the patients reveals a few persisting cognitive lacunae . . .' (p. 280); in contrast to everyday interactions, lateralized testing . . . reveals. . .' (p. 280); 'In general, . . . split-brain patients behave in a coordinated, purposeful, and consistent manner, belying the independent, parallel, usually different and ocassionally conflicting processing of the same information from the environment by the two disconnected hemispheres' (p. 283). Detailed analysis focuses on data drawn from testing, not data drawn from

repeatably inspectable conduct in ordinary interaction, on which the present analysis is based, on the premise that it too is amenable to rigorous and telling analysis which can make distinctive contributions in this area, however different in tenor.

16. I had intended to make available digitized video clips of this interactional episode, so that readers could get direct access to the data while reading its analysis. It has, however, proved impossible to secure informed consent for the use even of frame grabs from the videotape of this interaction with which to give the reader some direct visual access to the material addressed in the ensuing account. Accordingly, using the videotape and frame grabs displayed in conference presentations of this material as the target, we used Adobe Photoshop and the Poser program to model the key aspects of the key moments of Alvin's conduct in this strip of interaction. I wish to acknowledge and appreciate the contributions of Geoff Raymond of the Department of Sociology and Val Poliuto of the Visualization Center, both then at UCLA, in producing these depictions of a virtual character rather than the actual one, which nonetheless capture with remarkable fidelity the key elements of the conduct of a very real, embodied person, while retaining his complete anonymity.
17. This itself is indicative of a special speech-exchange system being in operation for the 'testing' interaction, one which is apparently sustained by the 'subject' even in this momentary intermission from it.
18. 'Potentially' because addressing an utterance to someone does not, by itself, select them as next speaker. Only certain turn types, if addressed to another, select that other as next speaker. The most common such turn types are those which constitute 'first-pair parts' of adjacency pairs (Sacks et al., 1974: 716–17). The turn addressed to Alvin here, being a request, is such a first-pair part, and does select him as next.
19. It is, of course, possible that Alvin is merely looking in the direction of the current speaker as a sound source, without discriminating that he is the targetted recipient. We see later that he looks to Ezra when there is no such basis for his doing so.
20. I am not, of course, endorsing speech act theory here. On the contrary, the utility and relevance of its way of discriminating direct and indirect speech acts in actual talk-in-interaction is called into question here, as it is elsewhere (Schegloff, 1988, 1992c: I:xxiv–xxvii). Shoshana Blum-Kulka has pointed out to me (pers. comm.) that many lines of speech act theory would now consider the form of this utterance as virtually formulaic and as not implicating the sort of analysis to which the text is addressed.
21. Not, of course, in the sense of Sperber and Wilson (1986).
22. After reading a draft of this paper, Asa Kasher (one of the Principal Investigators in the larger study from whose material this episode was drawn) wrote (per. correspondence) that in the testing mentioned in my text 'the S did not use a command, under . . . circumstances where normal Ss do use it regularly, and that he did not react properly to non-regular indirect requests, not of the form of "could you . . ." and the like, which are usual, but rather of unusual forms ("would it be possible for you. . . ." and the like) . . .'. The upshot of this colleague's comment was to qualify my invocation of the consequentiality of differences in context between performance in tests and in 'real life' exchanges, in accord with the difference between what 'Alvin' does in this extract (respond to a 'usual form' of indirect request) and what he did poorly at in the tests.

    Perhaps so, perhaps not. My text does not question the adequacy of the tests in assessing whatever they will turn out to have assessed, only their relevance to what those who have been tested can do – demonstrably *do* do – in real life circumstances. What the tests are assessing is, of course, precisely what is at issue here – the organization of a 'language faculty'; its mapping to, and implication with, the architecture of the brain; the context-sensitivity of practices of talking-in-interaction etc.

I am reminded of a number of stories I was told by Claus Heeschen, trained as a formal linguist and aphasiologist (and my collaborator in Heeschen and Schegloff, 1999), in describing his own scientific trajectory from testing as the instrument of inquiry into the speech and other conduct of aphasics to detailed examination of naturalistic records of ordinary interaction in mundane settings with friends and relatives. For example, while engaged in testing aphasic patients, he would ordinarily use rest periods during which patients had coffee to go and check his mail, etc. One day he happened to join the patients in the coffee room during the break and was astonished to hear the patients doing things while talking amongst themselves or with relatives which they had just shown themselves 'unable' to do in the preceding testing session. After that experience he undertook to try out other methods of inquiry in addition to testing, and, eventually, in preference to it.

That there may be important differences in capacity and performance between talking in the special frame of 'testing interaction' and in ordinary conversation is, then, no idiosyncratic or casual suggestion on my part; indeed, the contrast is reported by one of the Principal Investigators of this very project (as cited above from Zaidel, 1998 and Zaidel et al., 1998). One payoff we may hope for from the intersection of naturalistic with other modes of inquiry is just such a specification as is at issue here of what tests (or other measurement instruments) are tapping; that is, a specification of validity.

23. The observation that some contribution to a strip of interaction can constitute a move in a position in a sequence without constituting a turn-at-talk is not new, of course. It played a central role in the formulation of the summons/answer adjacency pair in Schegloff (1968), where the summons – which *can* be done as a turn-at-talk when realized by an address term or 'excuse me!' – is *not* a turn-at-talk when realized as a tap on the shoulder or the ringing of a telephone, though each of those can implement a summons. The telephone's ring, it might be mentioned, does have a structure, and a projectable one, but not the projectable structure of a turn-at-talk.

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